

KILLER CREATIVE

Do anonymous comments hurt?

HOWIE DOES IT

CHE's boss outlines his plans

BIG SMALL

UM's unique positioning

AKQ&A

Ajaz Ahmed talks

**JUGGLING
ACT**

Roll up for the social
media circus



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THE SOCIAL CIRCUS

Social media is more prolific – and confusing – than ever before. Most of us have three, four or five online profiles that we juggle.

Lucy Clark asks whether it's worth it, and what 2013 will deliver to the social media circus



The social media scene is fast becoming a circus of platforms that we are all struggling to juggle.

Keeping up to date with your Facebook news feed is one thing. Having an active Twitter account is another. Maintaining your professional social self on LinkedIn is growing in importance. Not to mention Instagram-ing your photos, sharing and discovering new music and posting videos. There is a lot to keep up with.

Emerging platforms are fighting to out-do one another and be the next 'must have', while old favourites are battling to stay at the top of their game by introducing new tools and functions that we all 'need'.

It's a juggling act even the best clown would struggle to keep up in the air.

But with so many platforms to contend with, are consumers getting confused, overwhelmed, or even bored?

The ringmaster

Facebook is undoubtedly the social media ringleader. Since it launched in 2004, it has amassed more than one billion users. And, not willing to let our attention slip, it is about to »

launch its new search function, Graph Search (see page 19).

Brian Giesen, director of Social@Ogilvy, says: "In the last five years in Australia, there is one platform that stands out in terms of impact, and that's Facebook.

"A lot of people ask, 'is Australia behind in terms of brand savviness on social?'. Facebook is where we have almost leap-frogged other countries in terms of being addicted to it. It's the one platform that continues to be most important because of the sheer numbers of people using it.

"At the moment, the king is Facebook. It's still growing, and Graph Search is going to keep that momentum going."

But Facebook can't rest on its laurels.

Chris Bridgland, account director at WeAreSocial, warns: "Facebook has started to plateau, even decline in some places. Mums, dads and grandparents are active on Facebook, so younger people don't want to be on it. Graph Search will adapt how people use Facebook, turning it into more of a discovery network."

Brands and social

Where people go, advertisers must follow. So, social media is becoming more of a priority for brands every day.

Bridgland explains: "Brands are starting to realise the value of social media and, in the last year or so, have started to put budget behind it. That means it's turned into a really competitive space. But the great thing about social is that you don't have to put \$1m behind it."

Sharon Williams, chief executive of Taurus Marketing, agrees: "Social media is increasingly directing brand presence whether it's your own personal brand, company or product brand. It's becoming a must-have, rather than nice-to-have - even for B2B brands."

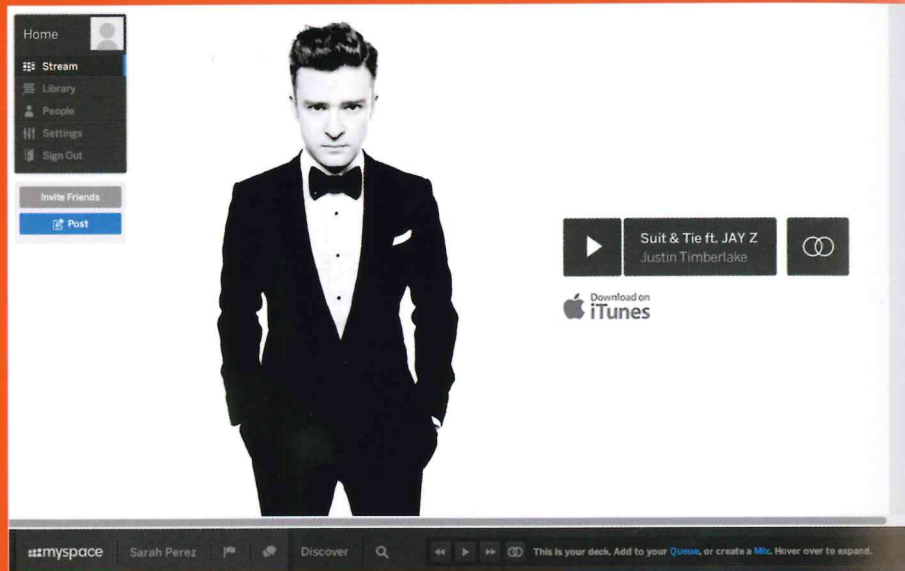
Social media is also at the heart of creating 'brand experiences'.

