UNTANGLING THE SOCIAL WEB:
INSIGHTS FOR USERS, BRANDS AND RETAILERS

PART 1 OF 5: **ASSESSING THE SOCIAL NETWORKING LANDSCAPE**

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INTRODUCTION

Social networking is no longer defined by arbitrary status updates posted by Millennials. It has incredible scope and power that demand attention from users, brands and retailers. It is the most popular online activity worldwide and has altered the way we connect, share and build relationships with people and communities around the globe.

Social networking sites currently reach 82% of the world's online population, representing 1.2 billion users.[1] It has given power to the masses, creating overnight sensations via YouTube® and altering shopping behaviors with foursquare®, and has even changed the presidential campaign process through the use of Twitter® and Facebook®.

The digital landscape has experienced tremendous growth, innovation and technological advancements over the past several years. Five years ago, email was predominately sent from a computer, the iPhone® was a brand-new product, "'Twitter' was a sound, the 'cloud' was in the sky [and] '4G' was the name of a parking space."[2] The online world is moving rapidly, and brands and retailers need to understand the social networking landscape, its users, how it impacts their role and presence in the market and how they can affect the space.

To bring greater clarity to social networking and how it pertains to the larger retail and grocery industry, the Coca-Cola Retailing Research Council (CCRRC) of North America has partnered with The Integer Group® to provide a five-part series on the current state of social networking:

PART 1: *Assessing the Social Networking Landscape*

PART 2: *Identifying the Allure of Social Networking: Traits, Behaviors and Motivators*

PART 3: *Social Networking Personas: A Look at Consumer and Shopper Mind-Sets*

PART 4: *The Value of Social Networking for Brands and Retailers*

PART 5: *The Effectiveness of Professional Social Networking*

Throughout this series, we aim to provide the entire retail community with the foundational knowledge to decode the complexities of the social web and seed inspiration for how companies can set a path for change.

ABOUT PART 1:
FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SOCIAL NETWORKING: WHAT IT IS, WHAT IT IS NOT, ITS EVOLUTION AND THE DRIVERS OF THE LANDSCAPE.

UP NEXT:
PART 2: IDENTIFYING THE ALLURE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING: TRAITS, BEHAVIORS AND MOTIVATORS.

1. Comscore®. (2011). It's a Social World: Top 10 Need-to-Knows About Social Networking and Where It's Headed

2. Thomas Friedman. (2011, DECEMBER 7). Thomas Friedman on "*How America Fell Behind*." Retrieved from http://www.npr.org/2011/09/06/140214150/thomas-friedman-on-how-america-fell-behind

ASSESSING THE SOCIAL NETWORKING LANDSCAPE

Every day, 41% of Facebook users and 27% of Twitter users log on to their pages, four out of ten doing so before they get dressed or have breakfast.[3,4] Every day, 250 million updates are posted on Twitter, and more than 250 million photos are uploaded on Facebook.[5,6]

Yet social networking is far more than sharing personal updates and photos. Increasingly, social networking is about individuals connecting with retailers and brands and sharing back their experiences with peers. This changing reality means that retailers and brands must aggressively create strategies to engage in this evolving and exciting space.

But first, retailers and brands must understand the dynamics of the social networking landscape. This will shed light on how to interact in the most positive way, which is critical to any company that hopes to build effective social networking communities and communication.

So it might be comforting to realize that the key to understanding this new landscape could be as easy as remembering experiences from adolescence—specifically, high school. Consider the following:

The social web is very much like high school because:

+ The people involved self-select into cliques and subgroups.

+ What people say can shape a reputation—for good and bad.

+ Boring people are often overlooked. Fun and exciting people attract a crowd.

+ Users seek both individuals and the groups those individuals are a part of.
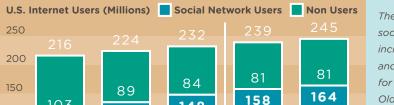
+ Sometimes it's inclusive; sometimes it's exclusive.

