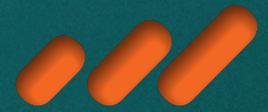




CONTENT & SOCIAL MEDIA

CONTENT
MARKETING

AUGUST 2015
MONTH



margimedia

Introduction

A couple of years ago, people were more insistent on keeping content marketing and social media marketing divided as clearly separate entities.

However, as social media platforms have evolved and the ways in which brands communicate have changed to reflect such changes, the concepts of content vs social have started to blur.

Ultimately, it doesn't really matter if you're writing a blog or you're writing a social media post - both are content and both have the potential of helping you generate traffic, leads and sales.

In the realm of social media, content is simply approached in a different way. You're not writing an 800-word blog (at least not typically), rather you're publishing shorter, easier-to-digest posts. Some may be text, others may be photos or videos, some may be a combination of these types. Depending on the platform, the kind of content you can craft also changes drastically. A simple example is Twitter's restrictive 140-character limit per tweet - a parameter that essentially makes it a social microblog.



In this eBook, we will be looking at some of the most important points to remember when it comes to creating content on social media. These include:

- **IDENTIFYING AND UNDERSTANDING THE QUIRKS OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS**

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- Google+

- **CONSIDERING YOUR CONTENT**

- Text posts
- Media / Photos & Videos
- External links

- **THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSISTENCY**



UNDERSTANDING THE *Quirks* OF YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM

Here's a list of just some of the **SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS** out there:

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Facebook |  Tumblr |
|  Twitter |  Snapchat |
|  LinkedIn |  Pinterest |
|  Instagram |  Myspace (yes, it still exists) |
|  Vine |  YouTube |
|  Google+ |  And potentially hundreds of other, smaller and lesser-known social networks |

The number is overwhelming, but the good news is that you can cut this list down to some of its key players. These include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Google+ is also worth having a presence on, even if it is considered a relatively inactive network - I'll clarify why it's worth it in a little bit.

The other networks listed may be worth it provided you can make them work for your brand, though Myspace is essentially not worth your time unless your brand deals heavily in music or is an actual band.



THE QUIRKS OF FACEBOOK

The primary quirk of Facebook is its EdgeRank algorithm. Besides LinkedIn, Facebook is the only social network out of the key players to use an algorithm that determines which posts get exposure and which ones are buried. The basic logic, however, has to do with how relevant a post is - particularly to individual users.

What this means is **the more a user actively engages with your brand page posts and your actual brand page, the more likely it is that posts you make will pop up in their news feed**. But there are also some other determining factors outside of user behaviour. One of these is whether or not you include an external link in your post.

Facebook doesn't want users to navigate outside of the network, so it tends to minimise the reach of any post that includes an external link, especially when that post comes from a brand. So the best way of giving your posts a chance at good organic reach is to avoid posts that lead users away from Facebook. Alternatively, you can pay to boost posts that include a link.



THE QUIRKS OF TWITTER

Twitter's primary quirks all revolve around its 140-character count. It's this single factor that can make some people absolutely adore the network and others absolutely loathe it. Still, you'd be surprised by how much you can say in 140 characters.

There's no definitive rule of how to navigate Twitter's character restrictions, but that's the point of it being called a tweet. Because just like the tweet of a bird, every post you make on Twitter is meant to be short and sweet. **Be mindful of the fact that including links, photos or other media in a tweet will reduce the character count, as well.** The good news, however, is that Twitter never buries posts like Facebook.



THE QUIRKS OF LINKEDIN

When looking at LinkedIn, it has a couple of key quirks. First of all, unlike Facebook and Twitter, **the social network is all business**, which does make it an ideal choice for B2B companies. Second, it does have an algorithm that leads to it displaying some posts and burying others much like Facebook does. While it's not as clear what makes LinkedIn determine the visibility of one post vs another, **it is believed to be partly tied to how active you are on the network.**

The more you're networking and engaging with other users, the more your activity will pop up in other connections' feeds. For your brand page, the more your followers like, comment and share your posts, the better it is for you. As LinkedIn encourages connecting with a whole host of professionals (to the point where you can have thousands upon thousands on professional connections), **the algorithm is likely designed to also ensure you're not overwhelmed by the activity of every single connection you have.**



THE QUIRKS OF INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a drastically different social network to the above three. First of all, it's mobile-only. **You may be able to view your profile on desktop, but any posting must be done through the Instagram app itself.** Second, the posts that go up on Instagram come in two varieties - photos or videos. **Instagram is a visually-driven social media platform,** and linking to external sites is not allowed besides a single link on your profile page. Just like Twitter, however, no posts are buried. You will see everything from the accounts you follow in your feed, as well as the occasional ad.



