

@vaughndavis

TWEET

THIS

BOOK

(-: How to build your business  
and personal brand through  
social media

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# TWEET THIS BOOK

(-: How to build your business and personal brand through social media

*If you read just one book about social media, it probably shouldn't be this one.*

But if you've got a couple of hours to spare and want to see what a goat-farming ex military-pilot advertising creative director makes of it all, then you've come to the right place.

From the basics of what each social medium is and does to a step by step guide to creating your own personal brand network, *Tweet this book* will take you from social media wannabe to Facebooking, Linking-in and Tweeting like an overcaffeinated canary in no time at all.



*Tweet this book:* How to build your business and personal brand through social media

Parts of this book have appeared as blog posts at [posterous.com/vaughndavis](http://posterous.com/vaughndavis)

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## Acknowledgements

Even the simplest book – and this is a contender – takes a lot of hard work, by more than just one person.

Over the last few months I've taken a bunch of advice (some of which I have ignored, probably to the detriment of the finished product), copped a bit of criticism (see previous parenthetical comment) and been buoyed by far more encouragement than this self-serving endeavour deserves.

That it's progressed to the point where you have something to download and read is a minor miracle. For the last month my usual answer to anyone asking how the book was coming along was that it was just two days' hard work from being finished.

Finding those two days turned out to be the hardest thing of all, and it's mainly thanks to the support and understanding of my wife Jane and our sons Jonathan and Ben that I've finally managed to do so.

I gratefully acknowledge the creators of the many achievements that I describe in this book and thank them for their time in sharing their stories with me. Some did so on condition of anonymity, but you know who you are and I thank you all. I owe a special debt of gratitude to the members of the Auckland social media community, from my close friends who make up #theusualsuspects to those who I've only met online. Thank you for being part of my life and helping me in so many ways to write this book.

Most of all, I'd like to thank you for putting your reputation literally online and telling the world you've downloaded this book. If you still feel like recommending it when you've finished reading it, I'd be grateful if you pointed your friends and colleagues to the download too.

Thanks.

I'm off for a beer now.



# Why “Tweet this book”?

## Why not “Buy”?

First of all, “Buy this book” was already taken. It’s a great book about advertising edited by Mica Nava *et al* (as we used to say at University). “Steal this book” has been used a heap of times too – I guess you couldn’t complain that someone had ripped off your title with a title like that.

So *Tweet this book* it is.

There are a few reasons though that I’ve chosen to ask readers for a Tweet (or a Facebook post), rather than a dollar or two, for this book.

1. Here in New Zealand, the only books that pay their authors a living are cookbooks or sporting biographies. Short of naming this *Tweet this Muffin!: The Nigella Lawson Guide to Social Media*, or *Sprigs on my Facebook: the @colinmeads story*, it’s never going to make me a buck anyway.

2. Tweeting a book means the ideas in it become organically distributed through my social network and the networks it intersects with. Harnessing the power of social seems an appropriate way to distribute and promote a book about social.

3. I like the Freemium approach. If you like what you read in the book, I’d love to talk to you about presenting some of the ideas in it personally (plus a few extra special secret ideas that only paying clients get to hear ... ) And if you think the book sucks, well, you’ve saved yourself the trouble of meeting me in person.

4. Who the hell am I to charge money for this?

Have fun. I’ve enjoyed writing *Tweet this book* and hope it starts some useful conversations.

Vaughn Davis  
The Goat Farm  
December 2010

# Why everything in this book might be wrong. Including this sentence.

The bad news is that I'm not a social media expert.

The good news is that there really isn't any such thing.

There used to be a time when the best way to get the villagers to pick up their pitchforks and flaming torches was to transgress the laws of God and man and create some artificially animated semi-human beast in the castle on the hill.

These days, all you have to do is claim any degree of expertise in social media.

So I won't do that. Pitchforks leave nasty holes. And burns from flaming torches hurt.

Instead, I'll lay my cards on the table and tell you about my lack of expertise, and give you some fairly compelling reasons why you should pay no attention at all to anything in this book.

I was recently invited to join the Direct\* Jury at the Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival. As part of the process we were each asked to "Tweet" (they even put it in quotes like that – bless!) a brief description of ourselves and our experience. Mine read:

*Vaughn Davis is one of New Zealand's most experienced and qualified creative directors. Sadly, most of that experience, and all of his qualifications, are in military aviation.*

It's true. If I'm qualified to write a book about anything, it's how to land your C130 Hercules on a floating ice runway, or why checking the brake pressure in your De Havilland Devon is an excellent idea before starting the engines.

*\*Direct is advertising speak for ads that are designed to create a response. You might ask why you'd ever want any other sort of ad. Good question and thank you for asking.*

But here's the thing: I think there are plenty of people – marketers especially – who want to know more about social media and haven't found a book that explains it to them in a relevant way. Learning by doing is fantastic, of course, but so is learning by reading about other people's experiences and opinions. It's why when I'm not *doing* this stuff I'm going to conferences, talking to other people about it, and reading blogs and books.