40%
of social networkers log on to a social site before they get dressed in the morning.[4]

3. Digital Surgeons®. (2010, OCTOBER 8). Social demographics 2010: A fresh look at Facebook and Twitter. Message posted: http://www.digitalsurgeons.com/blog/design/social-demographics-2010-a-fresh-look-at-facebook-and-twitter/

4. Integer®/iModerate. (2011, NOVEMBER 7). Social Networking and Brand Engagement Research

5. Paul Sloan. (2011, OCTOBER 17). Twitter CEO: 250 million tweets – now what? Message Posted: http://news.cnet.com/8301-1023_3-20121714-93/twitter-ceo-250-million-tweets-a-day-now-what/

6. Facebook. (2011). Press Center. Company statistics. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics

Through the lens of high school, the complex nature of social networking appears to be more commonplace. Like high school, the social networking landscape is comprised of an eclectic mix of individuals who are rapidly changing and diversifying. Though most assume that young Millennials dominate social networking, older generations are actually the fastest-growing user segment. In 2009, approximately 40% of social networkers were over 35 years old. This population has experienced 20% to 35% growth in recent years and is expected to represent approximately 50% of users in 2013.[7]

But because of its dynamic nature, the industry has not settled on one clear definition of the term social networking. Everyone has their own definition, and many defer to the online platforms (e.g., Facebook or Twitter) to address the overall social networking landscape. However, researchers and industry participants agree that there are nuances and distinctions regarding the social landscape, specifically when it comes to the difference between social networking and social media. Understanding these terms and definitions can help a brand or retailer start to see how and where they may consider strategically engaging.

U.S. Internet Users and Social Networking Penetration[7]

| U.S. Internet Users (Millions) | ■ Social Network Users | ■ Non Users |

	2009	2010	2011	2012E	2013E
Non Users	103	89	84	81	81
Social Network Users	113	135	148	158	164
Total	216	224	232	239	245

Note: Internet users who use social networks via any device at least once per month.

The reach of social networking is increasing every year, and is not just for Millennials. Older generations are the fastest-growing user segment, and those over 35 years old will make up 50% of users by 2013.[7]

U.S. Social Network Users by Age[7]

AGE	2009	2010	2011	2012E	2013E
<18	17%	16%	15%	15%	15%
18–34	43%	40%	39%	38%	37%
35+	40%	44%	46%	47%	48%

7. eMarketer®. (2011, March). U.S. Social Network Usage: 2011 Demographics and Behavioral Trends

To create clarity and consistency throughout this report, we use these definitions[8,9,10]:

SOCIAL NETWORKING [VERB]: *the **act** of using social media tools to connect, communicate or interact with others in a social manner.*

SOCIAL MEDIA [NOUN]: *the **tools** (e.g., social networks, blogs, etc.) that enable people to connect, create, disseminate, annotate or edit content online by:*
- *Enabling users to create a profile/persona*
- *Providing users with the ability to have two-way connections with others*

It is important to understand that social networking is characterized by human behavior rather than the specific technology that creates the online space. However, technology is instrumental to the space because, at the most basic level, social media is a technological catalyst for social networking. Today's social media is complex and ever advancing in seven rather distinct areas, including publication, sharing, discussion, commerce, location, networking and games, with Google® and Facebook at the center acting as cross-functional integration platforms.[11]

Social Media Categories[11]

- **Publication** — Blog, Microblog, Stream, Wiki
- **Sharing** — Video, Photo, Music, Links
- **Discussion** — Forums, FAQs, Comment
- **Commerce** — Opinion, Reviews, Co-Shopping, Inspiration
- **Location** — GPS, Location, Guides, Reviews
- **Networking** — Personal, Professional, Mobile, Tools
- **Games** — Casual, MMO
- **Cross-Functional Platforms** (Facebook, Google)

Each type of social media tool is a catalyst for social networking.

Social networking is a fundamental human behavior

– HOWEVER –

Social media is a catalyst for digital behavioral evolution.

8. eMarketer. (2011, March). U.S. Social Network Usage: 2011 Demographics and Behavioral Trends

9. Warc®. (2011, August). Status Update: The six decisions shaping the future of online social networking

10. Integer. (2011). Internal brainstorm

11. Fred Cavazza and Media Sociaux. (2011, December 12). Social Media Landscape 2011. Retrieved from http://www.fredcavazza.net/2010/12/14/social-media-landscape-2011/

Though distinct, social media and social networking are undeniably related and reliant on each other. How these social media tools and social networkers interact creates a dynamic and complex landscape that we will refer to as the social web.

Social Networking
(THE ACT)

+ Social Media
(THE TOOLS)

The Social Web
(THE LANDSCAPE)

The social web and its user base continue to grow and diversify. The number of platforms continues to expand, and the accessibility of its content has surged with the introduction of mobile apps. Facebook alone has over seven million apps and websites that are integrated with the site.[12]

The success and state of the social web today is the result of years of evolution and development. The space continues to transform itself. By assessing the past evolution of the social web, we begin to see possibilities for the future and understand what drives this complex landscape today.