Nicola Swankie, social media director at Leo Burnett Sydney, says: "Last year, there was a lot of hype about every idea needing to be social, but we didn't see many of these types of ideas happen in Australia. I think we will see a shift this year. Every brief will have to be social. Advertising will be more about creating experiences or content that people actually want - following the likes of Red Bull."

But, of course, all this is irrelevant if the content is useless to the consumer. As Adam Vincenzini, head of social at Mango, outlines: "The content needs to be right. My concern is that brands think they can say what they want. But if the content does not add any value then it's futile. Content should be placed sparingly and be right for the platform, rather than just pushing a message."

Bridgland adds: "Content is still king. More and more brands will put budget behind social content that works.

"A lot of brands approach social as a channel, when it should be approached as a medium to



MYSPACE RE-LAUNCH

Myspace has come a long way since it first burst onto the emerging social media scene back in 2003. The music-centric site has completely reinvented itself in the past year.

Christian Parkes, marketing VP at Myspace said the site is now in an open beta, while it is vetted at features are built before the official launch.

Music is much more central to the new Myspace, with a player front-and-centre on the site. The site gives members an open canvas to populate with photos and designs. And it's designed to be simple.

Parkes explains: "We're trying to build something that doesn't exist in the marketplace today. Myspace has deep roots in music, but we're not a streaming service. Myspace has a social foundation that inherently drives connections, sharing and discovery. We believe that the new Myspace is well positioned to become a destination for people who create content and people who consume it."

Myspace is also putting a focus on artists.

"Myspace's goal is to empower artists with tools, intelligence and a platform that lets them showcase their work, reach new audiences and make deeper connections with their top fans," says Parkes.

Nicola Swankie, from Leo Burnett, observes: "The fact that they have focused the platform so much on music is fantastic. Its ability to help you make new friends is its big strength. Myspace will be a big competitor to Spotify this year."

Chris Bridgland, from WeAreSocial, also praises the new Myspace, but argues that there needs to be more focus on that. "It's a world away from where it was in 2009 and it works really well on a tablet. Music is still at its core right that Myspace concentrates on that.

"Long-term, I know Myspace wants to be an entertainment platform with TV, music, video, books.

"It will be a real competitor to LastFM and Spotify when more music is available there. But at the moment why would I go there? It needs to be developed a bit further and it needs to find a USP." ■

entertain your consumer – with content that’s entertaining. It’s as simple as that.”

Twitter take-off

Predictions are that brands will increasingly turn to social media for customer service (see John Price’s column on page 20).

Leo Burnett’s Swankie outlines: “The telcos are very much employing social CRM (customer relationship management) at the moment. Other brands, however, haven’t scratched the surface yet, so we will see a lot more social CRM this year, especially on Twitter.”

Geoffrey Emerson, digital business director at experiential agency Urban, adds: “The telcos have really got their act together, but CSM really should have been a trend two years ago. Major brands that have a consumer-facing component should be on top of it.”

Twitter’s imminent physical arrival in Australia (the social giant is opening an office in Sydney) is expected to help.

Social@Ogilvy’s Giesen says: “With Twitter about to have a presence here, it will be easier for marketers and brands to use it more effectively. Using it for customer service is a big opportunity for brands.”

Predictions are that Twitter will only grow once it has a physical presence on our shores.

Vincenzini explains: “We will see a lot more Twitter intervention in our lives when they arrive here, such as the hashtags during live television broadcasts. We will also see a push for it to become a primary consumer service tool for brands.

“There will be an obvious split – Facebook will be used for consumer engagement, and Twitter for customer service. For the bigger brands, Twitter will become the default customer service channel this year. Universal issues can be addressed publically, and personal issues can be taken offline.”

WeAreSocial’s Bridgland adds: “There are really nice opportunities out there for Twitter to integrate with TV, but you need to think about what the real engagement point is for the consumer. An example of a really nice campaign recently was in the UK for Mercedes, called ‘You Drive’. It combined the power of a big TVC with the social reach of Twitter.”

‘You Drive’ – dubbed a ‘crowd-sourced cliffhanger’ – encouraged viewers to vote, using a hashtag, on what should happen next in the ad. The most popular sequels voted for in each geographical area of the UK were then aired, according to area, in the following ad break.

“That sort of thing will take off in the next few years,” says Bridgland. “Brands that pick up on it will do great.”