So here I am.

While I might not be the world's leading authority on social media, as advertising folks go I know more than some. Which puts me in an OK position when it comes to tying marketing and advertising goals to what social media can do. This was brought home to me when I was judging at the Cannes Lions Advertising Festival.

My jury had awarded a Gold Lion (second only to a Grand Prix) to an Australian campaign that featured social. A couple of journalists disagreed with our choice, and one ran a blog titled "If this is a Gold Lion then the Cannes Direct Jury knows nothing about social media: oh look, they don't." (Long title, but you can't argue with its clarity!)

The blogger then went on to table the results of his investigation into each of our social media habits. (There were 30 creative directors on the jury, so it was an impressive piece of homework.) From 30 of the most senior and experienced advertising creative directors in the world, only two were judged to be even using social media in a native way.

Luckily, I was one of them. So in the advertising industry, at least, I appear to be not the dullest knife in the drawer.

If there's one thing I learned from running marathons and ultramarathons (other than to stop doing that: I have, at least for the moment), it's that there will always be people ahead of you as well as behind you. And if someone's ahead of you, even by a few minutes, it's probably worth listening to their advice. Should you eat a banana before a race, or a cream donut? Is the pee-while-running technique really worth it?\*

And so on. The point is, the winner isn't the only person with something to share.

\*Probably yes for boys; probably no for girls.

So I set the price of this book at one Tweet or Post only partly because I thought it would be a cool thing to do. It's as much because I'm not an expert, a guru, or a consultant. I'm just someone who has worked in advertising for a while, had some personal and professional successes with social media, and wants to share what I've learnt with anyone kind enough to be interested.

I hope you find this book useful, but I hope also that you disagree with at least some of it. When you do, please join the conversation at [tweetthisbook.posterous.com](http://tweetthisbook.posterous.com). Each chapter will appear as its own blog post and I would love to read your thoughts in the comments section at the end of each post.

As the book evolves, and especially if it ever becomes more tangible than a PDF, I'll incorporate your comments too.

While we're on the subject – and I will return to this in a later chapter – I have to give a shout-out to Posterous.com. If there's a simpler way to create and publish to a blog, then I don't know it. Yep, there are more powerful, feature-rich and possibly elegant platforms out there, but for me it's the blogging weapon of choice. As the Dilmah Tea man says, do try it.

Introduction over. I'm excited to be writing this book. It's a cool subject, and a really important one if communication and connections are important to your business or your career.

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# You can't learn to swim by watching

There are some endeavours where professional training and thorough preparation are a very good idea. Heart surgery, hairdressing and the landing of large passenger aeroplanes are probably best done with a diploma of some sort nailed firmly to the wall.

Social media isn't like that.

Going to seminars and conferences, looking at websites and yes, even reading insightful and informative ebooks will only get you so far.

There comes a point in this whole social media thing when you just need to pull on your big-strong-girly-pants, knock back a steaming hot cup of harden the fuck up and leap on in.

Easy to say but, especially if you're a big company where risk starts with a capital R and takes up a whole floor on your big glass building, hard to do.

But even if your company isn't ready or willing to jump in, there's no reason you can't take a paddle as an individual. Open a Twitter account. Sign up for Facebook. Connect with colleagues on LinkedIn. Shoot a video on your phone and upload it to your own YouTube channel. Tie it all together with a blog on Wordpress, Blogger or (my favourite) Posterous.

Don't worry too much about content ... you're just learning to swim, right? You'll probably have more fun though, and stick to it longer, if you write about something you're passionate about.

Barbecue cooking? 1970s New Zealand punk? Shortland Street bloopers?

Whatever lights your candle, really. Jump in.

**Why do  
social?**

**Because**

**social is**

**doing you!**

# Are your ears burning?

They should be.

Because all over the social Internet, people are talking about you and your brand.

Some of them are saying nice things. And some are saying nasty things. Who's to say if they're even telling the truth?

For many of us, *truth* matters a lot less than *trust*.

If someone we trust tells us something about a company or a person, that's good enough for us. It doesn't have to be true; it just has to be, in the words of my nine year old son, *true enough to believe*.

It's how human communication has always worked. If you're a marketer, you'll know that the power of word of mouth trumps any media channel you can buy by the second, click or column inch.

Which isn't just an opportunity, it's a problem.

People are talking about you and your brand. And they're not necessarily telling the truth.

If your brand matters to you, then you need to be part of those conversations.

Why do social?

Because social's doing you.

Of course, not every voice is worth listening to, and not every conversation is worth joining. Luckily, it's easy to get a gauge of that on Facebook and Twitter. Even if whoever is slagging you off is hiding behind anonymity, it's easy to see how many Friends or Followers they have, and who those people are. So if Angry of Suburbia has only three followers, maybe letting him go ahead and be angry is the right thing to do. But if those three followers are the Prime Minister and a pair of tabloid journalists, it might be worth getting involved now and then.



