

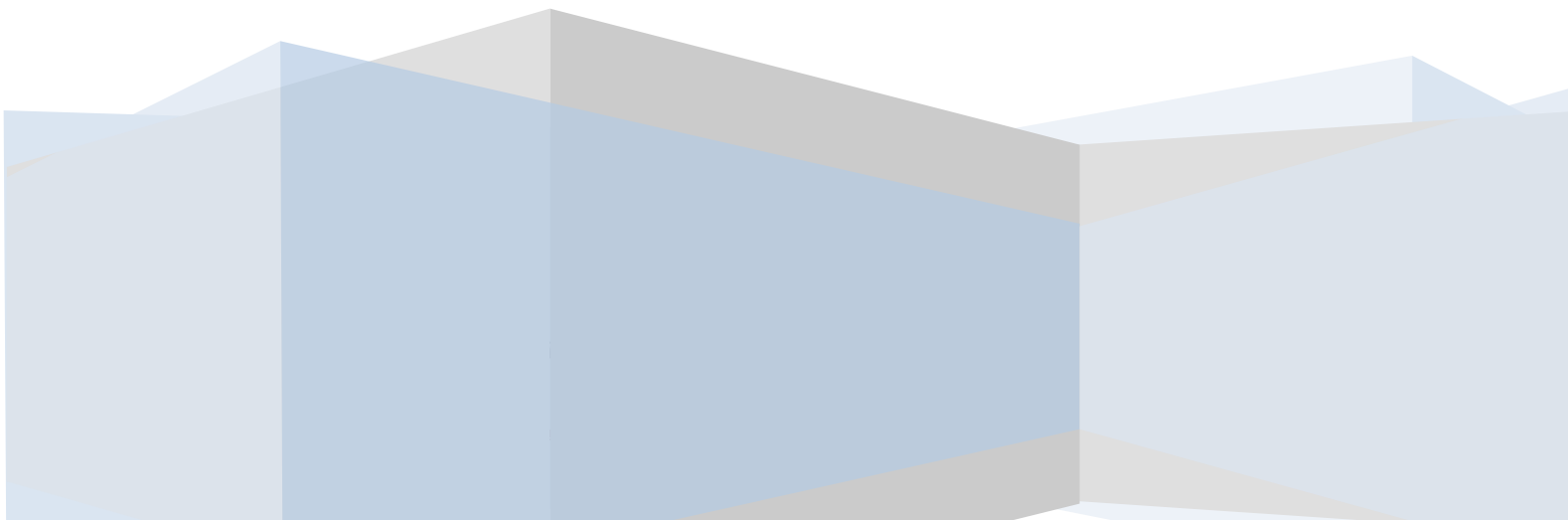


Social Media Metrics & Measurement

New Media = New Standards & Best Practices

Research Project Overview & Prospectus

February 2009



Overview

About the Society for New Communications Research

The Society for New Communications Research (<http://www.sncr.org>) is a nonprofit global think tank dedicated to the advanced study of new communications tools, technologies and emerging modes of communication, and their effect on traditional business and media models, professional communications, culture and society.

SNCR is dedicated to creating a bridge between the academic and theoretical pursuit of these topics and the pragmatic implementation of new media and communications tools and methodologies.

The Society's Fellows include more than 40 futurists, scholars, business leaders, professional communicators, members of the media and technologists from around the globe, all collaborating together to develop research and educational programs that address the most important trends and developments in communications.

Proposed Research Project Focus

“Social Media Metrics & Measurement: New Standards & Best Practices”

Adoption of new communications and social media tools and technologies continues to grow and become more widespread. Additionally, there is a convergence of the communications functions and spending on traditional forms of media and communications initiatives continues to decline, while spending on social media and new communications initiatives – which are less cost-intensive but require a great deal of human resource commitment – continues to increase. It is absolutely crucial that the communications industry updates its approach to metrics and measurement, and establishes new best practices and standards for the measurement of these new communications initiatives. This new era of communications demands a complete overhaul of the way analyze investment and ROI and pursue metrics and measurement.

One of the discoveries SNCR’s Fellows made through their research over the past few years is that there seems to be an inconsistency between what communications organizations set as goals and what they actually measure. This may be indicative of the maturity level of the communications industry in terms of their understanding of how to best deploy and measure new and evolving media and communications tools and methodologies.