7 MILLION +

apps and websites are integrated with Facebook.[12]

The social web continues to evolve and adapt to our habits and technology.

12. Facebook. (2011). Press Center. Company statistics. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics

THE EVOLUTION OF THE SOCIAL WEB

Upon examining how the social web began, evolved and established itself in our culture, we identified three eras: the Invention Era, the Industrialization Era and the Entrepreneurial Era. Each embodies unique characteristics and builds on the past to continue to drive this dynamic landscape.

The Evolution of the Social Web*

INVENTION: MID- TO LATE 1990S
CHARACTERISTICS:
+ Trial and Exploration
+ First-Time Excitement
+ Establishing Online Communities
+ Internet-Hungry Dot-Com Bubble

INDUSTRIALIZATION: 2000–2006
CHARACTERISTICS:
+ Evolving Online Communities
+ Developing an Online Identity
+ Self-Expression Entertainment
+ Commerce Conversation

ENTREPRENEURIAL: 2007–PRESENT
CHARACTERISTICS:
+ Developing Multiple Online Identities/Communities
+ Personalized Expression/Branding
+ Integrating Online Communities
+ Specificity
+ Real-time Expression and Consumption
+ Brand Engagement

The Invention Era: Mid- to Late 1990s

The social web began to surface during the mid-1990s with the launch of the first social networks equipped with personal profiles and "friend lists." At this time, social networking was a "new invention," an evolution of the Internet, which, to its credit, has been helping to connect us in new and interesting ways since the first email was sent in 1971.[13]

The Invention Era was characterized by trial and exploration of the platforms, including classmates.com® and 6 Degrees™. Because these social networks—and the Internet for that matter—were new concepts, user engagement was exciting and efforts were geared toward building one's network and understanding how and what to exchange.

During the latter half of the 1990s, most attention was focused on the explosive growth (and subsequent bubble burst) of dot-com commerce, which further advanced the Internet's capabilities and engrained the Internet as part of our culture. Though the bubble eventually burst at the end of the decade, the nation was hooked on the Internet, and out of the bubble sprang the next evolution of the social web—the Industrialization Era.

> The social web has taken on an entrepreneurial spirit that drives self-expression and rapid evolution.

13. Ray Tomlinson. The First Network Email. Retrieved from http://openmap.bbn.com/~tomlinso/ray/firstemailframe.html

*Source: Integer Primary Research, Nielsen. (2011, Q3). *The State of Media: The Social Media Report, eMarketer*. (2011, MARCH), U.S. Social Network Usage: 2011 Demographics and Behavioral Trends.

The Industrialization Era: 2000–2006

After the bubble and uneventful passing of Y2K, platforms including StumbleUpon® and MySpace® emerged on the social web. These platforms allowed users to seek friends from the lists of others and proactively grow their network. Soon to follow (in 2004) were platforms like LinkedIn®, Facebook and eventually Twitter (in 2006), which we now see as the modern-day social network name brands. During this time, the social web was industrializing and establishing itself as a linchpin in our culture. In fact, between December 2004 and the end of 2006, the number of active Facebook users grew from 1 million to more than 12 million as it expanded to include colleges and high schools.[14]

Activity during the Industrialization Era became more involved and entertaining. Users were testing new platforms and focused on evolving and expanding their communities beyond friends. Platform evolution enabled users to now connect with family, coworkers, businesses, brands and even celebrities.

In addition, users have shifted their focus to self-expression and development of their own online identity.

StumbleUpon

FOUNDED: November 2001

USERS TO DATE: 20M global

ABOUT: StumbleUpon is a community-based surfing network that helps users discover and share websites by suggesting sites based on personal preferences and friend and network suggestions.

SOURCE: Alexa®, company website

MySpace

FOUNDED: August 2003

USERS TO DATE: N.A./34% domestic

ABOUT: MySpace originated as a general social network but has since evolved to be a social-entertainment site for music, TV, movies and more.

SOURCE: Alexa, company website

Facebook

FOUNDED: February 2004

USERS TO DATE: 800M global/<200M domestic

ABOUT: Facebook is a social network that offers a range of functions, making it a "jack of all trades" in the space as well as a leader known for its tremendous reach and innovation.

SOURCE: Company website

Twitter

FOUNDED: July 2006

USERS TO DATE: 175M global/<55M domestic

ABOUT: Twitter introduced micro blogging to the masses and created an easy and personal way for anyone from individuals to celebrities, brands and public figures to communicate and voice their opinions, actions and beliefs.

