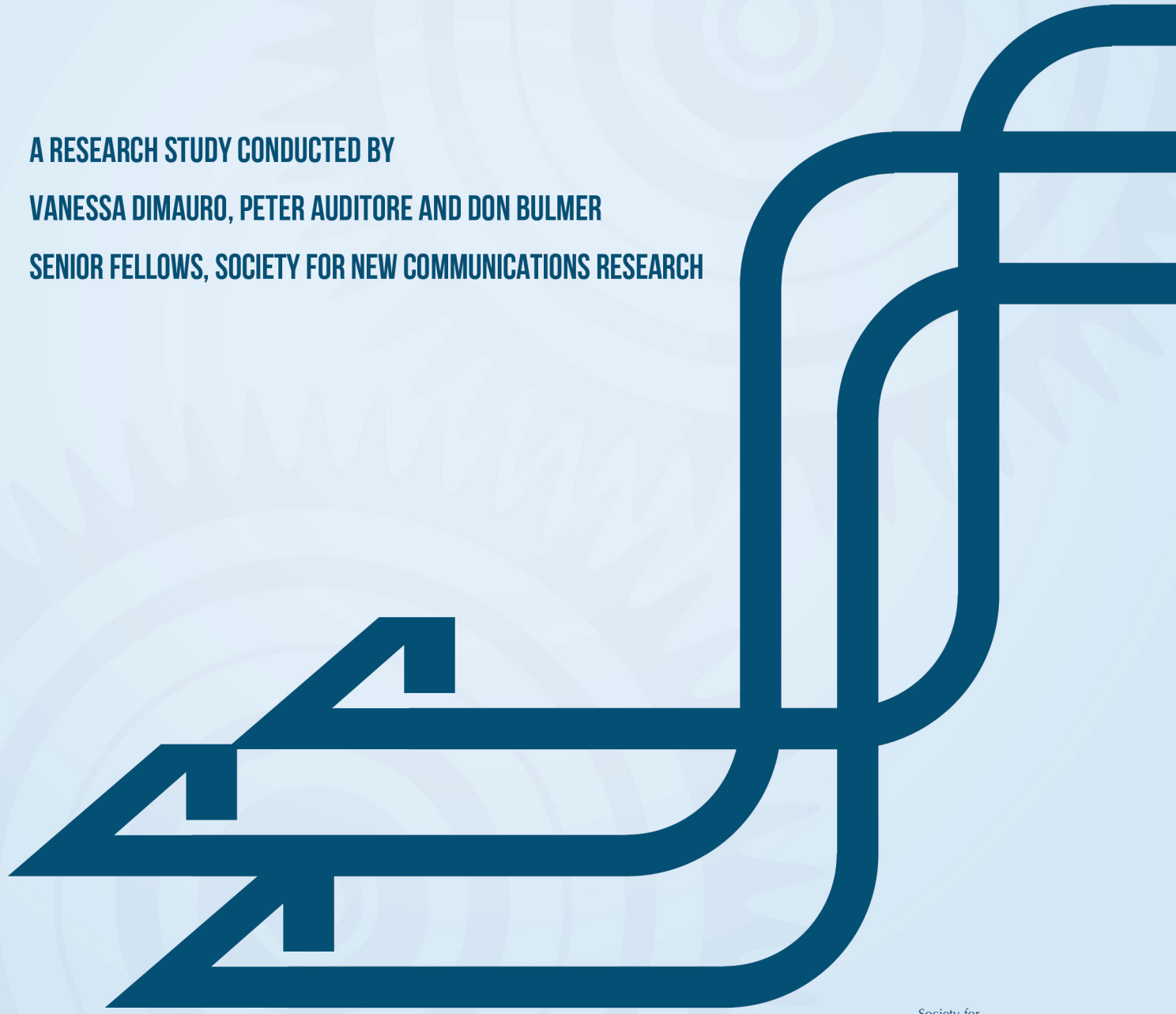


# THE SOCIAL MIND

A RESEARCH STUDY CONDUCTED BY

VANESSA DIMAURO, PETER AUDITORE AND DON BULMER

SENIOR FELLOWS, SOCIETY FOR NEW COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH



Society for  
New Communications Research



## THE SOCIAL MIND

Social networking is changing the face of human interaction and communications globally with the emergence of new social behaviours. Interrelationships between individuals, organizations, thought leaders and influencers are evolving in new and previously unforeseen ways thanks to the advent of social media networks and peer groups. This paradigm shift represents a major communications innovation in all markets, and is radically changing the way people and organizations engage and behave online. There is also a strong link between social networking and what might be called “a new global anthropology” that is developing because of these new behaviours, interactions and interrelationships between cultures enabled through social media.

The advent of Web 2.0 and social media networks has created a dynamic and friendly human-machine user interface that greatly facilitates collaboration; information sharing and influence flow in ways never seen before. Our communication and interactions in social media environments are now part of our daily lives, and are accessible on nearly any device including our TVs. Information, human interaction, interrelationships and most importantly influence now flow at the speed of the Internet with the only limitations time zones. Even language differences are somewhat mitigated through the translation services built into many browsers. Due to the ubiquity of global communications, all people now have instant access to information anytime, anywhere. Consequently, nearly all business, organizations and companies will be severely challenged to become transparent in this new communications paradigm enabled by social media.

The Social Mind research project was conducted by Society of New Communications Research (SNCR) Fellows, and was designed to explore and understand interrelationships of global communications and how they impact the consumption of information across social media channels and influence flow. Social Mind findings will enable B2B, B2P, B2C or cause marketers to understand the importance and relevance of content - and - its ultimate impact and influence on behaviours, beliefs, decisions and actions.

The Social Mind research identifies key characteristics and insights into the engagement behaviours of influencers and individuals, and how organizations can maximize reach and influence to execute on what we call the new Principals of Engagement in the Millennium. This research is part of a 3-year on-going study on social communications and influence. The New Symbiosis of Professional Networks research conducted three years ago, (2009), identified what we called a Social Media Peer Group, (SMPG) this is essentially a Web 2.0 community of interest around a specific topic and/or business in the course of this treatise we will refer to them as Social Media Networks (SMNs). SMNs, are not always groups of peers, but are enabled by the new social media human computer interfaces and platforms that facilitate easier information sharing and collaboration. And the second New Symbiosis of Professional Networks study (2010) honed in on the changing role of the online influencer and formatively noted the rise of the “crescendo effect” where content creation and curation was being used as credibility builder in online environments.

It is in this third study that the authors endeavour to bring the findings gathered in the midst of the social media tsunami (2009-2012) into a set of actionable outcomes to help communications professionals better understand how to maximize social media to talk to and with their audience more effectively.

## ABSTRACT AND KEY FINDINGS OF THE SOCIAL MIND

Social Media Networks have evolved into trusted expert networks that are testing the trust that people have in more traditional news and information sources. This is a huge shift in information and influence flow as nearly 65% of the sample base indicated that SMNs and professional networks are more trust worthy than traditional news and information aggregators. The Social Mind research study clearly defines the characteristics and behaviour of social media influencers within social media networks that impact the brand, reputation and potentially the sale of products.

## THERE IS A SHIFT IN INFORMATION FLOW

- The role of the expert is rising in importance on the social sphere.
- And the need for expert content is high among content consumers.
- Journalists are no longer considered the most authoritative sources for information, and traditional media is just a leader to let people know what they need to self-educate about on their own.
- Instead, content consumers find greater value in curated content from experts in order to discover the information they need.

## SOCIAL GETS SERIOUS

- People with expertise are using content as a means to elevate their personal brand.
- People with expertise are directly associating themselves with the information they share.
- The trust factor is built on a content association/affiliation.
- People with expertise are taking their endorsements more seriously than ever before and need to believe in the information in order to share it broadly.
- All this leads to boundaries of consequence and social identities to show value. Experts use their relationships with content to craft their personas online (and off).
- We now see a clear separation of an individual's online "persona" and how they use social media to manage relationships. The emergence of the professional me, the personal me, the friend me and the consumer me reflects human behaviour that is driving the evolution of social media engagement (e.g. G+ circles and Facebook lists)

There are some consistent **characteristics of the Social Mind**: Educated, has influence, care about information they share, expert in a specific subject matter, informed about their topic and the world, and tend to follow through on how their content is being consumed. They are ultimately community participants through the social channel and relate to people and information via content.