THE MAIN QUIRKS OF GOOGLE+

Google+ is more or less an unsuccessful social network. Despite a few years of earnest effort, Google could never really get it to differentiate itself enough from Facebook and, as a result, adoption of the platform never really took off. Google tried some controversial tactics that included forcing people to create Google+ accounts in order to just have a general Google account, but backlash led them to revise these approaches.

So why should you still have a presence on Google+? Well, for one, there are users who still use it. Second, **Google+ is now tied to what was Google Places - the service that allowed you to list your business in Google Map results.** Third, given that Google+ is a Google product, **being active on their helps with your business's search engine rankings.** These three reasons are enough to at least post the occasional update on the network.



CONSIDERING YOUR *Content*

Now that you're aware of the basic quirks of each social network, it's time to look at different types of content and how they can be used. These will be divided into text, media (e.g. photos and videos), and external links.

TEXT

Text posts can come in a variety of forms, be it as some clever quip, an update on your products/services, a question to your followers, and so on. **For Facebook and Twitter, you can increase the potential reach of a post by adding a hashtag or two** - this will make them searchable.

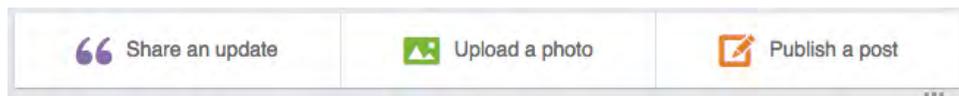
When a certain hashtag or topic is trending, you can consider hijacking that hashtag for the potential of even greater exposure. However, this approach needs to be carefully considered as, on occasion, the subject of a specific trending topic/hashtag can be of a sensitive nature.

Hashtags can also be used on Instagram (30 in total per post), but the text has to reflect the nature of the main focus of any Instagram post: the photo or video you've uploaded. **On LinkedIn, hashtags are not applicable**, so there's no need/point in adding any. However, like on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, **you can tag other users or brand pages**.



What you write does need to account for the purpose of the social network, as well. The biggest difference exists on LinkedIn. It is a professionally-driven network. So while a more casual, funny status update could work on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, you may need to be a little more straight-laced on LinkedIn. It doesn't mean you have to be humourless or without personality, but remember you're talking to business-minded individuals, not just a casual crowd.

Another interesting difference with LinkedIn is the fact that you can write comprehensive articles on it. When you sign into your account, no doubt you've seen this:



The 'Share an update' option is your usual short-form status update. 'Upload a photo' is self-explanatory. If, however, you click on 'Publish a post', you get redirected to this page:

Your Posts Delete Save Publish

Untitled Post
Draft · Aug 21, 2015


Add an image to bring your post to life
Images that are at least 700 x 400 pixels look best.

 David Murton
Lead Copywriter at Margin Media

Write Your Headline

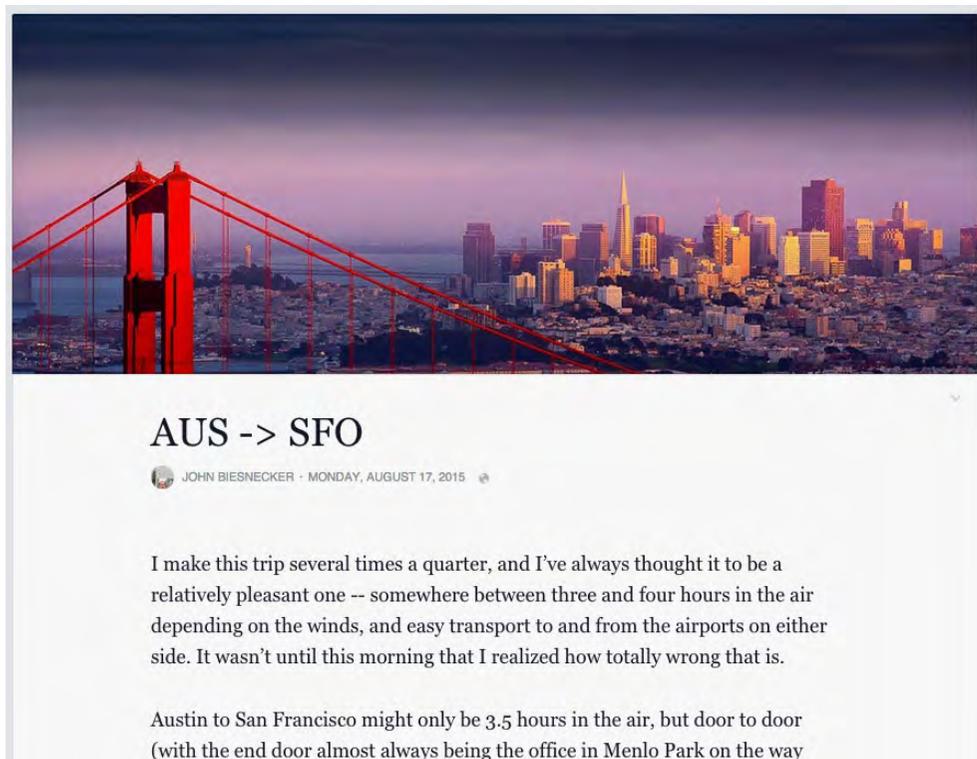
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Start writing.



