SOCIAL MEDIA
WEB 2.0
AND YOUR
ONLINE
ENGAGEMENT
STRATEGY

WATTA?

WHAT ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT?

6 Steps to Joining the Web 2.0 Conversation

FENTON | communications

WATTA?

What are they talking about?

When it comes to Web 2.0 and social media, it can feel like there are all these new people at the party that nobody knows that well.

We know we should know them. We know they are the latest and greatest.

They're certainly "cool."

However, it can be hard to decipher what is and what isn't worth an investment of time and money. Add to that the challenge of successfully upgrading or integrating your Web site to take advantage of these new communications tools.

In short, there is a lot of information with funny little cute names that you've never heard before to sort through and get your head around.

This guide is designed to give you a well-grounded overview of Web 2.0, social media and how to succeed in this new communications paradigm.
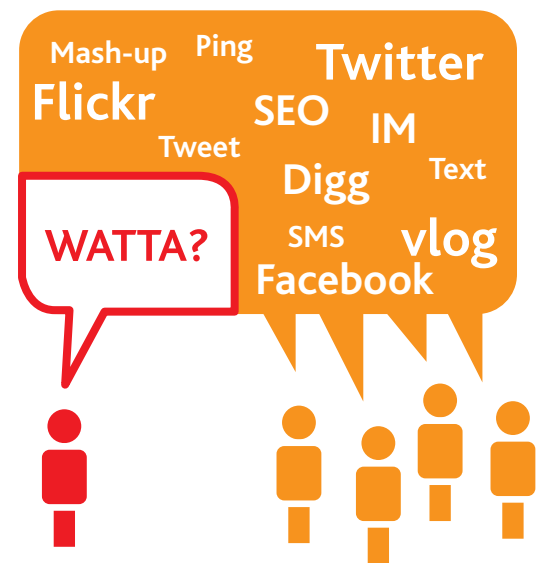
ARE YOU IN THE
CONVERSATION?

Social media is all about connecting people quickly and efficiently.

Social media is a "personal broadcast" medium, where everyone can broadcast to their own personal networks.

People are sharing more than ever before. And their "cause" is often something they want to share with friends, family and colleagues.

Today, you can plug your cause, raise awareness, spread the word and update your network without that funny feeling that can come with emailing everyone on your list.

It's healthy to get a little paranoid though. Why? Because somewhere in the digital universe there is a conversation about your issue, your cause and sometimes even your brand. There are influencers, commentators, followers and browsers. They may even be talking about your organization right now.

The trick is to **find** the conversation and work hard to position your cause in such a way that can engage this new social online audience.

**6 Steps to
Joining the Conversation:**

1. Listen Up!

2. Target your audience

3. Develop an active idea

4. Produce engaging content

5. Distribute your content

6. Get social

① LISTEN UP!

Pay attention to what they are saying.

Before you join the conversation, you need to listen. With social media and Web 2.0 monitoring tools we can track conversation and interaction across the Web. We can identify the influencers, see who follows them and listen to the language they are using.

This information will help you develop an effective and targeted strategy for your issue, brand or message.

Before you start listening, it's important to ask the right WATTA questions. See the list to the right for a good start.