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS:

We define a social media influencer as one who self-reported as active user of social media channels and a social content creator.

- They are experts.
- Informed.
- Trusted.
- Educators.
- Engage and care about the information they share.

Organizations that are social media savvy will recognize the value and enhancements that can be derived in the areas of customer service, CRM and customer experience through social media networks. This is becoming a significant competitive advantage as social media networks evolve and grow.

Professionals spend 40% of their time online in professional networks closely followed by friends (31%) and then family at (13%). The majority of the sample base are highly educated Americans with a BS. And nearly 50% regularly create content through blogging, the other half engage and share/create content in Social Media Networks.

Twitter and blogs are equally important as the company or organizational website which ranked 2nd in importance to Twitter. This in contrast to research from just three years ago where a majority of respondents indicated that websites were the most important source for information, followed in close second by social media channels.

- Twitter emerged as the most important social network for professional interaction.
- Facebook was the friend network.
- Email was indicated and the preferred channel network for family.

## SOCIAL NETWORK BEHAVIOR

- 65% participate to engage with a professional community of colleagues and peers, enter the Social Media Network.
- 80% participate in groups online to help others by sharing information, ideas and experiences.

## SAMPLE BASE & DEMOGRAPHICS

- The majority of the sample base are highly educated Americans with at least a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree.
- Nearly 50% of those create content through blogging, the other half of the sample base engage and create content in social media networks.

## SYNOPSIS OF QUESTION FLOW

***Questions (1-5) Focus on online information exchange and participation in communities:***

- With whom it is exchanged.
- How respondents spent their time online.
- Why they participate in groups online.
- And which online information sources are the most meaningful.

***Questions (6-13.) Examine reasons for participating in Social Media Networks, preferred channels, content format and type.***

***Questions (14-16.) Profile motivations, behaviour and frequency of content sharing.***

***Questions (17-21.) Examines content creation, type of content created, content creator behaviour and engagement in Social Media Networks and primary reasons for creating online content.***

***Questions (22-30) Are primarily demographic in nature.***

*All respondents to the survey were volunteers, and did not receive any compensation for participation. The primary channel for survey distribution were email, twitter, blogging and social media promotions.*

## FINDINGS

### **Question (1.) Use of Social Media Networks & Information Exchange**

Nearly 100% of survey respondents indicated that they use online networks and share information and ideas online with others. This is not too surprising as the majority of survey respondents were gathered via online channels (email, Twitter, blogs, and social networks such as LinkedIn and Facebook).

People are just beginning to adapt to online networking / multiple channels and multiple points of interact.

### **Question (2.) Who do you Exchange Online Information With?**

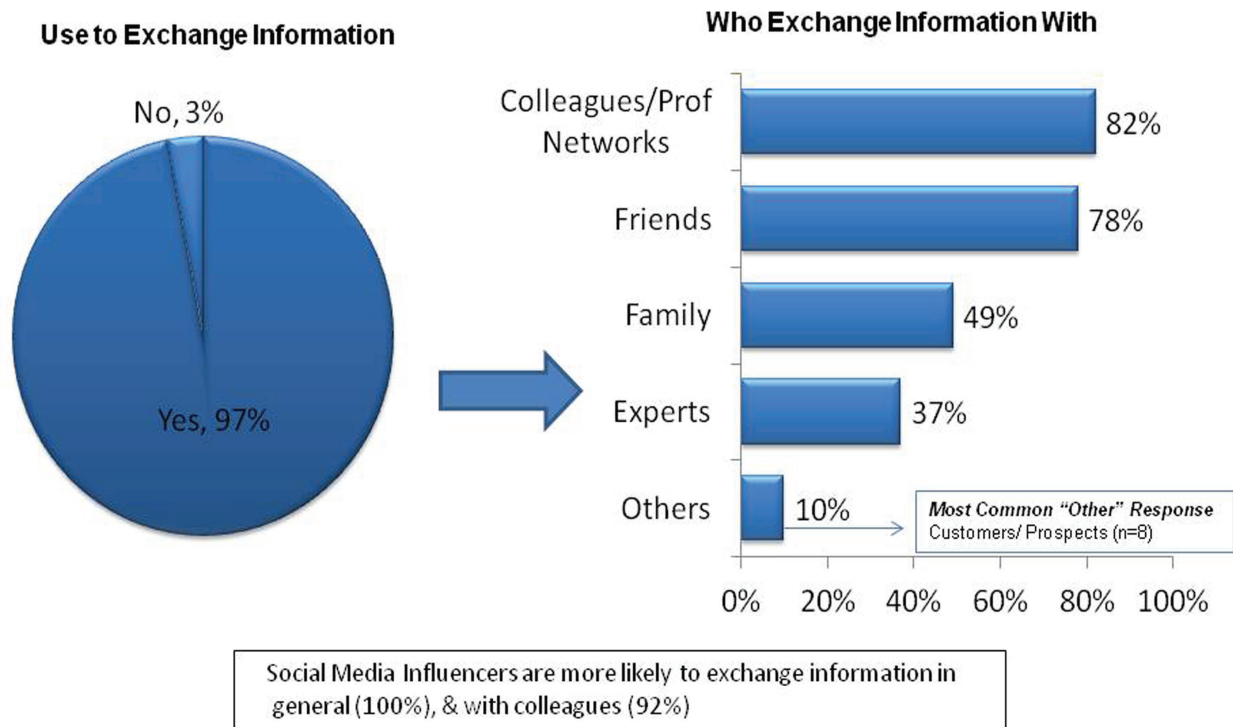
Information exchange is primarily with:

- Friends (78%)
- Professional networks (82%)
- Family (49%)
- Experts (37%)

Interesting here is that there is a clear distinction in how people use social media to engage specific online relationships. The emergence of personas that we call “professional me,” “family me,” “friend me,” and “consumer me” reflect human behaviour that is driving the evolution of social media engagement.

This is consistent with trends being driven by Google+ and Facebook allowing people to separate relationships via Circles and Lists respectively.

## Online Social Networking Is Reaching Critical Mass



**Question:** Do you use your online networks to exchange information and ideas with others?

**Question:** Who do you exchange information and ideas with online most frequently? (select all that apply)

The separation of an individual's persona is an important phenomenon for marketers and communicators to understand. They now must seek to understand what motivates and drives the social behaviour of an individual as professional, a friend, a family person and a consumer, to connect to them as an advocate or an influencer. There is a difference between an advocate and an influencer as someone may be knowledgeable and credible about a topic but not self-identify as an influencer. This relates to an individual's interests and needs in each persona and is critical for organizations and companies to exploit and use social media expert content in building and maintaining engaged communities to build advocacy and to sell products and services and aggregate influencers.

**PEOPLE SPEND 700 BILLION MINUTES  
PER MONTH ON FACEBOOK**

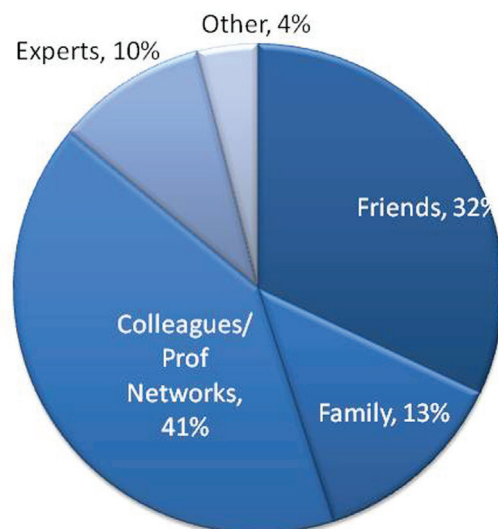
### ***Question (3.) Time Spent in Social Media Networks***

The majority of time that respondents spend online is with colleagues in professional networks (41%), followed by friends, family and experts. Just over three quarters of respondents participate in groups and communities online in order to help others by sharing information, ideas and experiences. Two thirds do so to participate in a professional community of colleagues and peers.

Another interesting insight here is how respondents use social and online channels to manage and engage relationships. There is a notion that social media has made communication more scalable and "easy" but in doing so has made it less personal. In doing so, social media has allowed people to establish more relationships that are weak and made strong relationships weaker. This in fact may be the reason why respondents use email as a preferred channel to communicate with family members as email is now a much more personal form of communication.

