

Bright ideas for blue sky thinkers

Digital marketing innovations

Digital Insight Report

May 2006

The digital marketing landscape is constantly changing and this innovation report brings you a few examples of some of the tools and techniques that are delivering results across a wide range of digital marketing formats. How can you use them to change your marketing? Which will work in your sector? Which can be applied straight away? How can you maintain that competitive edge?

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Speed read

Search gets local and delivers powerful mapping with Google.

Doing more with banners: Profero finds three innovative solutions for Frank.

Corporate blogging starts to take off: Sun, GM and hints on best practice.

In-game advertising: FMCG brands achieve impact with the tuned-out generation.

Avis harnesses music CDs: integrating with the web to build customer loyalty.

Personality remains key: LastMinute show you how to build engaging email marketing.

Pay-per-text: the latest twist on search engine advertising from Miva.

Innovation and learning: great bedfellows

One of the things you have to love about digital marketing is its innovation: creative, chaotic and ceaseless. Digital content and communications are the freshest of media to work with, and in this short Digital Insight Report we showcase a few digital marketing innovations that are really worth checking out.

They're not only great examples of unlocking the potential of digital media; they include models and approaches that can be used by thousands of firms. Maybe they're right for your brands, maybe they're not, but explore them, learn from them, and see what ideas that generates for how you can develop you online communications. The real innovation kicks off in the hands of the practitioner, and because all these tools are still in their early stages of development, you can be sure that there's plenty more innovation to come.

Tips for brands

Marketers need to be given the freedom to explore and evaluate all these new models. They won't all be right for every brand, but a few of them will fit neatly into the marketing objectives of your business. Harness them well and they could change the face of the company. Look for innovative creative agencies and media agencies that are successfully exploring the new tools and models. Continue to review not only your competitor set brands, but look across Europe and North America for ideas about how online can help you do more.

Track your innovations

Always look for ways to track the effectiveness of the innovations you are exploring. Look for clear key performance indicators and find ways to measure any effects of online marketing that may have been reported in other sales channels. Some of these new digital marketing techniques may prove so radically more effective than the traditional routes you have known that they can force firms to review their entire marketing mix. Use constant 'split run tests' to measure the effectiveness of each new permutation or combination you try.

To stay on top, learning is key

The fast pace of innovation in digital marketing will not change in the next five years. Not only are the audiences expanding and demand for services rising, but the technology itself is allowing new types of integration between channels as well as the continued organic innovation we saw throughout the first digital decade. To stay on top, brands need to build a learning network of agency partners, along with specialist knowledge providers to help them stay on top of the latest techniques. Building learning into your organisation is critical.

Search gets local

Search has gone local, really local. Thanks to Google maps I can zoom in on the pubs in my street, look for related pizza restaurants across London, find all the video stores in the neighbourhood and with the directions available at a mouse-click, I can even mail my friends the instructions of how to get here. Since April 2005, UK users have been able to search for business listings and regional information on Google's Local UK edition.

Innovation in search engine advertising has been breathtaking. It's changed the way we all find the answers to just about everything, and it's making the most fundamental of changes to the direct marketing and local marketing industries.

Maps make the difference

Integrating all that search information with Google Maps was a massive task, but one that has changed the nature of search forever. Anyone searching for local information can see where the responses really are. This is the crashing together of the real and virtual worlds, bridging the gap between information being available online and on the highstreet.

