gen2
ADVISORS

Contents

Introduction

Do You Speak Social Media?

For managers across the business spectrum, social media literacy is becoming as important as computer literacy and basic numeracy. If you are a marketing or marketing insights manager, a confident working knowledge of social media monitoring and analytics will soon be a question of survival. For marketing insights managers grasping and learning to manage social media analytics is especially urgent.

You must understand the general concepts of social media monitoring and analytics for your brand to thrive.

Social media monitoring and analytics are being adopted to support all areas of the enterprise—from customer service and crisis management to human resources and supply chain. The impact on marketing and on marketing insights is already profound.

The pressure is on and growing by the day:

- One-way advertising from brand to consumer has been joined and sometimes drowned out by a globe-spanning billion-voice conversation among customers.

- Customers have vast power over brand equity and product acceptance. Yes, they own your brand.

- Marketing to hyper-networked customers in a fluid digitized world requires constant reevaluation of strategy and tactics.

- Brand management must be prepared to turn on a dime to seize opportunities or avert crises.

- Traditional marketing and research approaches are not dead, but they are no longer sufficient. They look backward when management needs to move forward at warp speed.

Along with these pressures and challenges, however, there is also terrific news. An effective program of social media monitoring and analytics offers unprecedented opportunity for insights into consumer perceptions and behavior:

- Unprecedented access to what the market is saying about your brand, your competition and the market at large

- Customer opinions, decision processes, priorities, unmet needs, and lifestyle choices available in real time on a massive scale

- Insights to improve your customer experience, promote and defend your brand, identify white space in your markets, and keep an eye on your competition

In the next couple of years, we will hit a tipping point, after which the market insights function, as practiced by most, will no longer exist. – Forrester Research, 1/22/13

These new sources of market intelligence and insights offer exciting new tools to marketing managers. They also clearly pose a direct challenge to traditional marketing research approaches. Marketing research departments and vendors grew and prospered by acquiring, interpreting, and disseminating data when data was precious and hard to come by. Now enterprises are drowning in data, much of it generated through social media. More than ever before, managers need clear, immediate, and actionable insights; but many marketing research departments are still organized around data gathering and deliver insights based on data collected weeks or months before. There is an emerging consensus that this model of the consumer insights function could soon disappear.

How We Can Help

This report is a social media analytics user manual for marketers. We explain in detail how social media can supercharge marketing programs, enabling true relationship and real-time marketing. We show you how to get into the game or improve your current social media program. We also show how social media analytics will impact the marketing insights function and how insights managers can find opportunity in the challenge.

Figuring out how to meet the challenges and capture the advantages of social media monitoring and analytics can be bewildering.

For one thing, a dwindling community of naysayers are losing the argument, but they may still sound persuasive. They will tell you that social media data is noisy, filled with spam, and not at all representative of your customer base or consumer targets. They say that instead of wasting your time sifting online chatter for insights, you might just as well ask your grandmother and nephews what they think.

Getting past these objections is fairly easy, but there is a lot to learn about mining social media, analyzing it to support your brand, and integrating these new data and insights streams into your organization. We also help you make intelligent resource choices from a staggering array of technologies, processes, services, and vendors.

Many vendors will tell you that their social media solutions—that look incredible on their websites and in demos—are perfect for you. Some say their social media software will fry you an egg in the morning and tuck you in at night. To help you assess these claims and identify the best options for your organization, we include a comprehensive overview of the vendor landscape, a contact directory for 130 firms within the report, and a separate interactive vendor selection tool with additional details on services and approaches .

To be more specific, we answer the following questions:

- How are global and local marketers using social media analytics to answer key questions and support strategic decisions?
- Exactly how do social media analytics support strategic marketing, new product development, improving the customer experience, and marketing communications?
- Where do social media monitoring and analytics fit within the organization—especially in relation to the marketing and marketing insights functions?
- What exactly should you listen to?
- What should you listen for?
- How do you convince upper management (or yourself) that they will get a good (more likely, great) return on investment and find yourselves spending less to get more?
- How do you find a vendor that is right for you—from structuring the initial review to signing the first check?

Based on two surveys, more than 50 in-depth interviews with vendors, marketing, and insights professionals at some of the world's leading companies, and the collective wisdom and experience of our own thought leaders and subject matter experts, this report gives you an orientation, concrete action steps, and access to tools that will make your job easier, your business more profitable, and your career path more secure.

For more information please contact
Gregg Archibald, Senior Partner | garchibald@gen2advisors.com | 646.568.6566 x702

Acknowledgments

Gen2 Advisors would like to thank the following brands and vendors for their valuable contributions to this report. All participated in one-hour telephone interviews and many responded generously in follow-up emails and phone calls. In addition to the brands listed here, we thank several who preferred to remain anonymous.

Brands

Activision
Campbell's
Chick-fil-A
Citigroup
Coleman
Del Monte
DivCom
Iced Media
John Deere
Johnson and Johnson
Kraft Foods
U.S. Marine Corps
McDonald's
Mercy Hospital System
Microsoft
Nokia
Phillips
Rogers Media
Sodexo
Sonaesierra
Spielo
Univision
Vodafone

Vendors

Adobe
Aiaioo
Altaplana
Anderson Analytics
Attensity
Bluefin Labs
Bottom Line Analytics
Clarabridge
Concentric
Converseon
Conversition
Decooda
General Sentiment
Gnip
in4mation insights
Integrasco
Metavana
MomentFeed
MotiveQuest
Netbase

Getting Marketing Insights from Social Media Analytics

- **How is social media changing marketing and marketing research?**
- **How are brands benefiting from social media analytics?**
- **How do social media analytics support strategic marketing?**
- **How do social media analytics improve and track advertising and brand communications?**
- **What about new product development?**
- **How do social media analytics support the customer experience?**

The Changing Marketing and Insights Game

Marketing and marketing insights are increasingly adapting to a new paradigm, and the changes are immense and profound.

Every hour, millions of consumers use social media to talk to each other about likes, dislikes, problems, triumphs, celebrities, media, product usage, your brand, and your competitors' brands. They meet and sometimes bond to each other across vast geographies. Exchanging opinions and experiences is an important part of their lifestyles. In a sense, this is where they live now.

The availability of social media data has caused drastic change in the relationship of managers to marketing and tactical decision support. Managers are expected to make quick decisions, responding to problems and seizing opportunities as soon as they present themselves. Citigroup's global insights director explains that they can no longer wait for exhaustively analyzed survey data.

"Social media has changed business in general and financial services in particular. Financial services used to react to projections based on data gathered weeks previously about recalled or projected behavior and stated opinion. Social media can provide relevant information in near-real time, and managers can react immediately." – Ravi Parmeswar, Citigroup

Parmeswar feels this is a good thing. His managers are hired for their good instincts and expertise in designing and managing financial products. They are expected to use their judgment supported by the best available information. They must decide whether input from social media rings true, whether it calls for action, and what action is indicated. They make more calls based on their own educated judgment and cannot hide behind statistically supported recommendations.

> *"Social media monitoring and analysis provides extremely rich and valuable insights that must be exploited without quantifiable confirmation. Research is more a support for informed and inspired judgment calls and less a crutch for CYA agendas. Judgment has become paramount." – Ravi Parmeswar, Citigroup*

Today, marketing research and insights professionals are challenged to incorporate social media data into their insights and recommendations. At some brands, principally large FMCG companies, research and insights departments have assumed a leadership role in championing the development of comprehensive and rigorous social media monitoring and analytics programs. At many others, marketing, customer service, and communications departments have launched their own social media monitoring and analytics programs, often hiring different vendors to perform similar or duplicative tasks. Marketing research and insights professionals find themselves playing catch-up.

Key Points:

- Social media data not only supports but also demands fast decisions and responses from marketers.
- Marketing insights professionals must adapt quickly to remain relevant.

How Companies Use Social Media Analytics

Social media has broad applications within the enterprise: wherever knowing more about the customer can help managers make better decisions.

According to the GreenBook Research Industry Trends (GRIT) study conducted in late 2012, social media analytics and insights are most widely adopted for monitoring the customer experience, followed by supporting brand and corporate identity, crisis management, and public relations.

The GRIT findings also show growing adoption of social media analytics across these and other areas, including competitive intelligence, new product development, and tracking advertising and promotional campaigns.

Adoption of Social Media Analytics

(Percent Using Each Application)

Customer experience monitoring	**52%**
Brand identity	**38%**
Corporate identity, crisis management	**32%**
Public relations	**31%**
Competitive intelligence	**25%**
Campaign and promotion tracking	**20%**
Campaign and promotion development	**16%**
Advertising	**16%**
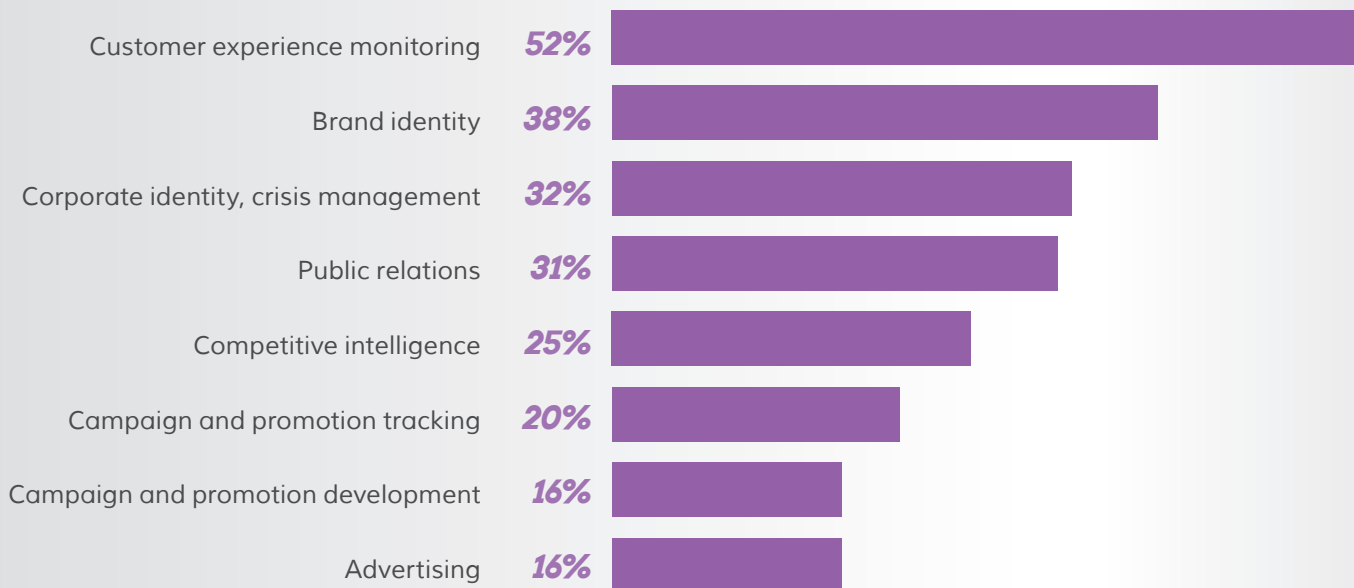
Brands with sophisticated integration of social media analytics with social media outreach and digital marketing are beginning to conduct real-time marketing, rapidly introducing and adjusting products and services in response to consumer demand.

Even at slower implementation speeds, social media outreach and analytics offer brands a continuous loop of insights, opportunity, action, and assessment.

While our focus is on achieving insights relevant to marketing and positioning, social media programs have broader applications within the enterprise. Monitoring and analyzing social media yields insights toward improving operations, local product and service delivery, human resource recruiting programs, and investor/analyst relations.

Recognizing this, enterprises are rapidly moving toward integrating social media into comprehensive dashboards and are combining social media data with other data from survey research, customer service logs, transactions, and operational metrics. Social media is one of the major components in Big Data management and analytics.

From brand maintenance to customer segmentation and competitive intelligence, social media analytics deliver valuable strategic insights.

Insights from social media analytics

Identify opportunities for products, service enhancement and promotions

Trial introductions of new products and service programs, and promotions tailored to customer segments or individuals

Success and diagnostics for improvement from customer reactions and engagement metrics
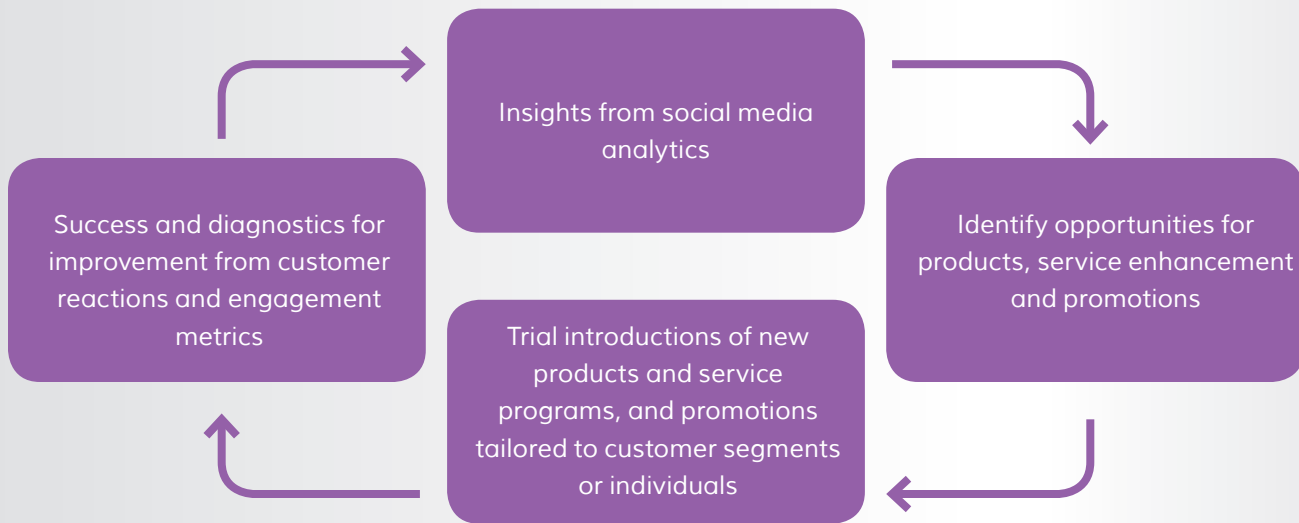
Key Points:

- Social media analytics can make you more competitive not just in marketing but across all operations.
- Combine social media analytics with transactional, customer support and other business metrics to support real-time marketing and operational agility.

Track Your Brand by Share of Voice and Sentiment

If you are in a high involvement category or have a highly promoted and widely discussed brand, social media analytics easily and reliably track your share of voice and "buzz" (how often your brand is mentioned by comparison to competing brands). When placed in context, this is a very powerful metric for tracking responses to advertising and promotional campaigns as well as overall brand health in real time.

Share of voice must be placed in context by applying sentiment measures to distinguish between positive and negative buzz and by linking shifts in share of voice to events in the market. If your share of voice goes up relative to a competitor, it could be a very good sign. If you are BP around the time of Deep Water Horizon, however, it would be a very bad sign.

> *"Social Media is a 'real time equity monitor' that provides the unique opportunity to learn how your brand is perceived in the marketplace in consumers' own words." – Product Research Leader, P&G*

While any brand benefits from social media analytics, well-known brands in high-involvement categories have a strong advantage. There are more mentions and conversations to analyze.

> *"The effectiveness will hinge on the importance of word of mouth for a brand, on how likely the customers are to mention it on social media. For most brands with a decent degree of awareness, it should work—especially for items where there is high involvement in the purchase: autos, well-known food brands." – Michael Wolfe, Bottom Line Analytics*

In addition to buzz most social media monitoring and analytics platforms support classifying mentions by basic sentiment: positive, neutral, and negative. These basic metrics are extremely useful when tracked and placed in the context of known external events such as product introductions, a new advertising campaign, a promotion, or a negative event or rumor. To make this more relevant to decision making, you should:

- Establish benchmarks and baselines for share of voice and brand sentiment ratings for your brand and competing brands, using sentiment measures to distinguish positive and neutral share of voice from negative.

- Continuously track brand buzz and sentiment against your benchmarks and against key competing brands.

- Monitor correlations of peaks and troughs with dashboards that include timelines of marketing initiatives and events (extreme weather, market gyrations, political crises).

- Investigate significant shifts in share of voice relative to your competitors to establish context. When Exxon lost significant share of voice relative to BP in 2010, it reflected a firestorm of negativity directed at BP rather than a problem for Exxon.

THE UNIQUE BRAND NAME ADVANTAGE

Brands with unambiguous trade names have an advantage in social media analytics. There is no confusion when tracking mentions of Adidas. With no reason for anyone to say or write the word except in referring to the brand, all mentions will have a 100% relevance rating.

Similarly, Verizon has no issues. Accurately tracking Sprint or Best Buy, however, requires carefully constructed algorithms.

Tracking Low Awareness Brands and Low Involvement Categories

Lower awareness brands and organizations in niche categories can make use of social media analytics, but not with the same ease of the higher awareness brands. These lower awareness brands may not generate enough conversation to support analysis of Twitter data, for instance. But there are other opportunities. They can direct their social media monitoring toward category-specific sites, their (and their competitors') Facebook pages, and perhaps Market Research Online Communities (MROCs) set up to facilitate the brand's research. Research can also be directed toward the category and category usage scenarios, interactive product review sites, and special-interest blogs. While they may not mention specific brands, people do talk about the how they use products, what they think of features, and what the products do for them.

A short burst of social media activity for a brand in a low-involvement category can also be generated by a contest or promotion involving social media submissions that invite discussion around the entries and their judging.
An office supplies brand generated a valuable spurt of social media comments about their own and competing products by sponsoring a competition for the most creative use of their products in Halloween costumes, party decorations, and displays.