SOURCE: Company website, Nielsen Netview August 2011

Equipped with Facebook 'likes,' photo shares, tagging and new social media like YouTube and Flickr®, users were able to demonstrate their personality and tie themselves to the cultural elements they felt defined them (e.g., music, celebrities, hobbies etc.).

This really was a time of tremendous change, but, much like the industrial revolution, it was just the beginning.

14. Facebook. (2011). Press Center. Company timeline. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/press/info. php?timeline

The Entrepreneurial Era: 2007–Present

Over the last five years, much advancement has been made within the social web regarding user habits, platform style/functionality and network accessibility. This evolution embodies an entrepreneurial spirit, in that it has evolved and innovated the idea of what the social web is, how it can be used and a push to consider what it could be tomorrow.

This entrepreneurial spirit has created a very fragmented yet highly integrated social web in which users are geared toward real-time, customized and often "snack size" consumption of content in tremendous volume. It has become a daily habit for many. As previously stated, 41% of Facebook users and 27% of Twitter users log in daily, and nearly 40% log in before they get dressed in the morning.[15,16] In addition, millions of apps feed into platforms like Facebook and Twitter, which generate 250 million photos a day and 1.8 billion tweets each week, respectively.[17,18]

Ning

FOUNDED: October 2005

USERS TO DATE: N.A. (90,000 networks)

ABOUT: Ning enables users to create their own social websites and attracts individuals, organizations, marketers, influencers and activists looking to create a customized social destination for their network.

SOURCE: Company website

Meetup

FOUNDED: June 2001

USERS TO DATE: 9.5M global

ABOUT: Meetup has a mission to "revitalize local community and help people self-organize." It allows members to find and/or create local groups and organize individuals to meet face to face.

SOURCE: Alexa, company website

Users are generating a constant flow of content that is highly personalized. Small-scale, niche social networks like those made on Ning® and Meetup® are more prevalent, and many platforms have become a public diary, a scrapbook of our lives, even a support group and a place to solicit advice. For some, connecting directly with businesses, brands and their followers on the social web is an effective means of getting advice. Similarly, many retailers and brands entered the space feeling it presented an effective means to connect with their shoppers.

15. Digital Surgeons. (2010, OCTOBER 8). Social demographics 2010: A fresh look at Facebook and Twitter. Message posted: http://www.digitalsurgeons.com/blog/design/social-demographics-2010-a-fresh-look-at-facebook-and-twitter/

16. Integer/iModerate. (2011, NOVEMBER 7). Social Networking and Brand Engagement Research

17. Paul Sloan. (2011, OCTOBER 17). Twitter CEO: 250 million tweets – now what? Message posted: http://news.cnet.com/8301-1023_3-20121714-93/twitter-ceo-250-million-tweets-a-day-now-what/

18. Facebook. (2011). Press Center. Company statistics. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics

Because there is so much chatter happening online, more and more brands are activating a social networking strategy. Brands and businesses are not only listening to user-generated content, but many are getting involved and engaging with fellow social networkers. By establishing a social networking personality and engaging with users, brands are able to develop new connections in new places (e.g., mobile) with their followers.

Obviously many evolutions during the Entrepreneurial Era stemmed from technological evolutions, including greater platform functionality/integration, application development and increased mobile accessibility, as well as new platform launches including Google+™ and Pinterest. Users can now utilize several different platforms and devices to tweet, upload an HD-quality video, search or review and navigate to a restaurant in the moment. And, to put it in perspective, these capabilities have been made possible only in the past few years.

Google+

FOUNDED: June 2011

USERS TO DATE: 62M global

ABOUT: Google+ makes connecting on the web more like connecting in person. The site's point of difference is that it allows users to create "circles," video chat and "+1" items from search engines.

SOURCE: Alexa, company website, *PC Magazine®*. (2011, December 28). Google+ Users Estimated at 62 Million
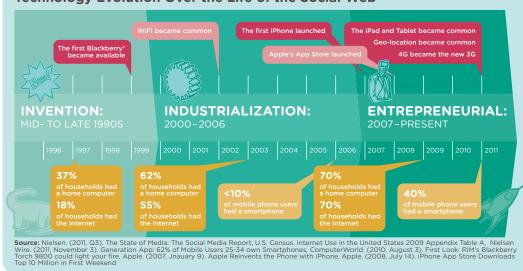
Pinterest

FOUNDED: October 2011

USERS TO DATE: N.A.