How advertisers can take advantage

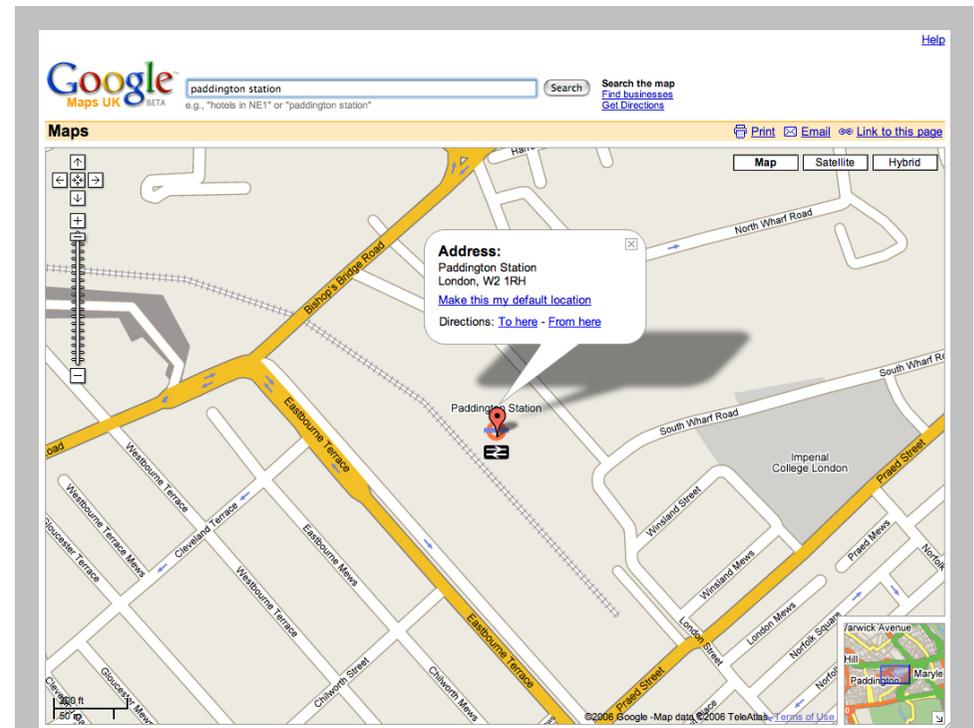
Google Local also allows Google AdWords users to reach customers who are searching for a particular service in or near a particular area. Firms that offer services in a particular geographical area can now use the AdWords platform without worrying about wastage in regions that they cannot serve. It improves the efficiency of their existing media buy, reduces wastage for customers who were outside the target district, and builds deeper economies of scope that encourage viewers to click through to the advertising website.

And now onto mobile

If that wasn't enough, these features are now migrating onto mobile phones. The same data comes back to a mobile user after they've sent a simple SMS text code. As the new generation of mobile handsets start offering the same experience, maps will really take off.

More on the way...

The ability to layer different data sets on top of the maps will change the way much local information is accessed because the layering of data adds real value itself: cinemas and parking regulations, restaurants and public transport routes, offices and car parks. With more information being accessible geographically, it won't be long before you'll be able to click to see photos of what's on the maps – and no doubt that will mean more ways to advertise.



Putting yourself on the map

The mapping tools layer much of Google's data onto streetmap structures you can zoom in on from anywhere on the planet.

They overlay clickable listings that can take you into the search engine or into the website of what's been picked out.

One click more and information that is similar – other pizza restaurants, schools, stations – also gets displayed.

Click again, and you'll get directions of how to get there too.

Find out more: Google.co.uk

Doing more with banners

Frank shows three different models for getting more from the humble banner

There are many alternative models for using banners than delivering a single branding message, or driving a click to a single page on your site. This campaign for the UK government delivered complex drug awareness messages to teenagers. Profero had to create a message that would not only be listened to, but actively explored. They had to reach out to a notoriously sceptical and media savvy audience, and talk with them in the right tone of voice to build trust as well as engagement.

The objectives also included opening up the discussion between young people about drugs and encouraging them to seek further help and advice. The complexity of the information demanded a dedicated website - talktofrank.com – and another objective was generating traffic to it.

Search engines within banners

Inside one of the banners on talktofrank.com was a search window that used simple linguistic prediction to complete words that were being typed in. It then took the viewer deep into the supporting website, matching the content exactly to the issue that had been keyed in. In the Talk To Frank campaign this was an A-Z of drug names and information. This approach delivers a rich and personalised customer journey. It's a core strength of web marketing, but many advertisers still miss out using banners to subtly direct viewers in dozens of different directions.