You want to know WATTA? – What are they talking about?
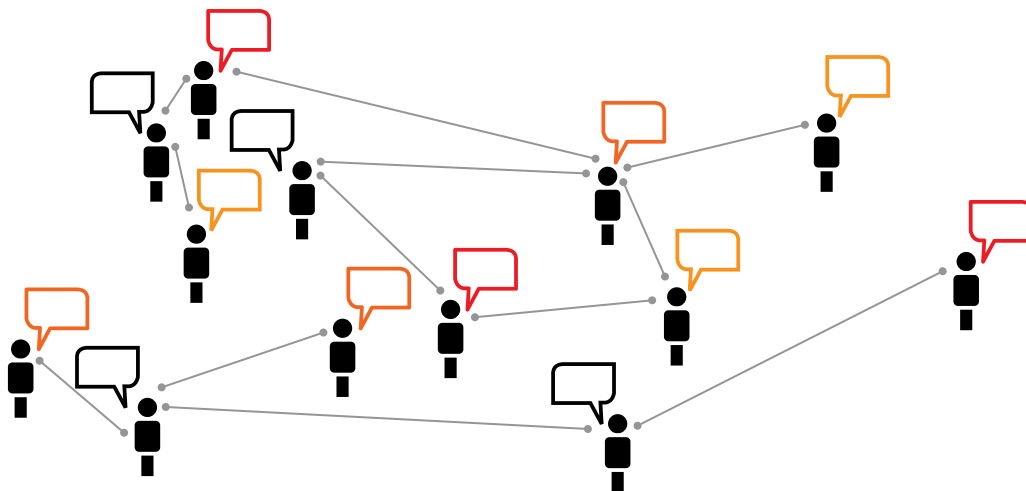
WATTA questions include:

- What are they saying?
- What's topical?
- What's the trend?
- What do they care about?
- What emotions are involved?
- What do they want?
- What language are they using?
- How big is the conversation?
- How does your organization or issue fit in?
- Who are the influencers?
- How much buzz is out there (traffic, number of posts, comments, links, etc.)?
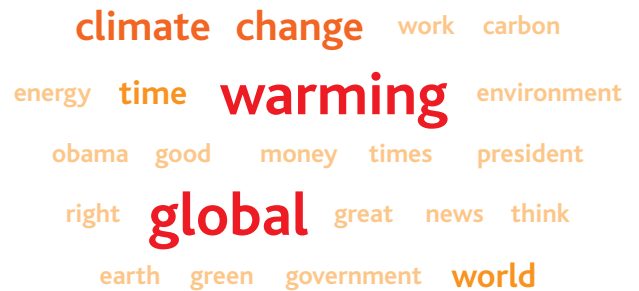
CASE STUDY LISTENING

How Does WATTA Work?

Below is a small sampling of findings from a social media analysis report on Climate Change. These charts can help identify "what the conversation is about."

What Are They Saying?

The word cloud represents the top words (by quantity) that appeared in 79,225 posts. Note: "global warming" is used far more often than "climate change."

climate change work carbon
energy time **warming** environment
obama good money times president
right **global** great news think
earth green government **world**

What Language Are They Using?

Using some other buzzwords as keywords, we can track which phrases are currently "sticking" and which are not being used so much right now.

smart grid
green energy
green jobs

number of posts
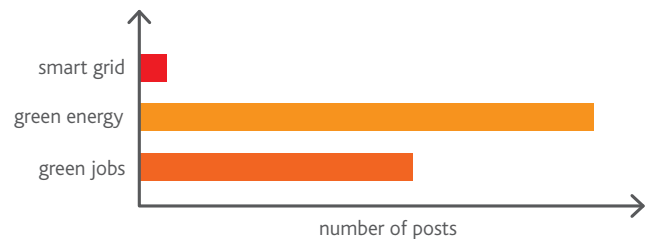
Who Are The Influencers?

Our research identified these sites as the most influential blogs on this subject

Global Warming Review Blog

Alternative Energy

Earth Warming Blog
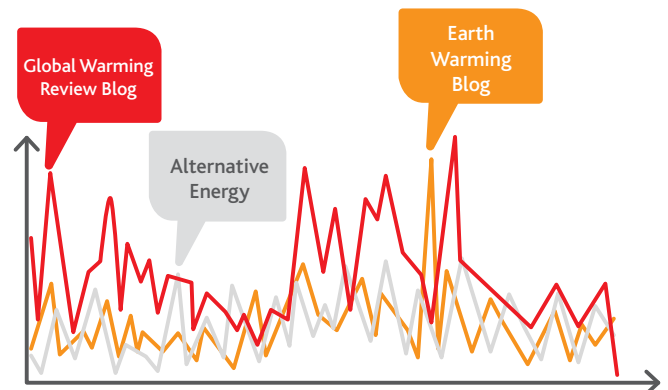
② TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE

You know your audience. You've listened to the current state of the conversation on your issue and you've figured out where people are having the conversation. Now it's time to deliver your message in the most efficient manner possible. Your plan should include a variety of different channels to increase the likelihood of reaching your audience.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Sometimes people know about your organization and sometimes they just know about your issue. Either way chances are a search engine is going to be your audience's primary entry point to your cause. If the words they use don't match the words you use, they will never find you. Proper SEO means using the language you learned while listening and applying it to your content and HTML coding.