Ultimately, brands in low involvement categories should do careful analysis in collaboration with vendors or social media consultants to determine realistic goals for a social media analytics program and appropriate scale for their investment.

Beyond Twitter and Facebook

Keep in mind that social media include far more than just tweets and Facebook updates. Comprehensive social media programs will monitor a wide array of blogs, wikis, influencers, communities, and forums relevant to the category. Although less glamorous and popular, these other resources and sites are key to monitoring low-involvement categories, niche brands, small markets, and consumers in less developed countries.

John Deere, for instance, gleans important insights from Twitter and Facebook for its consumer product lines (e.g., Gator). For larger farm and earth moving equipment, however, forums and blogs catering to farmers, engineers, contractors, and landscapers are far more relevant.

More Social Media Data Sources

- Image and video: *YouTube, Pinterest, Tumblr, InstaGram*
- Product reviews: *Yelp, Amazon*
- Technology review and news release: *EnGadget, Gizmodo,* and *TechCrunch*
- Experience review sites: *TripAdvisor.com*
- Websites, blogs, and *Facebook* pages of competing brands in the category

- Question and answer: *About.com*
- Lifestyle-centric blogs catering to ethnic populations, lifestyles, or age segments
- Gaming sites that allow exchanges among players
- Your own Marketing Research Online Community (MROC) of interested customers and prospects

Tagging Emotions

Going far beyond basic positives and negatives, some vendors provide tags for specific emotions and intention, presenting a more nuanced analysis of brand perceptions. Emotions that can be identified and measured for intensity include anger, joy, disgust, fear, excitement, and many more. Semantic and linguistic pattern analysts can identify as many as 80 distinct emotions in text. The intention most relevant to brands is intent to purchase, and social media analytics can identify a customer's position on the purchase decision path.

Word clouds also yield insights into customer perceptions when subjected to concentrated analysis by trained researchers.

Fleshing out a brand profile or determining appropriate action steps based on a shift in perceptions requires human involvement. Social media analytics, however, greatly simplify this task by providing topics to pursue and threads to follow. The process is very straightforward: click through word associations in the cloud display to the actual comments and sampling tweets and other conversations feeding into the codes.

No matter how sophisticated and carefully constructed the analytical framework, digging into actual conversations is key to ensuring quality and illuminating the findings. Human involvement turns information into a brand story.

> *"I make a point of getting on Twitter every week for a certain amount of time and reading through the feeds, seeing what people are talking about. The lines on the chart will tell me a lot but so will the individual conversations. I want to make sure I'm always looking at both." - Rick Wion, McDonald's*

> *"Working with teams, I say this is what the data is telling us. This is how our brand map looks. This is how the competitor's brand map looks. What are they thinking? What are they looking at? Let's look at some sample tweets. Let's look at some of the sample conversations which are happening in these. What seems to be driving those? How can we amend accordingly? – Marketing Researcher, Leading Technology Firm*

Key Points:

- Establish performance benchmarks of brand buzz and sentiment for your brand and competitors.
- Display positive peaks and negative troughs on a timeline of market and external events.
- Drill down into actual conversations for deeper understanding.

Gather Competitive Intelligence

It's just as easy to research a competing brand or service as it is to research your own. It's also a sure thing that one or all of your competitors track you in social media. Besides, tracking competitors is essential for understanding your own brand.

Tracking the competition puts the performance of your brand in context and highlights your strengths and weaknesses relative to your competition and the overall category.

> *"I could give my tool to two competitors and depending on the culture in the company one can study the other and beat their weaknesses whether it's campaign management, brand equity, insights about soda or any time of product. Anybody can study anybody now and those who are going to win are going to figure out how to do it faster, understand how to trust the data and leverage it." – Malcolm De Leo, Netbase*

Tracking information on competitors is quite simple. The sites, triggers, and analysis that you design for your own brand are leveraged with the competitive brand. In this way, most of the work is done for competitive intelligence the moment the work is done for your own brand.

For brands with a few key competitors or budget challenges, simply monitoring the Facebook pages of competing brands can give a sense of how their customers regard them. You can also learn about product or service problems you can exploit to your advantage in marketing or product development. Creativity is key. In one of our favorite examples a gaming system manufacturer regularly monitors YouTube, where slot game videos, we learn, are a major category. If she wants to check out a competitor's new machine, she just watches a video of someone playing it.

Key Point:

- Track competing brands as carefully as you track your own. That's what your competitors are doing.

Segment Customers Through Social Media

Segmentation is one of the basic tools in every marketer's toolkit. Social media tools and procedures deliver segments defined along a variety of dimensions, including: demographics, geography, behavior, relation to the product category, and stage on the customer decision journey. These approaches do have some limitations compared to some of the traditional approaches to segmentation, but these are getting narrower all the time.

- **Geographic segmentation** is achieved through geolocation on social networks, which are now predominately accessed on mobile devices. Tweets and other messages are aggregated according to geographies that are of interest to the brand. For example, retail outlets aggregate the information at store, division, and regional levels. Food service and franchise operations can segment customers by the stores and outlets they patronize—enabling micro comparisons of customer experience and management effectiveness at the location level, as well as highly personalized customer engagement programs.

- **Behavioral segmentation** classifies consumers by their lifestyle and activities. Behavioral segments could be frequent business flyers, winter sports enthusiasts, long-distance commuters, DIYers, or gamers. Social media analytics can deliver behavioral segments most directly by cross-tagging tweets to correlate brand mentions with mentions of activities. The cross-tagged tweeters are then clustered in much the same way as in traditional segmentations.

- **Purchase intent segmentation** uses semantic and linguistic analysis to classify customers by their stages in the purchase decision process: consideration, evaluation, and purchase. In a practical application cited by Radian6 (now owned by Salesforce.com) an auto manufacturer found a higher share of voice (relative to market share) in the consideration stage than in the evaluation or purchase stages. Among other responses, they focused marketing and operations efforts on stimulating showroom visits.

- **Influencer segmentation** identifies customers and commentators with extensive networks of followers who take their opinions and recommendations seriously.

- **Demographic segmentation** is achieved directly by sourcing social media data from communities and blogs that cater to particular demographic groups. If comments come from, for instance, a site with high concentrations of Latino women or young males, two demographic tags can be confidently attached to each segment. Additionally, advances in text analytics support assigning some demographic tags to word choice and usage.

Social Media Segmentations

- Behavioral
- Demographics
- Geographic
- Influence in Social Network
- Lifestyle
- Stage of Purchase Decision

- **Psychographic segmentation,** as well as demographics, is delivered by semantic analysis of message content. These analyses are advanced, cutting edge, and on the cusp of greatly enhanced effectiveness, immediacy, and subtlety. In fact, they may soon be capable of supporting highly customized marketing through a process Decooda calls "fluid segmentation."

- **Fluid segmentation** applies advanced semantic and linguistic analyses to identify not only the standard segmentation dimensions just discussed, but also emotional need states and life events. Reclassifying consumers on the fly can support highly targeted time-sensitive offers tailored not just to a general customer profile but also to specific needs or circumstances that emerged in the previous 24 hours. This takes us to the customized advertising shown in "Minority Report" and beyond.

According to David Johnson of Decooda, fluid segmentation based on real-time analysis of social media conversations is within reach in the near future. He stresses, however, that the shelf life of a "current need state" is only about 24 hours. Consumers whose tweets and Facebook updates are older than 24 hours are not included.

> *"We ask clients, 'Hey, if I knew someone's state of mind and their emotions when they walked into my store or visited my website, would that change how I either serve up an ad or promote to them?' So many clients that we've talked to said, 'Absolutely, yes.' If we're able to monitor all Facebook and all Twitter information in real time, I can not only tell when a customer's status changes, I can actually tell you the things that they're talking about and the things that they're most emotional about right now. I can use that information to frame how I'm going to communicate with them. That's important because the way segmentation structures work today, you're always an A, you're always a B, you're always a C. They're going to treat you the same way all the time because you fall into that bucket. The reality is, at any moment in time, your emotional state may be such that you're an A when you're normally a B or you may be a D when you're normally an A. Our ability to understand that will allow people to engage more relevantly and intelligently with their consumer base." – David Johnson, Decooda*

Key Points:

- Social media analytics can deliver sophisticated customer segmentations through geo-location and/or semantic/linguistic analysis.
- Advances in linguistic analysis enable fluid segmentation and flash marketing to customers according to momentary need states.

Integrating Social and Customer Data for Broader Segmentations

"Our clients can connect social media profiles to actual customer profiles by using our Pulsar platform to deliver customer care via Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. In order to serve their customers the brand needs them to provide their unique identifier (a loyalty card number in one case, a bank account number in another, a mobile phone in another case).

"Once the connection is made you are able to define a list of customers from each segment (as defined by the brand segmentation model) and identify their Twitter handle. You can now track any conversation from the users included in the lists of Twitter handles for each one of the segments.

"Finally you can craft a dashboard for each segment in order to provide the brand with live segment psychographic and behavioral data in real-time. This integration of social data and customer data is beneficial in two ways: social data (psychographics, attitudes, opinions and behaviors) are used to better segment the customer data. Customer data in return can be used to segment more effectively the social data so that you can add context to the conversations and know exactly how they are impacting the key segments of your audience."

— Francesco Dorazio, Facegroup

Another approach to segmentation combines social media data with CRM records to add social media segmentations to traditional segmentation schemes, enriching both for a holistic view of the individual customer. One method is for customer service representatives to receive problem reports and questions through social media and respond with a request for some kind of unique identifier that provides a hook into the CRM system.

Key Points:

- Encourage customers to follow your brand on Twitter and provide their Twitter handles to add to your CRM profiles.
- Collect unique identifiers (account numbers, phone numbers, loyalty program number) when responding to service requests from social media.
- Integrate segmentation from social media with existing brand segmentations for more complete and actionable customer profiling and targeting.

Case Study:

Microsoft

Microsoft Experiment to Validate Social Media Segmentations

In an ongoing pilot program, Microsoft worked with Alterian Insights (formerly Intrepid) to develop a social media segmentation scheme for technology decision makers.

Several thousand IT professionals participating in a Microsoft panel volunteered their Twitter handles and gave permission for their tweets to be mapped to their detailed panel profiles.

Alterian analyzed their tweeted opinions and behavior over an 18-month period and correlated them to the panelists' historical answers to surveys and the demographics, psychographics, and behavior from their panel registrations. Each panel member could be profiled by personal interests, enthusiasms, and concerns and by their answers to survey questions about particular products and services.

Analysis yielded telling word usage, comments, and types of conversations typical of each segment developed from the panelists. They then used those patterns to identify the same segments within a larger population of tweeters (identities unknown) mentioning (for example) Windows 7. Once they were tagged in segments, Microsoft was able to track reactions to product features, product announcements, and advertising campaigns by various classifications of customers (such as high-maintenance frequent users of support services). Analytics yielded a metric they called product commitment that may apply in other categories going forward.

For now tracking by survey continues as before, with results compared to findings from the social media research to establish benchmarks of comparability. The goal has been to eliminate some portion of ongoing tracking surveys, substituting social media research.

> *"We essentially used the data sets from the community to generate a segmentation for everything else and look at the trending over time. We focused on text mining and keywords to find which each of the segments was using most and that's how we would classify the larger population. It wasn't a perfect match, but what we could see how it was trending both in the panel and the rest of the people. What we could then do was look at it historically and say, 'Here's what it looked like for Win7 and here's what it looked like for the previous release.'"*
>
> – Warren Sukernek, SDS Alterian

Support Marketing Communications, Advertising, and PR

There is no better tool than social media for learning how best to communicate with and motivate your customers. Access to unfiltered customer conversations, coupled with analytics that identify themes and track variations in sentiments and emotions make marcom a "killer app" for social media—second only to customer support.

Advertising Campaign and Message Development

Social media has become the first (and sometimes only) stop for many agencies when preparing a new business pitch or seeking inspiration and grounding for new advertising. Real time unfiltered conversations among active customers are an incomparable resource for quickly gaining an understanding of a product category and a brand's place within in it. The traditional approach of focus groups continue to offer some advantages, but social media offers the unfiltered voice of the customer and can yield insights on topics that might never have found their way onto a moderator's discussion guide. For agencies specializing in digital marketing, social media may well be the only live data collection resource.

> *"In social research you can lay a blanket over the conversations that are naturally happening and see where the passion exists in the category, and see how people are naturally talking about it." – David Rabjohns, MotiveQuest*

Campaign Performance Monitoring

Close monitoring of social media provides feedback on a campaign or individual execution immediately after launch or even during deployment. A Super Bowl ad starts generating tweets within seconds and gives early indicators of audience response by the time it has finished running.

There is no better resource for quickly understanding a product category.

Over time, effective television advertising generates discernible spikes in brand mentions and positive sentiment. Key messaging points or campaign hooks are replayed in social media and key copy points or tag lines begin to appear in juxtaposition with brand mentions. Social media analytics also track brand associations with key tag lines or celebrity endorsers.

> *"Monitoring new product launches in social media while consumers are reacting in real time will help polish the communication and identify opportunities early on. A conventional questionnaire is too slow and often misses the "emotional" component as consumers are reporting memories of emotions not sharing actual emotions with each other." – Product Research Leader, P&G*

A misfiring television commercial will also generate spikes in negative brand mentions. There is a potential silver lining however, since specific offending elements will often be mentioned—providing quick diagnostics and possible opportunities for revision. Voiceover announcements and typographic overlays can be tweaked in a day to correct missteps or add emphasis to an appealing element. Facegroup, a leading co-creation agency, shared an example of a client's turning a digital marketing campaign on a dime in response to social media learning.

"Our client (a major mobile network) recently ran a text/sms based campaign around an iTunes Christmas offer. It became apparent within days from social data that the wording they used was confusing to consumers so they changed it on the fly and the uptake of the campaign doubled. The Head of Real-time Research says, 'It is helping us to deliver better customer experiences by reacting faster than the competition to customer needs with better products and better pricing. We are becoming a lot smarter about learning what our customers want and matching that with our offering.'" – Francesco Dorazio, Facegroup

Agencies and marketers establish benchmarks and performance metrics over time that can provide normative reference points for gauging buzz and sentiment variations. Even so, questions may linger about what amount of additional buzz signals a "good" response and the significance of the lag between campaign rollout and noticeable spikes.

"On Twitter, how many followers do we have and what are the trends in that? [On] Facebook, how many fans do we have and how often are they visiting? What are they pushing the 'Like' button on? We're in a constant state of reading those metrics and trying to determine what those metrics mean in terms of how we are presenting ourselves to our fans and followers." –Rick Wion, McDonald's

Tracking reactions to high-visibility advertising for high-interest brands and products frequently mentioned in social media is relatively easy. Monitoring Twitter and Facebook could be sufficient (although most brands monitor far more widely). For brands with less widespread involvement, monitoring key blogs and category-relevant sites is required.

Bluefin, a relative newcomer in this space, offers clients moment-by-moment tracking of television programming and the commercial spots running on a network. Proprietary technology lets them take "video fingerprints" to determine which spots for which brands aired at a precise moment in time. They then map that information to Twitter. They can report to brands how much social media buzz their spot generated in a particular daypart on a particular network and in the context of a particular kind of programming.

"Because we marry the social response with the origins on TV, we know when that commercial ran. Did it run on Modern Family? Did it run in the comedies in general? Was it run in a sporting event context? Did they run in special events? Did they run on daytime, early fringe, late fringe prime time, and so on. We can now work with the brands and say, 'Hey, when commercial A for diet Pepsi ran in this context you were able to take this paid media investment and generated this much social response or social amplification. When diet Pepsi spot B ran in this context, maybe it ran more on daytime in talk shows, it generated this much social conversation for you." – Tom Thai, Bluefin

These metrics not only enable brands and agencies to compare effectiveness of alternate spots or alternate celebrity endorsements. They also have massive implications for marketing mix modeling and network valuations of commercial time slots.

Assessing the audience reach of social media tweets and postings could provide an extremely valuable metric. The tweet itself is a valuable indicator of engagement and confirms delivery of an impression. There is also a ripple effect as a like, a tweet, or a comment about the brand is seen by friends and followers. These secondary exposures are legitimately part of the true reach of the advertising.

When campaign-relevant social media buzz is tracked to particular channels and dayparts, it provides networks with a valuable sales tool and a justification for higher pricing toward advertisers.

> *"The network can say, 'Hey we're trying to get greater share of advertising wallet from the GMC brand of GM. Let's show them how advertising on CBS will generate more social buzz for the GMC brand versus advertising they can put elsewhere.'" – Tom Thai, Bluefin*

When there is a good match between the affinity for a program and the affinity for a brand, the agency and brand have direct guidance as to where to place their advertising. Some social media vendors analyze Twitter feeds over time to see how many users have mentioned (for instance) both Audi and Modern Family in positive contexts. Levels of congruence indicate how receptive the program's viewers are to a given brand.

> *"For Twitter followers we have a series of Venn diagrams with followers of Audi, Chevy, Chrysler, etc. Then we have the same Venn buckets for TV shows. The overlay gives intersections and says to our clients this is why your show aligns to this brand or why your brand aligns to this show." – Pete Moran, General Sentiment*

These new metrics are going to impact revenue in unforeseeable ways. It is clear, however, that both networks and advertisers have much more powerful planning and modeling tools than ever before.

Key Points:

- Advertisers and agencies rely on social media to create, track and modulate campaigns based on the unfiltered voice of the customer.
- Since social media provides a continuous stream of audience responses, brands, agencies, and networks can get real-time metrics on campaign performance, comparative boost of celebrity endorsements, and optimal match-ups of brands, programming and dayparts.

