



RESEARCH



Social Media Best Practices

Profiles and Recommendations

by

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1. REPORT PROFILE

FOCUS

Key best practices for social media publishing, as developed through an analysis of nine leading Web sites that incorporate social media offerings.

AUDIENCE

Buyers, sellers and facilitators of content and the technologies that enable its value in individual and institutional environments. Executives in the community of vendors creating publications and content technology services will be especially interested to understand what features and management methods succeed in social media publishing properties.

CONTENT

Key best practices recommendations, social media product analysis and a review checklist. The paper provides sixteen key best practices recommendations for social media site development, further summarized into a two-page checklist for reviewing your own product plans, as well as recommendations as to how publishers should staff for social media and manage social media properties. Features and capabilities defined and analyzed for each site include business model, concept analysis, distinguishing features, implementation advantages, key best practices, key takeaways, growth contributors, traffic growth, community features, editorial guidance, look and feel, indexing and tagging, voting and rating, linking, syndication, registration, moderation, writing style, search engine content placement, ad integration, channel partners and portal integration strategies. Social media features and services were evaluated as demonstrated in nine leading destination Web sites, some with B2B orientation and others with a consumer orientation: **ALM Legal Weblogs, Amazon.com, Flickr, ITtoolbox, LinkedIn, Newsvine, VerdictSearch, Wikipedia and Zagat.** These were chosen to reflect key attributes and platforms used to deliver social media services: bulletin boards & forums, integrated portal services, ratings & reviews, social bookmarks, social networking, weblogs, Wikis & collaborative databases.

USE

A guide for publishers and content technology companies considering how to develop social media services. The report provides both in-depth insights into how Web sites equipped with social media features succeed – or not – and high-level recommendations as to what key best practices can help to make a social media play successful.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Social media encompasses any self-published content created by individuals that contributes significantly to the editorial value of a publishing product through enhanced peer interactions. This means everything from comments on weblogs to ratings and reviews to full-blown Wikis and social networking sites. Our research shows that it's not the tools of social media that make it a powerful communication form as much as how those tools have been deployed. More established Web sites equipped with appropriate social media features can gain benefit from them in much the same way that an all-user site can generate value. The key is to treat your audience contributors as serious publishers and to help them to be successful publishers as much as you would any professional contributor. Social media treated as a serious editorial asset can become the cornerstone of a publishing strategy that has the potential to supplement and eventually to replace print as a key driver for revenues from highly focused audiences.



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