The year of visual – and practical

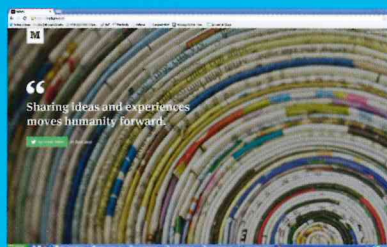
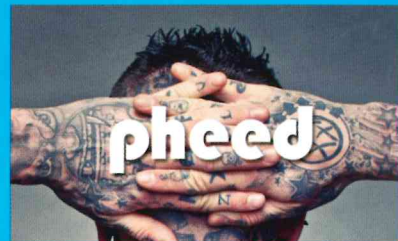
2013 is tipped to be the year that social visual takes off, as Giesen explains: “The rise of the social visual web is something I’m really excited about. The Australian Open was a great example of an organisation using Instagram well, »

EMERGING PLATFORMS TO WATCH IN 2013



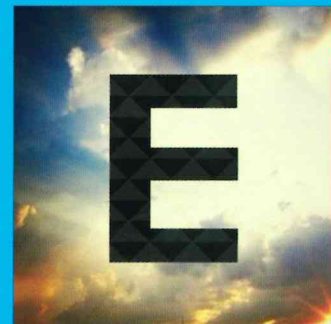
Path: A location-based network. Path has been around for about a year, but is tipped as one to watch.

Pheed: A new destination for musicians and celebrities – and where the celebs go, the mainstream follows.



Medium: An invitation-only social network from the creators of Twitter. Long-form content, such as stories and blogs, are at the centre of the network.

EyeEm: A new photo sharing app with full synchronisation with Facebook. It’s tipped as being a potential threat to Instagram.



showing behind-the-scenes pictures from the competition that the public would not normally have access to."

And Vincenzini hopes this could be the year of online video. "I hope YouTube and online video will continue to get bigger. It's still not being used in the right way.

"People want magical viral videos to make them famous - they are not treating it as a channel that needs to be maintained. They should be creating disposable content - hints, tips and how-to videos. They can be produced cost-effectively and there is a real hunger for content that has value."

The 'internet of things' has also got people talking. This could be the year that we see our home appliances interacting with us while we're out - all on social media.

Swankie explains: "2013 is going to be the year that we see our fridges have a social presence. Our 'things', such as appliances, will be able to tap into our social networks.

"For example, my air conditioning system might be able to talk to me through a social network and say 'it's 35 degrees today, would you like me to turn on at 5pm so it's cool when you get home?'

"I will be really interested to see what will be introduced by the likes of Samsung."

Social media could also change the way we work in 2013.

Giesen observes: "In other markets, there is a trend emerging where brands are starting to get serious about creating social centres in their organisation, forming teams in their business. They have departments made up of people from across the business who form a social team - a social centre."

And Jodie Sangster, chief executive of the Association for Data-driven Marketing and Advertising, predicts: "Social media will play a more central role in marketing campaigns and ongoing customer engagement strategies, becoming a core component, rather than an additional campaign element.

"This year there will also be an increased realisation of the value of social media data. Technology that enables data analysis will become more available, and there will be a significant focus on truly personalising the customer experience."

LinkedIn and connected

Dubbed the "sleeping giant", LinkedIn has been busy doing big things quietly in the background. The platform has just hit the 200 million members mark - and it has lofty ambitions that stretch far beyond that.

Tara Commerford, head of communications at LinkedIn ANZ and South East Asia, says: "This latest milestone is a reminder of the global footprint and the scale of impact our network has each day.

"Our broad vision is to connect talent with opportunity at massive scale and, by doing so, develop the world's first economic graph. In >

Introducing Graph Search

Photos before 1990



Explore your world through photos

Now you can use simple, specific phrases like "Photos my friends took in New York City" to find anything you want.

FACEBOOK UPS THE ANTE

To kick off 2013 with a bang, Facebook announced its latest feature: Graph Search.

The new tool is Facebook's answer to Google and will enable Facebook users to search for information based on what others have made publically available. Finding friends with similar interests, searching photos and discovering restaurants and music through people you know are all promised.

Richard Parker, head of digital at content marketing agency Edge, says: "Graph Search is effectively positioning itself to become the ultimate in social curation of content. Graph Search's approach adds context to searching and has the capacity to bring people close together and allow users to make informed decisions based on the 'trustworthy' likes of their friends - and friends of friends."

Leo Burnett's Nicola Swankie believes it's vital for Facebook to up its game. "Facebook has stepped up the game - and it needs to," she says. "People are not using Facebook as much as they used to and there is a lot of negative sentiment around brands being present in the newsfeed. Graph Search definitely has implications for brands - if they can be present and relevant, in search results that could be very powerful."