Real-Time Public Relations and Promotions

Some of the following applications may seem more like problem identification and response than applications of insights to marketing issues. We include them here because insights generated from a social media monitoring program are key to understanding context and formulating appropriate action steps.

Crisis Management and Early Warning

Social media amplifies positive brand messaging, but nothing spreads faster in social media than a serious or amusing gaffe from a politician or well-known brand. Unfortunately, this applies to malicious, unfounded rumors as well.

Mike Moran of Converseon, a full service social media agency, provides a terrific example to illustrate the perils of not monitoring social media defensively. In May of this year, Greenpeace unveiled ArcticReady.com to bring attention to Shell Oil's plans for drilling in the Arctic. Designed to spoof Shell's legitimate web pages and featuring the Shell logo, the home page article featured the headline, "For hundreds of years, explorers have battled the Arctic. Today, we're finally winning." A good recap of the campaign is available at The Huffington Post.

The spoof site was active for over two months before Shell took any notice. They only found it when Greenpeace introduced an ad contest inviting visitors to write provocative captions to photos of Arctic wildlife and scenery. All of a sudden, links began to show up on Shell's Twitter pages. Shell was caught completely off balance and generated further negative buzz when site managers responded with a threat of legal action against anyone who shared the links. Shortly thereafter, seasoned PR professionals took charge. They pointed out that the site was a scam, said that no legal action would be filed, and communicated that the company would focus on "safely executing our operations."

The obvious lessons are that comprehensive monitoring for early signs of negative buzz is not optional for major brands, and the monitoring must include hot lines to trained and poised PR professionals[1] who can address issues appropriately.

Working with your vendor or consultants, develop key words and ideas for identifying flash points specific to your category or brand identity. Examples would be "nausea" or "spoiled" or "cockroach" for a fast food brand. Any rapidly rising spike in negatives, however, should trigger an alert to your crisis management team.

---

1   It is important to have a crisis management team thoroughly grounded in social media and supported by a clear and detailed reaction plan.

There is consensus that Twitter is the essential crisis management platform for all brands, though broader monitoring is surely advisable.

> *"What I aspire to do is know very fast, as fast as possible, if there are conversations that are happening that might lead to challenges for my product, my brand or my company. In that particular use case Twitter is great, right? Because everyone recognizes it, and it is super fast. It also happens to be super concise which is fine for PR crisis management." –Chris Moody, Gnip*

Remember that early detection is of no benefit unless you have early response teams and policies in place to react effectively and decisively. How long is too long? Let's hope you do not find out. Responses are often needed within minutes or hours rather than days.

Key Points:

- Monitor social media 24/7 for weak signals of customer dissatisfaction and negative buzz. Nip potential PR crises in the bud.
- Channel early warnings to expert response teams. Establish clear lines of communication and have policies in place to ensure fast and appropriate responses.

PR Campaign and Message Development

Social media inspires and guides creation of public relations initiatives and communications, in the same way as it fuels advertising. Plugging into social media teaches communicators how their customers talk about their brand and the category. They are able to join the conversation with an authentic and appropriate voice, understanding which topics and themes seem to resonate with intended audiences and how to broach them.

> *"We analyze responses to our posts on the public Marine Corps Facebook pages to see what topics resonate with our target audiences. Most of our audience are young people not directly involved with the Marines. That led us to feature a bit of Corps jargon every week. We give one real one and two fake, ask them to guess which one is real. This builds a loyal audience so when we have a story we want to push out, they will be there." – U.S. Marine Corps*

Analyze social media responses to PR initiatives for positives, negatives, and measures of emotional intensity to identify winners and losers. A small Midwestern healthcare group had been reaching out to area audiences with stories about new equipment and success with new medical procedures. Their social media analytics revealed that programs addressing autism and other childhood issues more effectively spurred engagement.

> *"We learned that there is less chatter than we have assumed generated by heart health awareness events. We also learned that revealing our programs to treat and mitigate autism generates a lot of warm and fuzzy stories and prompts engagement better than promoting a new procedure." – Mercy Hospital System*

Social media marketing and outreach are beyond the scope of this report. It is important to note, however, that the way employees respond to customers in social media is a crucial factor in overall public relations. Thorough training is essential. Focus training on customer-facing employees, but do not stop there. Coach all employees on how (and how not) to represent the brand whenever they are online and identified as brand employees. Maintaining a positive brand image is a complicated and crucial mission when thousands of people potentially represent your brand to the public.

Key Points:

- Social media supports development and monitoring of PR campaigns as well as advertising.
- Listen to the voice of the customer to establish the voice of your brand in social media outreach and response. Set tone and content guidelines for anyone representing your brand on social media.

Power Your Activation Campaigns and Promotions Through Social Media

When it comes to promotional campaigns and targeted offers, social media most clearly offers brands its virtuous circle of insights, opportunity, initiatives, and assessment. Engagement platforms push promotions to influencers and tailor offers to regions, individual locations, and customer segments. Coupons or loyalty rewards can be sent as tweets directly to the target audience or even influencers for further distribution, enlisting the key customer as a brand ambassador.

Awareness, buzz, and brand sentiment are tracked for shifts as promotions are rolled out. Enthusiasm for a promotion relative to others for the brand is tracked against benchmarks. Faltering promotions are adjusted in real time or re-launched as a sequel.

Social media also suggests opportunities for promotions. Johnson & Johnson discovered a lot of tweets about a popular rock group referring to Band Aids in their lyrics. They sent a big case of Band Aids to their hotel as a tongue-in-cheek gift and were rewarded with a flood of positive tweets.

Key Points:

- Social media analytics give you immediate feedback on promotions down to individual store level and across customer segments.
- You can also reach out through social media to deliver micro-targeted promotions and loyalty incentives to segments or individual customers.

Developing New Products

Properly monitored and analyzed, social media can provide a gold mine of inspiration and opportunity for developing new products and services. Social media also support co-creation of new product concepts tailored precisely to the needs and preferences of the market.

Finding and Filling Gaps

Mining complaints and suggestions from your customers is a sure way of revealing opportunities for service and product improvements or innovations. Another rich vein lies in comments about your competitors from their customers. They reveal innovations you may need to counter and lapses for you to market against.

Comments To Monitor For Unmet Needs

- Does anybody else ...?
- How do I (you, they, we) ...?
- I hate it (makes me angry) when ...
- I wish ...
- If they could (would, can) ...
- Too long (short, fast, slow, expensive, fragile, dangerous)...
- What's the best ...?
- What's the worst ...?
- Why can't (don't, won't) they ...?
- Why did (do) they ...?
- Why doesn't somebody ...?

"We look for what traditional and non-traditional competitors are up to in the marketplace. What new things are customers hearing about? Of course dissatisfactions and statements of unmet needs are immensely valuable." – Ravi Parmeswar, Citigroup

Search social media data for complaints, wishes, requests for advice, and outright suggestions ("Why doesn't somebody come up with ...?"). You will find unmet needs, new product opportunities, and even specific new product and service ideas.

Social media also supports crowd sourcing and co-creation. You can simply ask customers what new products they would like to see in your category or what they would like to see in a refreshed version of an existing product (Product 2.0). Alternatively you can offer alternative concepts for a new product and ask for preferences and suggestions for further improvements.

Keep in mind that topics and themes with high concentrations of participation and comments are likely to be mainstream and mundane. Unmet needs and wishes for unique new products and services are likely to be found in single mentions or brief exchanges.

"Lego has a Facebook page. They do a really good job of understanding what their audience is going to respond to semantically so they'll say, 'Okay, we've got a new superhero line. What kind of vehicle would you like us to build next?' The people will comment. They'll look at what the comments are and then they go off and they'll make what people ask for. It's part of their core philosophy, something I really admire about that company." – Chris Beland, Converseon

What we might call the Big Data approach addresses unmet needs as a general phenomenon across all categories—drilling down to find relevance to a particular category, brand, or product family. The most useful nuggets, most likely to contain clues to unique products or services will usually be found among the outliers with only a few mentions. Topics and themes with high concentrations of participation and comments are likely to be mainstream and mundane, although they do provide guides what is meaningful in the category. Unmet needs and wishes for new products and services are likely to be found in single mentions or brief exchanges. Measures of emotion and intensity identify highest priority wishes and needs.

> *"Unmet needs include conversations like, 'I wish I had. I wish there was. If I were in charge …' Things like that. We create these conceptual frameworks that allow us to identify all those conversations and make sure that we're really confident that these are questions and statements related to new product needs or unmet needs in the marketplace. Then, we filter down to more granularity including intensity and emotion to identify the ones that are highest priority." – David Johnson, Decooda*

For high-involvement categories like automotive, social media can provide rich data streams on highly granular issues. For example, an Alterian client successfully drilled down to find discussions about upholstery fit, identify opportunities for improvement and explore a new product idea.

As discussed earlier, brands in lower involvement categories can glean insights from product reviews and blog discussions about the lifestyle and usage situations the products address. They do face challenges, however. Guidance on fine points of product design and performance will require the more directed inquiries of survey and focus group research or co-creation exercises utilizing MROCs.

Key Points:

- Monitor customer (yours and your competition's) dissatisfaction and "I wish" conversations for early hints of unmet needs.
- Use customer communities and MROCs for co-creation and to solicit suggestions.

Look Beyond the Brand for Category Insights

A great deal of social media monitoring and analytics is devoted to conversations that mention the brand—tracking buzz and sentiment to measure the impact of campaigns and keep on the lookout for product, service, or public relations issues. When looking for insights for product development or refinement, however, it is important to broaden the scope to encompass the lifestyle and situational context in which products and services are used. Only a fraction of brand-relevant conversations actually mention a brand by name.

The strength of social media monitoring and analytics is in the inexpensive acquisition of unprecedented flows of consumer data points. Take advantage of this and be open to seeing the big picture of category usage across lifestyle and other segments. Focusing narrowly on the brand and a narrowly defined product area will yield results, but it wastes a ready opportunity to learn more and bump into completely unanticipated opportunity and new product ideas.

> *"People drill down too quickly and only look at their brand. Social gives the ability to look at a lot of different angles at the same time. In traditional ethnography no realistic budget would give you all the money you would need to understand each and every possible application. With social media you have all that data at once to better understand the opportunities." - Malcolm De Leo, Netbase*

> *"If I have a specific question that I want to drill down into, social media's probably not the best forum for data collection. But in terms of looking at the attributes and decision points around that question you can get a wealth of information around social media." - Warren Sukernek, SDS Alterian*

Marketers can monitor the entire category or all conversations involving a key target segment, developing a deeper understanding of how well all current products and services address priorities, wishes, and needs.

Budget, sample size, and respondent attention span force traditional surveys to focus on carefully selected specific issues. Social media allows marketers to look at the big picture with few practical limitations. If you started a survey about a line of toys with questions about the nature of play and everything you could imagine that might be relevant to play, your survey would be longer than 30 minutes before getting to your brand. Social media, however, can easily deliver all of the above and more without stressing your budget or your customers.

Additionally, social media allows you to explore all these issues both currently and historically, sifting data for insights into the nature of play and its possible effect on product development, advertising, and brand positioning. You can, in effect, conduct a massive user ethnography in tandem with brand-specific probing.

> *"Social gives you the ability to design at the highest level, how you can understand your problems so that you can focus your way into what you're actually looking to figure out. It gives you the power to look at a lot of different angles of the same problem. That's something that people should realize when you talk about, 'How would I do insight development for my brand?' It's such a small question in a much larger context. From there, you can very easily begin to look at how you compare to the competition. 'What do people like or dislike about my brand? Where do different types of people talk about my brand?'" – Malcolm De Leo, Netbase*

Key Points:

- Cast a wide net and explore all social media sources relevant to your brand's category and to your key customer segments.
- Don't limit your exploration to pre-determined issues. Let the social media analytics surprise you.
- Track product launches in real time for customer confusion, delivery glitches, and quality issues; and rush to address them.

Monitoring Product Launches

A successful launch will generate significant spikes in buzz and positive sentiment over an established baseline among targeted customer segments. This is also a time to be especially alert to signals of product or service problems around the launch.

McDonald's drilled down into customer complaints about a new snack wrap and identified inconsistencies in preparation.

Some real-life examples:

When Nokia launched their Lumia smartphone, they immediately picked up buzz about battery problems, which they rushed to address technically and with outreach to affected customers.

A global consumer electronics company picked up confusion about deciding between their new product and existing products in their line. They made adjustments to their portfolio to simplify the product line and modified display cards and instruction pamphlets to highlight key innovations.

McDonald's drilled down into customer complaints about a new snack wrap, determined that they were consistently emerged from some locations and not at all from others, and identified inconsistencies in preparation.

"We quickly realized that the issue was caused by inconsistency in how it was being put together in different restaurants. Working with operations, we moved fast to clarify the proper way to build the wrap and solve the complaints." – Rick Wion, McDonald's

Real Life Examples: Identifying Unmet Needs

Discovering that fast food is a major topic on blogs focused on health, nutrition, and obesity, Chick-fil-A identified healthy fast food as a major unmet need. They have been addressing this through a series of new product launches introduced by messaging finely tuned from social media insights.

Reaching out to expecting mothers with advice on prenatal care, Mercy Hospitals found large numbers wanting to have epidural or c-sections, but they also found significant numbers looking for health systems (providers) that will support a more natural birth approach. They are considering a robust optional natural birth program as a point of market difference.

Customer Experience and Customer Support

Social media is all about the unfiltered voice of the customer and a clear window into the customer experience. In the broadest sense, everything you can learn about your brand from social media translates into some aspect of the customer experience.

With the right tools and programs in place, social media analytics can deliver a rounded impression of the customer experience to rival and surpass traditional tools for monitoring and rating customer satisfaction—including comment cards, surveys promoted on sales checks and at point of sale, and of course, focus groups and telephone surveys. While all of these are valuable and continue in wide use, social media delivers customer impressions in the moment and from casual sharing with friends—without the possibly distorting factors of survey questions and recalling experiences from days or weeks past.

> *"Because the comments are in the moment and they are not just talking to brands but talking to their friends and others in their circles, we think it's a much more genuine representation of the customer experience. You might also have review sights, surveys or secret shopping and other data sources, but when you take review data alone, you're going to find polarized feedback. A consumer has to be super motivated either positively or negatively to go home, sit down, and take time to write a review." – Neil Crist, Venuelabs*

As discussed earlier, social media analytics provide metrics to monitor overall brand health over time. As the analytics highlight themes in the ongoing conversation, most will reflect some aspect of the customer experience. It is possible to become much more specific and targeted, however.

A standard customer experience metric is the net promoter score (NPS), and there is now a social media version, delivered by Satmetrix in partnership with Metavana.

> *"We will take a comment on Twitter about Marriot Hotels, and we will then translate it from a binary into a 1-10 scale and then determine if that comment is a promoter comment, a neutral comment or a detractor comment. This is a rich real time solution we call SparkScore. You can use it as a standalone monitor or as a supplement to customer sat surveys." – Romi Mahajan, Metavana*

Drilling down beneath general satisfaction ratings, social media analytics can deliver measures of satisfaction with specific aspects of the experience: ambience, taste, waiting time, amenities, cleanliness, and service quality (among others).

"Let's take the fast food restaurant space as an example. At the location level we take a look at how customers are reporting their experience, and we can identify areas customer are happiest or most unhappy with. Are they staffing related or about facilities, pricing, or product problems? Ultimately we have some proprietary ranking scores that can help them stack rank the overall performance of stores and locations on all these issues." – Neil Crist, Venuelabs

In addition to being immediate and unfiltered, social media customer feedback offers the potential for interactivity. Monitoring satisfaction is crucial and useful, but social media allows the brand to do something about it in real time. Problems can be addressed before they turn into crises. Employees who go the extra distance can be recognized and rewarded. Customers who share high satisfaction can be identified and courted as positive influencers.

Monitoring and delivering customer experience and support are evolving into a seamless process of interaction between brands and consumers, benefiting both and changing the paradigms of marketing and service delivery.

Monitoring social media to analyze the customer experience has something in common with mystery shopping and a great deal in common with customer ethnographies. A deep understanding of customers' interactions with the brand yields insights for altering programs, addressing issues in employee training, and modifying operations and installations at retail locations.

The most fundamental applications, however, are direct customer support and possible referrals into customer retention programs. Social media gives customers access to the brand and to one another when things go wrong. It empowers the customer and makes speedy resolution of problems crucial to the brand reputation. It also gives companies the ability to monitor customer conversations for "weak signals" of service or product problem and to reach out to address them proactively.

Intelligent systems can be trained to channel customer communications to an appropriate level of customer or technical support, from tweeted responses through email to immediate telephone outreach from a live tech support or customer retention representative.

"If you tweet something that says, 'Hey Verizon, I'm having a lot of trouble getting connected in Kansas today,' you write that right now and hit "tweet"—within 2-10 seconds we have ingested it from Twitter, we have run it through NLP. It has been categorized as a customer service problem related to service access and it has been routed to an individual at Verizon to respond to you. And that happens within 2-10 seconds from when you hit that "tweet" button. – Michelle de Haaff, Attensity

Key influencers can also be tagged for special access and handling. For instance, when a key influencer tweets a problem or dissatisfaction, an effective brand's response will be immediate and supportive. Tweets from key influencers merit faster responses than calls to the 800 number.

> *"For some clients like Starwood for instance, some of their best customers have been taught to tweet and get a response from customer service as fast as or faster than calling their 800 number." –Tom Anderson, Odin Text*

We heard many examples of social media coming to the rescue through a solid customer support installation and creative listening. Here are two:

- United Airlines picked up passenger complaints about coffee after switching coffee vendors. Drilling down with Clarabridge, they were able to isolate the problems to taste rather than temperature or service issues. They also found that the problems surfaced only on certain routes and solved them by retraining a small number of service personnel in how to use the new brewing system.

