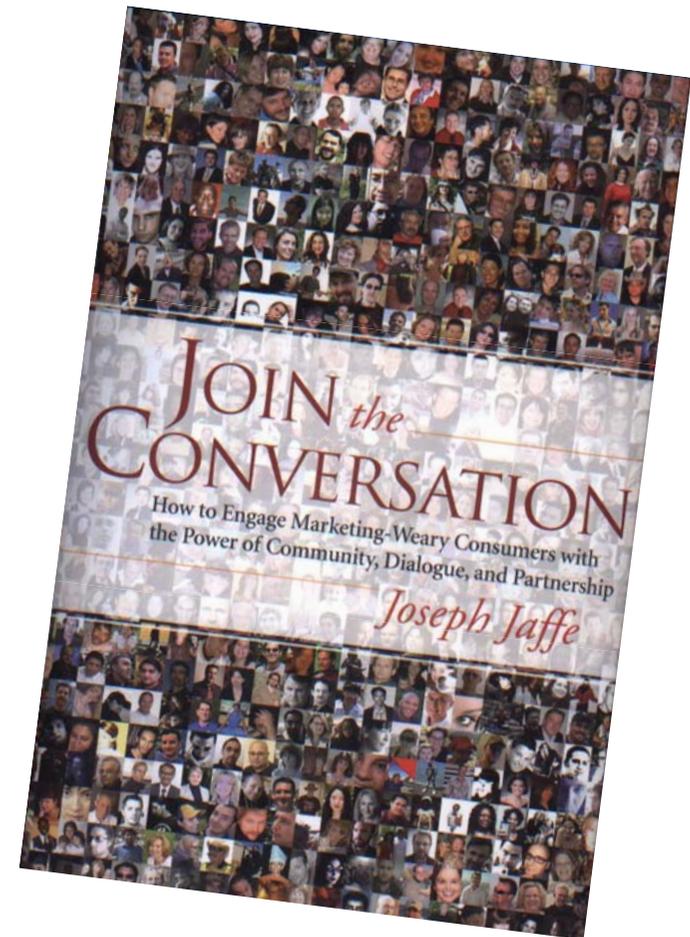


**Join the conversation**  
**Digital Book Club**

Joseph Jaffe  
Wiley 2007

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“In a new marketing world, where conversation trumps communication, there is no hegemony, only partnership.”



After the marketing hit ‘Life after the 30 second spot’, Joseph Jaffe starts examining the nature of communication and conversations in digital spaces and concludes that with the right attitude and something to say, brands might just be able to play a part.

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**Series reviewer:**  
**Danny Meadows-Klue**

Danny has been a researcher and commentator in the digital networked industries since 1995. He managed the UK's first online newspaper and has helped run web businesses ranging from mass market portals and consumer magazines, to online stores, search and email services. He is the co-founder of the UK and European IABs, was their president for four years, is a passionate educationalist and has been lecturing on digital marketing for more than a decade.

“Joseph Jaffe challenges the status quo of marketing, bringing a confrontational freshness to the channel mix and the nature of consumer engagement. In the digital landscape brands need to build awareness and image by taking part in conversations, and this book explains both why and how. Firms need to accept a step-change in their relationships with customers, and ‘Conversations’ is a great catalyst for encouraging them to dare to think of a taking leap beyond the standard media plan or campaign idea. Marketing is changing, but not all firms will adapt.”

## Introduction

### In conversation with Joseph Jaffe

Joseph Jaffe is on top form in his latest attack on marketing thinking that is rooted in the past. “Join the conversation” is a fun romp through the post-ClueTrain landscape of digital media, networked marketing, and the new role for marketers. In an era when the monologue of marketing has given way to genuine dialogue between brands, their customers, and the friends of those customers, Jaffe makes a call to action is for brands to join in these conversations, shrug off the historic models of the mass-communication channels of the past and open up to a fundamentally new way of behaving. When we caught up over breakfast in London, our conversations explored his view of the world and what motivated the writing of the book.

