Content Curation
Taming the Flood of Online Content

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"In a world where attention has become so scarce to become as valuable as currency, and where quality information on a specific topic requires ever more time and attention to be found, the value that could provide those who have the ability to organize, select, compile and edit the most valuable information on any one topic is incommensurable."

—*Content Curation: Why is the Content Curator the Key Emerging Online Editorial Role of the Future?*
Rohit Bhargava, Senior Vice President, Strategy & Marketing, Ogilvy 360 Digital Influence

Foreword

It's a well-known fact that the game has changed forever when it comes to interacting with customers and prospects. While the Internet has proven an invaluable tool for the rapid sharing of information, the deluge of online content driven by new social media channels continues to grow at an ever increasing and relentless pace. As a result, marketers face the daunting challenge of finding an easy, affordable, and effective means of engaging their key constituents online, while providing customers and prospects with timely and relevant information.

Content curation has emerged as a new and powerful tool for B2B marketers, allowing them to easily sift through the flood of content, cost-effectively advance online thought leadership, and drive business through new and innovative customer interactions.

This eBook explains the critical role content curation plays in today's dynamic communications ecosystem, and why companies that don't integrate content curation technologies into their marketing toolkit will be left far behind by their competition. We welcome your feedback, and encourage you to share this eBook with any professionals and communities that you believe may benefit from its content and resources.

Pawan Deshpande, CEO, HiveFire
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The flood gates are open wide...

As marketers are aware, thought leadership is one of the most valuable market assets, allowing companies to drive industry dialogue, create sustainable competitive differentiation, and advance customer engagements throughout the sales cycle. Thought leadership inspires trust, and trust advances the company's brand authority over a particular business issue. Over the past several years, new trends have reshaped the way in which companies establish and advance online influence. Social media and content marketing are playing an increasingly important role, and in some cases, are replacing traditional vehicles.

...and your prospects are drowning.

In today's Internet-driven communications market, savvy companies are responding to the need to engage prospects more effectively throughout the buying cycle – and recognize the critical role that social media channels play in content marketing. As a result, an unprecedented publishing rush is on, with hundreds of thousands of companies, media outlets, trade organizations, analyst firms, and individual bloggers flooding the Internet with new digital content on a daily basis. This content flows through an ever increasing variety of online communications channels, and leads to two key problems:

1 Smaller firms struggle to compete against big companies, who can afford to produce lots of content. Finding the time to create content while executing a business is very hard. Yet publishing can't be a hobby if it's critical to business.

2 With so many companies producing new content – and disseminating that content via blogs, email newsletters, media outlets, video channels, podcasts, and social networks – prospects are drowning in a sea of information overload. As a result, they're challenged beyond their means to easily decipher what information is relevant and which sources are trustworthy.

With everyone attempting to lead their respective industry discussions, these problems are getting worse. Early on, it was the analysts and trade publications that steered the conversations. Next it will be you, the forward-thinking brand. Soon it will be your competitors, every single one of them. And their mantra will be publish, publish, publish. Publish a press release, publish a blog post, publish a white paper, publish a case study, publish a podcast, publish an eBook.

Content Curation: How to Save Your Prospects from the Flood of Content

So what exactly is content curation? Let's put it in context. If you're familiar with Google Reader or a similar feed reader, you know it aggregates syndicated content – from blog posts, news headlines, and podcasts – in a single view.

The News Users 2009 study conducted by Outsell, Inc. finds that together, aggregators, newspaper Web sites, and other sites account for 57% of where people first turn for news, up from 33% in 2006. Fully 44% of those polled said they scan headlines on Google "without accessing the newspaper sites," the report said. For many users, the report continues, "headlines are enough and valuable…"

In other words, people are hungry for sites and social media curators that can filter content so it's manageable and relevant. And they view those sites as trusted resources.

Curation goes a step further than aggregation by adding an editorial component. According to Rohit Bhargava, Senior Vice President of Strategy & Marketing for Ogilvy 360 Digital Influence, a content curator is someone "who continually finds, groups, organizes and shares the best and most relevant content on a specific issue online."

Aggregators, newspaper Web sites, and other sites account for **57%** of where people first turn for news.

—*New Users 2009 Study,* Outsell, Inc.

Content Curation: Throwing a Lifeline of Trust, Authority, and Leadership

Successful online thought leadership requires your company collect – and make easily available – relevant information for your prospects. In addition to saving your prospects time, you will gain their trust.