Naturally, there can be an upside to these conversations too. Listen closely and you'll hear great ideas about how what you do can be done better, suggestions for new products or services, or improvements to old ones. When you act on those suggestions you'll be rewarding your customers and making them feel, even more, like they own the brand.

Which they do.

Marketers, CEOs and advertising agencies come and go. What endures is customers. It's your customers; their relationship with your brand, the perceptions they've built up over years, decades and even generations, who truly define who you are.

And for a marketer, that's one of the greatest opportunities social presents. Use it well and you've got a direct connection to the people who own your brand! That's not just market intelligence, that's market emotion. And that's pretty cool.

### **The power of \$%^&\*!**

"I was extremely disappointed by having to wait 10 minutes for my meal at Goatburger"

"I've flown with Goat Air for years and I've never experienced such terrible service"

"This is the last time I ever buy a GoatPhone."

Peel back the skin (OK the scab) on most customer complaints and what you'll often find is not ... OK, maybe that metaphor should stop there. What you'll often find is an incredibly loyal customer.

If someone is new to your business, tries it and walks off, they may or may not complain and tell their friends.

If someone has been with you for years and suddenly has a terrible experience, you'll hear about it!

By listening to the bad things people are saying about you, and looking behind the anger, you'll often find a temporarily disappointed brand advocate ... it only takes one bad experience to go from advocate to badvocate! Managed well, these grumpy fans can become just as energetic about spreading the good word about your business as they were about the bad.

Let me tell you a story.

It was the month before Christmas, and Telecom New Zealand had set up an enormous illuminated Christmas tree in a park near our home. The 1<sup>st</sup> of December was to see it lit for the first time, so my sons and I walked up the road to join in the fun.

I'm a Telecom customer (almost everyone in New Zealand has been, one way or another) and have done advertising work for them in the past. I quite like Telecom, and was feeling pretty positive as we walked to the park – despite the light drizzle that was beginning to fall.

The lights were supposed to come on at 9pm – Christmas is in the Southern Hemisphere summer, so it gets dark pretty late. 9 o'clock came and went, and nothing had happened. Actually, the drizzle had turned to heavy drizzle, so we ducked under a tree for shelter. It was getting past the boys' bedtime and even the prospect of an illuminated Christmas tree wasn't exciting them anymore.

Then a Telecom security guard walked over to talk to us.

Cool!, I thought ... some news on when the lights are coming on.

But that wasn't what he wanted. Could we please move from under the tree, he asked, as the VIPs would be walking through that way soon.

Move out from under the tree.

Into the rain.

So the important people – whose late arrival was apparently holding things up anyway – could walk from their VIP cars to their VIP seats without their VIP hair getting too wet.

Naturally, I Tweeted.

Naturally, I didn't say very nice things.

Telecom could have ignored my grumpy, slightly wet tweets, but they didn't. They jumped right in and fairly cheekily asked why I was at a Telecom party if I disliked Telecom so much.

I replied with equal cheek that if only Telecom's friends were at the party then it would be a very small party!

Then Santa arrived, the lights came on, and we all went home wet but mostly happy. I didn't think much more about the incident until I got to the office on Monday and found something from Telecom, addressed to me:

An umbrella.

I use it all the time, and every time someone asks me where I got it I tell them this story.

You could easily dismiss Telecom's initial response as a little bit rash and even a bit rude. But for me, it was an example of social being used in a completely appropriate way. Through our online relationship they knew me well enough to know I could give as good as I got, and that I would respond better to a cheeky tweet than a measured, PR-approved comment or apology.

They were right.

They saw a conversation about their brand, they joined in, they responded honestly and with emotion and turned my badvocracy into advocacy.

The umbrella didn't hurt either!

**Advertising  
is a wall;  
social is a  
window**

# What the fuck can rugby players teach us about social media?

In early 2010, (New Zealand rugby team) the Hurricanes midfielder Ma'a Nonu was all over the media thanks to a radio interview he gave following his team's 33-27 win over rival team The Chiefs..

It wasn't the game that got the coverage; it was the way Nonu described it. Specifically, the adjective he used. And used. And used.

The game was, according to Nonu, fucking close. The Chiefs were on the Hurricanes' fucking tryline when, fucking hell, they scored a fucking last minute try. All the Hurricanes had to do was fucking hold on to the ball in the last five minutes but then, with two minutes to go, fuck, it's all over again. Then they fucking scored after the hooter had gone.

Golly!

This wasn't some guy in a pub excited about his team winning a close game. This was an experienced, high profile professional sportsman giving a post-match radio interview.

So why is this relevant to companies interested in social media?

Because even though it involves traditional media, this is a great example of exactly what you need to be prepared for – and even prepared to embrace – when you knock holes in the walls around your brand and allow your people (all of them, not just the marketers) to engage with your customers.