### **Colleagues and Friends Dominate Social Network Use**

- They spend an average of 40% of their time online with colleagues, and a third with friends



Those who do not create online content spend more of their time online with family (16%)

**Question:** Among the people you are connected to online, how do you typically spend your time online? Percent of Time

Again the most frequently mentioned other category was customers, prospects, and clients. Organizations that are social media savvy recognizing the customer service, CRM and customer experience enhancements and value they can add through social media networks. This is becoming a significant competitive advantage as social media networks evolve and grow.

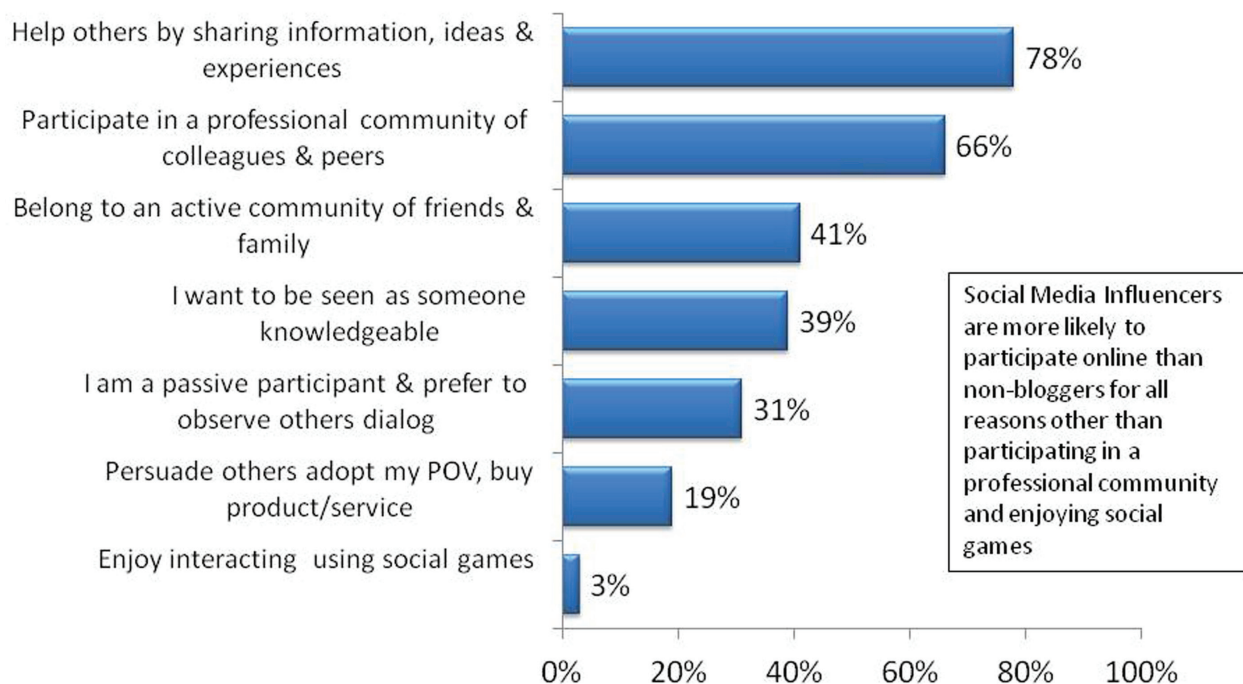
#### ***Question (4.) Reasons for Participating in Social Media Networks***

Nearly 80% of respondents indicated they participate in online groups to help others by sharing information and experiences, and (66%) participate in a professional community of colleagues and peers. (41%) participate in groups to be seen as someone knowledgeable, or belong to an active community of friends and family.

Only (19%) currently are trying to persuade others to adopt their point of view or buy a product of service and barely (3%) enjoy interacting with others using social games.

In combination with the previous question (Q3) this shows that social media has become a “learning” and “experiential” channel used primarily to manage, develop and gain value from professional and loosely mapped personal relationships. This also confirms data from Facebook that indicates over 300,000 users helped translate Facebook into 70 languages. One could surmise that such a large number of people wouldn’t have taken this action, if it were not a powerful channel to communicate.

### **People Participate Online To Help Others & Be Part of a Community**



**Question:** Why do you participate in groups and communities online? *Select the top three responses*

### Question (5.) Importance of Digital & Social Media Channels

Twitter and blogs have become just as important as the company or organizational website for information and influence.

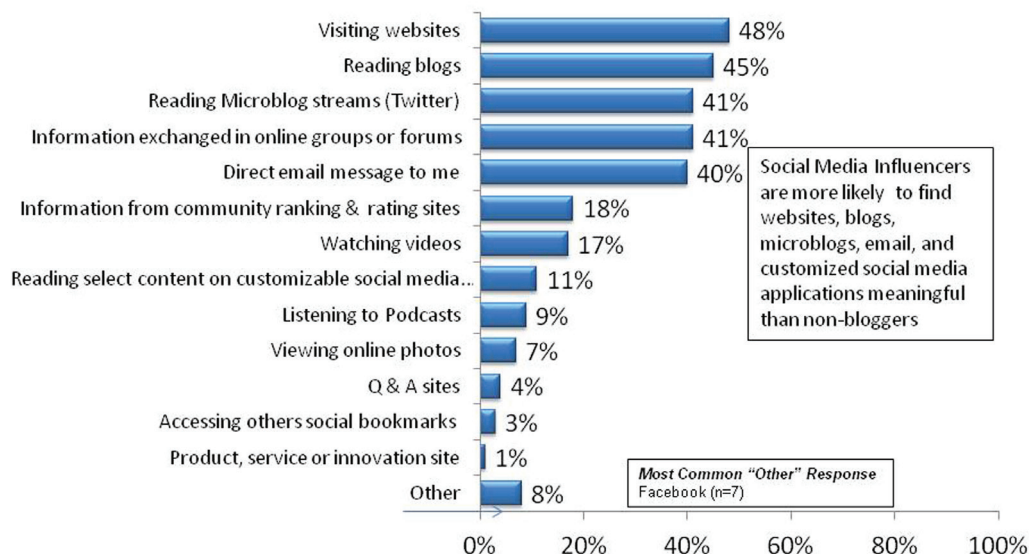
Close to half of respondents who exchange information with others find visiting websites and reading blogs meaningful. Product, service, or innovation activity sites, accessing other's bookmarks and Q&A sites were considered least meaningful.

Nearly (50%) of respondents indicated the visiting company websites was most meaningful, (45%) read blogs and this was closely followed by micro-blogging (41%), direct email (40%) and (41%) information exchange in online groups or forums. Considering that we are highly visual creatures in a visual society, watching videos (17%), listening to podcasts (9%) and viewing online photos (7%) was not significantly meaningful, however this may be a direct reflection of the professional sample base.

This is also an interesting contrast considering the massive number of photos and videos uploaded to social media channels on a daily/monthly basis.

This shift from Websites and controlled communications has disintermediated many long-standing marketing, communications and selling beliefs that have traditionally guided how companies interact, support and collaborate with their customers. We now work in an environment where companies have diminished control over the reputation of their brands, products and services as the wisdom of crowds increasingly dictate the rules of reputation management and selling. Through the use of social media, customers and prospects now have an almost instantaneous platform for discussion of their ideas, experiences and knowledge. The social nature of learning and decision-making has increased with impressive strength connecting generations of professionals to each other - changing the dynamics of customer relationship management, marketing and communications, forever.

### Online Networks Are Disrupting Traditional Channels



Question: What online information sources are the most meaningful to you? Select the top three responses

### ***Question (6.) Reasons for Participating in Social Media Networks & Question (7.) Preferred Information Channels***

Nearly all of the respondents indicated that they participate in SMNs for educational purposes and to learn about topics. This demonstrates the growing importance of SMNs as knowledge and educational platforms where experts exhibit their knowledge and question 7 reinforces the importance of experts and influence flow in SMNs.