Paid Advertising

Search Engine Marketing (SEM), blog ads and banners ads are all effective ways to place your cause directly in front of your audience. When they search on related terms you can advertise right on the search results with low cost text ads through Google, Yahoo or MSN. Bloggers often write on specific topics and those ads can be highly targeted to the type of content on blog posts. And banner advertising can be effective if you target well and also want to focus on impressions (how many people see

the ad) in addition to clicks (how many people clicked on the ad and went to your Web site).

Email Lists

Email is still one of the most effective ways to reach your audience and you can grow your list quickly by buying email lists from a third party. If you pursue this option, do your homework and work with a reputable list provider. This will guarantee you are getting good names that are at least double opted-in to receive messages on your issue.

Partnerships

Ally or strange-bedfellow relationships can present their own unique challenges, but partnering with other organizations is a great way for both organizations to extend their networks and reach new audiences. Look for partners who have a strong online presence including e-newsletters, blogs, social networks and well-trafficked Web sites.

③ DEVELOP AN ACTIVE IDEA™

Fools rush in.

Just about anyone can set up a Facebook page, start Twittering, upload a video or have a Flickr stream. But that doesn't mean that they can engage an audience in such a way that compels them to act, share content, create their own user-generated content or participate in a conversation around your issue.

Create a campaign

When you look to leverage PR or advertising you generally start with the idea of developing a campaign. The only difference is that now it's a social media campaign. Which means you need an "Active Idea™." Something that will engage people, spark conversation, and allow you to successfully position your point of view within the community you are targeting.

Find your audience

Sometimes your audience is where you think they are and sometimes they're not. Controversy can be a great conversation starter for a campaign, so you may want to seek out people with opposing views. The bottom line is that you want to know who you are talking to and you need to identify where they are and how they are seeking out information about your organization or your issue.

Be in the conversation

Once you've engaged your audience and you know you're in the conversation, it's important to stay in the conversation. Reach out and invite them to follow your Twitter posts, read your blog or simply share links and relevant information with them on an ongoing basis.

CASE STUDY ACTIVE IDEA

"Not Alex"

In June '08, neither candidate was a clear favorite and 13 percent of voters were undecided. Then McCain said that he would keep troops in Iraq "for 100 years." Fenton joined Moveon.org PAC and AFSCME to persuade undecideds to reject McCain. Our Active Idea was personalizing the consequences of a prolonged war. Fenton developed the "Not Alex" TV spot to push the Active Idea. The ad generated nearly $1 million in earned media, led thousands to post their own user-generated Alex ads and helped turn the tide against McCain.

④ PRODUCE ENGAGING CONTENT

Content is more than an ad or solicitation; it is something that people consume for information and/or entertainment. The ultimate goal is to produce content that compels people to want to share it with others – to make it go viral.

Viral is a Verb

There is no formula that guarantees content will go viral, but all viral content does share some basic elements that make it worth passing on. Whether the content is a video, photo, song, cartoon, story, call to action, email or blog post it should have at least one of these elements:

• Funny
• Sad
• Shocking
• Timely
• Emotional

Boring content is boring no matter where it resides – a Web site, Facebook or a movie theater.