- Whirlpool traced complaints on an appliance repair discussion board about mildew and musty smelling clothes to high humidity areas. They resolved the issue by suggesting customers leave the washer lid open until the interior was completely dry. They now have an automatic alert in place for the topic. When it comes up again, a Whirlpool representative enters the conversation with, "Here's a quick fix for this."

Key Points:

- Social media analytics let you monitor your customers' experience in real time—both overall and on specific issues like ambience, waiting time, and service quality.
- Social media lets you reach out with customer and technical support proactively or in rapid response to requests. The "demand and reaction" model of customer support becomes an ongoing conversation and feedback loop.

Harnessing Social Media for Insights and Advantage

- **Nine steps to bringing social media into your organization**
- **Justifying ROI to upper management**

Setting Up Your Social Media Insights Program

Assessing your organization's needs and determining what kinds of social media programs can best address them is tall order. In this section we outline nine steps for successfully introducing social media monitoring and analytics program into your organization. As you move forward, however, be aware that this process will require patience.

Your needs and scope can prove to be a moving target as you and your team learn more about the potential applications of social media and the resources available for monitoring and analysis. Prepare yourself, your team and upper management for an evolving agenda, although one with a method and a through path to recommendations.

Potential Stakeholders in Social Media Analytics

- Customer Service and Retention
- Marketing
- Marketing Research/Insights
- Operations
- Sales
- Corporate Communications

- R&D
- Public Relations
- Risk Management
- Regulatory Compliance
- Human Resources

Bring Social Media into the Organization in 9 Steps

1 Set up a working group including representatives from Marketing Insights, major Marketing divisions, Customer Service, Corporate Communications and other stakeholder departments. Make sure to expressly include any departments with existing social media programs in place.

2 Solicit hopes, expectations, and concerns from all potential stakeholders Share them with the entire team both in writing and in a facilitated group session to highlight all issues and resolve differences. Circulate a document outlining the resulting consensus.

3 Emphasize the importance of staying open to discovery and position this first stage as very much a learning process.

4 Bring the team up to speed on social media concepts, basic terminology, and how other brands are using social media analytics. Departments with social media programs should present to the group, sharing what they have learned along the way as well as positives and negatives about their vendors and their programs overall.

5 A social media consultant can help design your adoption and vendor review processes. Reach out to vendors for introductory presentations on what a social media program can deliver to all stakeholders on your team.

6 After requesting information from a variety of vendors, develop an RFP for a narrowed field. A detailed guide to vendor review and selection follows this chapter.

7 After settling on a vendor and a successful trial engagement, maintain open communications with your team of stakeholders and meet at least occasionally to review progress, share experience, and discuss problems. The team itself is likely to evolve into a streamlined oversight group composed of the members most actively engaged in the review process.

8 It is a good idea to formalize this group to ensure coordination of social media programs, compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, and training programs.

9 Demonstrate ongoing value with widely distributed monthly reports. Frequent reports on the benefits accruing from social media analytics and outreach will build support for expansion of your brand's social media program.

Case Studies: Social Media Program Adoption

McDonald's Case Study

Approximately four years ago, McDonald's launched a pilot program to assess the merits of an investment in social media. They assumed that there must be some opportunity for business in accessing a new channel of communications, but the jury was out on ROI and implementation.

For six months they silently monitored tweets and Facebook postings to understand how consumers were talking about the McDonald's brand, the restaurants, the menu, the overall experience, and their personal issues and enthusiasms. Before attempting to join the conversation, they wanted to understand its patterns and tone.

Their first "aha" came from the sheer volume of brand and product mentions. The second and killer "aha" occurred when they accessed tweets and exchanges about messed-up orders, long waiting times, and other service issues. They saw great opportunities not only for outbound communications and brand evangelism but also for a new customer service tool.

The first investments added social media to call centers as a vehicle for customer service and established a positive brand presence on social media platforms. Today there is also a robust customer and product insights program working in tandem with customer engagement and support.

> *"The way that our new products process works, there's going to be the internal research and development work in the first place. Before we roll something out across the country, we'll test it in the local market. What we found is that, almost anything that we put in test these days, people see it and then, they talk about it in social media. It literally is, someone walks in the restaurant, they see something new on the menu and they tweet about it. Now, when we see those tweets, that is an additional point of insight that we are monitoring, capturing and feeding that into the product that we process." – Rick Wion, McDonald's*

McDonald's has a three-person Social Media Council representing Communications, Marketing, and Customer Experience and Insights (CEI). The Director of Social Media sits within the Communications group and liaises with Marketing and CEI. Despite the "director" title, there is no over-arching social media department. Marketing and Communications implement their own social media programs reaching out to key influencers, pushing out promotions, monitoring campaigns, and supporting overall customer engagement. CEI monitors customer satisfaction, ensures that dissatisfactions are addressed appropriately, and provides guidance to marketing and communications for brand, product, and environment maintenance.

Although they were not generated specifically to justify the program, monthly reports from the Social Media Council build support and respect within the McDonald's organization by demonstrating the value of their social media monitoring and analytics efforts.

> *"One of the things that we do is we put together a weekly report that includes an overview of the volume of conversation about McDonald's; what people are talking about, what items on the menu are the most popular. We have some competitive analysis as well; what other restaurants people are talking about. That goes out to a distributional that's about 500 people across the company." – Rick Wion, McDonald's*

Chick-fil-A Social Media Programs

Chick-fil-A set up an initial task force representing all potential stakeholders to uncover the needs that social media could serve. The task force also developed guidelines for educating managers about social media and its uses. They then retained a consultant to help them survey the field for appropriate vendor candidates.

They settled on a two-track implementation. Digital marketing firm Engauge monitors social media conversations for customer service and satisfaction issues and reaches out to customers mitigate damage and shore up loyalty with quick responses. They also hired MotiveQuest to conduct "online anthropologies" of behavior and attitudes relevant to the category by analyzing full year's worth of social media data from all available sources. Both programs are considered big successes, and the vendor relationships continue. The insights from the first online anthropology are still proving useful, and the second wave is currently underway.

Johnson & Johnson
Pilot Social Media Program

Johnson & Johnson Brazil is piloting a social media program under the direction of the JeffreyGroup marketing and communications agency. The internal J&J social media group worked with JeffreyGroup and brand managers to establish relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) for each of 17 brands, including number of mentions (buzz) and basic sentiment analysis. Each month they present social media analysis to the brands. Each quarter they present a report integrating social media analysis with business intelligence (BI) analytics, other media, and commentary from the customer relationship group.

Monthly Social Media Report to Brands

- Graphic representations of buzz (number of mentions) on each brand and up to three market competitors, with commentary

- Basic sentiment ratings (Positive, Neutral, Negative) for their brands and competitors

- Compare sentiment ratings quarterly against other brands and previous quarters

- Lists of keyword associations for brands and competitors

- Word clouds for brands and competitors with comparisons to a cloud for the brand category as a whole

- Sample verbatims from blogs, Facebook, and Twitter for brands and competitors illuminating the underlying content of themes

- Platforms with greatest activity on the brands (distribution across Twitter, Orkut, Facebook, blogs)

- As data accumulates, it will display number of mentions historically by social media platforms to show trends in distribution of brand activity

- Key influencers in blogs, Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook for each brand, and key competing brands with comparative influencer profiling to help the customer relationship team target and attract influencers to the brand

Key Points:

- Involve all stakeholders in setting and buying into program goals.
- Assess needs and evaluate available services with the help of vendors and/or social media consultants.
- Create an ongoing social media coordination group to ensure consistent implementation.
- Generate frequent reports of social media metrics and progress in implementation to build support and promote best practices.

Justifying the Spend

At the early stages of a social media program, analytics are often focused on fine-tuning customer engagement and service programs. A key starter application for social media monitoring and analytics is learning how customers talk about your brand and how to join the conversation to foster a more positive relationship and to address negatives.

Most of the larger enterprises we included in our research have moved well beyond this stage and are well on the way to integrating social media monitoring and analytics into their strategic planning and tactical marketing. Some, however, report hesitancy and a reluctance to invest in analytic platforms without a mandate from upper management or a clear means of demonstrating ROI.

Social media is transparently efficient and cost effective at pushing out promotions and product announcements, and focusing on influencers clearly magnifies the effect of marketing initiatives. Applied to customer service, it is quickly apparent that using social media to address complaints is less expensive than using a call center while enabling early identification of problems before they turn into crises.

The ROI for other applications of social media analytics is more elusive. Established marketing research programs are already addressing marketing issues across the board. The advantages of bringing social media analytics into the mix are often obvious to advocates, but convincing resistant management can be a problem.

Key Point:

- ROI on social media programs for customer support is clear: there are cost savings over phone banks, and rapid response increases customer satisfaction.

Answering the ROI Challenge

Some advocates for adding social media to the marketing research data stream have not found metrics or figures to justify a return on the initial investment in social media monitoring and analytics software. LuckilyWe believe this issue is rapidly becoming moot, as more brands recognize social media analytics as essential to competitive marketing programs. In the meantime, we can offer two suggestions for turning the objection and one direct answer.

> *"I keep looking for stats that show the value of social media. Social media is always the last thing they think of as a customer interface and for budgeting." – Mercy Hospitals*

In several of the organizations we spoke to, the arrival of a new digital marketing department or director trumped any reservations since social media analytics are needed for her Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

> *"They hired a Director of Digital Marketing, and I think she will want to use social media listening to measure the effectiveness of campaigns. I think we will learn things we would not learn otherwise, including answers to questions we would not think to ask. We do not have a fix on how to make a case for ROI. If a vendor could provide that link, they could have an inside track to the business." –Tiffany McNeil, Del Monte*

- A marketing insights manager for a global technology company suggested answering the ROI question with another question: "How do you justify the ROI for the Finance Department?" His point: the benefits to better research are seized opportunities and avoided missteps.

> *"Can you give an ROI for the finance department? The return on investment is making sure that we don't make errors, right? It's the cost of saving you from making errors." –Marketing Insights Manager, Technology Company*

SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING AND ANALYTICS ROI

- Replacement for some traditional qualitative research
- Continuous tracking for real time analytics at affordable cost
- Allows reduction in survey tracking studies with significant cost reductions
- Advanced analytics now provide ROI on social media marketing, which is a proxy for social media analytics

- As marketing researchers become more comfortable with the findings and benefits of social media analytics, nearly real-time continuous assessment of brand and campaign performance will allow for fewer and more targeted tracking studies—with easily measurable cost savings.

- Similarly, social media analytics will reduce reliance on focus groups to explore new product categories or to understand a new market.

- The research director for a global facilities management and maintenance concern justified the expense of a social media monitoring and analytics program by a comparison to the cost of focus groups and surveys. There would be a one-time large initial expenditure followed by extremely low running costs—less than the cost of one large survey per year.

Offering specific and compelling metrics, Michael Wolfe of Bottom Line Analytics (BLA) has used linguistic rules and factor analyses on social media data to derive a Social Engagement Index (SEI). This measure has a correlation to sales of greater than 80 percent. According to Wolfe, BLA can determine not only the ROI of social media marketing but its contribution to the overall media mix. This is a credible proxy since effective social media marketing depends on social media analytics.

Key Points:

- ROI challenges are increasingly moot since social media analytics are becoming an essential tool for brands wishing to remain competitive.
- Digital and real-time marketing require social media analytics and can justify ROI directly as profit centers.
- Skeptics can be reassured by likely cost savings on traditional research studies.

Implications for Marketing Research

- **Why researchers should be excited about social media analytics**
- **Answering researcher data quality concerns**
- **How social media analytics will impact marketing research programs**
- **How marketing insights professionals can join the game and lead the charge**

Where *Is* Marketing Research?

Marketing insights professionals are out of the loop or on the periphery of social media listening and analytics programs at many companies. They underestimate the potential of social media monitoring and analytics and do not appreciate the implications for their careers. This is a great pity, because marketing research and insights professionals should be leading the charge; and marketers are not waiting for them.

The winter 2012 Greenbook Research Industry Trends (GRIT) told us that marketing research departments initiate less than one quarter of corporate social media monitoring activity. Marketing and communications departments—which traditionally have depended on marketing researchers for insights—initiate twice as much social media monitoring as marketing research.

There have been important and notable exceptions, such as Joan Lewis at P&G and Stan Sthanunathan at Coca-Cola, as well as brands like Yahoo, Intel, Ford, Nike and a host of others who have embraced social media for the vast and rich pool of insights it can deliver. The largest fast moving consumer goods companies (FMCG) either have advanced social media analytics programs or are well on their way. There are also signs that things have been changing rapidly over the past year as increasing numbers of marketing researchers make social media analytics a priority. Reservations about the quality of social media data, however, have caused many marketing researchers to make a late start; and some continue to balk.

> *"Marketing Research is a group that is very precise in the way they do things and that's not a bad thing. That's what they're supposed to do. I personally think they're going to be forced to evolve, though, because I think their customers are going to force them to. I don't think customers in this day and age of things moving in real time, are going to be willing to wait and pay for something that they may feel is dated by the time they get it." – Scott Briggs, SAS*

Social Media Project Ownership

(Average Percentage Across GRIT Respondents)

Marketing or Brand Management	**35%**	
Marketing Research	**23%**	
Corporate Communications	**16%**	
Outside Advertising Agencies	**7%**	
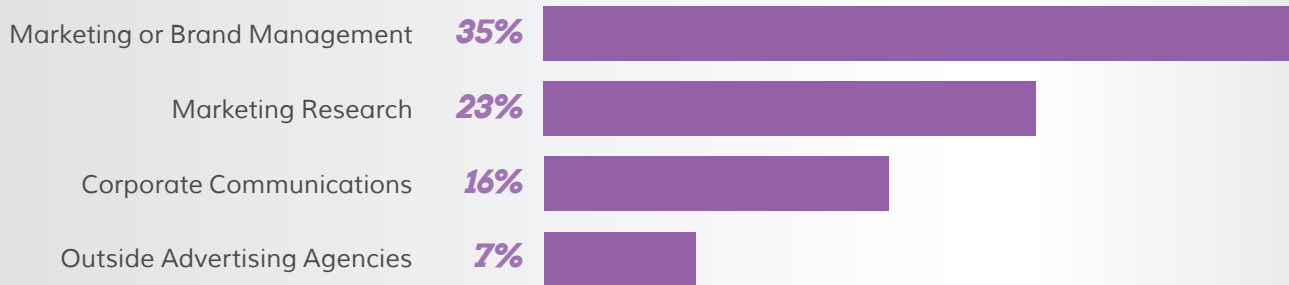
Key Points:

- Some marketing insights professionals have led the charge in adopting social media analytics as central to their customer insights programs.
- In many cases, however, marketing researchers have been slow off the mark and risk being sidelined as marketers embrace social media analytics and outreach.

Why Researchers Should Be Excited

The rise of social media may generate concerns among some marketing research pros, but there is a lot of great news for many. We'll get to the concerns, but the benefits and advantages of analytics based on social media make up a long list.

Qualitative Data

Social media research produces qualitative data in the form of comments and longer form essays, and even small batches deliver valuable insights. A single comment can help a marketer crystallize an idea or provide an "aha" moment in understanding customer behavior or attitudes toward your brand or your advertising.

> *"Social media should be treated just as you treat focus group findings."*
> *– Tom Morder, Chick-fil-A*

KEY SOCIAL MEDIA ADVANTAGES

- Millions of conversations: enormous sample
- Customers talk about what matters most to them
- They answer questions you might not think to ask
- Comments are frank, unfiltered, and spontaneous
- Conversations are global and go on 24/7

- Comments from customers committed to your category or brand
- Low incremental costs for continuous listening
- Answers in (or near) real time
- Years of historical data available for trending

Quantitative Mass: Sample Sizes are Mind Boggling

Imagine a focus group of one or two million respondents. That's a lot of M&Ms.

Traditional survey research is proud to return 1,200 responses. It is not unusual for social media analysts to sift 100 million conversations in a custom study for a national or global brand.

> *"If you can do a focus group with 100 million people, that gives you quant/qual data back almost immediately versus running around the country, sitting in rooms eating too many peanuts, why wouldn't you do that?" – David Rabjohns, MotiveQuest*

Even if 98% proved irrelevant, you would still be tapping into one to two million spontaneous conversations among people who care enough about your brand and category to be texting and tweeting about them.

> *"The world has changed and technology has changed the way that people interact with each other, with companies, with everyone. What that means for all of us, what that means for us in the marketing world is that we have more data. We may have less accurate information and may not have the level of confidence that we had before but we have more data and it's moving faster." – Scott Briggs, SAS*

The mass of social media data often lends itself to robust quantitative analysis.

> *"You can count how many messages are created on a daily, weekly, or quarterly basis. You can count how long or short the messages are and where they come from. But you can go far beyond that and quantitatively measure the sentiment and topics of conversation just as you would if you were working with survey data." - Annie Pettit, Conversition*

"Survey Length" Is a Non-Issue

Social media monitoring can cover thousands of variables, while survey research struggles to accommodate 30 or 40 counting screeners. Social media makes it possible to get insight into small issues that might never attract sufficient budget to be included in a survey or focus group agenda.

Answer Questions You Might Not Think to Ask

Traditional survey research design is based on carefully evaluating a category, projecting demographic characteristics of your target customers, coming up with just the right topics, just the right way of asking about them, and just the right people to ask. Social media lets you research everything at once. You learn the things that customers find important enough to discuss rather than just the things you thought were important.