The Huffington Post and Drudge Report are prime examples of content curation in action, helping their readers find relevant content that answers tailored needs. On opposite ends of the political spectrum, both sites attract readers interested in the niche coverage.

Behind the scenes, their editorial teams are handpicking third-party content to feature on their sites. The Huffington Post and the Drudge Report recognized the value of weeding through relevant information for their respective audiences. And they've been well rewarded. As of February 2009, The Huffington Post had 8.9 million unique visitors per Nielsen NetRatings. According to the same Nielsen NetRatings above, Drudge Report had a readership of 3.5 million in 2009.

Another example is The New York Times, which effectively curates blog posts from outside sources. As Steve Rosenbaum of the Silicon Valley Insider says: "…what the Times knows is that content that they validate with their brand and redistribution becomes more valuable, both to readers and to the content creators."

The Huffington Post and Drudge Report are prime examples of content curation in action… And they've been well rewarded. As of February 2009, The Huffington Post had **8.9 million unique visitors**, and Drudge Report had a readership of **3.5 million** in 2009.

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Examples of Content Curation at Work in the Business World

Company	Content Curated Site...	Trusted site for...
IBM	http://smarterplanet.tumblr.com	The Smarter Planet vision, smarter systems
Airvana	http://femtohub.com	Femtocell Technology and news
UPS	http://brown.popurls.com	Best in business news
Western Massachusetts Economic Development Council	http://news.westernmassedc.com	Regional business and economic news
Techmeme	http://techmeme.com	Curated technology news
Posterous	http://posterous.com	Individual article collections
Delicious	http://delicious.com	Individual bookmarking
Reddit	http://reddit.com	Social bookmarking

Now is the time to establish your company as a trusted resource: according to the **2010 Edelman Trust Barometer**, conversations with friends and peers as a source of company information saw sizable drops in the U.S., UK/France, Germany, Brazil, Russia, India, and China. "In other words, while Google is placing more emphasis on the results of personal opinions shared via social-network sites, trust in those opinions is on the wane."

—2010 Edelman Trust Barometer

Manifesto/Job Description: Content Curator

"To satisfy the people's hunger for great content on any topic imaginable, there will need to be a new category of individual working online. Someone whose job it is not to create more content, but to make sense of all the content that others are creating. To find the best and most relevant content and bring it forward. The people who choose to take on this role will be known as Content Curators... they will help to add a voice and point of view to organizations and companies that can connect them with customers - creating an entirely new dialogue based on valued content rather than just brand-created marketing messages."

— Rohit Bhargava, Senior Vice President Strategy & Marketing, Ogilvy 360 Digital Influence

Content Curation in 3 Easy Steps

Just as librarians help us make sense of the overwhelming number of books and periodicals available in a library, content curators identify, organize, and share information that will be most relevant to their propects. It's as easy as 1, 2, 3.

How does content curation work?

Identify

The best librarians have access to hundreds, if not thousands, of information resources that deliver ongoing, real-time information on specific topics of interest to information patrons. On the Internet, these include RSS feeds, podcasts, saved searches, and search filters that deliver relevant information for easy processing and sharing.

Organize

Librarians must consume and curate information in order to interpret and best understand how it addresses their patrons' information needs. Expert librarians can quickly process hundreds of documents daily, using tools that organize and automatically tag content, deliver summaries, and rank content as needed. Modern libraries even employ professionals with titles such as "Metadata Specialists".

Share

This may be the easiest aspect of the curating role. Sharing requires that information is easily available for patrons to acquire and use on a recurring schedule. The Internet – and a number of tools – makes it very easy to publish resources online. However, the best librarians are able to deliver relevant information, while also highlighting the relationships between that information so patrons can understand how all the content fits together.

Content Curation + Content Creation = Influence

"Strangely enough, curation shifts the balance of power back to brands and publications. While anyone can make content, the decision to gather it, and present it by trusted content curators has more risk, and therefore more value."

—*Can 'Curation' Save Media?,* Business Insider

Perhaps you think we're suggesting content curation should replace your content creation efforts. But nothing could be further from the truth. Not only can content curation help you attract a steady stream of prospects, it can help you extract more value from your own content. Here's how:

Just as The Huffington Post, Drudge Report and The New York Times mix their original content with third party content, you can expose prospects to your own content as you draw them in with curated content. And because the content you curate is likely to reflect your own positioning on topics of interest to your prospects, your prospective buyers will naturally find your content relevant too.