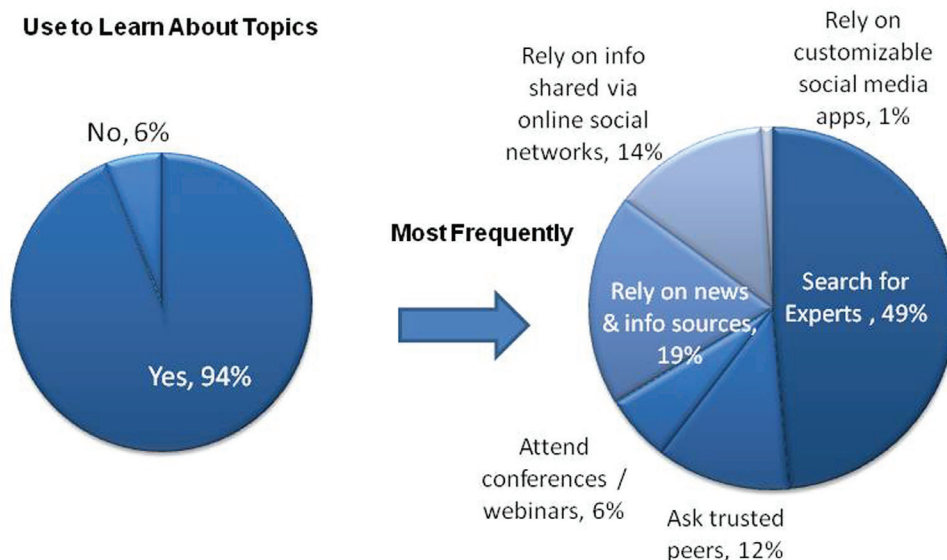
Searching for experts to see what ideas they have shared online is the most frequent activity for about half of those who use online networks to learn about topics. SMNs are rapidly evolving as the “new word of mouth marketing arenas” in the millennium and this is especially important for B2C and B2B companies who are selling products and services. Before the advent of the Internet, word of mouth marketing amongst peers was primarily done through traditional channels of influence, trade shows, conferences, forums and traditional media outlets.

More than nine in ten respondents who use online networks to learn about topics seek expert opinion that is researched and well documented. Most also agree that they need to hear the details to understand what is happening.

The most important insight here is that only 19% of respondents rely on traditional news and information sources, this represents a massive shift in information flow. Additionally, only 6% indicated they currently attend conferences to be educated, again a massive shift away from traditional information sources especially for this highly educated sample base.

50% of respondents look for experts on topics in the SMNs, only (12%) rely on trusted peers, while (14%) consume information social networks such as Twitter and Facebook. We suspect that in many scenarios the influencer’s ecosystem of influence may begin with Twitter and lead back to a SMN where expert information is exchanged in a more collaborative environment.

### **Most Participate Online To Learn From Experts**



Social Media Influencers are more likely to use online networks to learn about topics (98%)

### Question (8.) Preferred Information Channels

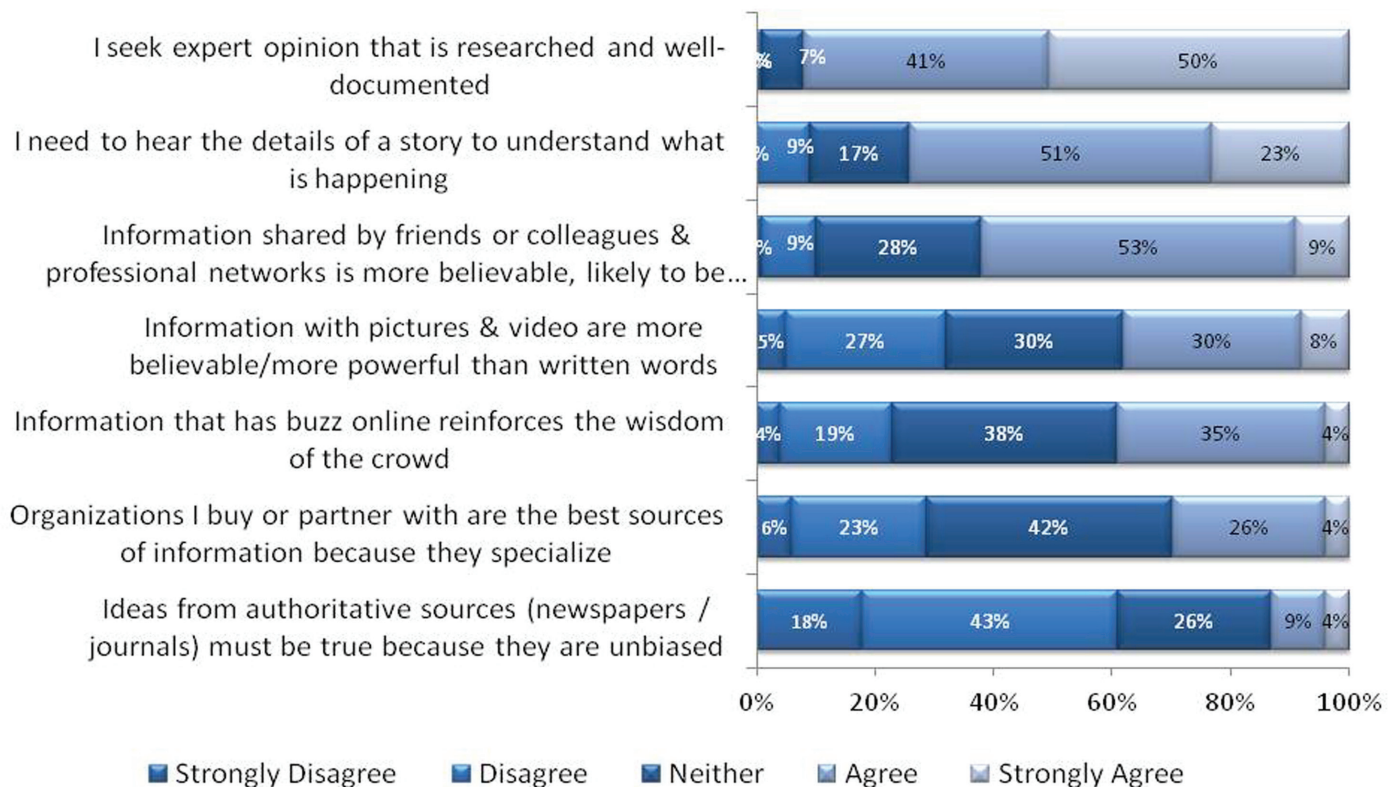
More than six in ten of those who use online networks to learn about topics prefer information that uses graphics and prefer curated content sources with links and bookmarks. Less than a quarter prefer online information to be audio and/or visual over text-based.

The shift towards SMNs and expert networks is even more apparent here as nearly two thirds of the sample base indicated that traditional news sources are not necessarily true and are biased. A significant number of respondents indicated that information sources shared by friends, colleagues and professional networks, (SMNs) are more believable and likely to be true.

Respondents indicated that “wisdom of the crowd” was less important than experts, more than 100 respondents were neutral on this question’s parameter. Again, this may be reflective of the highly educated sample base and not representative of all social media consumers and participants.

This indicates that people are using social media to seek purity of truth with facts supported by and validated by experts and trusted relationships in their social networks. Journalism is not a considered single source of truth / exclusive authoritative sources; instead they are a single point of input into the larger self-education approach.

## Online Learners Trust Traditional Media Less, Look To Validate Information Independently



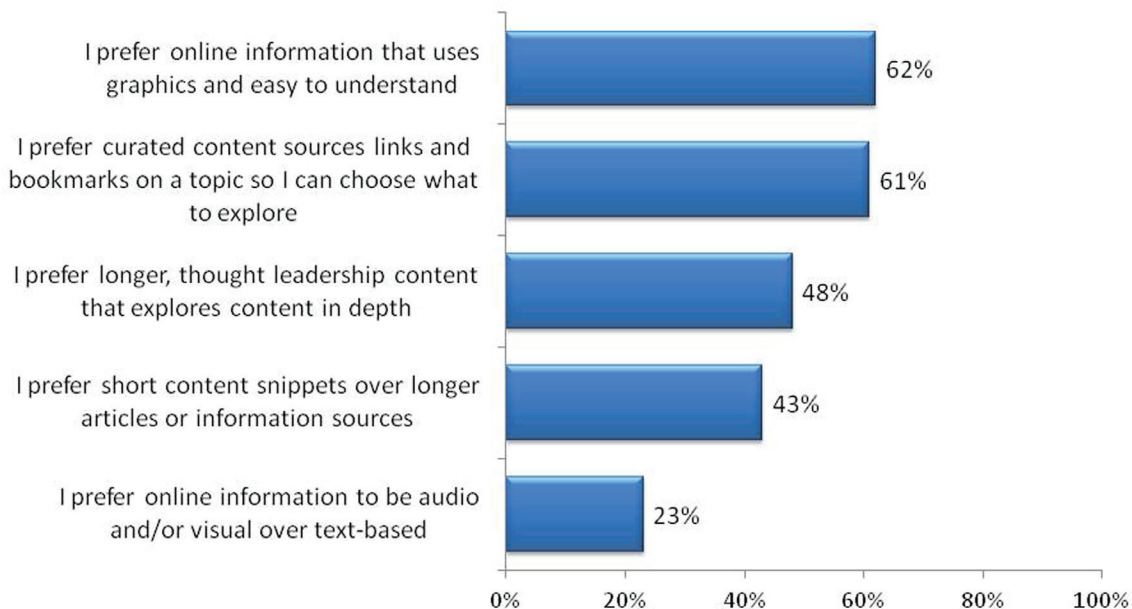
### Question (9.) Preferred Content Format

The majority of respondents (62%) indicated that they prefer information that uses graphics and is easy to understand and prefer curated content with bookmarks and links to additional resources (61%). Nearly 50% desired longer in depth expert content, however, 43% prefer short snippets over longer information articles and surprisingly only (23%) prefer audio or video based content.