Putting polls into banners

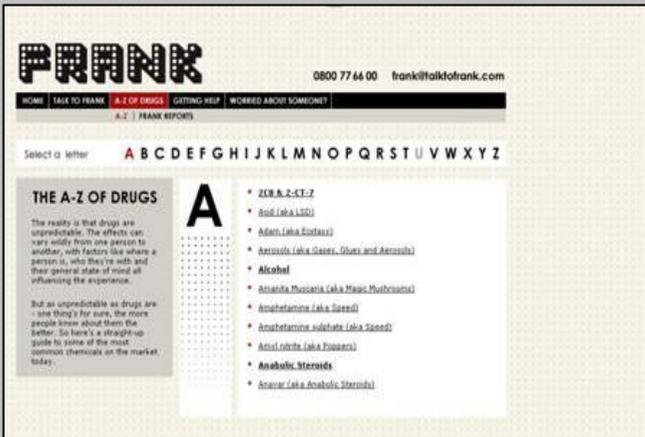
A similarly powerful way of getting more value from online media is to in build voting or polling within the ad itself. Communicate the question and the immediacy of the answer, and you have a powerful model for engagement. In the Talk To Frank campaign, Profero asked viewers topic related questions. These built both viewer knowledge and brand engagement.

With engagement now firmly established as the battleground in brand communication, simple devices like this achieve engagement in a relevant and powerful way. They deliver value back to the viewer straight away, and if needed readily position viewers for the next step in the purchase journey.

Getting banners and skyscrapers to work together

Using combinations of online media placements can build impact, engagement and viewer interaction. In this series of executions viewers were prompted to choose and drag an icon from the banner at the top across into the skyscraper below. Each selection delivered an alternative response within the skyscraper, and although this particular campaign was delivering a health message about the effects of taking different types of drugs, the model can be used widely.

With a targeted media buy placing the creative within environments that included lots of peer-to-peer discussion, the banners and supporting websites immediately generated a modest viral effect as viewers started talking about the messages and their implications. By getting the banners to work harder, more impactful messages were being delivered, and the client's website was opened up to be more fully used by a hard to engage target audience.



FRANK 0800 77 66 00 frank@talktofrank.com

HOME | TALK TO FRANK | A-Z OF DRUGS | GETTING HELP | WORRIED ABOUT SOMEONE? | FRANK REPORTS

Select a letter: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

THE A-Z OF DRUGS

The reality is that drugs are unpredictable. The effects can vary wildly from one person to another, with factors like where a person is, who they're with and their general state of mind all influencing the experience.

But as unpredictable as drugs are, one thing's for sure, the more people know about them the better. So here's a straight-up guide to some of the most common therapies on the market today.

- ZCB A-2-CT-7
- Acid (aka LSD)
- Adam (aka Cocaine)
- Azooids (aka Gases, Gases and Aerosols)
- Alcohol
- Amanita Muscaria (aka Magic Mushrooms)
- Amphetamine (aka Speed)
- Amphetamine sulphate (aka Speed)
- Astil (aka Paper)
- Anabolic Steroids
- Anavar (aka Anabolic Steroids)

Find out more: Profero

Deep linking within the advertiser's site

The Talk To Frank campaign included an A-Z directory on the client's website. Smart banners included a simple search engine that directed viewers to the specific words being searched.



Risking It All

How do you get what it takes to change your life? Find out if you're ready to see the effects.

DRUGS ARE UNPREDICTABLE. THE EFFECTS CAN VARY WILDLY FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER. WITH FACTORS LIKE WHERE A PERSON IS, WHO THEY'RE WITH AND THEIR GENERAL STATE OF MIND ALL INFLUENCING THE EXPERIENCE.

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Find out more: Profero

Combining banners and skyscrapers to tell a story

Drag the icons from the banner, give them to the teenager, learn what happens.