58% of participants in a 2009 survey clicked on a news article that agreed with their views vs. **43%** clicked on a news article that disagreed with their views.

—*Looking the Other Way,* S. Knobloch-Westerwick and J. Mengo, Communication Research Journal, 2009

Not convinced? In a study conducted at The Ohio State University and published in Communication Research Journal in June 2009, researchers discovered that participants were most likely to click on a news article that agreed with their views 58% of the time vs. 43% of the time for an article that disagreed with their views. In other words, individuals are apt to consume content with which they agree, whether the topic is about politics or business. Plus, recent research by MarketingSherpa shows that B2B buyers are very receptive to receiving industry news and articles from vendor sources. In fact, 84% said such offers increase their likelihood of a click.

"Market leaders aren't always 'thought leaders.' In fact, thought leadership can be an effective way to steal mindshare from market leaders and to start to build inroads into the horizons of prospects. Picking a niche and establishing thought leadership is a way to build dominance in a market segment."

—*Understanding the BuyerSphere Project – Part 4,* Karl Hourigan, Enquiro 2010

Is Your Industry Ripe for a Thought Leader?

How do you harness the media noise to increase your influence and trust with prospects? By taming the B2B content flood, you will be helping your prospects navigate through the sea of content to find the most relevant, valuable information.

The good news is that curating in the Internet age is easy since there are many tools to help identify, organize, and share relevant content. However, not all curators of B2B information will be considered the leading industry resources. Only those B2B marketers that successfully curate the most comprehensive information of interest to their prospects will rise to the top.

The sooner you take action and deliver valuable information, the sooner your organization can become an online category and brand leader, beating other marketers to the punch.

"We don't have an information shortage, we have an attention shortage," says Seth Godin. "There's always someone who's going to supply you with information that you're going to curate. The Guggenheim doesn't have a shortage of art. They don't pay you to hang [a] painting for a show, in fact you have to pay for the insurance. Why? Because the Guggenheim is doing a service to the person who's in the museum and the artist who's being displayed." –Seth Godin "The Curation Chronicles."

"We don't have an information shortage, we have an attention shortage"

—*The Curation Chronicles*, Seth Godin

Boost Your Online Brand Authority

Content curation produces another powerful by-product. The prospects with budget influence are getting their daily industry news and insights from several sources, many of which have established authority in their fields. If your company is trying to establish brand authority, getting close to thought leaders can go a long way to achieving your goal. In other words, by leveraging the authority of these information sources, you can boost the perceived credibility of your brand. It's similar to sponsoring a report by an industry analyst – only the effect goes much farther and deeper when you're continually curating and delivering relevant content to your prospects.

Sounds Great, But I Don't Have the Time…

By now you should be convinced of the value of content curation. However, it's one more task you need to add to the already complex job of B2B marketing. This is why you need to automate the process. There is simply too much content for even the smartest marketers to handle. And unless you do a comprehensive job of curating all the information of interest to your prospects, you won't be able to establish brand authority.

The most effective curating systems will be automated, letting you quickly and easily re-purpose relevant content for publishing into automated marketing systems, your existing blog, and your e-newsletters. They will automate SEO optimization so you can cut back your Adword buying budget for keyword optimization – all while improving your natural search results. More importantly, they'll let your organization establish itself as an industry thought leader – in just a few hours per week.

Case Study:
Airvana: Standing Apart in a Crowded Market

Company

Airvana (www.femtohub.com)

Challenge

Establish company as a brand leader in an emerging market

Solution

Used Curata to create a niche destination site around the topic of femtocells

Benefits

• Quickly built up significant online following

• Connect with potential customers on a daily basis

• Gained industry recognition

When you're targeting a small set of potential customers, you need to find a way to stand apart.

That was the challenge facing Airvana, which provides technology and products that enable network operators to deliver compelling broadband services to mobile subscribers. The company, founded in 2000, wanted to attract a loyal audience by offering valuable content.

"It's hard to rise above the noise using standard channels. Whether you exhibit at a trade show, speak at a conference, or publish an article in a magazine, those routes are costly and you end up competing against other companies who are offered the same deal," explains Joshua Adelson, Director of Product Marketing at Airvana.

With Curata, Airvana was able to create an industry-specific news destination site that is hard to duplicate. And it was able to do so for far less cost and effort than other options. **"We didn't have the time to create this on our own. We talked to companies that offered us teams of editors to develop a site, which would have cost significantly more than the Curata solution,"** explains Adelson.