## **Advertising is a wall; social is a window**

Once upon a time, organisations stayed pretty much inside the building. Customer contact was limited, controlled, and on the organisation's terms. Your "brand" was, more or less, whatever you paid someone to paint on the outside of your building. Advertising was a wall.

Enter social media. In his (recommended) book “Engage”, Brian Solis describes a transformation in the way organisations and customers relate:

- We started with one (brand) to many customers.
- We evolved to one (brand) to one (individual) customer at a time.
- Now we’re undergoing the biggest change yet: many (individual voices within your organisation) to many (individual customers).

Advertising was a wall. Social is a window that allows any customer to connect directly with anyone in your organisation.

**So what if they look in the window and Ma’a Nonu tells them to fuck off?**

Excellent question.

One answer might be to restrict the number or size of windows and only open them at certain times (strict social media guidelines). Another approach might be to make sure only “trusted” people in your organisation sit near the windows (approved spokespeople).

I reckon neither of those approaches can work long term. Guidelines are useful up to a point, but they won’t stop conversations happening – only make it simpler to discipline people (if that’s what you’re into) when they say something embarrassing or damaging. People like to sit next to windows; and when there’s someone outside saying hello it’s only natural to say hi back.

**Why you should care less about the windows and more about what’s inside the building**

If we accept that the windows social creates can’t be closed, shuttered or guarded 24/7, we need to accept that people will see in. And by people, I mean everyone: your competitors, your customers, potential staff, people who love you, people who want to see you dead, or at least featured in a tabloid gossip column in association with an ageing Russian shemale prostitute.

What does that mean for an organisation? Simple: the heat's on to be good.

- To define who you are and what you stand for. Specifically – and critically – your employment brand.
- To hire people whose values and culture are the same as yours. And tell your existing people what you're all about.
- To make sure everyone in the organisation – *everyone* – knows what's going on, every day.
- To default towards openness so when your people talk about you, they're well informed and don't need to rely on rumours.

**So is Ma'a Nonu coming back into this story? I thought this was about rugby.**

I started thinking about Ma'a and his 7-fucks-in-three-minutes because I'd been asked to talk at a marketing event about personal versus corporate tone in social media.

While some might have seen Ma'a's story as a PR disaster, for me it formed a more powerful and visceral connection to the Hurricanes brand than I've ever gotten from advertising. It also opened my eyes to the importance of genuine human emotion for any brand wanting to succeed with social media.

It reminded me too of the famous or infamous incident (depending on your perspective) last year when a Westpac Australia staffer mistakenly tweeted one Friday afternoon from his company rather than personal account: "I am so over today." Far from harming Westpac's brand (although in Australia, it would be hard for a bank to sink lower in the public's estimation) the minor media storm it sparked gave a human face to the bank and left many Australians feeling far more positive about the brand ... to the extent that some conspiracy theorists claimed the whole thing to have been planned!

What can we really learn from Ma'a? That when you let social – or a radio interview – open the windows into your organisation, people see what's really there. You can try to close the windows, but it's unlikely to work for long. People *will* see into the heart of your business, so the heat's on to make sure what they see is good.

Which takes us nicely to the next chapter ...

@3NewsNZ coverage <http://bit.ly/c8whX5>

Edited audio: <http://bit.ly/id79vk>

Buy Brian Solis's book "Engage": <http://bit.ly/eJUF1q>

Heart: the  
icecream  
maker's  
secret  
ingredient



# Giapo: What is a mouth without a heart?

If there were a social media guided bus tour of Auckland, New Zealand – and who knows, by the time you read this there may well be – the first place it would probably stop would be outside an icecream parlour on Queen Street called Giapo.

Giapo is famous – in New Zealand, anyway – not just for selling some of the tastiest gelato and sorbet anywhere, but for creating one of the country's most popular and innovative social media networks.

From his laptop at the front of the shop – when he's not serving customers, making gelato or plotting to provide the entire street with free WiFi – Giapo founder Gianpaolo Grazioli leads a tribe of Twitter followers, a flock of Facebook fans and a hugely popular YouTube channel. On the walls of his shop LCD screens display his tweetstreams and Facebook page, and in one corner you can make a 20-second video to upload to his YouTube channel and share with friends.

Despite all this though, Gianpaolo is about as dismissive of social media, and those who see it as the next marketing silver bullet, as anyone you could ever hope to speak to.

At Giapo, media choice takes a distant second place to what you have to say, and who you really are as an organisation, and as a business owner.

Gianpaolo believes that what really matters is what's in your heart – or at the heart of your business. Your purpose in life matters more than your vision, mission statement or quarterly plan.

I touched on this in the last chapter ... social media lets people see inside your organisation. A wall of advertising might get them to visit once, or try whatever you're selling one time.

But if what you're selling doesn't taste good, or your premises are dirty, or you don't look after them when they visit, they won't come back.

With advertising and old-fashioned word of mouth, you could easily consign that 1, or 100, pissed off customers to the “shit happens” file and resolve to try harder next time.