ABOUT: Pinterest is a virtual bulletin board that enables users to organize and share content they find online using the site's customized bookmarking tool that lives on the user's browser.

SOURCE: Company website

Technology Evolution Over the Life of the Social Web

The first Blackberry® became available

WiFi became common

The first iPhone launched

Apple's App Store launched

The iPad and Tablet became common
Geo-location became common
4G became the new 3G

INVENTION:
MID- TO LATE 1990S

INDUSTRIALIZATION:
2000–2006

ENTREPRENEURIAL:
2007–PRESENT

| 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |

37% of households had a home computer
18% of households had the Internet

62% of households had a home computer
55% of households had the Internet

<10% of mobile phone users had a smartphone

70% of households had a home computer
70% of households had the Internet

40% of mobile phone users had a smartphone

Source: Nielsen. (2011, Q3). The State of Media: The Social Media Report, U.S. Census. Internet Use in the United States 2009 Appendix Table A, Nielsen Wire. (2011, November 3). Generation App: 62% of Mobile Users 25-34 own Smartphones, ComputerWorld. (2010, August 3). First Look: RIM's Blackberry Torch 9800 could light your fire, Apple. (2007, Jnauary 9). Apple Reinvents the Phone with iPhone, Apple. (2008, July 14). iPhone App Store Downloads Top 10 Million in First Weekend

Though technology is complex and ever-evolving, it is more important to recognize that it is also driving, enhancing and evolving social networking. Many retailers and brands see this trend and tap in to various platforms and devices to explore new ways to connect with social networkers.

> ## "Technology is a partner to social networking because it helps foster social interaction."
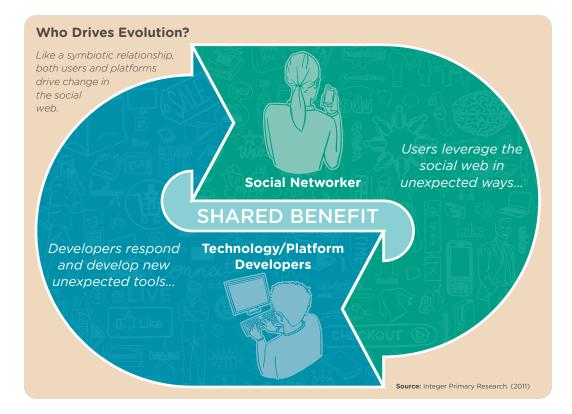> –Community Manager, Large CPG Company[19]

For example, Old Navy® and Starbucks® are leveraging mobile and social media to engage and reward shoppers. In May 2011, Starbucks launched a Lady Gaga® scavenger hunt across Facebook, Twitter and foursquare that allowed followers to find clues, win prizes and access the artist's new album.[20] Similarly, the Old Navy Snap Appy app enabled shoppers to snap in-store icons and uncover style information, deals, games and more.[21]

These are just a few examples of the newest evolutions of the social web. The social web has seen tremendous change in a short time. The beginnings of social networking were geared toward discovery but soon evolved to a multidimensional space with various platforms, user motives and devices. The entrepreneurial spirit as of late will likely lead to new dimensions of the social web and lead us to a new era of social networking.

19. Integer. (2011, OCTOBER 17). Expert interviews with industry participants

20. Bruce Horovitz. (2011, MAY 19). Starbucks teams with Lady Gaga. Message posted: http://www.usatoday.com/money/advertising/2011-05-18-starbucks-lady-gaga_n.htm

21. iTunes.® (2011, DECEMBER 7). Old Navy iTunes preview. Retrieved from http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/old-navy/id342792281?mt=8

THE FORCES SHAPING THE SOCIAL WEB

The social web is made of human behavior and media tools, but which is driving the evolution of the space? We believe it is both. Evolution of the social web is the result of a cyclical, symbiotic relationship in which each party (in this case social networkers and developers) interact, influence and affect each other while also deriving benefits.

Social networking behavior inspires developers to evolve platforms/technology, which in turn produces an advancement that is of use to the social networker and beneficial to the developer. However, technology/ platform advancement alone does not imply success— because it is reliant on user demand. For example, Facebook users began to incorporate their location into status updates. Developers responded through app development and mobile phone advancements, which gave birth to geo-location-powered check-in functions like foursquare.

Who Drives Evolution?

Like a symbiotic relationship, both users and platforms drive change in the social web.

Social Networker

Users leverage the social web in unexpected ways...