Find out more: Profero

Corporate blogging

As if they didn't have enough to do, some senior executives are now blogging. These busy people are regularly sitting down at their computers to offer the world a view from inside their firms, a view on world events, business challenges, and developments in the industry.

Why should senior executives blog?

It's a new way of talking directly to customers, opening conversations between those at the top of a corporation and the staff and teams in their smallest supplier or customer. It cuts through layers of hierarchy and gives a personality to corporate actions. Unlike the old world of PR and short quotes in the trade press, here the senior managers get to tell the full story.

Owning the PR message

The opinions can be personal as well as corporate, they can be about the wider trends impacting on the industry, they can share the firm's passions and visions in a way unfiltered by the media. Some senior executives may enjoy wrapping themselves up in the blanket of a corporate communications team, but for a few, like Jonathan Schwartz the Chief Operating Officer of Sun, this is proving to be an unparalleled tool for industry thought leadership. This new kind of dialogue can be with customers, suppliers, industry observers, and employees. It allows the crafting of a more human face and voice for the company

Fast-track

Key benefit: Instant communication without the media filter.

Used by: Progressive corporates and passionate SMEs.

Untapped applications: CSR and crisis management.

Key audiences: The web literate and people with a specific interest in your company or sector.

Getting started: Try a small internal test. Get support for writing training and get your team commenting.

Risks: Will stock market analysts also like what you write?

Beware the press release

Setting up the blog is the easy part. Writing with passion and building interest is a lot tougher than you may think. And the corporate framework may not be supporting your creativity. "Here's the problem", explains marketing author Seth Godin. "Blogs work when they are based on: candor, urgency, timeliness, pithiness and controversy. Does this sound like a CEO to you?" Godin's suggestions are simple: "Short and sweet, folks: If you can't be at least four of the five things listed above, please don't bother. Nobody is going to read your blog, link to your blog or quote your blog unless there's something in it for them. Save the fluff for the annual report."

Passion works in corporate blogs right now

Senior executives should be blogging and delivering the 'big picture' stuff. Blogging gives them a chance to slice through traditional media gatekeepers and take the unedited vision straight to your stakeholders. If it works well it can attract instant traffic, influence public opinion, steer legislation, influence the wider industry and maybe even sell products.

Crisis management

Compelling blogging is valuable in itself. But at times of stress in corporate communications it can come into its own. Firms can respond quickly to events and media comments, presenting information and building trust at times when the brand is under pressure.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

The CSR potential of blogs has barely been touched yet. For several years we've been urging firms to promote their CSR agenda through blogs, using the personality and voice of those involved to tell powerful stories.

Key challenges

The challenge for brands and bosses that adopt this route is that they have to be prepared to acknowledge the negatives about their companies, and be ready to tolerate criticism. Blogs are conversations, and without the freedom of the two way dialogue, your corporate blog will never shine.



Corporate blogs to bookmark

Among the business chiefs who are communicating their thoughts through blogging are Jonathan Schwartz, chief operating officer of Sun and Richard Edelman, president of PR giant Edelman and Randy Baseler, vice-president of marketing at Boeing Commercial. Another widely praised example is GM's FastLane Blog.

In-game advertising

Gaming used to be something done in the privacy of your own home. The competitive set for high scores used to be your classmates, or the guys competing for the hall of fame rankings in the local arcade. If that's still your vision of computer games then you're in for a shock. Three things have changed this: massive leaps forward in the sophistication of the games, supporting leaps in the power of the hardware and, more recently, the networking of gamers together. With the game playing community tuning out of television and other media, marketers have been looking for ways to reach them.

In-game advertising wins

In-game advertising is like outdoor media in a virtual world. Typically these ads run in 'real-life' elements of the game's fabric: posters on billboards, branding on drink vending machines, taxi advertising formats. Because the advertising follows the expectations of players, it avoids the risk of rejection or being screened out. Indeed, given how real games feel when you are playing them, the in-game advertising is a natural part of the virtual world, adding to the authenticity.

Which brands can play?