The challenge with social media is that it amplifies everything: good or bad.

People share experiences that affect them emotionally – and disappointment, frustration, embarrassment and anger are pretty powerful emotions. Even before the rise of identified social media, “I hate XYZ” or “XYZ sucks” sites and blogs were all over the net. They still are – social media just makes it easier to share the hatred, one tweet at a time.

Could word of the quality and variety of Giapo’s icecream have spread the way it did without social media? He thinks it could; I’m not so sure. Certainly, no other medium would have built his brand and his business so quickly, and with so little cash.

Gianpaolo talks about it on his blog at [gianpaolograzioli.blogspot.com](http://gianpaolograzioli.blogspot.com). From his perspective, traditional media like TV can be a great way to get a quick result, but – unless you’ve got the funds to appear regularly – not much good for building success in the long term. Social is the reverse: the effects are slow to appear, but the community he’s built and the loyalty it has for his business is long-lasting. For him, creating a community has been more effective than creating campaigns.

Giapo’s social media success has led to a heap of traditional media exposure too – lots of it about the way he’s used social, but all of it building his fame and driving people to his icecream shop.

And when they visit, they experience the heart of his business: a passionate, loving Italian icecream-maker with staff who love to work for him, making and serving some of the best icecream I’ve ever tasted.

Giapo puts its heart where its mouth is, and social media or none, that’s a recipe for success.

# Winevault TV and The myth of free

# Video killed the radio star: now it's after your customers.

## **Warning: overquoted statistic follows!**

YouTube is the world's second most used search engine. In March 2010 Google served around 10.5 billion search results, with YouTube delivering about 3.7 billion. Not all of the searches are for LOLcats either – many brands are posting their ads, recruitment clips, instruction videos and more on YouTube and other video sites.



*YouTube: not made  
entirely of cats*

Most of these brands, though are doing a crap (my analysis, very scientific) job of search optimising their YouTube content while investing shitloads (see previous bracket) in SEO for Google and Bing searches.

Many brands are also ignoring video's importance as a social tool. If video sharing platforms like YouTube and Vimeo feature at all in marketing plans, it's as a way to push a "viral video" on an online public who more often than not seem to have been immunised at birth.

Done right though, video can be a great part of a personal or brand social network. It's not for everyone – some people have faces and personalities better suited to Twitter. And it takes time to do well; lots of it. Jayson Bryant from Winevault TV proves both points.

Jayson runs The Wine Vault, a busy neighbourhood wine shop. More than that, though, he operates one of New Zealand's most successful social media-based enterprises. His WineVault TV attracts up to 7000 viewers each week, drawn as much by his onscreen personality as his reviews of New Zealand wine.

As well as maintaining his own site at Winevaulttv.com, Jayson posts video content to YouTube, Vimeo and others and is constantly answering customer questions via Twitter and Facebook.



*Freeview? Only if you reckon your time's worth nothing,  
says WinevaultTV's Jayson Bryant.*

Like US wine phenomenon Gary Vaynerchuk (who has appeared on one of Jayson's video reviews), Jayson uses video because of the way it lets him form an emotional connection with his customers. For Jayson, wine is all about the story, so using a storytelling medium like video is a perfect match.

And like icecream-maker and fellow social media star Giapo, Jayson has the most important ingredient for a successful social network: he loves what he does and loves sharing his knowledge and passion for wine.

You can fake sincerity when there's an advertising agency and a paid media channel between you and your customers; strip it back to a video camera and a computer screen and it just doesn't wash.

### **Free media: great if you can afford it**

Even though Jayson's hardware investment is minimal and he uses exclusively unpaid media to promote his business, his experience is proof of the real investment needed to build a business with social media.

At first, when he was posting a video review to Wine Vault TV every day, each video was taking seven hours to shoot, edit and upload.

Production was only a small part of the job. Jayson knows the importance of search, so takes optimising his content as seriously as making it in the first place. Tailoring the clips for the different platforms he publishes to, including naming, describing and tagging them so people could find them easily took up most of his time – at least until he discovered video publishing tool TubeMogul OneLoad (tubemogul.com).

## **A (very long) day in the life of a social media wine store**

Of course, only so many people will search for video clips featuring “New Zealand pinot noir,” so in addition to the daily video reviews Jayson drives views and builds Winevault TV’s online community through Facebook and Twitter. In between serving customers who walk into his real-world shop he posts two or three messages every hour on Twitter (repeating your message is a good idea on Twitter if you want to be sure your followers will see it) and one on Facebook. On top of that he answers every question he receives, as quickly as he can. Often, these questions are from people who’ve never shopped at The Wine Vault – typically they’ll be from someone standing in a supermarket wine aisle or looking at a restaurant wine list – or even browsing in a competitor’s shop!

Even though answering questions like this are very unlikely to lead to an immediate sale for The Wine Vault, they’ve helped Jayson build a strong online community, a powerful personal brand and a successful real world business\*.