SHARED BENEFIT

Technology/Platform Developers

Developers respond and develop new unexpected tools...

Source: Integer Primary Research. (2011)

This evolution benefitted both parties and highlights an important strategic distinction for retailers and brands to consider moving forward—to not think about a strategy for a platform, but rather think about how to satisfy an unmet social need and use the appropriate platform to do so. The Directeur Général of SMARTS from the TBWA\® office in France best summed up this idea when he said,

> "[The Internet] does not create new social behavior. It is a facilitator for behavior that is already happening. [Similarly, with social networking] we cannot create a community. It must already exist, and we can merely tap in to it with an appropriate social network."
>
> –Directeur Général, SMARTS, TBWA\ France

There are innumerable existing communities online and off. The ability to tap in to their unmet needs can not only evolve the social web but also provide an arena for brands to engage more effectively with consumers. For example, Yelp® provides a source and an outlet for business reviews. It successfully taps in to a group of consumers who like to share their business experiences with others. Yelp gives this community a bigger voice while also engaging businesses, giving them the opportunity to have a voice, manage customer service and gain insight. Existing platforms like Facebook can also help retailers and brands tap in to or even discover niche communities.

For example, the supermarket chain Publix® has a rather large Facebook following for its sub sandwiches. Similarly, Red Lobster® has nearly as many Facebook fans for its cheddar bay biscuits as it does for the restaurant itself.[22] These social platforms can help retailers tap in to a niche community or expose one that was previously unknown, which can help identify new opportunities.

TAP IN TO AN EXISTING COMMUNITY:
Red Lobster's Cheddar Bay Biscuits' Facebook page has nearly as many 'likes' as the restaurant's page.

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22. Facebook. (2011). Red Lobster Facebook Page. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/redlobster and https://www.facebook.com/RedLobsterCheddarBayBiscuits

DRIVERS OF EVOLUTION AND FUTURE TRENDS

Though social networkers and developers are the foundational forces for evolution, four drivers in particular have shaped the social web of today and will continue to drive evolution moving forward.

1. Behavioral Evolution

Human behavior is at the root of social networking. Therefore, it is not surprising that behavioral evolution drives change. As we humans evolve, grow and desire personal and unique experiences in real life, it is only natural that those demands be reflected online.

One behavioral evolution of interest is the interaction between shoppers and brands. Consider this: if a brand had never created a page on Facebook or started a Twitter feed, users might have never recognized how they felt about the brand, what it means to them or why they would interact with a company. Conversely, now that brands are on the social web and learning what customers are really saying and what they really want, best practices online and off are changing. Brands are leveraging the social web as a real-time customer service-response unit, location-specific deal distributor and more.

For example, businesses are increasingly using Twitter questions as a means to engage with consumers because they have found that answering questions makes Tweeters 60%–65% more likely to follow that brand and make a purchase.[23]

And it's not just the brands that are changing their habits as the result of their social web experiences. In fact, a study by New York University® Stern School of Business Center for Measurable Marketing (CMM) revealed a positive correlation between word-of-mouth communication via social media and in-store traffic (greater than that of paid media). Approximately 16% and 5% of visits to social network or forum-categorized websites, respectively, are immediately followed by a visit to a search engine or shopping website, respectively.[24]

This symbiotic relationship will only grow in importance as the web evolves. A constant back-and-forth that is sometimes brand-led and sometimes user-led will be key to the future of what gets created, which new start-ups are successful and which new technologies are developed.

Do shoppers think differently about your brand if they are Facebook friends with you?

60%–65%

of social networkers are more likely to buy your product if you answer their Twitter questions.[23]

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23. Graham Charlton. (2011, SEPTEMBER, 1). 10 Amazing Twitter Infographics. Message posted: http://econsultancy.com/us/blog/8049-10-twitter-infographics

24. Experian® Simmons. (2011). 2011 Social Media Consumer Trend and Benchmark Report

2. Specificity/Personalization

The desire for greater specificity and personalization goes hand-in-hand with behavioral evolution. This is a user demand that is not unique to the social web. As humans, we are always on the search for personal experiences and ways to express ourselves as individuals. By defining our own individuality and finding specific, personalized outlets, we ultimately aim to identify others with a common passion and derive deeper connections.

The desire for specificity and personalization is prompting people to use more platforms targeted toward certain hobbies, certain groups, certain information or certain shopping perks. As they do so, people are also becoming increasingly aware that they may not want to act the same way across all their networks or maintain the same persona among their different circles of connections. The social web, like high school, can positively or negatively impact a person's reputation.