Since 2000, we have been talking about the digital networked society and the implications for firms as their sectors make the transition. Digital Book Club reviews look at books we’ve enjoyed because they shed valuable perspectives on economic and social change, providing some of the navigation firms need to successfully make the transition.

#### Speed read

Marketing is changing and firms need to prepare for a step change in the way they communicate with customers; the success of the classic techniques is falling, but transition to the new requires a fundamentally different type of thinking

The balance of control has shifted radically since the days when marketers took ownership and control of the message; in the new digital spaces no one is in control and the equality of relationship between brand and consumer demands a new mindset for marketers

Firms can take part in conversations in several ways and the approach of a ‘Conversation’ can be extended into a new model for marketing; it could be the central focus for a firm’s marketing strategy and involve activities across myriad channels

The search for new models is not restricted to the needs of the advertising campaign itself; new models are needed for agencies and other stakeholders

Without an effective reading of the digital landscape, most brands perform poorly when trying to market themselves in these new social spaces

Even if a brand is not ready to take the leap there are a series of steps they can immediately take to get a better understanding of the landscape they are working within; this will help with evaluating the real market situation and the choices they face

**Review: Join the conversation**

## Joining in the marketing conversation

### A new type of marketing industry

Jaffe sees the marketing industry as full of contradictions, embroiled in a time of great change that leaves most firms either lacking any direction, or lacking a direction that fits with the nature of the new landscape they're operating in. This echoes our experience at Digital where we've been coaching marketers in how to work effectively in a landscape so radically different from the one they were schooled in.

"Marketers have become so manic" says Jaffe. "They are high, then low, and always want the next big thing, but the next big thing is now. That's where the opportunity really is."

It's part of what Jaffe describes as 'Facebook fatigue', citing many of the waves of hype in digital media as showcases in how to misread the landscape. "Second Life is a great example. Marketers fail miserably; they were given a new world and just failed to rise to the challenge."

Part of the challenge is in the transience of classic marketing, he argues that one of the differences in thinking is that in online marketing firms need to be making a greater commitment to stay the course: "If we are going to help a firm do this, then they need to commit to their blogs or virtual spaces for at least 12 months".

### So who is in control?

The switch towards consumer centric-marketing grows from one of the tenets of the digital environment, namely that consumers are in control of the media they are exposed to and that control has been lost by the marketing community. Jaffe has an interesting take on this: "The consumer is in control. It's like a broken record. Worse still it's like a broken record being used as slow and painful torture. Here's a thought. Marketers are not in control. Consumers are not in control. No one is in control."

In saying this he doesn't deny the shift in power, but underscores it: "Consumers have changed irrevocably, and one of the major and most significant symptoms of this change is the zero tolerance consumers have for bad advertising, subversive PR plots, manipulative

marketing, and unforgettably bad customer service."

### Empowering the silent majority

"We need to empower the silent majority," says Jaffe. It's an interesting reflection of how the silent majority now have the means to a voice. Be it the active comments on blogs, the star ratings they leave on review sites like Trip Advisor, or the more passive switching of attention that means many once loud voices now fall on deaf ears.

### A new type of neutrality

There's a new type of thinking marketers need to take on board says Jaffe. And that means not just being neutral about the choice of media:

- Idea neutrality
- Media neutrality
- Campaign neutrality
- Solution neutrality

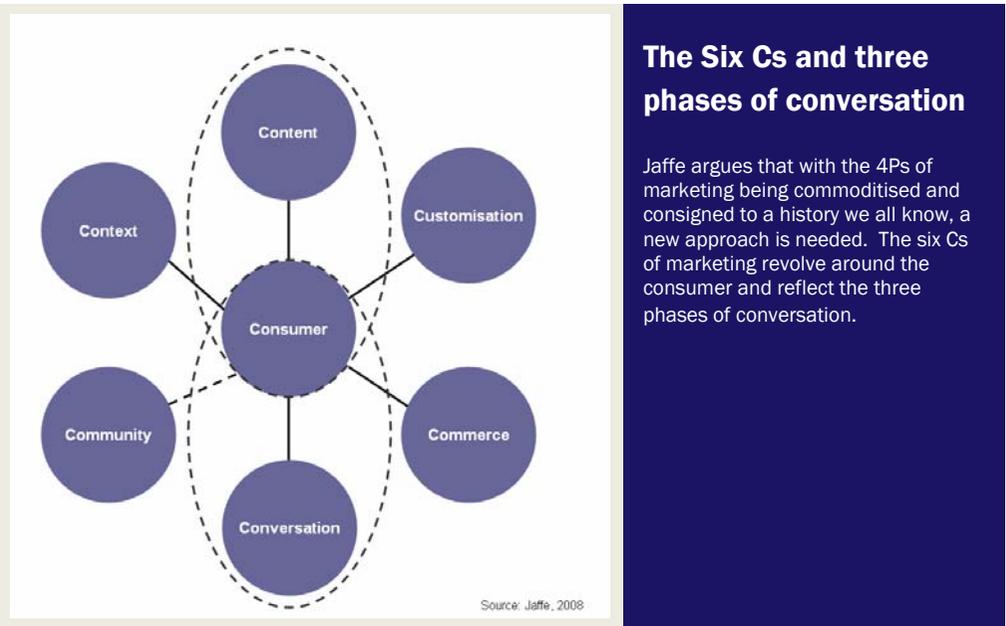
### The Six Cs

When we talk about the book his passion for a change that's needed in marketing is clear: "The sooner universities stop teaching the 4Ps the better. If the 4Ps are commoditised then what rises in its place? Content, Commerce and Community are joined by Context

### Jaffe's five ways you too can join the conversation

1. Listen to a conversation
2. Respond to a conversation
3. Join - or be invited to join - a conversation already in progress
4. Catalyse a conversation
5. Start a conversation

Source: Jaffe 2007



### The Six Cs and three phases of conversation

Jaffe argues that with the 4Ps of marketing being commoditised and consigned to a history we all know, a new approach is needed. The six Cs of marketing revolve around the consumer and reflect the three phases of conversation.

Conversation and Customisation.” This makes for a neat model that joins up three phases of conversation.

### “You can't buy community”

During the last three years there has been an obsessive wave of marketers racing into the community space. Our experience at Digital has been that many brands are entering because they either feel they should, or because they misread the benefits as well as the landscape. Either way it makes for a dangerous start in a strategically critical aspect of marketing communications. When Jaffe says “you can't buy community, you have to earn it” this resonates strongly.

### Viral marketing? Think again

In the era of social media, viral marketing has enjoyed a resurgence, but with this many of the misconceptions of viral 1.0 have returned. “There is no such thing as viral,” proclaims Jaffe, “People either want or don't want to pass on content, that's the DNA of this new social media.”

### You can't go dark on your consumers.

When the marketing models change, it's time to challenge conventions. In ‘Join the conversation’ Jaffe also challenges the conventional model for media campaign planning, saying that “media plans should have no blank spaces any more, you can't go dark on your consumers. Marketing is not a campaign, it's a commitment. The concept of a campaign is a silo. The sizzle in paid campaigns is followed by the fizzle.”

“Marketing is not a campaign, it's a commitment. The concept of a campaign is a silo. The sizzle in paid campaigns is followed by the fizzle.”

### A new model for agencies?

“I feel sorry for the agency community right now” he explains, citing the myriad challenges agencies face in developing and running campaigns. “It's time to outmode the creative function; everyone needs to be creative and strategic. It's no longer a silo either.” He's also downbeat on the success of much marketing, saying “I don't know if there really is any creativity in the online advertising space any more”. This part of the conversation leads neatly into challenging the ‘big idea’ model: “there are no ‘big ideas’ any more, there's just ‘a small idea’, and many of them. Those are what we should be looking for.”