For example, if the goal of a campaign is to "get closer to your customers," as we hear so often with social media initiatives, then why is the primary metric click-throughs from the blog to the corporate website? What does it really mean to "get closer to your customers?" Is there a bottom-line impact or metric that aligns with this goal? What is the true definition of the elusive buzz word "engagement," which seems to mean something very different to advertising professionals, marketing professionals, and PR professionals – yet any one of those functions may be the drivers of a social media initiative. If a term like engagement has a different meaning to each

communications function, then it becomes completely meaningless. Yet, we as communications professionals seem to maintain that "engagement" is core to the success of social media initiatives. If that's the case, then let's work together to figure out what that really means.

Our discovery of this disconnect or inconsistency between what organizations set as goals and what they actually measure led the Society for New Communications Research to decide to focus on new communications and social media metrics and measurement as one of the primary areas for our research, education, and best practices initiatives this year.

Our work will include in-depth quantitative and qualitative research by our Fellows in this area. This will result in in-depth research reports, case studies, journal articles, best practices tip sheets, and presentations of our findings through educational offerings at conferences and via online delivery.

Partnering with the Web Analytics Association

SNCR will partner with the Web Analytics Association for this work. Given the WAA's mission of leading and supporting its members by providing quality education, developing standards and best practices, conducting research and advocating for issues that advance the industry, we have identified the WAA as the ideal partner.

In addition, we are seeking the support of new media entities and the media measurement vendor community to fund this work and to ensure that this is a comprehensive industry-wide program that gains wide acceptance.

Methodology, Deliverables & Timeline

This project will encompass:

- **An examination of the current landscape:** The study will include a recap of the WAA's and SNCR Fellows' existing research on the current state of new media and communications metrics and measurement
- **Small Business Social Media Survey:** The study will include an in-depth online survey to SNCR and WAA members and other targeted respondents
- **Case Studies:** The study will include in-depth case studies collected by the SNCR Fellows via recorded interviews, as well as the WAA case studies previously collected
- **Best Practices Tip Sheets & Standards Documentation:** Based on our research, SNCR/WAA will publish tips sheets and recommendations leading to standards for metrics and measurement of new media and communications

Existing Research/Literature Review

The Fellows will utilize existing findings from their prior research to inform and complement this new research on adoption trends and best practices.

Survey Component

An online survey will be developed and pre-tested by the SNCR Fellows and the WAA. Any necessary modifications will be made based on this test period, prior to wider distribution. The survey will be sent via email to SNCR's list of 10,000+, made available via snrcr.org and www.newcommreview.com, which receives approximately 1,500 visitors per day. In addition, the survey will be promoted via a press release issued jointly by SNCR and the WAA and promoted to WAA members via email. Links to the surveys will also be posted on the Fellows', advisory board members and vendor council members' blogs and websites. The goal will be to gather a minimum of 250-300 completed surveys by targeted respondents.

Case Study Component

The case studies will be collected by the SNCR Fellows via in-depth interviews, using a discussion guide and will be recorded, transcribed, analyzed/edited and used throughout the project output to illustrate specific points, describe situations and outcomes. The case studies will appear as independent content within the project output and will be presented as podcasts sponsored by SNCR/WAA when possible.

Project Timeline

- January/February – Determine team of SNCR Research Fellows and WAA members; finalize methodology and develop study
- April – Focus group event held at NewComm Forum – with sponsorship/participation by SNCR and WAA
- May/June - Case study development and collection
- July/August - Survey
- September/October - Collect and begin analysis of final data
- November 2009 – ½-day workshop of full results at SNCR Research Symposium, with sponsorship/participation by WAA and vendor sponsors
- December 2009 – Webinar & final report and paper in the *Journal of New Communications Research*

Benefits to Partners/Sponsors

Working with the Society for New Communications Research will provide partners and sponsors with the following benefits:

- Sponsorship acknowledgement on the research project: “Social Media Metrics & Measurement: New Standards & Best Practices” (featured logo and sponsor company description)
- Access to all research findings and to the SNCR Research Fellows’ expertise and analysis
- Survey results and analysis
- Case studies and analysis
- Sponsorship of in-depth research paper with recommendations published jointly by the SNCR and WAA
- Sponsorship of podcasts of case study interviews (presented by SNCR & WAA)
- Sponsorship of *Journal of New Communications Research*
- Joint press releases re: study
- Sponsorship of the SNCR Research Symposium and workshop where results will be presented
- Sponsorship of the presentation of the research via a branded webinar
- Complimentary registrations to the annual SNCR Research Symposium & Awards Gala
- Discounts on the SNCR Symposium & Awards Gala for all sponsors’ employees
- Extensive media coverage and thought leadership enhancement

Cost per sponsor: \$5,000. (Maximum 5 sponsors)

Exclusive sponsorship: \$25,000.

For more information, contact:

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