Curata is intuitive to use; Adelson and his small team can easily and continuously populate and curate the site with up-to-date content. "We set up our search terms and the intelligent search capability finds relevant articles. Plus, it's easy to customize the look of the site without any HTML expertise," continues Adelson.

Airvana's ultimate goal was to gain mindshare and respect, and its destination site has allowed it to do just that. "Not only are we able to interact with prospects and customers via comments they leave on our site and polls we conduct, we hear positive feedback from customers, prospects, and even competitors at the industry conferences we attend," concludes Adelson.

Download the Airvanna Curata Case Study at: http://info.getcurata.com/casestudy_airvana.html

Case Study:
EDC: Becoming the Go-to, Premier Resource

Company

The Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts
http://news.westernmassedc.com/

Challenge

Efficiently disseminate news and increase blog readership

Solution

Use Curata to augment existing content

Benefits

• Quickly built up significant online following

• Connect with potential customers on a daily basis

• Gained industry recognition

How does a private, nonprofit corporation establish itself as the region's premiere, go-to resource?

That was the challenge facing the Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts (EDC), charged with delivering the services and business resources that enable companies to thrive in Western Massachusetts. While the organization's blog had been up for some time, it had gained little traction. "We didn't have the time to consistently produce blog posts, or to manually review Web sites and grab interesting stories," explains Michael J. Graney, Senior Vice President of Business Development for the EDC.

Curata makes it possible for the EDC to efficiently disseminate news to companies in the region. **Whereas it previously took 90 minutes to gather and curate articles, it now takes 15 minutes per day.** Once Curata identifies a relevant story, it automatically archives it under the right category. Plus when EDC employees click on a Curata widget while reading a story on the Internet, the news is automatically added to the EDC's daily list of aggregated content. "In addition to saving us a tremendous amount of time and effort, Curata actually helps us improve over time to find ever more relevant stories and information," says Graney.

Now the EDC is easily able to deliver the information and news the business community is seeking – without having to worry about continually coming up with germane topics. **"In addition to augmenting our existing content, Curata expands exposure to our blog posts,"** explains Graney. The Curata solution provides the EDC with the competitive edge it was hoping to gain. "Being perceived as the place to go about business news is consistent with our mission. It reflects well on us that we're on top of the latest news and using cutting-edge technology," concludes Graney.

Download the WesternmassEDC Curata Case Study at: http://info.getcurata.com/casestudy_EDC.html

Take the First Step Today

Could your brand benefit from curating content for your prospects? Take the quick assessment below.

Content Curation Diagnosis

	YES	NO
Is your brand and company focused on a particular industry topic?	☐	☐
Do your prospects conduct extensive online research on this topic?	☐	☐
Do you and your prospects monitor this industry topic using RSS readers, Twitter, newsletters and other social-media tools?	☐	☐
Are your competitors talking about this industry topic?	☐	☐
Is it critical that your organization be recognized as the leading online resource for this topic?	☐	☐

If you answered "YES" to these five questions, register for our Content Curation Marketing Newsletter. You'll receive daily, curated updates and case studies on successful Content Curation for Internet Marketing.

Identify, Organize & Share — The Curata Advantage

• Produce and distribute fresh content easily

• Improve your SEO

• Drive sustainable, qualified leads

...in just 19 minutes a day.

Call 888-887-1874 to schedule a demonstration of Curata in action.

Content Curation with Curata

HiveFire offers a powerful, flexible and elegant way to transform content into success. Our products and services make it easy for companies to establish thought leadership, capture audiences and nurture client engagement.

Curata, HiveFire's flagship product, analyzes the web's relentless rush of content and delivers a spectacularly curated blend of news, multimedia and social media that is easily integrated into a company's site. Curata also streamlines the distribution of curated content via email marketing and social media. The result is a fresh, engaging and dynamic B2B online presence-- one that is easy to set up, easy to maintain and affordable.

For more information visit www.getcurata.com or call 888-887-1874.

About HiveFire, Inc.

HiveFire provides easy-to-use marketing solutions for content curation and content marketing. HiveFire's product, Curata, www.getcurata.com, allows marketers to quickly curate content on specific issues or topics in order to establish thought leadership, own industry conversations and drive qualified web traffic. HiveFire was founded in 2007 and is headquartered in Cambridge, Mass. For more information, visit www.getcurata.com.