Added up – and factoring in his commitment to be on hand when followers in Europe and the USA comment on videos or ask questions – Jayson estimates running WineVaultTV and its associated “free” social media platforms costs him up to 17 hours a day.

Which, if you put any value at all on your time, is about as far from “free” as you can get.

\*During research for this book – actually, that makes it sound more formal than it was ... hooking up with Jayson over a succession of wines and coffees would be more accurate – Jayson sold the Wine Vault store and is now concentrating on social media, particularly in the wine industry. He still owns and operates WineVaultTV.

## **But what about big businesses?**

It doesn't matter whether your marketing budget is measured in the millions or restricted to whatever is in the till at the end of the week, the lure of "free" can be hard to resist.

Free is a powerful and seductive word. This book would have been downloaded more had the title included the word free. But that would have just been perpetuating one of the most pervasive myths about social media.

The problem is in the name. Media. The temptation for many marketers is to compare Social Media with Traditional Media. Set alongside TV, print, radio and even digital advertising, Social does seem to offer a cheap and cheerful way to get your message out there.

I think that's the wrong way to look at it. Instead of seeing Social as just another tool in your marketing kit, it's better looked at alongside all the other ways you build and maintain customer relationships.

So rather than comparing the costs and benefits to TV, print, radio digital, it should more properly sit with call centres, frontline staff, public relations and CRM.

None of these incur any "media" cost either, but most businesses understand that to do any of them well takes a decent investment in training, staff, real estate and more.

Of course, social delivers benefits that closed conversations like call centre contacts can't. For every question you answer or customer you help on Twitter or Facebook, dozens, hundreds, or thousands of others are looking on. Assuming – and yes, this is an optimistic assumption – that your online encounters are mostly positive, social can be a powerful amplifier for your customer contacts.

Just don't call it free.

The hive  
brain: why  
Twitter  
trumps  
Google



# Have you ever asked a dictionary for an opinion?

I hope not.

Dictionaries are excellent for finding information; specifically, the definition, spelling, etymology and pronunciation of words. Encyclopaedias (remember them?) are pretty good too (and they smell so *good!*). And so is Google. If something's out there, published on the web in a way that the Google algorithm can see and categorise, it'll find it.

But Google, like dictionaries and encyclopaedias, isn't much chop when it comes to questions that require understanding, opinion and expertise to answer.

Enter Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. (And their many cousins around the world.)

One of the hidden features of social networks is their awesome ability to create powerful expert knowledge networks.

It all comes about thanks to the way your follower / followed network evolves. Lance Armstrong and other motley celebrities aside, you follow people based on the things they say, and the people they know. The things they say, naturally, relate to what they're interested in, and what they know about. You follow or befriend them because you're into the same things.

The result, especially once your network reaches a decent size, is a powerful expert network of people with knowledge about the things that interest you.

Depending on the subject, some of them will know more than you, and some will know less.

So sometimes you'll be the expert, and sometimes you'll be the one with the question.

## From WTF to FTW: the Twitter hive brain in action

A couple of months ago the car I was a passenger in stopped at the lights behind an odd-looking vehicle. It had a row of stubby aerials on the roof, but no markings to indicate what they were and what the vehicle was.



I took a photo of the vehicle on my phone and tweeted it to my followers. I'm interested in mobile communications, so there happened to be a few people in my network who knew more about the field than I do (not hard) and instantly tweeted me what it was: a mobile phone signal strength testing vehicle.

Google couldn't have done that. (At least not at the time.)

A wee while after that, I had an issue with a new TV we'd bought. I couldn't work out how to set it up for Freeview.

The manufacturer's telephone help line was only open during office hours, during the week. (I bought the TV, as most people do, at the weekend.)

The search function on the manufacturer's website came up with either nothing at all or way too much irrelevant information.

10 minutes on Google drew a blank – partly perhaps because it was a new model and my model number was New Zealand-specific, so no one had had the same problem before.

The shop I bought it from – as famous for its low product knowledge as for its low prices – didn't have a clue.

The email help function on the manufacturer's website promised a response "within 5 working days."

So I asked Twitter.

And had the correct answer, from three different people, inside five minutes.

These are both pretty trivial examples; I'm sure you can think of other ways the "hive brain" or "lazyweb" can answer questions in ways big dumb search engines can't.

Of course, your expert network isn't just limited to the people in your followsphere. Perhaps even more than in the real world, people in social networks like to help. So if you ask a question that your connections can't answer, they'll often pass it on by retweeting (Twitter) or sharing (Facebook or LinkedIn). So you could well have your problem solved by someone you've never met – and form a handy new connection at the same time.

Google isn't blind to this, and in mid 2010 began offering "real time" (or pretty bloody close to it) search results that include Twitter. Not quite the same as a human-based expert engine, but if people are talking about the topic you're interested in, and using the kinds of words you pop into the query box, you could strike it lucky.