So, work to make sure that people find your content engaging. Recruit spokespeople and professionals and test your content with audiences and focus groups so that you understand what is and what isn't grabbing them.
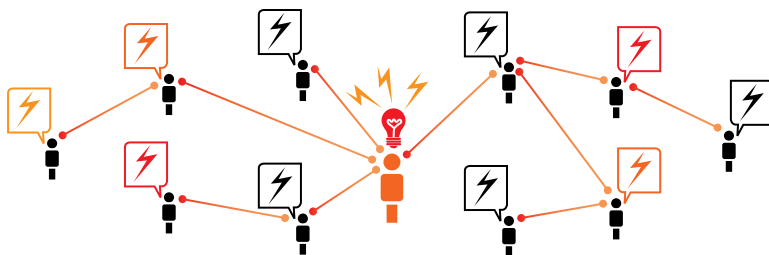
CASE STUDY CONTENT

"The Great Schlep"

A video featuring Sarah Silverman made a splash in the 2008 Presidential Election with its appeal to younger Jewish adults to persuade their grandparents in swing state Florida to vote for Obama.

A key tactic of the effort, sponsored by the Jewish Council for Education and Research, was to drive people to sign up directly on Facebook. This social media campaign was watched over 12 million times and helped build an army of more than 24,000 "Schleppers" who contributed to Obama's victory in the Sunshine State.

Produced by The Jewish Council for Education and Research (founded by Ari Wallach of studioBenZion.com and Mik Moore of JewishJustice.org)

(5) DISTRIBUTE YOUR CONTENT

Your content is engaging, but they can't see it if you don't post it. Here are some best practices to help you distribute your content:

Blogs
If you have a Press section of your site, make it easy for bloggers to post your content by offering cut-and-paste code with photos, video and hyperlinks already embedded.

Press Releases
Optimize press releases for search engines.

Video/Podcasts
Use "embed code" so anyone can cut and paste your content on to their Web site, blogs or social media sites like Facebook.

Email
Keep it personal, target content, don't bombard their inboxes and measure the results.

Photos
"Tagging" photos connects them to other photos with similar tags or keywords.

Advertising
The keys to online advertising are **target**, **measure** and **revise**. To be effective you must cast a wide net to a specific audience and then optimize your ad spend based on results.

Widgets
Simple little applications that people can post on their Facebook pages, blogs or Web sites. Widgets are the best way to create a more tangible experience with your issue.

CASE STUDY DISTRIBUTE

Peace Primary

Ploughshares Fund wanted to raise visibility and online donations. Fenton came up with the concept of the "Peace Primary," an online competition whereby the public could vote for different "planks" by leading peace organizations.

We distributed content about the campaign using a Flash promo, targeted online ads, social media and emails from Martin Sheen.

The Peace Primary raised more than $325,000 and Ploughshares Fund gained a list of new donors and activists. In 2008 Convio honored the campaign with the Innovator Award.

⑥ GET SOCIAL

Make it easy for people to join and build community around your cause.

Platforms like Facebook and Twitter have become the go-to content sharing engines. Whether it's photos, video or blog posts, nonprofits can tap into these tools to reach ready-made networks.

People are gathering online in great numbers, talking about your issues, and creating relevant user-generated content. More than 200 million people are on Facebook today, according to the latest figures.

Like the Health Jobs Starts Here campaign, you can tap into the natural momentum of social networking sites by integrating content and functionality with Facebook and Twitter (and others like them). Give people the content and functionality they can share with their network of friends and that directs them back to your site or connects them with your issue.

CASE STUDY SOCIAL

Health Jobs Start Here

With California's healthcare workforce dwindling, The California Wellness Foundation wanted to engage new audiences to choose careers in health. Fenton developed a strategy to introduce young people to health jobs and connect them to training and job opportunities.

Our research indicated that the opinions of peers, friends and family are the most trusted for this demographic, so we created a peer-focused campaign site featuring a story bank of health professionals providing testimonies and an "app" that enables users to find their nearest training or job opportunity. We created a Facebook community and widgets that encouraged sharing within their peer networks.

Six and a half months after the launch, the site has garnered 650,000 unique visitors and 38,000 account sign-ups—numbers that continue to grow.