Social Media Networks represent a new form of information and content aggregation that is enabling a major shift in information flow, facilitated by the rising role of experts or a body of experts such as a practitioner community and the a new dynamics in influence. The overall need for expert content in all markets is high along with content aggregation/curation and the need to self educate.

Often is the case that communication and marketing professionals must translate complex messages in simple and easy to understand communication. The nature of social media makes this both increasingly difficult and necessary to do in 140 characters or short form video and visuals. People will spend more time understating the complexity of information if presented in compelling visual form. Gone are the days that the general public spend a significant time reading long-form, content rich documents and reports. They want nearly instant gratification of information presented in the way that they use new mediums of social media and mobile provide. It could be argued that social requires communicators to be more judicious with their ideas as there are word constraints either imposed (Twitter) or perceived (blog). This can require greater clarity of thought, as outstanding content is more highly valued by the social community.

### Online Information That Is Well Organized Or Curated Is Preferred



Question: What kind of online information do you prefer? Select up to three

**Question (10.) Preferred Content Type and  
Question (11.) Types Of Information Shared**

Nearly all respondents indicated that they share information online and in Question 11 we elaborate on what type of information is shared. In this question we asked what type of information is shared. Almost all respondents share information online. More than six in ten of those who do, share educational information and among those that share information online, social media influencers report that they share information 100% of the time.

Educational information was by far the most frequently shared (61%), remotely followed by entertaining (15%) and supportive information (13%). Only five percent of respondents indicated that controversial information was most likely to be shared online.

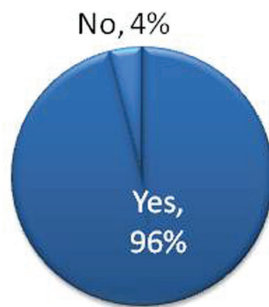
The other category further reinforced the focus of sharing educational information with preferences toward professional, informative, relevant, factual and interesting information.

The net/net here is that for this sample base is that social media participation is getting serious and represents a platform for endorsement, education and professional interaction, as the need for relational context that is validated by trusted sources of high importance.

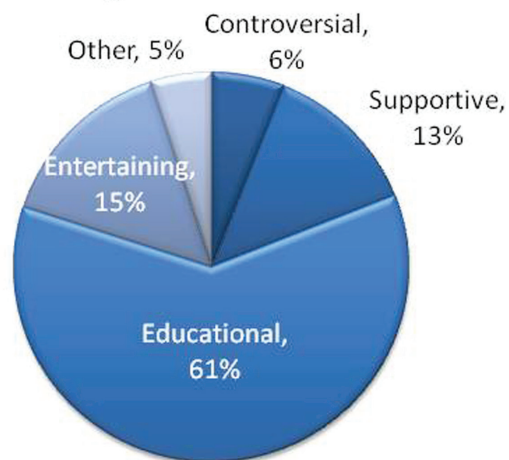
**WIKIPEDIA HOSTS 17 MILLION  
ARTICLES AND HAS MORE THAN  
91,000 CONTRIBUTORS**

**Online Network Users Are Driven To Discover Educational Information**

**Share Information Online**



**Type of Information Shared**



Social Media Influencers are more likely to share information online (100%)

**Question:** Do you share information with others online?

**Question:** What kind of information are you most likely to share online? *Select One*

### ***Question (12.) A separation of Persona and Channel***

In this question we explored channel preference. There is notable variation in channel usage by relationship type and persona. Respondents are most likely to email family and colleagues, while they are most likely to use social networks with friends. Few respondents use social bookmarking, online photo sharing, or video messaging. This is consistent with the earlier observation that social media has made communication more scalable and “easy” but in doing so has made it less personal. In doing so, social media has allowed people to establish more relationships that are weak and made strong relationships weaker.

This in fact may be the reason why respondents use email as a preferred channel to communicate with family members as email is now a much more personal form of communication.

Facebook was the preferred SMN for friend interaction, such as Twitter for professional networks and traditional email was the preferred channel for family. Twitter was indicated as a significant channel for following experts, however, sharing photos, social bookmarking, and video messaging ranked extremely low, again this may be a specific attribute of this sample base. Social media channels overall ranked as the number one vehicle for information exchange followed by email, and then twitter ranking third.

### **Relationships Dictate The Chosen Online Channel For Connecting**

	Direct email	Instant/ Text Message	Send a Web Page via email	Micro-blogging	Social Net-working	Social Book-marking	Online Photo Sharing	Video Messag-ing
Friends (n=332)	22%	12%	5%	5%	55%	1%	0%	0%
Family (n=284)	39%	19%	4%	1%	30%	0%	2%	5%
Colleagues/ Professional Networks (n=331)	31%	2%	11%	28%	25%	2%	0%	2%
Experts (n=212)	19%	1%	5%	45%	26%	4%	0%	0%
Other (n=48)	15%	0%	6%	25%	50%	2%	0%	2%

Social Media Influencers are more likely to microblog and social network with Colleagues/ Professional Networks and less likely to email with Colleagues/ Professional Networks than are non-bloggers

**Question:** Among those who you share information with online, what channels do you most frequently use? [select one per type of person]

### ***Question (13.) The Importance of Agreeability***

We wanted to explore what type of information was being shared with others and (46%) of the sample base indicated that they share information on a contextual basis, deciding who should receive specific information.

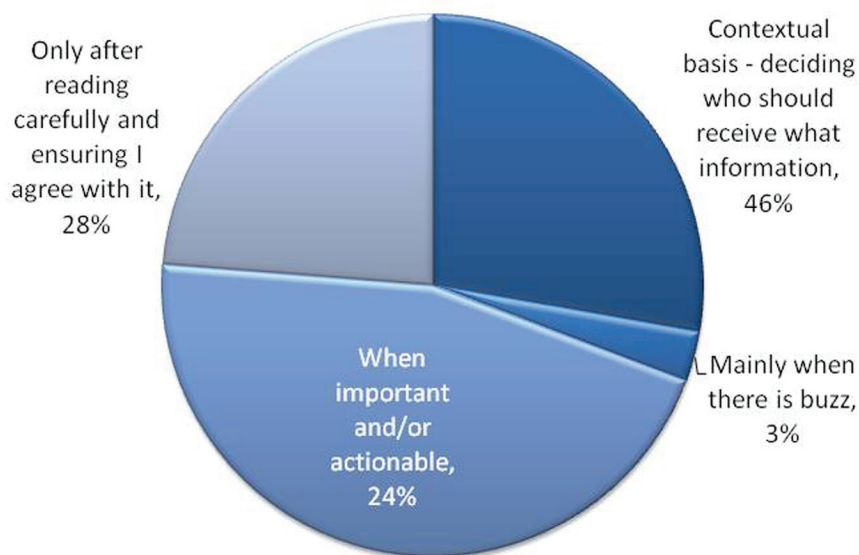
Half also state that the content they share reinforces their personal or professional knowledge and beliefs. One quarter of the sample base (24%) indicated that they share information when it is important and actionable, but more importantly (28%) share information only after consuming it and agreeing with it. Few respondents indicated that they share “buzz” information, this again may be a reflection of a highly educated social media “savvy” sample base.