Like all of the emerging digital media platforms, the brand landscape is very sparse at the start. Fast moving consumer goods brands have much to gain and it's easy to see the similarity in marketing models between in-game advertising and the soap operas of the 1950s. In time the breadth of brands will broaden to include all high energy brands and

brands that suit the increasingly broader audience of gamers. Motoring manufacturers, financial service firms and sports brands are all next in line.

Fast-track

Key benefit: Cuts through to an elusive target audience.

Used by: Progressive FMCGs brands, Coke, Visa, Honda.

Untapped applications: Motoring and high energy / sports brands.

Key audiences: Teens and twenty-somethings, predominantly male.

Getting started: Try one test.

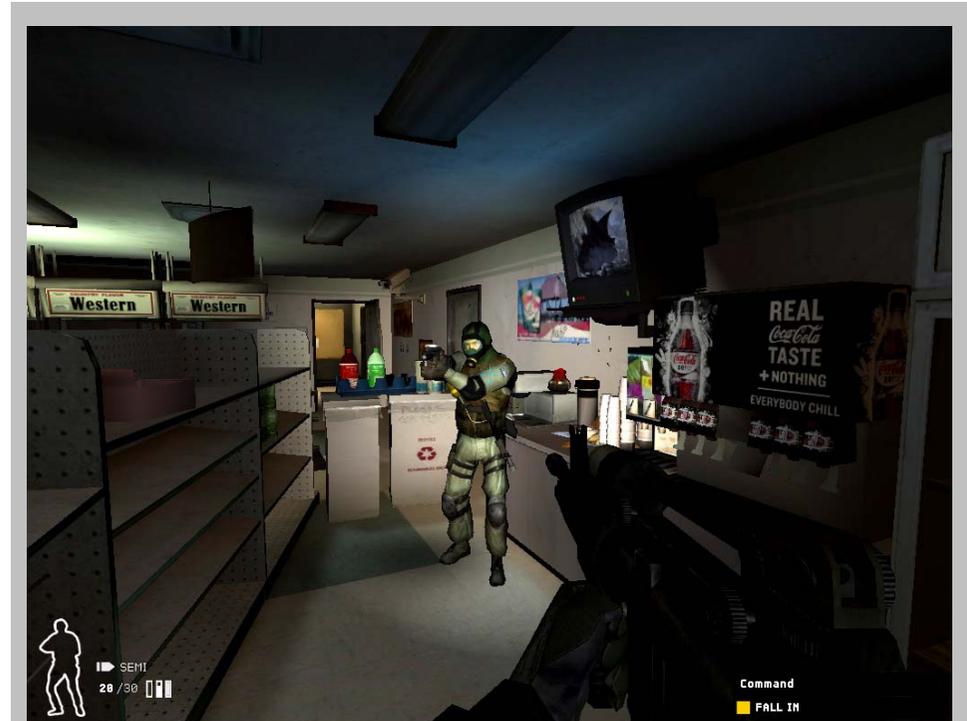
Measurement: Early days for clear campaign metrics so spend time calculating the dwell time and comparing it to your other media.

What's next?

The scale of this opportunity became clear when Microsoft bought one of the biggest gaming names, Massive, and announced plans to deliver ads on Xbox Live and MSN Games.

What are you buying?

Like the early days of web advertising, the problem for this young channel is to deliver the audience guarantees and prove the traffic levels.



Playing games with brands

In-game advertising is in its infancy, but for brands chasing audiences that have tuned out of traditional media, in-game advertising offers a powerful way to reach them and a unique environment, uncluttered by other media.

Interestingly, it's the fast moving consumer goods sector – FMCG – that stands to initially benefit most from in-game advertising. In spite of the late adoption of web advertising by FMCG brands, their innovation in the in-game media will prove to be much faster.