LEARN THE
LINGO

"Web 2.0" describes the concept of the web as a platform – for business, for communications, for news – depending on who the target audience is. Web 2.0 harnesses collective intelligence by aggregating knowledge and sharing: think wikis, social networking sites and blogs versus personal web sites. Web 2.0 applications and services get richer the more people use them.

Below are some common terms and definitions provided by Wikipedia:

Wiki - A wiki is a page or collection of Web pages designed to enable anyone who accesses it to contribute or modify content, using a simplified markup language. Wikis are often used to create collaborative websites and to power community Web sites. The collaborative encyclopedia Wikipedia is one of the best-known wikis.

Blog - A blog (a contraction of the term "Web log") is a Web site, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. "Blog" can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.

Blogosphere is a collective term encompassing all blogs and their interconnections. It is the perception that blogs exist together as a connected community (or as a collection of connected communities) or as a social network.

Mashup is a Web application that combines data from more than one source into a single integrated tool. The term mashup implies easy, fast integration, frequently done by access to open APIs and data sources to produce results data owners had no idea could be produced.

Google Analytics (abbreviated GA) is a free service offered by Google that generates detailed statistics about the visitors to a Web site. Its main highlight is that the product is aimed at marketers as opposed to webmasters and technologists from which the industry of Web analytics originally grew.

Search engine optimization or SEO is the process of improving the volume and quality of traffic to a Web site from search engines via "natural" ("organic" or "algorithmic") search results. Usually, the earlier a site is presented in the search results, or the higher it "ranks," the more searchers will visit that site. SEO can also target different kinds of search, including image search, local search, and industry-specific vertical search engines.

Search engine marketing, or SEM, is a form of Internet marketing that seeks to promote Web sites by increasing their visibility in search engine result pages (SERPs). According to the Search Engine Marketing Professional Organization, SEM methods include: search engine optimization (or SEO), paid placement, and paid inclusion. Other sources, including the *New York Times*, define SEM as the practice of buying paid search listings.

Social media are primarily Internet- and mobile-based tools for sharing and discussing information among human beings. The term most often refers to activities that integrate technology, telecommunications and social interaction, and the construction of words, pictures, videos and audio. This interaction, and the manner in which information is presented, depends on the varied perspectives and "building" of shared meaning among communities, as people share their stories and experiences.

Photo sharing is the publishing or transfer of a user's digital photos online, thus enabling the user to share them with others (whether publicly or privately). This functionality is provided through both Web sites and applications that facilitate the upload and display of images. The term can also be loosely applied to the use of online photo galleries that are set up and managed by individual users, including photoblogs.

Social bookmarking is a method for Internet users to store, organize, search, and manage bookmarks of Web pages on the Internet with the help of metadata. In a social bookmarking system, users save links to Web pages that they want to remember and/or share. These bookmarks are usually public, and can be saved privately, shared only with specified people or groups, shared only inside certain networks, or another combination of public and private domains.

Widget - A Web widget is a portable chunk of reusable code that can be installed and executed within any separate HTML-based Web page by an end user without requiring additional compilation with the goal of sharing your content and building community. Other terms used to describe Web widgets include: gadget, badge, module, webjit, capsule, snippet, mini and flake. Web widgets usually but not always use DHTML, JavaScript, or Adobe Flash.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Our New Media Communications Guides are designed to help you navigate the ins and outs of this new world order.

Future guides will cover:

Web Site Feng Shui
How to develop a Web site that engages and advances the conversation.

Work the Web
How to build a communications infrastructure with new tools for content management, Web based databases, and social media integration.

Webvertising
To advertise or not? We'll lay out the questions, the options and how to find the answers.

Sign up online at Fenton.com/watta

Questions?

The communications landscape is changing quickly and we're all in this together. Please contact us with questions or to explore ways to utilize these new communications tools to further your mission.

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For more than 25 years, FENTON Communications has partnered with nonprofit clients to make social change. We work to protect the environment, improve people's health and advance human rights. This guide is one in a series that we've produced to help build the strategic communications capacity of the nonprofit sector.

To download a free copy of this and other FENTON guides, visit www.fenton.com.

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