### Rethinking ‘reach’ in marketing

The classic approach to ‘reach’ in marketing has been based on media planning around advertising campaigns, yet Jaffe suggests an alternative lens for considering reach. He breaks out reach vehicles (such as social networks), from those that provide a kind of reach ‘in-training’ (the ones to bet on for the future), to the reach activators such as Twitter and other tools that can be used to influence the influencers.

### And that's why brands need to join the conversation

If the models of marketing are changing, then the nature of engagement needs to change. Jaffe argues that “the biggest opportunity is in joining the conversation, meeting the consumer half way”. He's adept at pointing out the new generation marketing that didn't work as well as the examples of what did, citing Coke Zero's fake blog among many others. “When we make mistakes in these spaces they are like a permanent stain that just doesn't go away”.

The conclusion is that marketers don't have to start the conversation, just take part. Along the way they need to find their voice, and be able to read enough of the landscape to know how to converse.

### Conversations and organisational structure

Whether the conversation model can be brought within most firms is a tough issue to face up to because the progress of digital channels typically creates organisational barriers. Jaffe's solution is to change the organisational model: “by 2012 every company will have a chief conversation officer and the CMO should become the CCO, customer service will be rolled up into the conversation department”. He's skeptical about the nature of customer service departments because they typically live in a silo distinct from sales or customer planning: “What is customer service? It's not out-reach, but in-reach.”



## Meet Joseph Jaffe

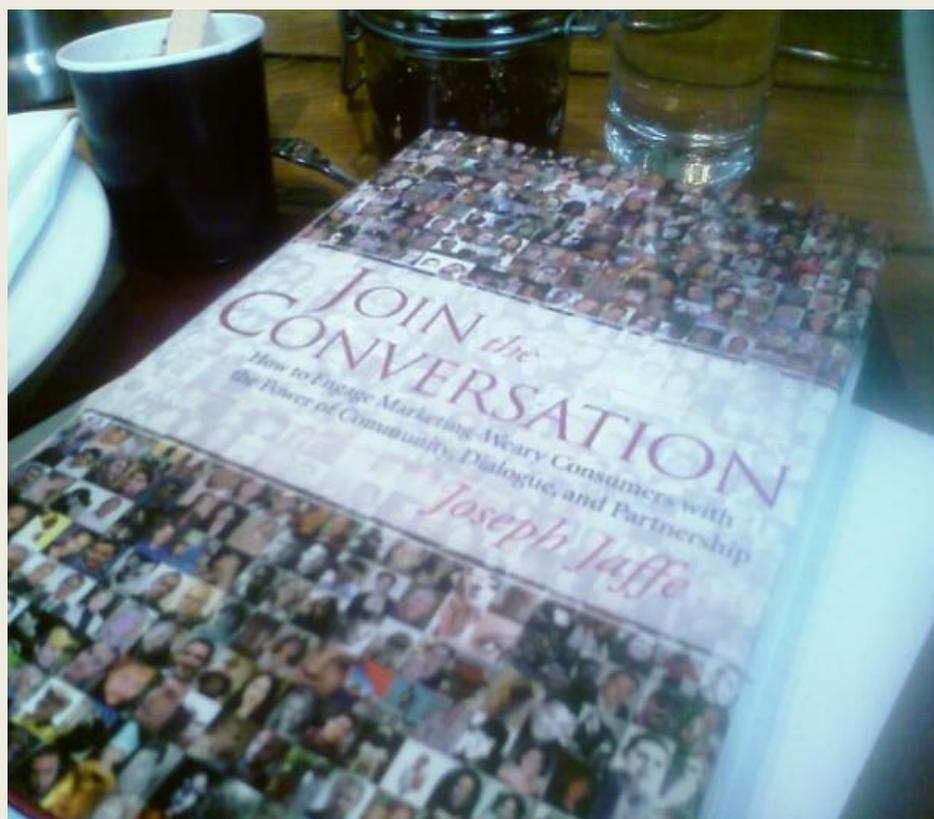
### President of Crayon

Joseph Jaffe is President of Crayon, a new marketing company. He also runs a popular blog, "Jaffe Juice," ([www.jaffejuice.com](http://www.jaffejuice.com)) which provides daily commentary on all things new marketing. He also hosts a weekly new marketing podcast called "Across the Sound".