> *"We give people the freedom to really convey and communicate what's most important to them as opposed to what's most important to us." – David Johnson, Decooda*

Not Constrained by Hypothetical Respondent Criteria

Traditional surveys depend on pre-defined quotas based on your assumptions about the appropriate people to target. This has obvious benefits, but it can mask the bigger picture. In social media research you pick up all relevant conversations and avoid the consequences of possibly unwarranted assumptions. The following example is extreme, but it illustrates the point very crisply.

> *"We did a project with a big CPG company where they'd always [specified] a representative sample of women to talk to about this product. When we went and looked at who was talking about the product, we found out that it was actually men, three to one." – David Rabjohns, MotiveQuest*

Hear the Unfiltered Voices of Customers

Social media conversations are spontaneous and unfiltered by any desire to avoid offending the marketer. Oana Stroie, Innovation Intelligence Manager at Philips Consumer Lifestyle, believes surveys often probe issues about which consumers have no opinion. In order not to offend the marketer or lose out on an incentive payment they may manufacture points of view or give reasons for an action they really can't explain.

Geographic Dispersion

Conversations can bring together consumers from any point on the globe into one discussion.

It Is Very, Very Fast

A properly tuned and implemented social media monitoring system can provide standard metrics in nearly real time. Custom analytics can usually be turned around in 24 hours, often faster.

Cost Effective Daily Tracking

After the initial investments, the cost of monitoring social media is very low in comparison to survey research or focus groups. Daily tracking of buzz or sentiment during a campaign is quite affordable and can provide diagnostics in time to make adjustments mid-campaign.

Enhances Other Research

Social media analysis is perfect for generating issues and probes for focus group discussion guides and the language in which to broach them. Just as social media research is useful to agencies for category exploration prior to new business pitches, it is useful to the marketer or researcher trying to get a handle on a research topic.

It is also very useful in ensuring that item lists in survey questions are complete and appropriate for the category, brand, and issue. You can ensure that you measure the factors important to your brand in the eyes of the customer.

Further, respondents in surveys can volunteer Twitter IDs and give access to Facebook pages, allowing social media to add dimensions to the analysis and permit follow-up tracking.

Ethnography at Arm's Length

No matter how disciplined and skilled the ethnographer, introducing an observer and a camera into a situation is highly likely to distort the normal course of home or office life. Netnography (ethnography using online conversations), however, does not insert the researcher into the discussion or exchanges, ensuring that we do not alter what we are trying to study.

Snapshots of Historical Data

Most vendors have large repositories of social media data going back at least a year. More established vendors have data for the past four or five years. It is as easy to research attitudes at a frozen point in time as it is to research the present. Imagine being able to construct a tracking study after the fact.

> ## Key Point:
> - Scale, flexibility, immediacy, and unfiltered responses are only some of the reasons hard-nosed marketing research traditionalists should be excited about social media research.

Addressing Researcher Qualms about Social Media Data

The advantages of social media monitoring and analytics are compelling now, and in the near future we expect that major advances in automated text analytics will make them even more so. Still, concerns about the validity, reliability and representativeness of social media data linger in some quarters. These qualms are easy to appreciate, but they are also easy to address.

A valid concern is the need to recognize limits to the uses of social media based analytics. We have discussed some of them in the previous chapter on applications. Many of the other criticisms, however, are dispelled or greatly diminished if we view social media data as essentially qualitative and recognize that data collected by other means have serious intrinsic flaws.

A list of the qualms and concerns marketing researchers have raised about social media monitoring and analytics is provided below. Each details the raised objections before presenting what we believe is the appropriate perspective.

Qualm One: It's Not a Representative Sample

Objection

Bloggers, tweeters, and Facebook posters are not a representative sample of a brand's customer base. Survey research goes to great lengths to ensure a balanced sample representative of the general population or a brand's user profile. Social media analytics scoops up comments and opinions from anyone and everyone contributing to the conversation. Basing decisions on findings from this unqualified population is foolhardy.

"If it creates insights, it's not invalid." –Rogers

Diehard critics within the marketing research industry view social media data with little more respect than they would give to "grandmother" research (ask a few family members and neighbors what they think and go with that).

Perspective

The differences between social media data and survey data are not black and white. As we all know, there are largely unspoken problems with survey research sampling as well:

- Annie Pettit, founder of Conversition, points out in her entertaining *Lovestats* blog that today's marketing research generally does not use probability and strictly random samples. We use sampling from panels.

- Using only one means of sampling is not likely to be representative because some people are more likely to respond when reached by phone, others by mail, still others by email, or others when accosted in a mall.

- Worse, response rates are at rock bottom, and we never hear from the large masses of the public who refuse to participate in the research process. We can only guess at the differences their input would show.

"As much as we like to think surveys use probability samples, that's just not the case. Surveys generally use very fancy convenience sampling with lots of corrections and approximations." - Annie Pettit, Conversition

Social media allows us to research among the entire population, letting factors such as product use define users, irrespective of whether they fit a predetermined user profile.

Social media research in fact sidesteps another key problem intrinsic to quota sampling. Sampling and screening are generally based on a notion about the profile of the customer or target population that may or may not be correct. Social media allows us to research among the entire population, letting factors such as product use define users, irrespective of whether they fit a user profile.

"Guess what? The only people talking about your brand in social media are the people who care your brand. Whether they hate your brand or love your brand, you have instantly reached the people who are relevant to your brand." - Annie Pettit, Conversition

> *"Marketing Research will use social media to fill in the blanks and must see it as an opportunity. They should shelve the objection that it is not a representative sample and accept it for the value it can provide." Ravi Parmeswar, Citigroup*

Social media is not appropriate for a study design that requires strict quota sampling or close adherence to general population contours defined by census data. For most purposes, however, the fact that social media may not be strictly "representative" in that narrow sense is not a reason to walk away from an extremely valuable data pool.

> *"Criticisms of its merits on the grounds of representativeness and the absence of demographics miss the point. Some things it cannot deliver, but the things it can deliver are found in no other way and have their own unique and strong value proposition." – Marketing Researcher, Leading Technology Firm*

> *"In the new world […] listening to the people that are talking and the people that are influential matters hugely more than having a representative sample of demographics." – David Rabjohns, MotiveQuest*

> *"If it creates insight, it is not invalid. So what if it does not have statistical reliability? Insight is qualitative. Objections on statistical grounds are wrong because it can give perspectives and hints." Tricia Benn, Rogers Media*

We do not know how closely a given group of participants in a conversation align to general population or brand profiles. That drawback pales, however, against the opportunity to hear real customers talking to each other about your product category, your brand, your product, or your competitors' products. The more important issue is not who said something, but that it was said in relation to your brand and category and that it speaks sense to an insightful researcher or marketer.

> "Maybe these online populations are not representative of their entire customer base, but they do represent a lot of customers and offer opportunities for deep data mining. Marketing Research ignores them at its peril." – Kraft Foods

Also, keep in mind that social media predictions turned out to be more closely representative of the 2012 presidential election results[1] than most established survey organizations.

Key Points:

- Relevance, absence of bias, and data gathered from outside the shrinking pool of cooperating research respondents trump representativeness.
- The representativeness of current survey samples is also open to serious challenge.

1   Pew Research, November 2012

Qualm Two: We Have No Demographics. Who Are These People?

Objection

Checking how closely participants in a social media conversation map to the general population or user profiles is not possible since we know little or nothing about these people. This violates the first principle of consumer and B2B data collection. How much can you trust analysis that can't discuss gender, geography, or age?

Perspective

It is true that demographics are not available for many of the comments gleaned in social media monitoring. If your research design depends on detailed demographic profiles, social media may be the wrong platform unless you are monitoring only tweets, which do have demographic tags.

As we discussed earlier, you can achieve a practical demographic concentration by selecting the sites you monitor. (For instance, you could focus on Latino social sites or retirement and senior topic forums.) Gender and ethnic skews of particular platforms are also available. Notably, Pinterest, by far the most rapidly growing social platform, skews heavily female.

Demographic data can also be inferred from semantic analysis and profile data. All major tools feature references to basic demographics including age or age cohort, gender, and geolocation (real-time geographic location enabled by mobile phone users). Geolocation data is most often inferred from IP addresses or pulled from profile information. Both approaches have limitations because there is no guarantee that the post analyzed actually came from the inferred location. As more data is collected via mobile devices the geolocation data will become more accurate. This will happen soon, as mobile access is climbing rapidly.

Key Points:
- Some demographics can be inferred through sophisticated semantic and linguistic analyses.
- Geolocation data is becoming more reliable as mobile access to social media increases rapidly.
- Integration of social media handles and profiles with CRM data provide rich demographics while enhancing segmentation and targeted marketing.

Qualm Three: Sentiment Analysis Is Wildly Inaccurate

Objection

Sentiment and content analysis are highly imperfect and unreliable indicators.

Perspective

When properly tuned, automated analysis routinely achieves 70% accuracy when identifying sentiment and 90% or better accuracy when identifying brand-relevant conversations. By comparison, two human coders working on the same comments will agree with each other (a good working definition of accuracy) less than 85% of the time.

As Annie Pettit points out, all of our research is prone to error. We do not throw it away. We learn to live with it and compensate.

> *"We try to write quality questions but always find a leading question, a biased question, or a misleading question somewhere in our surveys. […] As researchers, we understand that error is a part of every research project we conduct. We know when we start a survey or focus group project that multiple sources of error will be introduced at every step. We've learned how to work around these errors so that our research results are still meaningful and useful. That's how we've been trained. Why do we expect anything different from social media research?" - Annie Pettit, Conversition*

Building algorithms and semantic frameworks customized to your product category and known marketing and branding issues is essential. Working closely with a vendor to build a semantic dictionary of terms and phrases specific to your brand and category, the accuracy of sentiment metrics will be greatly improved. Comparing the results of social media monitoring and analytics to results of traditional polling will, over time, provide a good working sense of your sentiment analysis accuracy and establish the social media equivalent of a confidence level.

> *"Sentiment is a dicey thing to begin with. It's difficult to overcome things like semantics, sarcasm, regional dialects. The way to overcome that is our clients give a whole semantic dictionary that's relevant specifically to their product so the sentiment scores are cleaner and more accurate." – Pete Moran, General Sentiment*

> *"If I'm the business owner of cleaning towels, I can build a model that filters any conversations around towels or clean towels. That'll be tagged in that category. I can build that very quickly. I can also fine tune how sentiment is scored in that category based on the unique words that are used in my category. Out the box, we're going to be pretty good but really, what every single customer needs to know is how to fine tune our solutions so the accuracy for them is as high as it can possibly be." –Jim Schwab, Clarabridge*

> ## Key Points:
>
> - When sentiment analysis algorithms are "tuned" to your brand, you can expect accuracy of 80% or better in identifying statements as positive, negative, or neutral.
> - Absolute measures of positives vs. negatives are less useful than tracking spikes in one or the other that signal the need to dig deeper for the source of this "inflexion point."

How Social Media Will Impact Marketing Research Projects

The availability of sophisticated real-time analytics based on the unfiltered voice of the customer on a massive scale will not eliminate traditional marketing research—at least not in the near term. It will profoundly change the game, but gradually over the next few years.

Tracking Studies Will Continue but May Be Reduced in Frequency and Be More Targeted in Scope

There is a consensus among the companies we researched that brand tracking studies will continue. Not only are they needed for comparison purposes, but they also probe sentiment and perceptions on very specific dimensions and in particular usage contexts.

> *"Brand trackers are still needed for comparative metrics, although enriched by social media monitoring and analysis." Ravi Parmeswar, Citigroup*

> *"Tracking gives sentiment in the context of actual brand use and multiple dimensions. Social media doesn't give that." - Suzana Pamplona, Johnson & Johnson*

Brand trackers will also become more surgical and issue-specific, letting social media carry the freight of general regard, buzz, and overall sentiment.

> *"Right now we do ongoing tracking; lots of it. It won't go away but we will come to rely more on unsolicited as the backbone and make tracking and deep dives more surgical. Social media should be the first stop for 'What are our consumers saying?'" – Joe Sakach, Campbell's*

Advertising campaign tracking will become more and more the province of social media. It provides faster feedback and all of the diagnostics needed in normal circumstances. Misfires of a large budget campaign may still call for focus groups or flash surveys.

In the short term, over the next one to two years, expect tracking studies to continue while their findings are compared to findings from social media research.

Survey Research Will Become More Open Ended

Some of the most powerful tools available for social media analytics have their roots in text analytics and linguistic theory. The push toward social media has spurred development, and extremely exciting capabilities are available or about to enter the market.

The best of these tools promise to let survey questionnaires evolve into much more open-ended probing. Instead of asking painstakingly crafted questions that try to anticipate customer thought patterns and mental constructs relevant to your brand and product, you can cast a wide net. Rather than herding respondents into narrow chutes, you can let them relax and answer questions in their own words, bringing out factors that are top of mind and most relevant to them (rather than the ones you guessed should be relevant).

> *"A good open-ended question is, 'Give us your feedback regarding our checkout process.' We're not asking for an answer. We're asking for real feedback. They may say, 'You know what? It just pisses me off that every time I go into a Wal-Mart, you have seventy-two checkout counters. There's four checkout people. There's 12,000 people in your store. Why does this happen all the time?' Our ability to get to that level of detail and identify the intensity of those conversations—that's really, really valuable." – David Johnson, Decooda*

Text analytics will allow you to manage extensive qualitative data in the context of a quantitative survey.

Less Use of Focus Groups for Understanding Categories

When surveys are open-ended, there is less need for artfully honed and precisely phrased questions. The step of preliminary qualitative research to develop survey dimensions and determine appropriate language is foreshortened, replaced by social media monitoring and analytics, or skipped in favor of broad open ends in the survey instrument that are auto-coded through text analytic software.

Focus groups will be reserved for probing specific issues and testing developed hypotheses.

This will come as some relief to qualitative researchers who have learned to dread projects presented as, "We just want to talk to some customers." Qualitative projects that begin with vague mandates very often end with dissatisfied clients and frustrated moderators. Social media can replace these groups to everyone's benefit.

Social Media Will Inform Focus Group Discussion Guides and Reporting

When focus groups are appropriate, social media will provide inspiration and firm guidance for developing discussion guides and stimuli. Groups will have a strong role to play in helping marketers follow up on intriguing comments and behavior emerging from social media discussions.

> *"We use social media analysis through data mining historic conversations as stimulus for questions and prompts in ideation sessions." – Suzana Pamplona, Johnson & Johnson*

Additionally, social media explorations will determine how prevalent intriguing patterns and perspectives emerging in group analysis seem to be within the larger population.

> *"For a focus group, there's a lot of information that can be gathered in support of a discussion guide. And then go back and after gathering the insights from the groups, to go and validate it within social. We determine the proper questions using social data and then go into the focus group and use social data as a follow-up quant approach." – Warren Sukernek, SDS Alterian*

Socially Enhanced Interviews and Groups

Social media's usefulness to traditional research modes does not stop with informing survey questionnaires and focus group discussion guides. By requesting Twitter handles and access to Facebook pages as part of the interviewing process, researchers can add social media patterns to survey and focus group analysis.

Increased Comfort with Social Media Data

As technologies continue their rapid evolution and as approaches become more refined and efficient, marketing researchers will develop greater confidence in social media as a resource and understand better how to relate to less precise but massively more profuse data sets.

Key Points:

- Social media analytics will replace some research studies in the near term simply because they provide faster input. A prime example would be focus groups conducted by advertising agencies to explore a category for a new business pitch.
- It is not clear how much traditional research will ultimately be displaced by social media monitoring and analytics, but social media is clearly disruptive.
- In the near term social media analytics will augment and enrich traditional survey and focus group research by enabling more open ended questions and more sophisticated analysis of both structured and unstructured data.

A Challenge to Traditional Marketing Research Practices

Marketers have always expressed impatience with the time it takes to get insights from researchers, and researchers have long been exasperated with marketer demands to deliver better, faster, and cheaper insights. As long as collecting data and analyzing findings required special skill sets, marketing would chafe under the delays research felt were essential; but they really had no other option. Data was scarce, and marketing researchers knew how to get it.

That has now changed, and data is everywhere. The ground began to shift with the emergence of sales transaction scanner data, and the DIY online survey has become a standard way for marketers to reach around their research departments directly to consumers. Continuing in most cases to pay for professional research, many marketers came to prefer decent answers in a day or two over terrific answers in a week or more. With social media, the shift has become a groundswell and marketers do not even have to ask questions.

> *"The world is changing, technology has changed. At some point, you have to change with it or you become the next newspaper industry." – Scott Briggs, SAS*

All this has presented a direct challenge—not so much to marketing insights professionals whose data interpretation skills inform bottom line strategies, but to the marketing researchers whose careers have been based on understanding the mechanics of sampling and data collection. They are an endangered species.

Key Points:

- Marketing researchers no longer have a strangle hold on acquiring customer and market data.
- Insights professionals are learning to embrace social media as a data source or risk being sidelined and irrelevant.

A Bright Future with Some Adjustments

There is massive value in what market researchers can bring to the table. Being able to see patterns in data and to convey the stories buried in the figures remains pure gold and is even more important when management is drowning in data points and starving for clarity.

> *"People that have hidden behind the technique of market research without the thoughtfulness to look at patterns and actually take that data and have it impact on business might have a harder time. I might be looking elsewhere. On the other hand, anybody that's good at understanding humans and patterns and translating that into business is going to thrive. Because the age of the analyst is in the ascendant." – David Rabjohns, MotiveQuest*

Being able to see patterns in data and to convey the stories buried in the figures remains pure gold.

If marketing researchers embrace social media and celebrate its value, they can help their organizations ensure that social media monitoring and analytics be all that they can be.