LinkedIn is another network where we're seeing expert networks develop. These happen both organically, in the same way as they do on Twitter, and through the formation and growth of LinkedIn Groups. LinkedIn Groups are typically professionally based – I belong to a bunch of social media, creative and advertising ones. When you belong to a LinkedIn Group you're notified whenever someone starts a discussion – which is often nothing more than a question someone thinks the hive brain can answer.

If you don't already use your personal network as a hive brain, why not give it a go? While Google lives on algorithms and advertising revenue, your personal knowledge network is fuelled by karma and reciprocity. And it's amazing how well that works.

# The social landscape: a visitor's guide

# Here I give thanks to Tuki Tahua and Ngahuruhuru

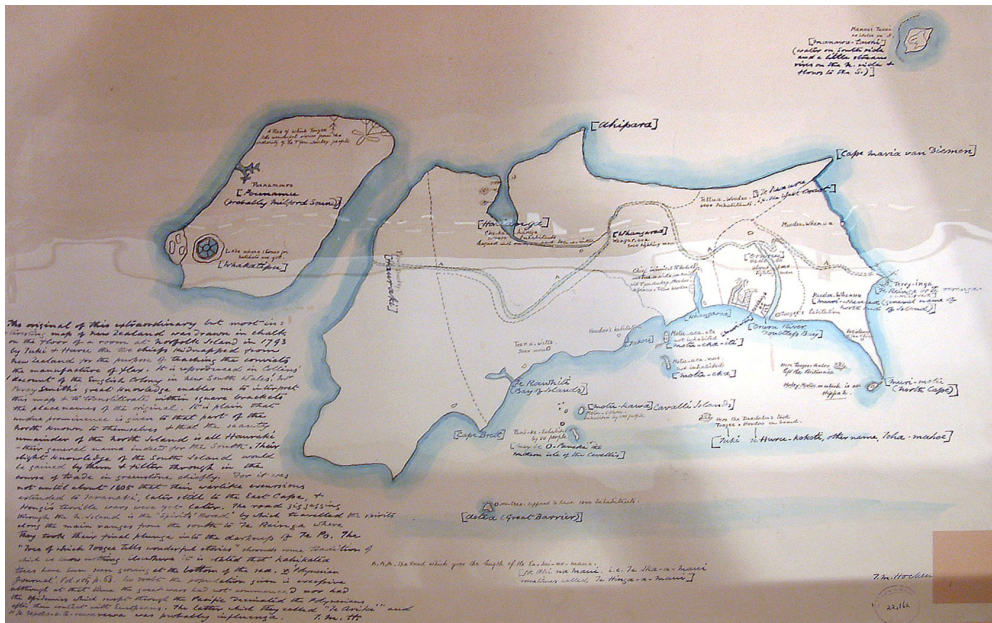
I talk about social networks to clients and other groups now and then, and one of the bread-and-butter parts of any presentation is an overview of each of the main networks, who uses them, what for, and so on. If you've ever heard me talk about this – or pretty much any other topic to do with numbers of people using a technology – you'll know I like to use geographical metaphors. I started doing this at a Google conference called Digital Now 2009. The hot topic back then was the iPhone, and the attention developers and their clients were paying to making applications for it.

During the presentation, I asked the room (marketers, mainly, plus a smattering of advertising bunnies like me) how many of them were considering or working on iPhone applications. About a third of the hands in the room went up. Then I asked how many people were working on something special for people who lived in Timaru. (Timaru is a town in the South Island of New Zealand. About 40,000 people live there and I'm sure every one of them is very nice indeed.)

Same population. No hands.

Now, I know there's more to audience numbers than quantity, and the iPhone population has grown a little faster than Timaru's in the year since then. The one thing that has endured, for me, has been the power and simplicity of geography as a simple anchor for social network statistics. That 1.7 million, 250,000 and 70,000 New Zealanders use Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter respectively might not stick in your mind. But Auckland, Christchurch and Palmerston North just might. (Or Pavlodar, Turkistan and Karagandy, if you live in Kazakhstan.)

Anyway, that's not the point of this chapter. I'm here, as the title says, to give thanks to Tai Tokerau chiefs Tuki Tahua and Ngahuruhuru. In 1793, the dastardly English kidnapped them and whisked them off to Norfolk Island. Not to enjoy a safe, all-meals-included 10-day package holiday as advertised on old people's radio stations, but to teach the convicts how to turn flax into linen.



Unfortunately for the kidnapers, they were wasting their time. Processing flax was women’s work. On this count, Tuki Tahua and Ngahuruhuru were no help at all.

They did create something very special though: a map of Aotearoa / New Zealand. Ngahuruhuru drew two; one on paper, and the other on the floor in chalk.

I think about this map every time I talk about social networks, and here’s why.

If you’re from New Zealand, or if you know your New Zealand geography, you’ll know that this map doesn’t look much like New Zealand at all.