An additional fun fact is that these types of posts can be tagged (not theoretically hashtagged, however). In LinkedIn's search bar, there's an option to search 'Posts', and this is where people can find your article based on the tags you select to associate with it.

Recent news shows that Facebook is looking at introducing a similar blog-style feature, as well. It's oft-forgotten ['Notes' is currently testing a more expansive design](#), which will allow Facebook users to blog to their friends and/or followers.

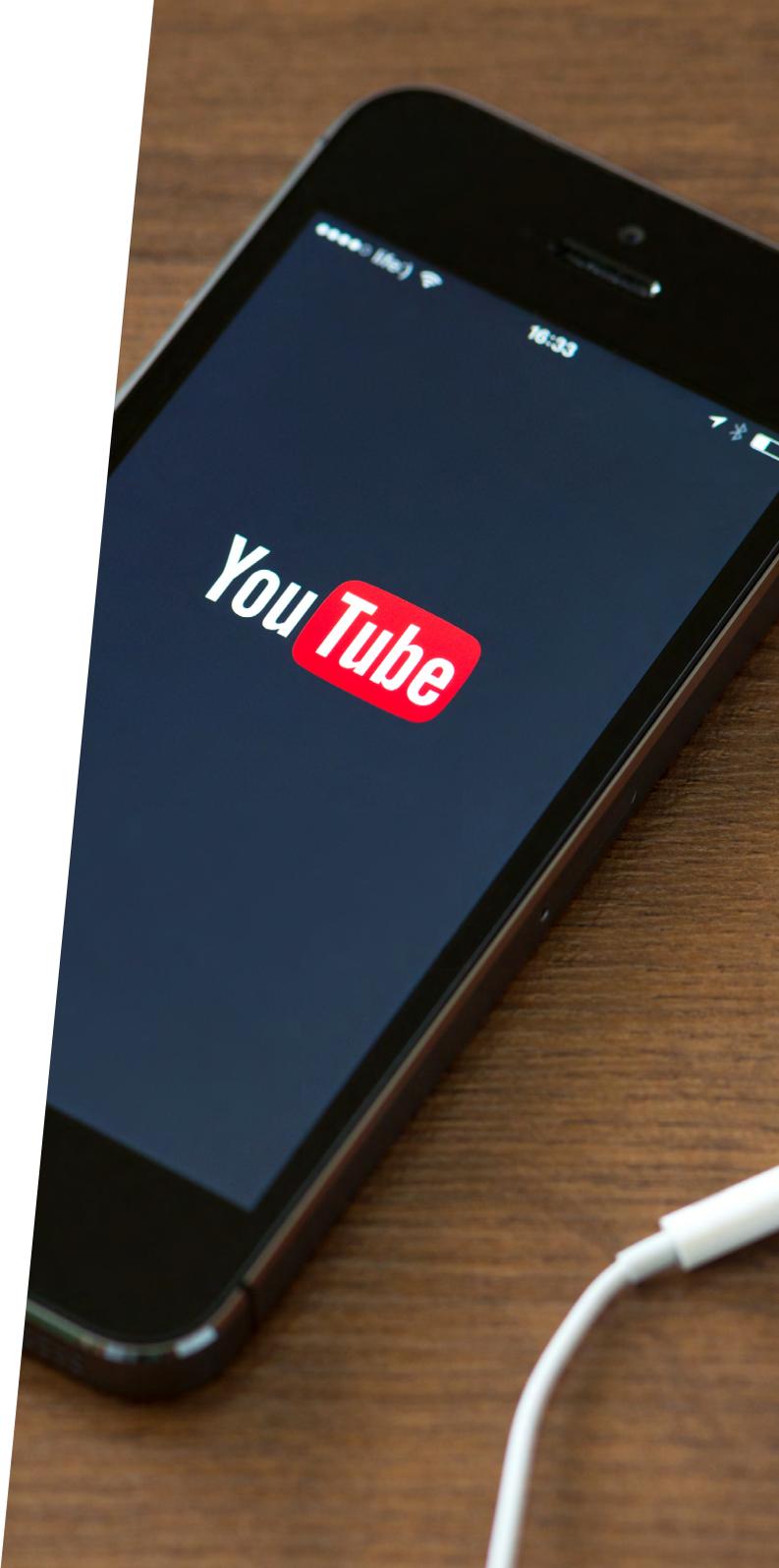


MEDIA / PHOTOS & VIDEOS

Almost every social network now places a massive focus on photos, videos and other similar visual media. Native videos on Facebook have themselves been a great addition, proving to drive more engagement than videos on YouTube. You can [read more about this here](#). The social network also acquired Instagram, knowing that it was seeing such substantial growth for its ease-of-use and appealing visual focus.

In general, **most social networks have gone through redesigns that better facilitate visual media** (large images, more space devoted to video dimensions, etc.) and social messaging apps such as Snapchat have shown that people love engaging on a visual level, even if that message disappears after a certain stretch of time.

In terms of Facebook, **if you post a photo or video that doesn't include a link to an external site, these tend to generate the most engagement** in terms of clicks, likes, shares, comments, etc. It does make sense on a fundamental level. Why read an update when you can simply look at a photo or watch a video?



Remember that some social networks come with restrictions on how long a video can run for. Facebook doesn't appear to have any, but **Instagram only allows videos that max out at 15 seconds, but they perpetually loop.** The same rules apply to Vine videos, only the time limit is six seconds. Again, you'd be surprised by how much you can say/do with such restrictions.



EXTERNAL LINKS (AKA DIRECT CONTENT)

On social media, there are two definitions of content. One is known as indirect content. This is content that is designed specifically for social media and includes no external links.

Direct content is content that is published with the primary goal of directing people to your website. You may do this when promoting a new blog, premium offer (e.g. an eBook such as this one), or a special that people can redeem via your website.