> *"Marketers will demand that marketing research steps up to help them with their consumption of social media or gets out of the way so others can." - Scott Briggs, SAS*

If your company does not yet have a social media monitoring and analytics program in full swing, we strongly suggest that insights professionals take a leadership role—kicking off with the understanding gleaned from this report and the resources we recommend. At companies like Chick-fil-A, marketing research led the charge toward understanding and adopting social media for insights and customer engagement. Quite simply, they believe it is part of their job description.

> *"We believe social media is just another channel and needs to be dealt with. Data collection has evolved from door to door to telephone, online, and now to social media. Something else will come along before too much longer, and we will be ready to manage it as well." – Tom Morder, Chick-fil-A*

A strong advocate for the value of social media analytics at a major CPG company with very active social media programs tells us that their marketing research department has awakened to the fact that a great deal of strategic thinking is going on without them.

> *"Marketing Research needs to get itself a place at the table so that critical thinking can be applied to social media findings and appropriate implications can be drawn. Marketers need marketing research, but they need social media as well. Marketing research will lose in a contest: not to be forced out of the organization but to be relegated to providing lagging indicators and corroborations/ challenges of data cascading into brand managers while they draft their questionnaires." – Scott Briggs, SAS*

Key Point:

- Marketing insights professionals can help social media analytics tell meaningful stories to marketers and other managers while saving them from improperly drawn inferences.

A Leadership Role for Marketing Research

Marketing researchers must realize they are no longer in the data collection business but in the data quality and interpretation for insights business. Their analytical, pattern recognition, and data integrity skill sets are of great value. Surviving, and in fact, thriving, is possible if researchers expand their focus beyond poring over survey responses (though that will continue).

The Market Research department, recast as an Insights Department, should take responsibility for the quality of data management, data interpretation, and data-driven insights, and the validity of the inferences made by management based on the insights. As data integration demands breaking out of silos and sharing across the enterprise, insights professionals must seek a broader mandate to assist management in reaping the benefits and avoiding the pitfalls of actionable Big Data. This broader mandate includes:

- Ensure that management hears the most important stories hidden in data so that they can gain insights without being overwhelmed by trivia

"The challenge becomes getting the most relevant insight together. What is the issue and what information bits are critical to deciding this? Information is massive and at senior levels managers are overloaded with data. The art of insight management is to reduce it to the max. A thousand things you can know. Only a few things you need to know." – Senior Marketing Insights Manager

"Marketing Research will have a continuing role in helping management to understand the underlying values driving behavior. They must provide the 'why' and the meaning of data relationships. They will connect the dots, help to derive meaning and value from mountains of data." – Ravi Parmeswar, Citigroup

"I think there's a big future for anyone with pattern recognition skills. With Big Data, it requires this more than ever before. The people who hide behind the technique without insights are in trouble." – David Rabjohns, MotiveQuest"

MARKETING RESEARCH LEADERSHIP

- Share expertise in deriving insights from data across the organization
- Become evangelists for data literacy and drawing proper inferences
- Follow social media technologies and state of the art to become the organization's go-to experts
- Proactively integrate text analysis of survey verbatims and focus group transcripts into larger Big Data stream
- Provide frequent reports on social media tracking, marketing research studies, and key insights

- Evangelize data and analytical literacy throughout the organization, but most urgently among marketers, to ensure that managers do not base decisions on spurious inferences. Note that this is instruction in logic and critical thinking—quite distinct from insisting that all decisions be based on statistically significant findings.

> *"I think the marketers tend to rely more on anecdotal evidence more than what's real, and having a market researcher sitting next to that person they would say, 'I don't think you can conclude that's what you saw.'" – Warren Sukernek, SDS Alterian*

- Continuously monitor developments in text analytics and social media management systems to stay abreast of the rapidly morphing technology.

- Be proactive in integrating text from survey open ends and focus group transcripts with social media as a major Big Data stream.

- Keep current with the state of the art in data science and Big Data management.

- Promote hiring of data scientists and develop programs to educate them in the businesses they support.
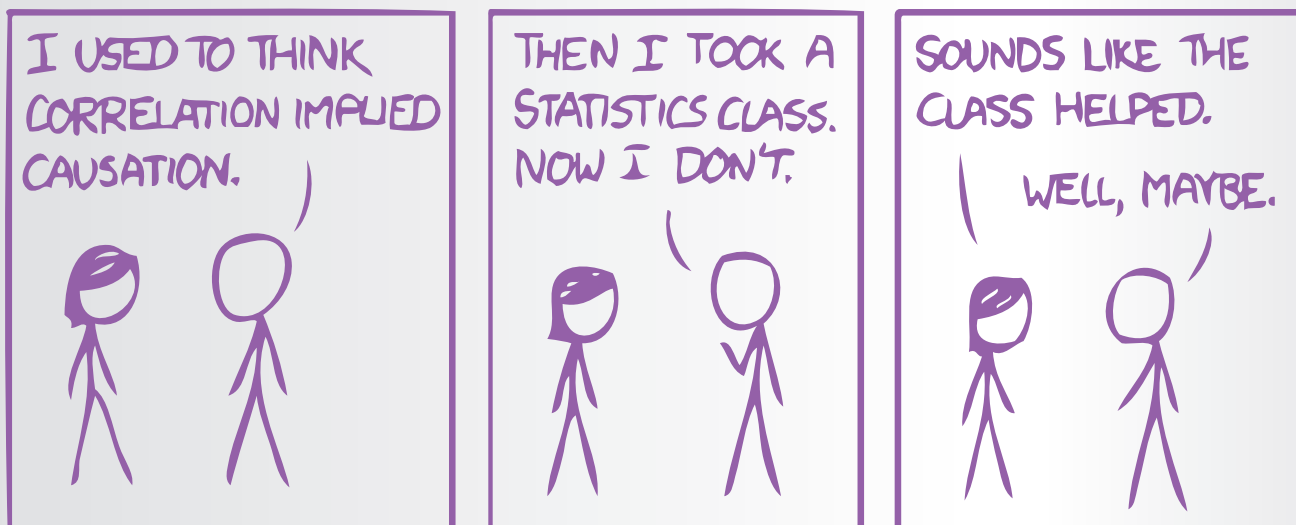
Credit: xkcd.com

Key Points:

- Insights professionals have an opportunity to lead their brands in making best use of social media data and social media analytics.
- Research and insights departments should be proactive in promoting best practices in data acquisition, integration, and interpretation across the enterprise.

Power Up:
Selecting Tools and Vendors

- **What kinds of services are available?**
- **What do social media analytics programs actually do?**
- **How do we choose a vendor?**

The Vendor Landscape and Available Services

Hundreds of companies offering social media analytics compete for attention, most making large promises and many delivering on them. We have identified five categories.

Software and Dashboard Providers

Specializing in the mechanics and tactics of social media monitoring and analytics, these vendors offer you the ability to capture social media data streams relevant to your marketing and strategic planning priorities. Some vendors specialize in particular metrics applied to particular sources (usually Twitter or Facebook or both). Most offer ranges of coverage and a variety of metrics.

Most offer software as a service (SaaS) on a defined subscription basis (minimum length service agreements) with tiered levels of coverage and of support in setting up and maintaining your program. Costs climb by the number of social media sources covered and kinds of metrics required.

Major service differentiators are in the kinds of metrics delivered, the degree of customization offered, and the strength and user-friendliness of the dashboards and data visualization components.

Full Service Agencies

For large enterprise and deep pockets, complete outsourcing of social media monitoring and analytics is available. This places minimal demands on your staff and delivers seasoned expertise in all aspects. Many agencies offer social media marketing and customer engagement services as well. Advantages include not only state of the art tools and management, but also assistance in exploiting social media analytics across departments and lines of business. Some may be subsidiaries of large marketing research organizations (Kantar, Maritz) offering integration of social media research with traditional marketing research study initiatives and findings.

Ad Hoc Consultants

A small number of firms specialize in addressing specific business questions or problems. Bringing proprietary systems into play, they set up a monitoring and analytics program customized to the task, execute, and provide not just analytics but the answers and strategic guidance where indicated. Prime examples of this vendor/consultant class are MotiveQuest, specializing among other things in online ethnography, and Conversition. Both position themselves as full service marketing research firms providing targeted analytics of social media.

Aggregators

Somewhat akin to social media wholesalers and distributors, social media aggregators capture and normalize data from disparate social media sources and platforms.

They do sell to enterprise end users, but more commonly provide the feeds for agencies and software/system vendors. A prime example is Gnip, which offers broad coverage and a growing suite of analytics tools that seem to be moving them into competition with some of their data customers.

Integrators with Other Text Analytics and Big Data

At the cutting edge of large enterprise social media monitoring and analytics programs, a small but growing number of vendors position themselves as Big Data integrators. They integrate social media analytics with analytics of other types of organizational data, including CRM, customer support call records, focus group transcripts, research reports, and surveys. The merger of Radian6 with Salesforce.com in 2012 suggests growing momentum in this direction.

Key Point:

- Determine what level of support—from largely DIY to full service program providers—is appropriate for your needs and budget.

A Brief Look Under the Hood into Text Analytics

Text analytics is the engine that powers the social media analytics we have been discussing throughout the report.

Although cutting edge sentiment analysis is beginning to include voice and images, almost all is essentially text analytics (conceptually the same processes employed for content analysis of transcripts, news feeds, and publications). Even the most basic social media metrics of buzz and share of voice depend on text analytics to identify brand-relevant comments.

Social media is the leading driver for today's investments and improvements in text analytics. Nearly two-thirds of text analytics users cite blogs and social media as a data source. Text analytics software transforms unstructured text (such as the terabytes sitting in Twitter and Facebook) into something more structured and valuable, using statistical, linguistic, machine learning, and visualization techniques.

Boolean ("And/Or") Dictionary Search

The most straightforward technique is simply to define Boolean search parameters: keywords combined with "and," "or," or "not" logic applied to words within a defined proximity (contiguous, separated by fewer than x number of words, present in the same sentence, or present in the same utterance). These types of searches will generally be very good at counting mentions of particular phrases or terms, but can't provide much *context* for those mentions. In other words, dictionary-driven search can find mentions without regard to their relevance.

Each brand name requires a custom dictionary to support the Boolean algorithms in resolving ambiguities: for example, making sure to count authentic mentions of the brand "Tide" (detergent) and not other usages like "rip tide" or "time and tides." The term commonly used for this is disambiguation. The dictionary will normally be compiled collaboratively by brand management and the social media monitoring vendor and will require tuning over time as results are evaluated manually.

The biggest drawback for Boolean keyword analytics is the labor involved in building and maintaining the data dictionaries. Because these systems only process the literal searches configured by the end user, initial configuration of these systems is quite tedious. Additionally, these dictionaries must be updated on a regular basis to reflect changes in vocabulary or to add to and refine search rules. Because the rules frequently change, comparing measurements over time will be challenging until the dictionary matures.

Key Point:

- Boolean searching is easy to understand, but labor intensive to implement properly and provides mentions only. Requires manual coding to extract sentiment.

Natural Language Processing (NLP)

Keyword dictionaries attempt to count mentions. Natural language processing tries to understand them. The goal of all NLP systems (a goal that has not yet been fully achieved) is to build a computer system capable of understanding all of the complexities and meanings of human language.

NLP algorithms tag or annotate words or phrases with additional metadata about their meaning, context, and relationship to surrounding words. This includes understanding parts of speech, slang, plural vs. singular nouns, and identifying brand and common names. For example, consider the phrase "This Tide detergent is the bomb!" How does software distinguish between Tide the brand and the level of the sea? When is a bomb a bomb, and when is it simply "the bomb"? These are some of the challenges that NLP technologies must address.

While machine learning is integral to NLP, people are still required to establish appropriate algorithms and rules pertinent to the brand environment and the category. Input from the brand is essential both for setting up the rules and adapting those rules to improve accuracy over time (often called *data curation* or *human curation of data*).

> *"When applied to large amounts of data, NLP systems can be tremendously more effective in characterizing the overall sentiment and emotion in the underlying text. These systems are still ultimately based on sophisticated rules engines, however, where vendors have pre-configured complex rules. Because we're looking at (text) from a very specific context and using multiple points of reference to determine whether a comment is positive or negative, or a specific emotion like anger or joy, it's actually more consistently accurate than if you were to get a couple of people in the room and say, 'What do you think?'" – Chris Beland, Converseon*

Ambiguities are resolved by taking nearby words into account. One method is to build "ontologies" mapping words to other words to clarify their meaning. A rule might say that if the word "bank" occurs in a text that also features "money" or "transaction" or "teller," it is financial. If it appears near "river," "water," or "shore," it is topographical. If it appears near "bet," "chance," or "future," it is judged as meaning "rely."

This is often a lengthy and labor-intensive process, but some vendors may already have developed ontologies relevant to your brand category (often referred to as "your domain"). Past experience in your domain is something that needs to be determined when selecting social media analytics vendors.

Tom Anderson underscores the importance of knowing whether your prospective vendor has domain expertise—or experience in developing successful algorithms and semantic dictionaries relevant to your product or service category. This is not a deal breaker, because your brand and situation will always require some customization and fine tuning during early stages. It might be an important differentiator, however, potentially saving you time, money, and stress.

> *"It's a different model when you want to just engage with high influential tweeters. It's a different model when you're using text analytics to identify fraud in insurance claims. Now, there are vendors out there that say, 'Yo! Architects Analytics software can do anything!' But that's really impossible. You can't be good at all those things. You need domain expertise, your algorithms and codes have to be very different to solve different problems." –Tom Anderson, Odin Text*

Key Points:

- NLP is the foundation of automated text analysis, deriving meaning from context (adjacent or nearby words).
- Success depends on training the algorithms to recognize terms and expressions relevant to your brand and category. A vendor with experience in your category can be very helpful.

Linguistic Pattern Analysis

Linguistic theory is employed by some social media monitoring and analytics vendors to derive meaning through recognition of patterns in strings of text. Human judgment does not play a role. Bottom Line Analytics claim a very high correlation of their social engagement index to sales. Decooda is another vendor reporting high degrees of accuracy from applying linguistic rules and other proprietary methods without any human intervention.

Chaos Theory

Considering the chaotic nature of the Internet, of language, and of humans, chaos theory seems an apt methodological construct for text analytics.

To date, Metavana is the only technology provider to apply chaos theory to text and sentiment analysis. The key advantage they find in this approach is the elimination of semantic dictionaries, looking instead at language from a purely mathematical perspective. The merits must be assessed though demonstration and case study evaluation since Metavana views their methodology as highly proprietary and offers little detail.

Key Points:

- Automated text analytics are becoming extremely sophisticated and discerning with impressive claims of greater accuracy and subtle emotional and motivational tagging without direct human intervention.
- We find these claims convincing, but some industry experts remain skeptical.

Accuracy

Recapping previous discussion, text analytics of sentiment remains imperfect. An out-of-the-box tool that has not been trained or tuned specifically for the business need at hand would generally have about 50% accuracy. A fully tuned tool can reach around 80% accuracy. But humans aren't perfect either: the highest rate of agreement that two trained sentiment analysts reached in one academic study was only 82%.

> *"Technically, the best validity rate that could ever be achieved in this testing would be 83 percent. Instead of 100 percent, we strive for 83 percent. We know it's not possible. A machine can't do 83 percent validity just like a human but in our heads, that's our goal. What we actually do see on a very regular basis are validity scores of 70 percent." – Annie Pettit, Conversition*

There seems to be consensus that with proper tuning, automated text analytics should deliver sentiment with an accuracy rate of at least 70%. While the standard is lower than one could expect from a team of human interpreters, one vendor we interviewed suggested that we contrast the value of hundreds of conversations tagged with 80% accuracy or millions of conversations at 70% accuracy.

As we pointed out in the earlier discussion of sentiment analysis, proper tuning of algorithms should bring accuracy rates up to around 80%.

Human Involvement

Regardless of the technical strength of a vendor's text analytics offering, most vendors agree on the importance of human interaction with machine learning. Human curation of algorithms and validation of machine choices is essential to training machine learning systems and for ongoing quality monitoring.

Practitioners of advanced analytic techniques like latent semantic analysis and linguistic rules-based analysis report high levels of accuracy with no human intervention.

Social Media and Big Data

Vendors like Clarabridge, Attensity and Anderson Analytics (OdinText) specialize in text analytics and content analysis across all of a brand's information systems.

Integrating social media monitoring and analytics with CRM and Business Intelligence systems to generate truly intelligent business decision support is of obvious value. The precise state of the art is open to some debate, although IBM and others claim comprehensive solutions. The basic technology is in place, but whether implementation is feasible at supportable cost in money and human resources remains to be determined. If not today, we expect truly intelligent marketing capabilities to be online in the near future.

IBM, Oracle, and SAP work to integrate the findings from text analytics with existing BI systems for CRM, ERM, supply chains, and sales. As discussed earlier, complete integration is an enormous challenge for an enterprise as well as for vendors and personnel. It requires a strong commitment from the top down, elimination of silos, and a change in attitude toward information as a turf protection tool. The technology exists, but the challenges are great.

One of the technical challenges is normalizing data across databases created for different purposes, often on different platforms. Custom algorithms must be created to match fields and ensure that information is structured uniformly. The simplest example would be data formats. This must be done before social media reaches your dashboard and is a standard feature of the principal social media aggregators' service packages.

> *"One publisher might refer to a user's handle as a username and other publisher might refer to it as a user handle. We recognize those, they're the same field. We provide a single field to provide username information. Maybe a better example, slightly different would be date formats. We have two publishers that provide dates in slightly different formats. One might be month, year, day. The other one might be month, day, year. We will take both and translate it to a single date format." – Chris Moody, Gnip*

Key Points:

- Social media is a main component of Big Data.
- Integrating social media with other structured and unstructured data presents enormous challenges, but the technology seems to be in place given sufficient budget and top-down management commitment.