His first book, "Life after the 30-second spot: Energise your brand with a bold mix of alternatives to traditional advertising" (Wiley/Adweek) was released in June 2005. In October 2007, his second book titled, "Join the conversation: How to engage marketing-weary consumers with the power of community, dialogue and partnership" was published by Wiley.

Joseph is a Senior Fellow at the Center for the Digital Future at the USC Annenberg School and he has also lectured part-time at NYU's Stern School of Business, Cornell's Johnson School of Business and Syracuse University.

## Conversations about conversations



As a mark of practicing what he preaches, Jaffe pledged to market and promote the book using the tools of the new channels themselves. So over a breakfast in London we explored the text, its meaning, and had a chance to contemplate what the future of marketing may have in store for brands and consumers alike. In Joseph's typical style there was conversation, engagement and discussion, with the type of motivating effect that gets bloggers blogging and twitterers twittering. The cover jacket of the book are the photos of some of the thousand bloggers who talked with Joseph in discussions.

You can read our previous interview with Joseph Jaffe at:  
[http://www.digitalstrategyconsulting.com/thoughtleaders/2007/08/joseph\\_jaffe.php](http://www.digitalstrategyconsulting.com/thoughtleaders/2007/08/joseph_jaffe.php)

You can join in this part of the conversation by leaving your comments:  
[http://www.digitalstrategyconsulting.com/bookclub/2008/03/join\\_the\\_conversation.php](http://www.digitalstrategyconsulting.com/bookclub/2008/03/join_the_conversation.php)

### Review highlights: Life after the 30 second spot

## Jaffe's ten truths for marketing strategists

In 'Life After The 30 Second Spot', Jaffe built out a simple model for brands to follow. This is a neat way to sum up the challenges marketers are facing. It may prove a daunting 'to-do' list for most firms, but just getting a few of these wrapped will stand you in good stead.

### 1. Your consumer is fragmenting; fragment with them

It's a neat way of bridging the gap for what firms should do, and Jaffe says that "you need to fragment with them because every time they fragment further it makes it easier for you to be relevant to them." ...and the bad news is that it's only going to get tougher: "We're not walking in the park any more, we're climbing Everest: the rate of change is increasing all the time".

"To call the web a medium is an insult; it's a storefront, a community, a psychologist, an entertainment platform. It's whatever you want it to be."

### 2. It's time to regain the trust of our consumers

"Small print is the instant indicator that you're lying to your customers," and Jaffe is not pulling any punches in challenging brands to be more honest.

"The rate of change is increasing all the time"

### 3. Follow the trail

Data and analytics may not be the sexiest branch of marketing, but Jaffe is absolute: "where most marketers are looking is the wrong place, if you open your eyes you see them. Data is the DNA of the new marketing model."

"Data is the DNA of the new marketing model"

### 4. Explore new roles for marketing

The explosive growth in new marketing formats is something Jaffe neatly champions. As an aside Jaffe's take is that the high frequency of advertising in any media is just a direct correlation to its inefficiency. To explain it he twists around the classic models of marketing to indicate the legacy of the thinking.

- Traditional models: Informing, persuading and reminding
- New models: Demonstrating and empowering

Jaffe cites four strategic trends as the drivers of change: the always on nature of broadband, the any-place nature of wireless, the power of search advertising and the concept of social networks. He sees them coming together to create “the perfect storm” in the scale of change they demand.

### 5. Embrace the 93 colours (the analogy is a pack of crayons)

Today’s consumers need more than three primary colours in their communications. Jaffe has a neat way of summarising this by looking at the colours in a massive box of crayons and all the shades and blends that go way beyond the primary colours. “To call the web a medium is an insult; it’s a storefront, a community, a psychologist, an entertainment platform. It’s whatever you want it to be”.