These are, without a doubt, the toughest posts in the sense of pure reach. Facebook prefers to bury posts with external links unless you pay a bit of extra money to promote them. LinkedIn can similarly hide posts, but there's no specific evidence that the network is more driven to do this with direct content vs indirect content. On Instagram, you can only have one external link, and that's on your actual profile page.

Twitter and Google+ are the only key social networks that will show all posts, including all of those that contain external links. All that can really be addressed here is the importance of balance. **Even with those networks that don't bury posts, too many posts that are simply links back to your website can be unappealing to your followers.** So your best option is to consistently alternate between direct and indirect posts. The more varied the content you post on social media, the better.

This also shows why it's worth having a presence on at least a couple of social media platforms, because not every platform is going to suit your business for every post. There's nothing wrong with picking and choosing. **If a particular platform substantially fails to perform as well as others, it may not be worth your time.**



THE IMPORTANCE OF *Consistency*

It doesn't matter what online channels you use for your content marketing; quality and consistency matter. You don't necessarily have to be posting something new every single day, but you should at least have some clear structure and frequency to your content. Just in the same way you should work on sticking to a reliable blogging schedule, these rules also apply to social media.

In a similar manner, **be careful about posting too frequently**. Too much and people may feel like you're spamming them. Keeping an eye on any analytics/metrics available to you can help you form a picture of which posts work and the type of frequency that appears to be the most effective.

Keep at it. You won't nail it straight away, and social media is a long-term investment that requires the thought, creation and execution of a lot of content. Patience is certainly a virtue when it comes to content and social media.

At Margin Media, we can help you with all of your content marketing needs. To start a discussion with us, visit our [Let's Talk](#) page or call us on 1300 798 848.