The use of social networking for professional reasons is just one driver for users to create distinct personas. Augmenting Facebook privacy settings and enhancing a LinkedIn profile are critical steps for job-seekers, because 65% of recruiters check social media sites.[25]

However, creating a distinct persona is not always driven by a person's desire to protect his or her reputation. Many users participate in specialized or niche networks, like GetGlue or a Ning network, to find specific connections about a passion of theirs. Furthermore, we see brands beginning to mimic this behavior by using different channels to achieve different goals (e.g., Facebook for coupon distribution/sweepstakes and Twitter for consumer engagement and PR). This type of channel planning in the social space will be critical to success in the future because it moves organizations closer to a social strategy and on from just a digital approach.

> Social networking is highly personalized.
>
> Can this help businesses recruit?

> Consider using different social media tools to achieve different goals and make more personal connections.

25. Charlie White. (2011, November 2). *Protecting Your Online Reputation: 4 Things You Need to Know.* Retrieved from http://mashable.com/2011/11/02/protecting-your-online-reputation/

3. Simplicity

As we evolve our own identity and self-expression, we want to be able to easily and simply convey it across all of life's outlets such as our clothes, our actions and especially with our Facebook/Twitter updates. In recent years, the proliferation and advancement of mobile technology has helped users integrate and simplify all their social networking activities. Mobile apps, Facebook integration and push alerts are making it easier and simpler for us to connect.

Developing newer, faster, one-click technology is a competitive advantage in that it helps make capturing or creating sharable content easier. And it's not just social media developers who are driving simplicity—the advancement of smartphones has elevated user capabilities even more. Consider this: to share a video a few years ago meant shooting footage with a specific video camera, connecting the camera to the computer, transferring the file and then uploading that file to the web. Now users can shoot HD-quality video with their phones and upload it wirelessly and instantly to the web to share.

From software developments like HTML5, which bring a new level of creativity and share-ability to the web, to hardware developments like the high-end iPhone 4s or the low-end AT&T® Impulse 4G (a smartphone advertised for $29.99), we continue to see technology evolve. As user tasks and engagement are made easier, marketers will be able to seek new, deeper levels of engagement in the future.

> Technology is responding to user demand for simpler, one-touch access to all of the social web.

4. Technology Proliferation

New technology is driving simplicity and is proliferating and propelling change among social networkers. It is redefining how, when and where people fundamentally interact and operate. As of December 2011, computers are still the primary access point for social media. However, users are increasingly accessing social media through their mobile browsers. Traffic to social sites from mobile devices increased 21% over last year, and access via application increased 101%.[26] Most social networkers (65%) use their mobile phones to connect to the social web because it gives them the freedom to access their network anywhere. However, 35% of respondents report that their primary reason to access the social web on their mobile is because it is also a fun and easy way to pass the time.[27]

Moving forward, we see additional touch points like smart TVs, gaming consoles and tablets having a greater impact and working together to integrate network communication for users leveraging multiple devices.

It will also be important to understand how the different device interactions are based in different behaviors. On a smart TV, people can more passively surf networks for entertainment purposes. However, on mobile or tablets, behaviors are probably more about real-time sharing of places, activities or media.

It is hard to know what will happen next. In the words of the TBWA\ Asia Pacific Digital President, "[the future is uncertain but] we just need to listen and learn and adjust with the changes. It's going to be interesting."

26. ComScore. (2011, November 21). Mobile Social Networking Audience Grew 44 Percent Over Past Year in EU5. Retrieved from http://www.comscore.com/Press_Events/Press_Releases/2011/11/Mobile_Social_Networking_Audience_Grew_44_Percent_Over_Past_Year_in_EU5

27. Integer/iModerate. (2011, November 7). Social Networking and Brand Engagement Research

How Do Consumers Access Social Media?*

97% COMPUTER	37% MOBILE PHONE	3% GAMING CONSOLE	3% IPAD	2% INTERNET-ENABLED TV	2% E-READER	1% HANDHELD MUSIC PLAYER

Computers and mobile are at the core of connecting on the social web, but other devices may become more prevalent and/or change the way we connect.

*Source: Nielsen. (2011 Q3). State of Social Media, The Social Media Report

BUSINESS CONSIDERATIONS

Every company needs to consider what is going on in the social web and what it means for them and their customers. Listening and learning are the names of the game. The social web shows no sign of stopping, and it continues to evolve in new and surprising ways that impact individuals as well as retailers and brands.