On the topics of integration he’s clear that “everyone talks about it but not that many people really get it”.

“Everyone talks about integration within digital channels but not that many people really get it”

“The internet is the integrator in marketing. If you’re buying integration and there’s no web element then you’re simply not buying integration”. He argues that it’s not about the duplication of messages between channels, but about how each channel can work in a combined media mix.

### 6. You are the community you keep

“....or more importantly you are the community that keeps you.” This is another neat way of twisting the convention of ‘you are the company you keep’. It’s one of those truths of the digital networked society and hard to fight against. It’s just that now your community is networked and the connections often widely apparent, it’s a neat way of looking at things.



### Digital Insight Reports

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In times of huge economic and technical change, knowledge becomes a critical success factor. We created the Digital Insight Reports to bring you insights from a particular part of this fast changing industry. They are independent perspectives on key issues around business or marketing in the digital networked economy.

### 7. Join the conversation

The shotgun approach to marketing in the early days gave way to Peppers & Rogers. In Jaffe’s reading of the market, the gods of one-to-one in turn gave way to today’s mashed up YouTube many-to-many debates.

### 8. You must activate the new influencers

The message here is to get engaged with the real influencers who are driving the discussion about brands online. This is a good bridge to Malcolm Gladwell’s Tipping Point where Gladwell deconstructs the social marketer’s challenge into about three key phases and just a few key types of players.

“The internet is the integrator in marketing. If you’re buying integration and there’s no web element then you’re simply not buying integration”

### 9. Production is the new consumption

The rise of the consumer content creator has hit the media industry like a tsunami in the last three years. It’s hard to imagine the full implications for brands, but Jaffe is clear that firms need to be embracing this. It echoed our interview with Joel de Rosnay who talked of the Pro-net-ariat as a group who had in their hands the tools of the means of production.

### 10. Experiment (or be experimented on)

Like Jaffe, we’ve been arguing for a decade that this isn’t about minor change in the economic landscape, but about the death of brands that don’t get it. It’s worth checking out Jaffe’s manifesto for experimentation.



### Digital Book Club

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Knowledge and training can unlock the potential of your team. We created the Digital Book Club reviews to bring you closer to the people and ideas shaping the digital networked economy. They are short reviews of texts we’d recommend, and are published monthly. You can buy our favourite books and other marketing texts through the Digital Book Club.

“I predicted a long time ago that one day, the new wave of leadership in the marketing /media space would come from within the digital space. There is absolutely no conceivable way that the leaders of tomorrow can possibly come from anywhere else than the digital realm.

That doesn't mean they necessarily have to be in digital at the time, but they're going to have to be deeply and intimately versed in the interactive space in order to stand an iota's shot in hell of being considered.”

Joseph Jaffe

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£4.52

### Actions to consider

At Digital we're fans of using books and ideas to activate change. Here are a few suggestions for what could be next for your brand. Start by reviewing your brand's relationship with consumers; and look for whether it is conversational already.

1. Listen to what your customers are already saying on the web; try using social network analysis tools and blog monitoring
2. Discuss the implications of what you hear in their conversations and test the appetite within your firm for engagement
3. Review Jaffe's simple model of alternatives for taking part in a conversation
4. Work with agencies and partners to build a strategy around changing your style of messaging
5. Consider who the 'Chief conversation officer' could be inside your firm
6. Consider how you can measure your activity in these new spaces to both track performance and prove success

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**Digital Thought Leaders**  
Thought Traffic  
Author and President of Eragon

“You are the community you keep – or more importantly you are the community that keeps you.”

**SEARCH INSIDE™**  
Life After the 30-Second Sprint

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### Digital Thought Leaders

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Why do some firms get it so right, and their audiences and revenues explode? Our Digital Thought Leader interviews bring you closer to people and brands shaping the digital networked economy. They are based on discussions we've had with them since 2000 and are published monthly.

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Media company board director and participant, in-company Digital Training Academy programme

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