Simply stated, people associate themselves to the information they share and in doing so they take care to understand before endorsing. People are mindful of their online or social identity and take care in what they share. This makes a “Like,” a “retweet” or a comment a powerful currency of influence in social media.

**MORE THAN 2.5 MILLION  
WEBSITES HAVE INTEGRATED  
WITH FACEBOOK**

## **Online Networkers Mainly Share Information They Agree With**

**When Are You Most Likely To Share Information Online**



**Question:** When are you most likely to share or forward information with others online?

### ***Question (14.) Motivations for Sharing Information***

In this question we wanted to explore motivations for sharing information in SMNs, and more than (50%) of respondents indicated that they share content that reinforces their personal and professional knowledge and beliefs.

Equally important were sharing of information that influencers thought colleagues in a SMN would want to hear (44%), information that influencers could intellectually understand (43%), and information that challenges the status quo or provokes thought. Only 28% of the sample base share content that they can relate to on an emotional level.

This question along with the profiling in other questions provides some unique insights into the persona, characteristics and motivations of professional social media influencers.

Casual, social, formal or personal – the connections that people make start with how they relate to one another or to a cause, an issue, a belief, a principle or even to a company.

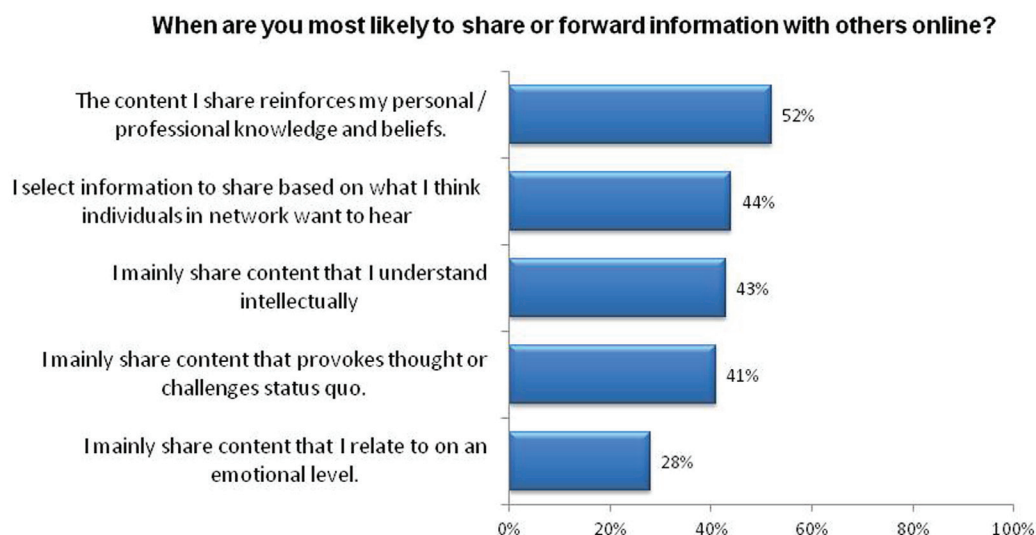
Capturing and sustaining attention and engagement requires having a keen understanding of what people care about. With an understanding of what people care about (i.e. your desired audience) and how to relate to them, then true and meaningful engagement can take place.

The ability to relate is a core principle in the art and science of influence that holds true in business, personal and political environments. It sets the tone for building trust and engagement. This is reinforced in the findings of question 15.

#### ***Key Characteristics of Social Media Influencers:***

- They are experts.
- Informed.
- Trusted.
- Educators.
- Engage and care about the information they share.

### **Context Matters With Online Sharing: People Pass On Information They Believe In**



### Question (15.) Content Sharing Behaviour

Most respondents think that their audience is generally informed, and they most frequently share information to deepen the discussion or enhance relationships. Close to half share information “frequently” online, while another one in ten respondents share it as widely as possible.

Smaller percentages of respondents indicated that they need information about topics important to them and that they share information about (16%), and (12%) share information to enhance brand awareness for business development.

Net/Net, social media influencers who represent a large sample size within this study consume huge amounts of information and content to stay informed and maintain their expertise to enhance relationships.

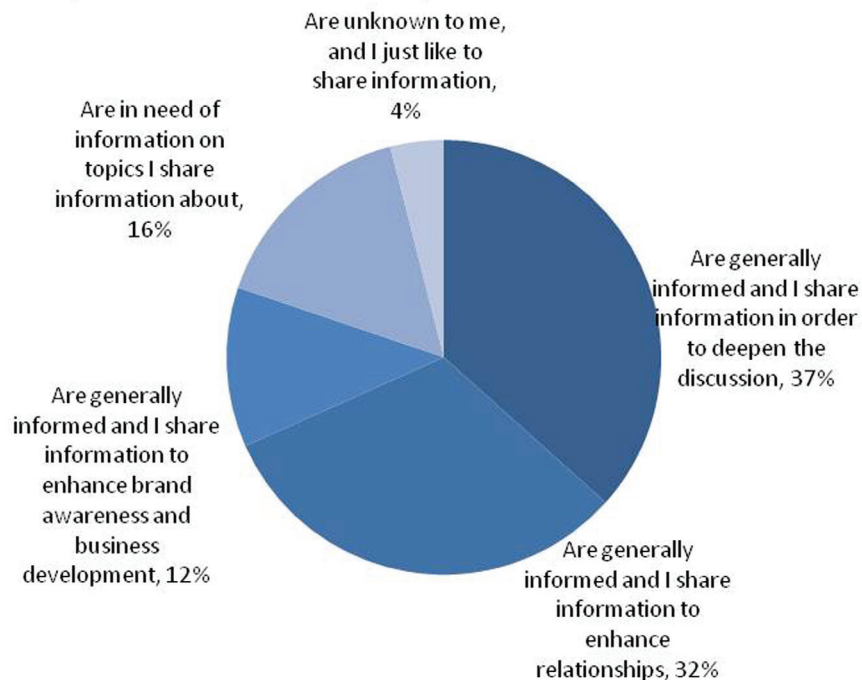
There is a great opportunity for companies and organizations to enhance brand awareness, reputation and conduct business development activities with SMN in the coming years.

People relate to each other based on the information or interests they share. This is at the core of social networks (online and offline) that connect people. Building advocacy for your company’s products and services or to a cause can be powerful when you cultivate and relate to the right audience. *This is where social media is a game-changer its now increasingly easy to find an established audience for nearly any issue or cause.*

**30 BILLION PIECES  
OF CONTENT ARE SHARED ON  
FACEBOOK EACH MONTH**

## Content Sharing Is A Means To Deepening Relationships

**The following statement best reflects my content sharing behavior. I believe my online networks (readers of the content I share)...**



### ***Question (16.) Frequency of Content Sharing Behaviour***

The majority of respondents indicated that they share content frequently and a slightly lesser number share sometimes.

Few rarely share and slightly more than share content widely. This indicates that social media professionals and participants are selective about how and when they share content, this indicates that SMNs are serious educational environments that deliver trustworthy, accurate and actionable content and information. While they have greater access and use of social media tools, they wield their use of them discretely. This data could support the notion that social media influencers actually use the social channel more judiciously than the casual user, and that they potentially understand the power of their social media content sharing activities as having impact on others.