Harnessing CDs and traditional media

Soundtrack to your holiday: Profero helps Avis with loyalty and integration

One fundamental challenge of networked marketing is that as soon as customers unplug and go off the grid, they slide back in to a world where they can't be reached through all these new channels. Profero discovered a novel way of overcoming the problem in the car rental market, providing customised CDs of the customer's favourite holiday music. The CDs had a lifespan way beyond the two weeks of car rental, and left a piece of branding forever in the customer's life; a constant prompt of where to go for the next holiday car hire purchase.

Few brands have experimented this type of integration, but using online experiences to build an offline media product is clearly a model that works well. For all the power of web marketing, even the most evangelistic digital marketers will admit that there are times and places when people prefer different media formats; print magazines, CDs, newspapers. But this model could easily be extended to T-shirts, beer mats, DVDs, and short run magazines.

How did it work?

Recognising that renting a car is a pretty unemotional experience, the music selection puts fun, anticipation and engagement into the process. It also succeeds in creating some differentiation in a commoditised market. Customers answered some simple lifestyle questions that drove the selection of tracks for the CD. When they picked up their car Avis gave them their own 'Soundtrack to your holiday'. Music rights were negotiated by Profero and the CDs featured artists as diverse as Fatboy Slim, The Kinks and The Gypsy Kings. Inevitably the CDs are kept and played long after the hire car has been returned.

Emails with personality

Employ great copywriters and you get great copy

How often have you received a marketing email that is utterly dull? It may contain useful information, but with little or no entertainment value all too often the delete button gets pressed before you've even read it. That's the sad reality fate of the vast majority of email.

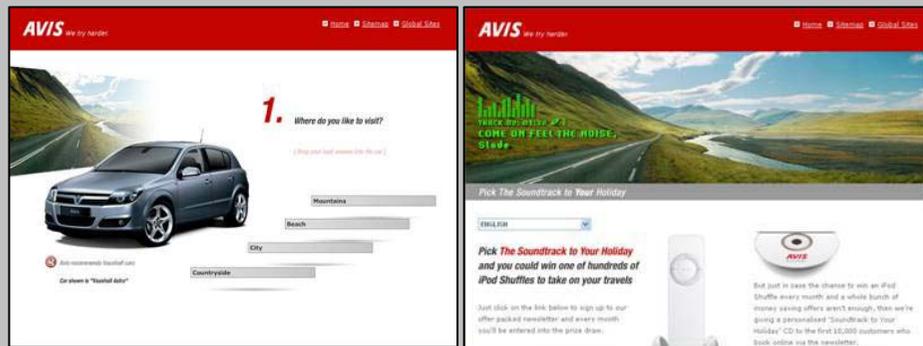
Yet just as brands have worked hard to build a distinct tone of voice in direct communications offline, so email communication also needs that type of attention. Get it right and the messages stand out, get clicked and get read.

Rich imagery and bold design

The Lastminute.com email service is a great example of one that developed a distinctive personality early on and stayed true to itself. The segmentation ensures there is a relevancy in the communications that are delivered, and their high impact style builds on the rest of the LastMinute brand experience. They regularly feed off news events to develop ideas for more topical communications; building engagement further and raising open rates.

Personality for all brands

The same ideas about personality stretch across business to business email marketing. The current interest in corporate blogging is likely to trigger a major shift in how business to business brands behave as firms gain the confidence to find a voice and weave it throughout all their communications.



Combining the web and CDs to build brand loyalty

Click on the link, answer the questions, book the car, pick up your holiday soundtrack.

Find out more: Profero



Putting the personality into personal mail

LastMinute's customer relationships were built on their email service. Developed in the late nineties, their emails have consistently pioneered an engaging tone of voice that boosted the brand's personality.

By employing topical events to deliver news, and continuing the same tone of voice throughout a customer's purchase cycle (order confirmations, e-tickets, travel reminders), they built the brand's image at a fraction of the cost of other travel brands. They also succeeded in heavy differentiation to the high street stores, driving awareness and sales even higher.

This edition from May 15th was Eurovision themed, contains flags that can double as a sweepstake selection tool as well as a mix of holiday and UK offers.