Parker goes as far as to suggest Graph Search could pose a threat to Google: "Graph Search will alter the way people - and search engines - think about search. More to the point though, Graph Search is the latest brick in the walled garden that Facebook is fast becoming. As more features join the already substantial list Facebook offers, we edge a little closer to a reality in which, for large portions of the online population, the entire experience of the internet could realistically be contained within the Facebook ecosystem."

MEC's James Hier, however, sees challenges to the tool: "People are going to have to change their behaviour, and that's a problem. Right now, in all honesty, I like things on Facebook that I think will make me look cool to my friends.

"So, people are going to have to be honest and rapidly increase the number of things like, like honestly and like mundane things, for it to work." ■



JOHN PRICE
PRACTICE LEAD,
NM INCITE AUSTRALIA

While social care is fundamentally about managing and responding to consumer feedback via social media, at its heart, social care is a key strategic tool that provides substantial opportunities to drive brand health and consumer acquisition.

In Australia, consumers' engagement with brands via social media is high – almost half (42%) of online consumers connect or interact with brands via social media sites. While today's socially engaged consumer can express their opinion of, or experience with, products and services without any personal contact, for many (46%) the motivation for connecting with a brand via social media is to solve a problem – and they have come to expect an almost immediate response. Among those connecting with brands via Facebook, 46% expect a response within two hours and 81% seek a response by the end of the day.

For a company not adequately equipped to respond effectively to social media engagement, brand equity and brand health are at risk. Among consumers connecting with brands via social media, 71% are more likely to become an advocate of that brand where a fast and satisfactory response is received.

Our research indicates that brand health and equity can be enhanced and nurtured via social care and can be activated at a low cost compared to more traditional 'offline' marketing and customer care channels. Properly designed and implemented social care models allow marketers to connect with consumers to optimise educational and engagement strategies that can lead to new customer acquisition.

How to operate within this environment? The answer lies within 'social care', which broadly describes a systematic approach that blurs the lines between marketing and customer service online.

Traditional customer service scripts are replaced with 'social care playbooks', which set guidelines for how to formulate a response as opposed to a finite, rigid response structure. Using these playbooks along with real-time monitoring of online conversations enables marketers to hear what customers are saying and to reach out to them quickly, effectively, and in the online environment in which the consumer is comfortable.

If you think personalised online social care is a drain on resource, think again. Insights show that more than one third of companies who implemented social care in 2011 reduced their total customer service support costs by 10%. This cost saving will continue to grow as the balance shifts from expensive call centres to online responsiveness.

Innovative companies have recognised that social care is not only essential to meeting today's basic customer service requirements, but is also a key strategic driver of brand health and consumer acquisition. ■

other words, we want to digitally map the global economy to identify the connections between people, jobs, skills, companies and professional knowledge – and spot in real time the trends pointing to economic opportunities.

"It's a big vision, but we believe we're in a unique position to make it happen."

Others would tend to agree.

Vincenzini, of Mango, says: "LinkedIn is a sleeping giant. I think it will soon develop a really solid company profile optional page that people will want to engage with on a corporate level – like a Facebook page, but on LinkedIn, because you really can't talk about chunky corporate stuff on Facebook."

And Bridgland concurs: "LinkedIn is on a steady path, growing well – especially now you can put your CV straight up, rather than emailing it."

"As more and more people feel comfortable having their professional lives played out on the internet through LinkedIn, there will be more and more opportunities."

Are you bored yet?

But, is all this social media becoming too much – and turning into a bore?

Swank poses a radical thought: "In 2013, I think a lot of people are going to switch off."

"For the last couple of years, our phones have been continually buzzing with notifications. People want to go back to nature, disconnect and have real conversations. It will be interesting to see if there are opportunities around people owning 'real' versus people owning 'digital' this year."

Other observers, however, are less pessimistic – and see social media as doing nothing but growing.

Jame Hier, chief strategy officer at MEC, says: "I think people are as engaged in social media as they have ever been."

"If the commercial weight of someone like Facebook gets so heavy that they move to an interruption model, then I think people might disengage. But we haven't reached the switch-off stage yet."

And Vincenzini agrees: "Any down-time I have in the day, I spend on Facebook, and I don't think that's going to change. I don't think people are switching off."

Giesen also concurs: "It hasn't hit a point where social media is starting to annoy people and they're switching off. The wave is going to continue and we will see continued growth of things like Facebook and Twitter and Instagram this year."

So, switched off or not, with new platforms challenging the old – and the old coming up with new ways to keep us coming back to them – social media is ingraining itself further and further into our lives. ■