**YOUTUBE FACTS:  
490 MILLION UNIQUE VISITORS  
EVERY MONTH**

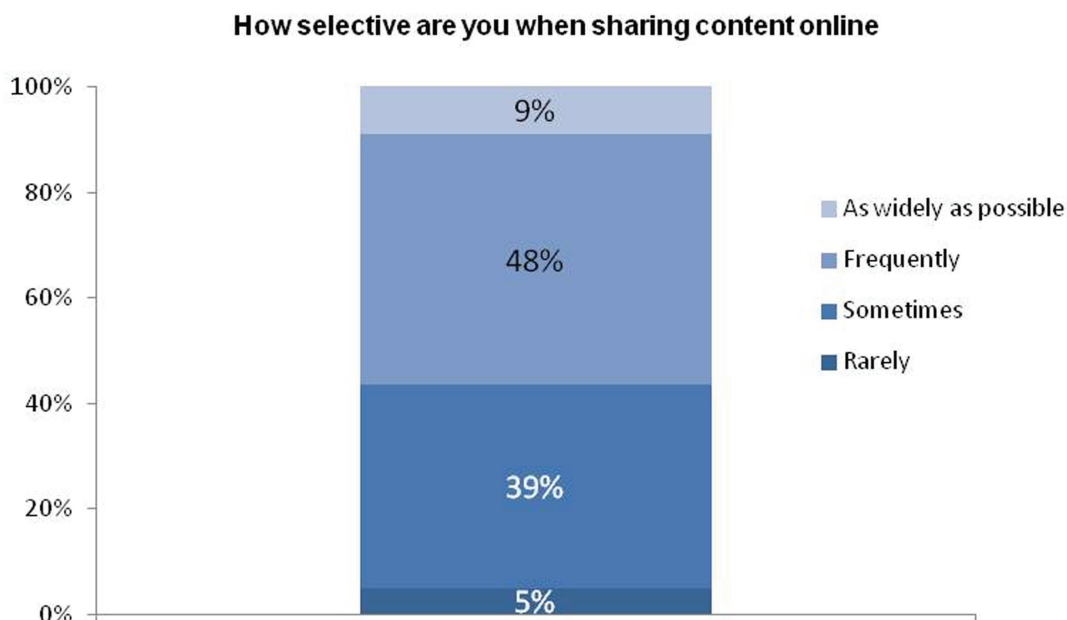
*(as of February 2011)*

**2.9 BILLION HOURS  
PER MONTH ON THE SITE  
(326,494 YEARS)**

**92 BILLION  
PAGE VIEWS PER MONTH**

*(not including YouTube videos viewed on phones  
and embedded in websites)*

## **Online Networkers Tend To Share Information Selectively**



**Social Media Influencers are more likely to share information frequently or “as widely as possible”**

### Question (17-18) Online Content Creation

The majority of respondents (73%) indicated that they create content online and only 27% of the sample base do not create online content. This is significant as people move from using social media to observe and monitor but using it to contribute and engage on important issues and topics.

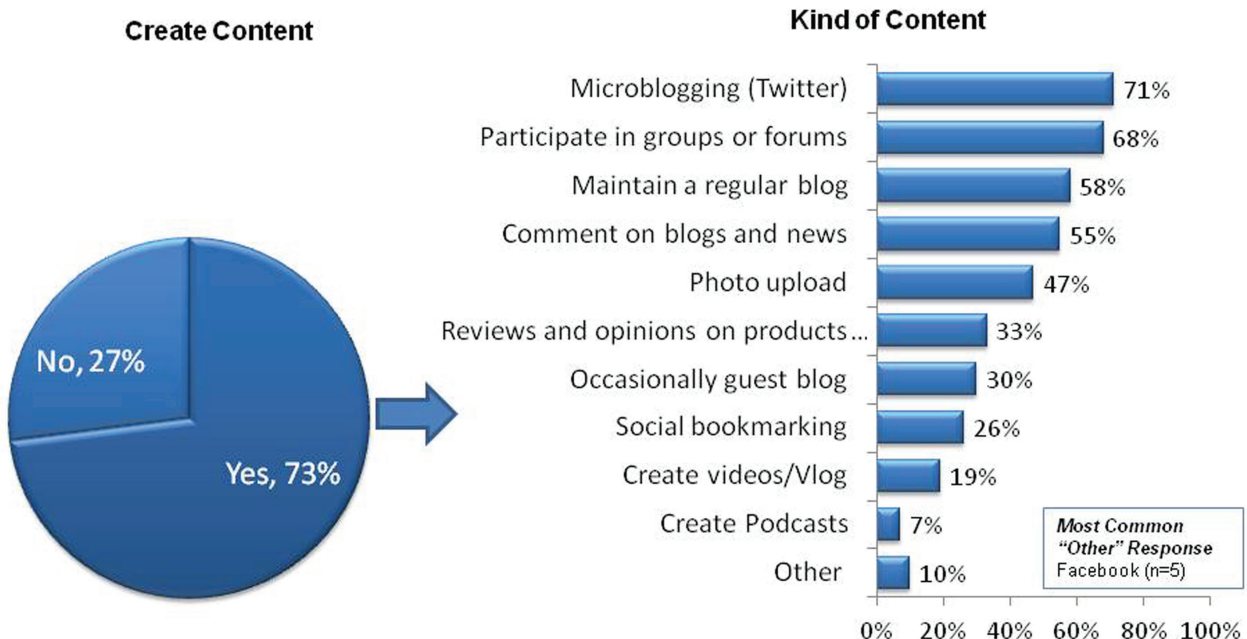
Approximately (71%) of the sample base engage in micro-blogging via Twitter. When asked what type of content or interaction they created online (68%) indicated that they participate in groups or forums, while (58%) maintain a regular blog and 30% occasionally guest blog. Again nearly half of the sample base could be considered social media professionals that blog. Just less than three quarters of respondents indicate that they create content online.

### Content Type Created Online

- 71% Tweet
- 68% Participate in groups
- 58% Maintain a regular blog
- 55% Comment on blogs
- 47% Upload Photos
- 33% Review opinions on products and services- Yelp
- 30% Occasionally guest blog
- 26% Use social book marking
- 19% Create videos & vlogs

It is notable that social media influencers are more likely to comment on blogs (65%), to engage in micro blogging activities (81%), and to create social bookmarks than non social media influencers.

## Tweeting and Online Community Participation Are The Most Common Content Creation Activities



Social Media Influencers are more likely to comment on blogs (65%), to microblog (81%), and to social bookmark (31%) those who do not regularly create content online

**Question:** Do you create content online?

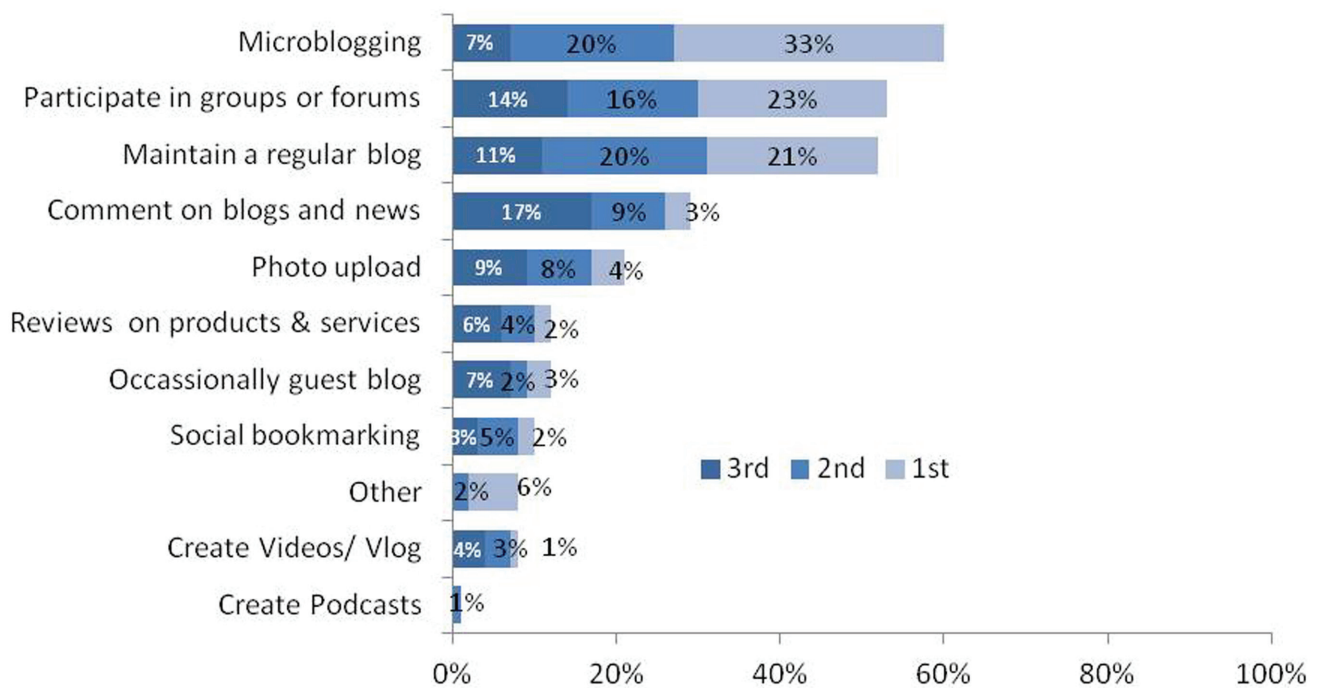
**Question:** What kin of content do you create? *Select all that apply*

### Question (19) Activity Around Content Created

Micro-blogging via Twitter ranked as the number one activity, closely followed by blogging, and participation in social networks, according the respondents to this survey. Commenting on blogs and news and uploading photos remotely followed this. Creating podcasts or video blogs rarely entered the top three activities among those who create content.