Vendor Selection Process

Reach Out to Vendors

If you are already surveying the literature and the webosphere for understanding and guidance, you may have a general idea of what social media monitoring and analytics can do for marketing and operations. As always, however, the devil is in the details; and approaching vendors is an essential early step.

We recommend the approach taken by Rogers Media, a major Canadian communications conglomerate. They began with RFIs (Requests for Information) to approximately 20 potential vendors that included all incumbents, and recommendations from their agencies. One of the most basic issues was whether they should hire one vendor to service their entire program or several vendors with different specialties. Their RFI included vendors that focused primarily on customer engagement, some focused tightly on insight and analytics, and others offered comprehensive suites of social media services.

After a thorough review and discussion of the informational submissions, including conversations with vendor representatives, they came up with requirements for their RFP. The short list included only single-source vendors offering suites of services, a variety of tools, and a history of expanding capabilities to accommodate evolving technologies. The attractions included a single SLA, a nimble supplier quick to adapt to rapid developments in technology and methods, the ability to coordinate and assure quality across multiple departments, and the resources that social media and other text analytics should integrate with CRM systems.

They are still at an evaluation stage but have already seen the benefits of insisting on flexibility in adopting emerging technologies (Pinterest has shot up in relevance over the past 12 months to become a major factor for customer engagement). They can also see capabilities for including voice and images on the horizon.

Key Point:

- Interview and request information from vendors to bring you and your social media exploration team up to speed on the fine points and determine RFP criteria specific to your needs.

Get Demos and Trials

All vendors will offer trials to serious prospects. After narrowing the field, hands-on experience with software, visualization capabilities, and vendor service and support make all the difference. Conducting more than one trial at a time is desirable but may not be practical when trialing a system for integrating data across silos.

Key Questions to Ask Vendor Candidates

During the RFI, RFP, and demo process, we recommend that you address the following issues with all prospective vendors.

Social Media Data Sourcing

What platforms do they include in their coverage and how flexible are they in adding specific venues where your customers and prospects might gather? If you have international operations or aspirations, what is their reach through partnerships or contractors in markets you serve or wish to enter?

Language and Culture

What languages can their analytics parse for determining buzz and for sentiment analysis? What experience and capabilities can they demonstrate in parsing sentiment expressed in languages other than English and linked to cultures other than American and European? All experts we interviewed advise launching social media programs covering only one language. If markets important to you require other languages, dig deeply to assure their proficiency and be sure to bring your country experts into the discussion.

Geography

What regions and countries to they cover routinely, and how flexible are they in willingness and capabilities to expand their reach as needed?

Mobility

How evolved are their approaches to analyzing input from tablets and smartphones and to capturing the mobile customer experience? This is crucial in Western markets. Mobile is often the only way to reach customers in emerging markets, especially Africa and central Asia.

Another consideration is how readily their analytics can display on your managers' tablets and smartphones.

Appropriate Category Expertise

Do they have a history of appropriate algorithms to address your categories and brands (financial, retail, NFP, CPG, food service, etc.)? If not, what history can they show to demonstrate success in adapting algorithms to new categories? What time do they project for getting up to speed? Category experience can also ensure that vendors suggest all appropriate data source coverage.

Variables

In addition to buzz and basic sentiment analysis, what variables do they extract for their clients with text analysis? These might include: behavior, demographics, intention (including purchase intent), engagement, and emotions (anger, joy, disgust, enthusiasm). These variables are extremely important when applying social media analytics to strategic marketing issues.

Appropriate Metrics

Will their analytics deliver metrics to support your strategy? Again, this may be a moving target as your strategy evolves in response to available capabilities. It is conceivable that meeting this requirement could require considering more than one vendor or revising strategy to accommodate the best available single vendor.

Integration with CRM and Big Data

Are they capable of spearheading comprehensive integration of social media data with existing corporate date pools and CRM systems? This requires deep consideration by a team of data scientists and subject matter experts with continual reality checks by stakeholder department representatives.

Dashboards and Visualization

How clear, comprehensive, and intuitive are their dashboards and data visualization modules? How adaptable are they to your measurement needs? How easy is it to make the needed adjustments? How easily is visualized data reporting exported to Office and HTML reports for internal distribution? On the micro level, do dashboards permit entering marketing initiatives and other brand-relevant events on the timeline?

Outreach and Engagement

How well do their systems support engaging directly with individuals and specific groups of customers? If needed, can they support pushing out and tracking promotions geared to individual locations? Do they develop apps for promoting engagement and facilitating promotional offers?

Service and Support for Your Customers

Do they have algorithms for preemptively identifying customer service issues (very helpful in formulating appropriate responses in anticipation of customer inquiries)?

Will their software support automated parsing of customer service and support issues for distribution to appropriate action centers?

Crisis Management

What processes do they have in place for identifying issues that could affect brand reputation and issuing early watch alerts to crisis management managers?

Drill Down

Do they support drill down through themes to specific conversations and comments for concentrated analysis?

Influence Mapping

What level of support do they offer for identifying influencers and tracking social network effects?

Documentation and Intuitive Controls

How clearly do they explain how their platforms and capabilities operate and interact? Are their dashboard and inquiry controls intuitive and easy to explain to new users, including senior managers who may desire occasional use?

Service and Support for You as Clients

How well do they communicate with you, and how responsive are they to requests for consultations and instructions during trial and initial consideration? How clearly do they explain the capabilities of their platform and service suites?

Methodologies

What approaches do they take to text analytics and what are their distinguishing advantages? Are their analytics easily applied to text other than social media data? How clearly can they help you understand the advantages of their analytic constructs?

Marketing Research Experience

Do they understand the needs and priorities of marketing insights professionals and departments? Are they able to speak to concerns about representativeness, demographics, and accuracy? Do they understand the concerns?

Two Issues that Trump All Others

- Make sure that the vendor understands your needs and offers solutions tailored to them.

   "You need to make sure that the vendor you're buying from is a vendor that you can work with. It's someone who is going to take the time to understand what your needs are and understand the vision that you have for social media and it offers solutions that go along with that."

- Select software that is well documented and extremely intuitive.

   "Another key piece that is really overlooked by a lot of vendors is that the tools have to be really, really simple to use. Because of the way that we're structured, we have a quarter of people who are using these tools all the time. On our insights team, one particular person on the team, she's in [the social media software] probably four to six hours per day. Contrast that with other people who are going to need to use it for a project and picking up quickly but then, after a couple of weeks, they're not going to touch it again for maybe a year. The user interface of these tools has to be so stupidly simple that someone can pick it up with a very minimal amount of training, and be able to use it really well."

   — Rick Wion, McDonald's

Key Points:

- Use these suggested steps and suggested priorities in lining up and evaluating vendors.
- Use the following directory of vendor services and the accompanying Gen2 Advisors Vendor Selection Tool along with colleague recommendations to identify likely vendor prospects.

Directory of Social Media Data and Analytics Vendors

- **These listslistings were compiled in February 2013 from responses to a Gen2 Advisors survey of social media vendors and supplemented by secondary research.**
- **Please refer also to the Gen2 Advisors interactive Vendor Selection Tool, which has expanded entries for all of the following.**

Aggregators of Social Media Feeds and Sources

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
DataSift					✖			
100 First St. Suite 360 San Francisco, CA 94105, US (415)795-9393 *Founded:* 2009 – hello@datasift.com — *Service Level:* API/Data Provider								
Engagio	✖		✖				✖	✖
69 Yonge Street Suite 600 Toronto, ON M5E 1K3, Canada (905) 584-8686 *Founded:* 2012 – info@eqentia.com — *Service Level:* SaaS								
Gnip			✖		✖			
1601 Pearl St. Suite 200 Boulder, CO 80302, US (888) 777-7405 *Founded:* 2008 – elaine@gnip.com — *Service Level:* API/Data Provider								
Twingly AB								
Stora Torget 8 Linköping 58219, Sweden (+46) 733 70 77 73 *Founded:* 2006 – pontus@twingly.com — *Service Level:* API/Data Provider								

Marketing Consulting Incorporating Social Media

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
1000heads	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖

41-44 Great Windmill Street London W1D 7NB, UK (+44) (0) 20 3206 2000
Founded: 2002 or earlier   –   info@1000heads.com   *Service Level:* Full Service

Altaplana		✖				✖		

7300 Willow Avenue Takoma Park, MD 20912, US (301) 270-0795
Founded: 1990   –   grimes@altaplana.com   *Service Level:* Full Service

Anderson Analytics		✖				✖		

154 Cold Spring Road Suite 80 Stamford, CT 06905, US (888) 891-3115
Founded: 2005   –   toma@andersonanalytics.com   *Service Level:* SaaS + Full Service Option

Augure	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖		✖	

15 rue de la Baume Paris 75008, France (+33) (0) 1 70 98 24 00
Founded: 2002   –   info@augure.com   *Service Level:* SaaS + Full Service Option

Dollywagon			✖	✖				

1st Floor East Bridge Mills Stramongate Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4UB, UK (+44) (0) 79 7062 6532
Founded: 2006   –   jason.brownlee@dollywagon.com   *Service Level:* Full Service

Face Group	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖

7 Midford Place London W1T 5BG, UK (+44) (0) 20 7874 6599
Founded: 2006   –   francesco.dorazio@facegroup.co.uk   *Service Level:* SaaS + Full Service Option

Goodmind	✖			✖		✖		

41 East 11th Street 11th Floor New York, NY 10003, US (212) 660-0110
Founded: 2002 or earlier   –   info@goodmind.net   *Service Level:* Full Service

icanmakeitbetter				✖				✖

9600 Escarpment Blvd. Suite 745-254 Austin, TX 78749, US (512) 498-3830
Founded: 2011   –   paul@icanmakeitbetter.com   *Service Level:* SaaS + Full Service Option

In4mationInsights						✖		

160 Gould Street Suite 201 Needham, MA 02494, US (781) 444-1237
Founded: 2006   –   scohen@in4ins.com   *Service Level:* Full Service

Itracks		✖				✖		

150 – 820 51st Street East Saskatoon, SK S7K 0X8, Canada (306) 665-5026
Founded: 1996   –   info@itracks.com   *Service Level:* Full Service

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
MotiveQuest	✗	✗	✗			✗		

1578 Sherman Ave Evanston, IL 60201, US (847) 905-6100
Founded: 2003 — drabjohns@motivequest.com
Service Level: Full Service

Social Fixation	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

4001 South 700 East Suite #500 Salt Lake City, UT 84107, US (800) 246-7624
Founded: 2011 — pr@socialfixation.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Social Wavelength	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

2nd Floor Mahajan Silk Mill Compound Above Union Bank of India LBS Marg, Vikhroli (W), Mumbai 400 079, India (+91) 22 6127 4301
Founded: 2009 — info@socialwavelength.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Providers of Social Media Monitoring and Analytics Services

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Alterian	✗	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	

The Spectrum Building Bond Street Bristol BS1 3LG, UK (+44) (0) 11 7970 3200
Founded: 2005 — info@alterian.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

ASOMO	✗	✗	✗			✗	✗	✗

Uribitarte 8 6° dcha Bilbao 48001, Spain (+34) 944 760 727
Founded: 2002 or earlier — communication@asomo.net
Service Level: Full Service

Attensity	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	

2465 East Bayshore Road Suite 300 Palo Alto, CA 94303, US (800) 721-0560
Founded: 2000 — sales@attensity.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Beyond	✗	✗	✗	✗		✗		

419 Park Avenue South New York, NY 10016, US (415) 593-8499
Founded: 1992 — newyork@bynd.com
Service Level: Full Service

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Bloggers' Mind	✗	✗	✗	✗			✗	✗
Bluefin Labs	✗	✗			✗		✗	
BrandMixer	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	✗	
BrandProtect	✗	✗	✗			✗	✗	
Concentric	✗	✗	✗				✗	
Converseon	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	
Conversition	✗	✗				✗	✗	
CyTRAP Labs GmbH			✗	✗			✗	
Ethority	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗
Focalytic	✗	✗				✗	✗	
Fuseware	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	✗	
Linkfluence			✗	✗			✗	

Bloggers' Mind
G-68, Lower Ground Floor East of Kailash New Delhi 110065, India (+91) 11 4107 6303
Founded: 2006 – info@bloggersmind.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Bluefin Labs
One Kendall Square Cambridge, MA 02139, US (617) 225-2592
Founded: 2008 – contact@bluefinlabs.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

BrandMixer
4340 E. Indian School Rd. Suite 21 Phoenix, AZ 85018, US (602) 456-1718
Founded: 2011 – info@brandmixer.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

BrandProtect
5090 Explorer Drive Suite 203 Mississauga, ON L4W 4T9, Canada (905) 271-3725
Founded: 2002 or earlier – onlinesales@brandprotect.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Concentric
10 Fawcett Street Cambridge, MA 02138, US (617) 520-1001
Founded: 2010 – info@concentricabm.com
Service Level: SaaS

Converseon
53 West 36th 8th Floor New York, NY 10018, US (212) 213-4297
Founded: 2002 or earlier – sales@converseon.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Conversition
58 West 40th Street 16th Floor New York, NY 10018, US (888) 296-1009
Founded: 2008 – hello@conversition.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

CyTRAP Labs GmbH
Roentgenstrasse 49 8005 Zurich Switzerland (+41) (0)44 272 1876
Founded: 2008 – Urs.Gattiker@CyTRAP.eu
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Ethority
Büschstraße 7 Hamburg 20354, Germany (+49) (0) 40 300 699 80
Founded: 2006 – contact@ethority.de
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Focalytic
6975 Union Park Center Ste. 450 Salt Lake City, UT 84047, US (800) 678-3748
Founded: 2009 – info@focalytic.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Fuseware
6 Tierberg Parow Cape Town 6500, South Africa (+27) (21) 930 9171
Founded: 2009 – mpwronski@gmail.com
Service Level: Full Service

Linkfluence
Tour Pleyel 153 Boulevard Paris, Saint-Denis 93200, France (+33) (0) 1 42 43 64 13
Founded: 2006 – contact@linkfluence.net
Service Level: Full Service

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
MediaMiser	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	✗	✗
11 Holland Ave. Suite 715 Ottawa, ON K1Y 4S1, Canada (866) 545-3745 *Founded:* 2003 – sales@mediamiser.com								*Service Level:* SaaS
NM Incite	✗						✗	
770 Broadway New York, NY 10003, US (855) 888-6904 *Founded:* 2010 – Leslie.cafferty@nmincite.com								*Service Level:* SaaS
Olery	✗	✗		✗		✗	✗	
Laboratoriumstraat 3 Amsterdam 1059 BX, Netherlands (+31) 20 752 03 16 *Founded:* 2010 – support@olery.com								*Service Level:* SaaS
Polygraph Media			✗			✗	✗	
2201 North Lamar Austin, TX 78705, US (512) 797-6001 *Founded:* 2011 – chris@polygraphmedia.com								*Service Level:* SaaS + Full Service Option
Semiocast	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	
20 rue Lacaze Paris 75014, France (+33) 183627948 *Founded:* 2009 – paul@semiocast.com								*Service Level:* SaaS + Full Service Option
Sensemetric	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	✗	
Beingasse 5-9 Vienna 1150, Austria (+43) 1 929 12 68 *Founded:* 2009 – c.waldheim@sensemetric.com								*Service Level:* Full Service
Sharp Market Intelligence			✗	✗				
P.O. Box 335 Hermosa Beach, CA 90254, US (310) 379-5179 *Founded:* 2002 or earlier – ssharp@sharpmarket.com								*Service Level:* Full Service
Social360	✗	✗	✗		✗			
261 Madison Ave 10th Floor New York, NY 10016, US (646) 561-6309 *Founded:* 2009 – ussales@social360monitoring.com								*Service Level:* Full Service
SocialEyez	✗	✗	✗		✗			
11951 Freedom Drive Suite 1300 Reston, VA 20190, US (703) 251-4529 *Founded:* 2010 – info@social-eyez.com								*Service Level:* Full Service
SocialRep	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	
165 Jessie St Third Floor San Francisco, CA 94105, US (415) 315-9152 *Founded:* 2006 – partner@socialrep.com								*Service Level:* SaaS + Full Service Option
SPOTTER	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	
192 Lexington Avenue Suite 1101 New York, NY 10016, US (+33) (0)1 55 34 93 35 *Founded:* 2002 or earlier – mdacosta@spotter.com								*Service Level:* SaaS + Full Service Option

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Symscio	✖						✖	

1 Washington St. Suite 4013 Dover, NH 03820, US (603) 609-0100
Founded: 2008 – webinquiry@symscio.com

Service Level: Full Service

The Social Studies Group, LLC	✖	✖	✖			✖	✖	

11814 Chapel Bells Way Clarksville, MD 21029, US (202) 715-3884
Founded: 2002 or earlier – wscherer@socialstudiesgroup.com

Service Level: Full Service

Track Social	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖

333 S. Grand Ave. Suite 1600 Los Angeles, CA 90071, US (213) 626-2076
Founded: 2011 – haley@tracksocial.com

Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Trendsmap Pty Ltd		✖			✖	✖	✖	✖

330 Little Collins Street Level 4 Melbourne, Victoria 3000 Australia (+61) 3 9642 3481
Founded: 2009 – trendsmap@trendsmap.com

Service Level: SaaS

UKNetMonitor Ltd	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	

Building 1090 Kent Science Park Galley Drive Sittingbourne ME9 8GA, UK (+44) (0) 17 9541 1520
Founded: 2005 – richard.brown@uknetmonitor.com

Service Level: Full Service

VICO Research & Consulting GmbH		✖	✖	✖		✖	✖	

Friedrich-List-Straße 46 Leinfelden-Echterdingen 70771, Germany (+49) (0) 711 78 78 29 0
Founded: 2005 – info@vico-research.com