So start asking yourself:

+ *What clique do you think you fall into?*

+ *In what social media categories do you want to engage?*

+ *What role does the social web and technology play for you and your shoppers?*

+ *What new possibilities does the social web present?*

Notes:

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

For this project, we used a combination of primary and secondary research to build a fact base to analyze the landscape of social networking as it pertains to its current state, how it affects both the shopper and consumer mind-set and its relation to physical and digital retailers.

We conducted a thorough review of secondary resources to build a knowledge base and guide our primary research. Secondary resources included subscription-based resources such as Iconoculture®, Experian Simmons, Warc and eMarketer, as well as publicly available information from industry associations, publications, studies, blogs and platform providers.

To fully understand this rapidly evolving space and its relation to consumers and shoppers, we leveraged a variety of primary research, including expert interviews, a quantitative consumer study and a qualitative shopper study.

Expert Interviews

In addition to leveraging social media, digital and media experts within the Integer network, we conducted interviews with seven industry participants to gather real-time insights regarding the project objectives. Participants included consultants, internal brand community managers and external digital strategists/agencies.

Quantitative Consumer and Shopper Research

Integer, in conjunction with iModerate research technologies®, conducted a quantitative survey with 308 frequent social networkers and intercepted 40 respondents to participate in one-on-one live conversations via the iModerate proprietary instant-messenger platform to gain deeper insight regarding habits and practices online.

Qualitative Shopper Research

Integer, in conjunction with Qualvu®, completed a qualitative survey with 24 frequent social networkers. Participants answered several questions regarding their social networking usage and habits and provided video footage of their "shopping journeys" to illustrate their social media behaviors and motivations throughout (Pre-Tail®, Retail, Post-Tail®).

About the Shopper Journey

We used the Integer Shopper Continuum® to frame the shopper journey and help us understand and articulate the role of communication and marketing actions during three distinct phases of shopping behavior: Pre-Tail®, Retail and Post-Tail®.

- **THE PRE-TAIL® PHASE** *includes all the things people do when preparing to shop and select a retailer, including how they respond to all things brands or retailers do to influence behavior.*
- **THE RETAIL PHASE** *is all activities that take place in a real or virtual retail environment. This includes the behavior of the shopper and the actions of the retailer and brand on the shelves (real or virtual).*
- **THE POST-TAIL® PHASE** *encompasses what happens after purchase. It includes things retailers and brands can do to reinforce and celebrate the purchase and encourage shoppers to repeat their behavior again and again.*

About the Coca-Cola Retailing Research Council of North America

The Coca-Cola Retailing Research Council of North America (www.ccrrc.org) conducts studies on issues that help retailers respond to the changing marketplace. The unique value of these studies rests with the fact that retailers define the objective and the scope of each project and "own" the process through the release of the study and dissemination to the broader retail community.

Members of the Coca-Cola Retailing Research Council of North America:

- *David Ball, Ball's Food Stores Inc.*
- *Jonathan Berger, The Consumer Goods Forum*
- *Chris Coborn, Coborn's Inc.*
- *Mike Donnelly, The Kroger Co.*
- *Randy Edeker, Hy-Vee, Inc.*
- *Cathy Green Burns, Food Lion LLC*
- *Jerry Golub, Price Chopper Supermarkets*
- *Mark Irby, Publix Super Markets*
- *Jay Lawrence, MAL Enterprises, Inc.*
- *John Lucot, Giant Eagle, Inc.*
- *Tim Mason, Tesco U.S.*
- *Jason Potter, Sobeys*
- *Leslie Sarasin, Food Marketing Institute*
- *Carlos Smith, Bodega Latina Corporation*
- *Greg Sullivan, Walmart Stores, Inc.*
- *J.K. Symancyk, Meijer Inc.*
- *Todd Vasos, Dollar General Corporation*
- *Lauri Youngquist, Knowlan's Super Markets, Inc.*

About The Integer Group - @IntegerGroup

The Integer Group (www.integer.com) is one of the world's largest retail, promotional and shopper marketing agencies and a key member of the TBWA\ Marketing Services portfolio. The Integer Group resides At the Intersection of Branding and Selling® and creates strategic marketing solutions for clients in categories that include beverage, packaged goods, telecommunications, fast food, home and shelter and power sports. Join Integer in a conversation on shopping culture and brand strategy at www.shopperculture.com or on Twitter @shopperculture.

Acknowledgments