Find out more: LastMinute.com

Pay-per-text

Text gets the search model: a first for Miva

The latest developments in search have seen its model integrate with telephone directory services to push advertiser phone numbers to mobile handsets. Search marketing network Miva recently began offering marketers the chance to send relevant text messages to consumers when they make directory enquiry calls using the 118 118 service in the UK. Because directory enquiry services take millions of calls every day, it presents the opportunity for sending millions of texts to customers.

Why text matters

Search engines have proved the incredible power of navigation and their ability to deliver vast volumes of customers to brands and their websites. This is true across all the business and consumer market sectors, and providing the firm is properly networked, just as true for the smallest micro business as it is for the largest corporate. Text based advertising simply opens up a new area of navigation: the mobile phone address book. This is a space that almost everyone uses daily. Mobile devices have an even higher market penetration than search engines, and as yet there have been no effective mechanisms for firms to get marketing messages into their address books.

How it works

The TXT//AD tools from Miva will be sold by 'ad groups' to ensure the advertisers' messages are tied to relevant phone number requests. A caller who asks for an airline number, for example, could also get a car hire message and contact number.



Pay-per-text

The latest form of search advertising that has migrated to mobile phones. Customers using mobile directory enquiry services in the UK get an extra number bundled into their text message. The numbers are for related services and are decided to anticipate user needs.

Find out more: Miva.co.uk

Actions

Examine each of these case studies and explore their relevance to your brand.

Click through to the websites and explore the services.

Re-examine whether your online marketing is working as hard for you as it could.

Resources & Links

Google.co.uk – Maps and local search.

LastMinute.com – Emails with personality from a brand that mastered differentiation right from the start.

Miva.com – Pay-per-text, the latest in search advertising.

Profero.com – Getting more from banners and building integrated campaigns.

Sun.com – Corporate blogging from the heart.

DigitalStrategyConsulting.com/thoughtleaders - for interviews with pioneers.

Digital Training Academy courses, including:

- Web 2.0 strategies for publishers developing online social networks
- Techniques for building and nurturing blogs and online communities
- The changing role of media in the digital networked society

And share with us your comments about this Digital Insight Report on innovations.

About the Digital Insight Report series

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



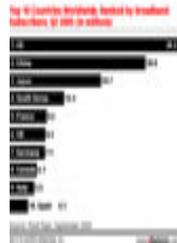
economy, and are published monthly. We also publish similar Digital Thought Leadership interviews and Digital Book Club reviews to share the ideas and thinking of some of the people and companies shaping the digital networked world. These often accompany our keynote talks and training workshops. Making sense of the digital world can be tough, but knowledge and training can unlock the potential of your team.

About the author

Danny Meadows-Klue has been a commentator on 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. Among his industry roles he is the co-founder and former chairman of the UK and European Internet and Interactive Advertising Bureau, and has been lecturing on digital marketing for more than a decade. He set up Digital Strategy Consulting in 2000 to help firms accelerate their businesses through digital networks.



Research: Digital Intelligence



Keeping on top of the latest research and trends is still a challenge for many, but Digital Intelligence can help you. To keep our Digital Training Academy classes up to date I trawl through hundreds of websites, magazines and research newswires every month, and distil some of the key points into this review of the industry's growth and the evolution of marketing. Let us take some of the strain and make your email that little bit faster to sift through. And if you feel something has been missed, or you'd simply like to know more, then just email me right back.

Training and Development from Digital Strategy

If your firm wants to harness new marketing and publishing approaches, then why not talk to the team here at Digital? Our network of senior associates can deliver the hands-on expertise you need to change the way your team behaves, enabling them to understand and implement new publishing strategies. We can work with you to support the rapid prototyping of new ideas and the building of simple tools that will allow you to use these new insights to improve your conversion rates, unlocking more of the value from the digital channel investments you've already made. Our range of training services spans executive briefings for boardroom colleagues to hands on workshops for data analysts and marketing managers. Call us to find out how we can help your team achieve more.



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Making sense of a digital world

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