Service Level: Full Service

WaveMetrix	✖	✖				✖	✖	

88 Kingsway London WC2B 6AA, UK (+44) 20 7283 3745
Founded: 2003 – alan.ault@wavemetrix.com

Service Level: Full Service

Social Media Monitoring Software or Platform Providers

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Aceita	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		✗	
Av. Professora Ida Kolb 551 Bloco 12 4°andar São Paulo 2518-000, Brazil (+55) (11) 3855 2222 *Founded:* 2010 – gerardi@digisa.com.br *Service Level:* SaaS								
Actionly Social Media Monitoring	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	
538 Head Street San Francisco, CA 94132, US (415) 488-5396 *Founded:* 2010 – support@actionly.com *Service Level:* SaaS								
Aiaioo Labs		✗						
65/D, MZ House, Millers Road Benson Town Bangalore, Karnataka 560046, India (+91) 80 4125 730 *Founded:* 2009 – cohan@aiaioo.com *Service Level:* API/Data Provider								
Alerti	✗	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	✗
27 rue de Ponthieu Paris 75008, France (+212) 6 61 31 60 46 *Founded:* 2011 – contact@alerti.com *Service Level:* SaaS								
AlchemyAPI	✗	✗				✗		
2300 15th St Suite 320 Denver, CO 80202, US (877) 253-0308 *Founded:* 2005 – questions@alchemyapi.com *Service Level:* API/Data Provider								
Anametrix	✗						✗	
10225 Barnes Canyon Road Suite A200 San Diego, CA 92121, US (858) 558-8230 *Founded:* 2010 – sales@anametrix.com *Service Level:* SaaS								
Appinions	✗	✗	✗				✗	
18 East 41st St 2nd Floor New York, NY 10016, US (646) 532-3062 *Founded:* 2011 – nyerr.parham@appinions.com *Service Level:* SaaS								
Argyle Social	✗			✗			✗	
208 Rigsbee Avenue Durham, NC 27702, US (919) 408-7990 *Founded:* 2009 – sales@argylesocial.com *Service Level:* API/Data Provider								
Augure	✗						✗	
C/Eiximenis 12-14 Entrl 1ª Girona 17001, Spain (+34) 972 982 960 *Founded:* 2002 or earlier – comercial@imente.com *Service Level:* SaaS								
Beevolve	✗	✗	✗		✗		✗	
1275 14th Cross CMH Road Indiranagar Bangalore, Karnataka 560038, India (323) 774-1233 *Founded:* 2008 – sales@beevolve.com *Service Level:* SaaS								

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
BrandReact, Inc.	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	

7114 SW 69th CT Miami, FL 33143, US (786) 288-2884
Founded: 2011 – info@BrandReact.com   *Service Level:* SaaS + Full Service Option

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
BrandsEye	✗	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	

The Boulevard 3rd Floor, Block C cnr Searle & Pontac Street East Woodstock, Cape Town 7925, South Africa (+27) (021) 467 5960
Founded: 2008 – contact@brandseye.com   *Service Level:* SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Brandtology	✗	✗	✗				✗	

70 Bendemeer Rd #04-02 Luzerne Singapore 339940, Singapore (+65) 6593 9888
Founded: 2008 – contact@brandtology.com   *Service Level:* SaaS + Full Service Option

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
chatterbox	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	✗	

Shropshire House 2-10 Capper Street London UK (+44) (0) 78 8679 4682
Founded: 2011 – info@chatterbox.co   *Service Level:* SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Clarabridge	✗	✗		✗		✗	✗	

11400 Commerce Park Dr Suite 500 Reston, VA 20191, US (571) 299-1800
Founded: 2005 – inforequest@clarabridge.com   *Service Level:* SaaS + Full Service Option

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Collective Intellect	✗	✗	✗			✗	✗	

1433 Pearl Street Boulder, CO 80302, US (720) 259-3600
Founded: 2005 –   *Service Level:* SaaS + Full Service Option

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Colligent							✗	

9266 227TH AVE NE Redmond, WA 98053, US (215) 680-7417
Founded: 2005 – william@colligent.com   *Service Level:* SaaS + Full Service Option

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Crimson Hexagon	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	✗	

155 Seaport Blvd Third Floor Boston, MA 02210, US (617) 547-1072
Founded: 2007 – wayne@crimsonhexagon.com   *Service Level:* SaaS + Full Service Option

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Cyfe							✗	

945 Concord Street Framingham, MA 01701, US (802) 448-2933
Founded: 2012 – sales@cyfe.com   *Service Level:* SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Decooda	✗	✗				✗		

3636 Habersham Rd Suite #2406 Atlanta, GA 30305, US (678) 761-5395
Founded: 2010 – djohnson@decooda.com   *Service Level:* API/Data Provider

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Digital Trowel	✗	✗				✗		

Park 80 West Plaza One 250 Pehle Avenue - Suite 211 Saddle Brook, NJ 07663, US (201) 931-9200
Founded: 2008 – info@digitaltrowel.com   *Service Level:* SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
dMetrics	✗	✗			✗	✗		

181 N 11th St Brooklyn, NY 11211, US (415) 578-3363
Founded: 2009 – info@dmetrics.com   *Service Level:* SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
eCairn	✗		✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	

142 Calle Larga Los Gatos, CA 95032, US (650) 319-8919
Founded: 2007 – conversation@ecairn.com

Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Engagor	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

Grauwpoort 1 9000 Gent Belgium (+32) (0) 486 29 17 02
Founded: 2011 – lien@engagor.com

Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Expert System	✗	✗		✗		✗		

600 Industrial Drive Suite M Cary, IL 60013, US (224) 357-8080
Founded: 1989 – sales@expertsystem.net

Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Expion	✗		✗	✗			✗	✗

900 Ridgefield Dr. Suite 85 Raleigh, NC 27609, US (917) 747-8401
Founded: 2009 – sales@expion.com

Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Gavagai		✗				✗		

Skånegatan 97 Stockholm 116 35, Sweden (+46) 735 04 13 64
Founded: 2010 – info@gavagai.se

Service Level: API/Data Provider

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
General Sentiment	✗	✗			✗	✗	✗	

50 Jericho Quadrangle Suite 220 Jericho, NY 11753, US (802) 321-0361
Founded: 2008 – alex.griswold@generalsentiment.com

Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
HedgeChatter	✗	✗	✗			✗	✗	

2451 Cumberland PKWY SE Suite 3770 Atlanta, GA 30339, US (678) 744-9720
Founded: 2012 – james@hedgechatter.com

Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
HowSociable				✗		✗		

Sussex Innovation Centre Brighton BN1 9SB, UK (+44) (0) 12 7370 4549
Founded: 2008 – support@howsociable.com

Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Integrasco	✗	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	

Arendalsveien 32 Grimstad, Aust-Agder 4878, Norway (+47) 91 68 40 82
Founded: 2004 – info@integrasco.com

Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Kanjoya	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

456 Montgomery St. Suite 500 San Francisco, CA 94104, US (414) 617-7294
Founded: 2004 – gary@kanjoya.com

Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Klout			✗	✗				

77 Stillman St. San Francisco, CA 94103, US (213) 590-3268
Founded: 2008 – contact@klout.com

Service Level: API/Data Provider

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Lissly	✗	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	✗

Sturegatan 58 Stockholm 114 36, Sweden (+46) (0) 8-661 61 62
Founded: 2010 – ivar@lissly.com

Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
ListenLogic	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		

500 Office Center Drive Suite 104 Fort Washington, PA 19034, US (215) 283-6393
Founded: 2007 — sales@listenlogic.com — *Service Level:* Full Service

Lithium Technologies	✗	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	✗

6121 Hollis Street #4 Emeryville, CA 94608, US (510) 653-6800
Founded: 2002 or earlier — erin@lithium.com — *Service Level:* SaaS + Full Service Option

Little Bird	✗		✗		✗		✗	✗

1227 NW Davis Street Portland, OR 97209, US (503) 703-1815
Founded: 2012 — info@getlittlebird.com — *Service Level:* SaaS

Manzama	✗						✗	

339 SW Century Drive Suite 203 Bend, OR 97702, US (541) 701-2267
Founded: 2010 — allison@manzama.com — *Service Level:* SaaS

Mention	✗		✗					

Rue de la Cigale 31 Brussels 1170, Belgium (+32) (0) 484 21 19 42
Founded: 2012 — contact@mention.net — *Service Level:* SaaS

Metavana		✗						

575 Market St., Suite 3025 San Francisco, CA 94105, US (415) 537-2602
Founded: 2011 — romi.mahajan@metavana.com — *Service Level:* API/Data Provider

MomentFeed	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗

1427 3rd St Promenade Suite 201 Santa Monica, CA 90401, US (310) 494-6617
Founded: 2010 — info@momentfeed.com — *Service Level:* SaaS

Netbase	✗	✗	✗			✗	✗	

2087 Landings Drive Mountain View, CA 94043, US (650) 810-2100
Founded: 2004 — info@netbase.com — *Service Level:* SaaS

Netbreeze	✗	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	

Ringstrasse 12 8600 Dübendorf Switzerland (+41) 44 824 3270
Founded: 2002 or earlier — service@netbreeze.ch — *Service Level:* SaaS

newBrandAnalytics	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	

1250 23rd Street, NW Suite 4507 Washington DC, DC 20037, US (202) 800-7850
Founded: 2010 — info@newbrandanalytics.com — *Service Level:* SaaS

Odimax Limited	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

4 Durham House Stratton Close Edgware, London HA8 6PN, UK (+44) (0) 78 9429 2296
Founded: 2011 — contact@odimax.com — *Service Level:* SaaS

OneDesk	✗			✗			✗	

774 Decarie Suite 205 Montreal, QC H4L3L5, Canada (855) 663-3375
Founded: 2008 — hello@onedesk.com — *Service Level:* SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
PeopleBrowsr	✗	✗	✗	✗				
PolitEar	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	✗	
QuestBack, Inc.	✗	✗		✗		✗	✗	✗
Radian6	✗	✗	✗	✗			✗	
Rankur	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Revinate	✗	✗	✗	✗			✗	✗
saidWot	✗	✗	✗	✗			✗	
SAS		✗				✗		
Sentiment Metrics	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	
Simplify360	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Socialmetrix	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	

PeopleBrowsr
474 Bryant Street San Francisco, CA 94107, US (414) 505-6456
Founded: 2007 – contact@peoplebrowsr.com
Service Level: API/Data Provider

PolitEar
106 Lincoln Blvd The Presidio San Francisco, CA 94129, US (415) 683-7871
Founded: 2011 – carolyn@politear.com
Service Level: SaaS

QuestBack, Inc.
Loevenskiolds Gate 26 Oslo 0260, Norway (+47) 21027070
Founded: 2002 or earlier – info.us@questback.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Radian6
30 Knowledge Park Drive Fredericton, NB E3C 2R2, Canada (506) 452-9039
Founded: 2006 – community@radian6.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Rankur
145-157 St John Street 2nd Floor London EC1V 4PY, UK (+44) (0) 20 8144 7701
Founded: 2011 – support@rankur.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Revinate
1 Letterman Dr. Building C, Suite CM100 San Francisco, CA 94129, US (415) 671-4703
Founded: 2009 – info@revinate.com
Service Level: SaaS

saidWot
The Oval Office Park Buffalo Park, Ground Floor (Cnr Sloane St & Meadowbrook Ln) Bryanston, Johannesburg South Africa (+27) (0)11 035 6000
Founded: 2007 – info@saidwot.com
Service Level: Full Service

SAS
100 SAS Campus Drive Cary, NC 27513, US (919) 677-8000
Founded: 1976 – support@sas.com
Service Level: SaaS

Sentiment Metrics
The Hub, Fowler Avenue IQ Farnborough Farnborough GU14 7JF, UK (+44) (0) 84 5658 9945
Founded: 2005 – info@sentimentmetrics.com
Service Level: SaaS

Simplify360
11824 Jollyville Road Suite 402 Austin, TX 78759, US (512) 539-0360
Founded: 2009 – contact@simplify360.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Socialmetrix
Bonpland 1248 1° 'C' Buenos Aires, Capital Federal C1414CML, Argentina (914) 840-5631
Founded: 2008 – info@socialmetrix.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
SocialNuggets		✖				✖		

4677 Old Ironsides Drive Suite 450 Santa Clara, CA 95054, US (408) 496-9930
Founded: 2009   –   sales@socialnuggets.net
Service Level: API/Data Provider

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Soshio	✖	✖	✖		✖	✖	✖	

611 Broadway Suite 704 New York, NY 10021, US (347) 674-5880
Founded: 2012   –   us@getsoshio.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Source Metrics	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖

44 Byward Market Square Suite 210 Ottawa, ON K1N 7A2, Canada (888) 830-4918
Founded: 2008   –   sales@sourcemetrics.com
Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Spiral16	✖	✖	✖				✖	

7171 W 95th St Suite 310 Overland Park, KS 66212, US (913) 944-4500
Founded: 2007   –   contact@spiral16.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Syncapse		✖	✖				✖	

7 West 22nd Street 7th floor New York, NY 10010, US (212) 798-1414
Founded: 2007   –   info@syncapse.com
Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Sysomos	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	

25 York Street Suite 900, P.O. Box 403 Toronto, ON M5J 2V5, Canada (866) 483-3338
Founded: 2007   –   contact@sysomos.com
Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Telligent		✖	✖				✖	✖

17950 Preston Rd. Suite 310 Dallas, TX 75252, US (877) 492-9484
Founded: 2004   –   sales@telligent.com
Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
TEMIS						✖		

Tour Mattéi 207 rue de Bercy Paris 75012, France (646) 392-7710
Founded: 2000   –   martine.falhon@temis.com
Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Texifter	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	

74 Overlook Drive Amherst, MA 01002, US (413) 230-3153
Founded: 2009   –   stu@texifter.com
Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
ThoughtBuzz	✖	✖	✖		✖	✖	✖	✖

Level 9 Malacca Centre 20 Malacca Street Singapore 48979, Singapore (+65) 6535 8295
Founded: 2009   –   contactus@thoughtbuzz.net
Service Level: Full Service

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Topsy		✖	✖		✖		✖	

140 Second St 6th Floor San Francisco, CA 94105, US (408) 569-2278
Founded: 2006   –   sales@topsy.com
Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
TRAACKR	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		✗	

901 Mission Street Suite 205 San Francisco, CA 94103, US (714) 412-2118
Founded: 2008 – nchabot@traackr.com
Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Trendiction	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

14, rue Aldringen Luxembourg L-1118, Luxembourg (+352) 20 33 35 3 43
Founded: 2009 – contact@trendiction.com
Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Unmetric								

2001 Victoria Road Chicago, IL 60060, US (855) 558-5588
Founded: 2011 – info@unmetric.com
Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Venuelabs	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

2023 120th Avenue NE 120th Ave NE and Northrup Bellevue, WA 98005, US (866) 333-7328
Founded: 2009 – info@venuelabs.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Viralheat	✗	✗	✗	✗			✗	

1510 Fashion Island Blvd San Mateo, CA 94404, US (408) 526-4000
Founded: 2009 – support@viralheat.com
Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Vitrue	✗		✗	✗			✗	

101 Marietta Street Suite 1700 Atlanta, GA 30303, US (888) 984-8783
Founded: 2006 – info@vitrue.com
Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
Visible Technology	✗	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	

3535 Factoria Blvd. S.E. Suite 400 Bellevue, WA 98006, US (425) 957-6100
Founded: 2005 – emorgan@visibletechnologies.com
Service Level: SaaS

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
VOXCO	✗	✗	✗			✗		

1134 Ste. Catherine Street West Suite 600 Montreal, Quebec H3B 1H4, Canada (514) 861-9255
Founded: 2002 or earlier – newyork@voxco.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
webLyzard technology	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	

Püchlgasse 2/44 Vienna 1190, Austria (+43) 1 276 0821
Founded: 2008 – info@weblyzard.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
YouScan	✗	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	

24 Pravdy str Office 725, Bldg. 4 Moscow 125993, Russia (+7) (495) 644-3268
Founded: 2009 – alexey.orap@youscan.ru
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Company	Listening	Semantic Analysis	Influencer Identification	Customer Outreach	Geo-location	Text Analytics	Dashboard	Community Management
HedgeChatter	✗	✗	✗			✗	✗	

2451 Cumberland PKWY SE Suite 3770 Atlanta, GA 30339, US (678) 744-9720
Founded: 2012 – james@hedgechatter.com
Service Level: SaaS + Full Service Option

Methodology

Gen2 Advisors uses a variety of research sources in developing its reports and opinions. These methods are proprietary, but include a combination of quantitative and qualitative primary research, secondary literature reviews, and consultation with subject matter experts.

The Gen2 Social Media Research and Analytics report is informed by four separate research efforts:

- An online survey of 2013 market research professionals, including both clients and suppliers. This study was fielded from September 24 to November 11, 2012, and provides industry perspectives from six continents.

- Over 50 in-depth interviews with marketing and research professionals and thought leaders from a diverse set of industries—including media, consumer packaged goods, food services, capital equipment, technology, telecommunications, and social media service providers.

- Vendor feedback surveys collected from over 70 active providers in the social media services and analytics arena.

- Review of over 900 pages of published research, analysis, and other materials from nearly 100 different sources. These secondary research sources include vendor press releases, published white papers, conference presentations and materials, blog posts, print and online articles, and interview transcripts.

Throughout the report, significant quotes and data points are highlighted in call-outs in the margin. Where possible, sources for all quotes and figures are included. In some cases, information was provided under conditions of anonymity and is not sourced.

For more information please contact
Gregg Archibald, Senior Partner | garchibald@gen2advisors.com | 646.568.6566 x702