**TWITTER HANDLES 1.6 BILLION  
QUERIES AND ADDS NEARLY  
500,000 USERS EVERY DAY**

## Social Media Influencers Create & Share Content Across Channels



**Question:** From the content that you create, please rate the top three activities

**Question (20) Primary Reason for Creating Content Online**

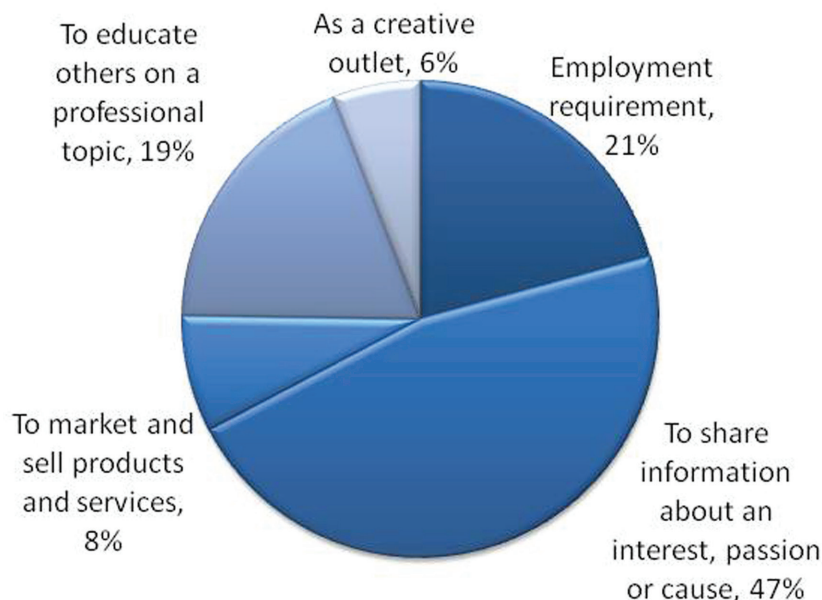
The majority of the sample base (47%) indicated that their primary reason for sharing information online is to share information about an interest, passion or cause. This is significant because people are organizing themselves to create change and influence using social media channels.

This was followed by educating others on a professional topic (19%), and as a requirement for employment/part of my job (21%). Only 8% indicated that they were marketing to sell products and services, and only a few respondents engaged social media networks as a creative outlet.

Again this would appear to be a great opportunity for organizations and companies to demonstrate “social media expert content” by blogging and creating content that demonstrates expertise. In the 1980s and 1990s this was called selling without hard selling with white papers and specific content like case studies and success stories with customers that demonstrate expertise.

**EACH FACEBOOK USER  
SPENDS ON AVERAGE  
15 HOURS AND 33 MINUTES  
A MONTH ON THE SITE**

**Content Creators Are Motivated To Share Information About Topics That Matter To Them**



**Question:** What is the primary reason why you create content online? *Select one*

***Question (21) After Sharing Content, Do you Assess How Content is Received?***

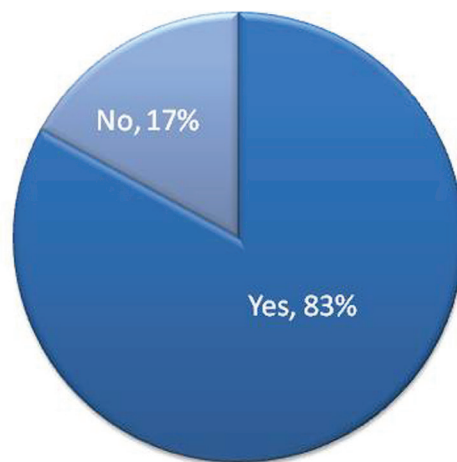
Nearly all respondents (83%) indicated that they assessed the content that they shared, how it was received, commented on and/or re-tweeted. And 88% of content creators - Social Media Influencers - follow the online content they create.

This again reinforces that Social Media Networks are serious communities in some cases dominated by subject and topic experts in their respective fields. This is an important characteristic in the evolution of a social media online society and in many ways a new social human behaviour. This represents an important characteristic of today's social media influencer, whom as an expert is rapidly gaining importance and influence.

These are indeed the new influencers of the millennium and identifying them and their “ecosystems of influence” will be important to all companies and organizations in the years ahead as social media networks begin the next stage of evolution beyond what see today. This communications paradigm shift will require new rules of engagement in the millennium as information shifts away from traditional channels of influence.

**FLICKR HOSTS OVER  
5 BILLION IMAGES  
3,000 IMAGES ARE UPLOADED  
EVERY MINUTE**

**Most Track The Reception Of The Content They Share**



88% of Social Media Influencers follow the content they create to see if it is well-received online

**Question:** After you share or create content online, do you follow whether the content is well received?

## SUMMARY

This paradigm shift in modern communications mandates a completely new set of principles for influencer engagement in the millennium. This means the end of what we have known as “propaganda communications” and many companies and organizations will be challenged to innovate their communications strategies and execution. Enter the era of the “sustainable engagement model,” perhaps the most important pillar of the principals of engagement that leads to meaningful relationships; not superficial episodic ones that are the history of past communications.

## NEW PRINCIPLES FOR INFLUENCER ENGAGEMENT IN THE MILLENNIUM

1. Identify all channels of influence traditional and social media including, books, speaking, blogs, micro-blogs, social media group membership, etc.
  2. Profile and understand the ecosystem of influence around influencers through their channels social and not social media driven.
  3. Evaluate the business models of influencers and strategize about how to engage with them in ways that are aligned with business initiatives.
  4. Create and maintain an influencer scorecard that can be leveraged and managed across products, services and regions by influencer type.
  5. Execute and maintain sustainable engagement models that leverage their expertise, thought leadership and influence.
- 

## ABOUT THE SOCIETY FOR NEW COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH

The Society for New Communications Research (SNCR) is a global nonprofit 501(c)(3) research and education foundation and think tank founded in 2005 to focus on the advanced study of the latest developments in new media and communications, and their effect on traditional media and business models, 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 a leading group of futurists, scholars, business leaders, professional communicators, members of the media and technologists from around the globe—all collaborating together on research initiatives, educational offerings, and the establishment of standards and best practices.

For more information:

Visit [sncr.org](http://sncr.org)

Call +1 (408) 825-9288

Email [info@sncr.org](mailto:info@sncr.org)

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### VANESSA DIMAURO

**Society of New Communications Research Senior Fellow and Research Co-chair and CEO of Leader Networks**

Vanessa DiMauro is a popular speaker, researcher and author. With more than 15 years of experience in social media leadership positions, she has founded and run leading online communities for CXO Systems, Cambridge Technology Partners and IDG, and has developed winning social strategies for influential companies such as Cisco, Cognizant, EMC, Palladium Group and SAP. Her work has been covered by leading publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *CIO Magazine*.

### PETER AUDITORE

**Society of New Communications Research Senior Fellow and Principal of Asterias Research**

Peter Auditore is currently the Principal Researcher at Asterias Research, a boutique consultancy focused on strategic and executable marketing communications for the millennium. Formerly Mr. Auditore was Head of SAP's Business Influencer Program. As a veteran of four technology start-ups including: Zone Research (Cofounder), Hummingbird (VP Marketing Americas), Survey.com (President) and Exigen Group, (VP Corporate Communications), Mr. Auditore has twenty years of experience in selling and marketing software to LE and SME organizations worldwide. A frequent speaker at industry conferences and tradeshow, Mr. Auditore has written many technology press articles and industry white papers.

### DON BULMER

**Society of New Communications Research Senior Fellow, Board Member and VP of Communication Strategy of Royal Dutch Shell**

Mr. Bulmer has more than 18 years of multi-national experience leading award-winning marketing, communication and business development programs with measurable effect in accelerating the sales and competitive strength of enterprise technology, Internet start-up and professional service companies.