Orientation aside, the shapes and proportions are all pretty shocking. Apart from the area where Tuki Tahua and Ngahuruhuru lived.

Compare their map to a modern map of the top of the North Island and you’ll see a heap of accurate detail, including harbours, inlets, islands and beaches. The further south (left) you go, the more vague the detail, and the smaller the features and land areas become.

And that’s why I think about this map every time I think social. I live in Twitter, mostly. I visit Facebook most days, and make the trek to LinkedIn now and then to visit friends. I know a few landmarks in the other networks, but can find my way around Twitter with my eyes closed. That doesn’t mean it’s bigger (it isn’t), has more features (it doesn’t) or is more important (it depends). It’s important to remember that.

What's your Northland? Where's your Te Wai Pounamu? Something to bear in mind the next time you're kidnapped, taken to Norfolk Island and made to draw a map on the floor.

### **Welcome to the neighbourhood**

In the next few pages we'll be looking at three of the more important social networks (as of late 2010): Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. They're not a "how-to" – check each platform's own website or YouTube for that. They're more an introduction, especially from an advertising or marketing perspective, of what each network does, what they're good for, and an example or two of how smart marketers have used them well.

**Facebook** is to social media as Jupiter is to the solar system and fat people are to McDonald's. As the tired to the point of near death cliché has it, if Facebook were a country, you wouldn't want to live there.

If you're looking to build a personal or corporate brand in mainstream social media, you just can't ignore Facebook. With well north of 500 million users, there's nothing niche about it. It's not just for kids either; the fastest growing group on Facebook is over 55 years old.

Like former social media champions Bebo and (recently relaunched) MySpace, Facebook didn't start out so much as a place to do business but (as the Australians put it) do the business. Facebook was designed as a place for real world college classmates to continue their real world relationships online.

Marketers would do well to remember that. In the same way that when we make a TV ad we're leaping uninvited into someone's lounge when they really wanted to be watching a Seinfeld rerun, taking your brand into a social space needs to respect the space for what it is: a social space. Facebook isn't an online shopping mall filled with people wanting to buy your stuff; it's an endless strip of bars, nightclubs and cafés with people out having fun with their friends. Using traditional push marketing techniques to sell stuff in this environment just isn't going to work.

Of course, not all brand activity on Facebook is connected to the businesses that think they own the brands. As I said in an earlier chapter, people own brands, not businesses. So many businesses' first experience of Facebook is the day they discover they already have a page – courtesy of their fans, haters, or staff.

Here in New Zealand, mainstream beer brand Tui had exactly that experience, with a Facebook fan page that grew to 35,000 members before Tui found out who was running it. It turned out to be a (female) fan of the brand who was beginning to find herself overwhelmed by the popularity of the page and the effort it was taking to administer it, especially since she was expecting a baby. When Tui offered to take it off her hands she was only too happy to agree. (The page has since grown to over 100,000 fans.)

New Zealand general merchandise retailer The Warehouse (think Wal Mart) had a similar experience ... just as well, as its staff-created page became essential infrastructure when New Zealand was hit with its most devastating earthquake in almost 100 years ...



## The Warehouse: networking through New Zealand’s worst earthquake

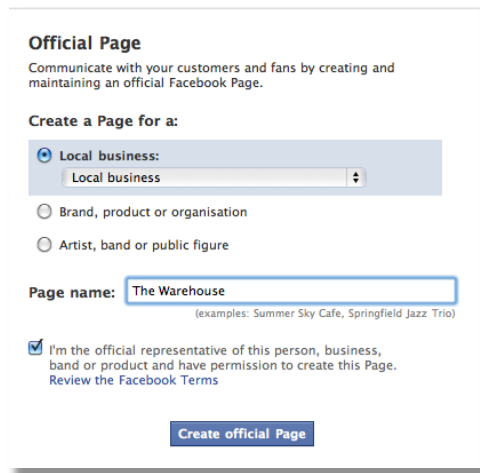
When Christchurch, the biggest city in New Zealand’s South Island, was rocked by a magnitude 7.1 earthquake before dawn on Sunday 4 September 2010 it wasn’t just many of the city’s heritage buildings that collapsed. Communications networks took a hit too. Dozens of mobile phone aerial towers were knocked out, and those that remained were quickly overloaded by hundreds of thousands of people calling and texting friends and families (mainly with good news – despite its strength the earthquake caused no direct fatalities).

In the days that followed, contacting people was made even more difficult as houses, streets and entire suburbs were evacuated as the ground they were built on liquefied during the earthquake and many aftershocks – making landline contact futile.

For The Warehouse, New Zealand’s biggest general merchandise retailer, this posed huge problems around communicating with staff. While some stores escaped unscathed, others, and the Warehouse’s massive South Island Distribution Centre, sustained considerable damage.

Enter Facebook, and a page that just months earlier The Warehouse knew nothing about. Like many organisations, The Warehouse’s social media strategy was a step or two behind reality. While it was considering whether or not to set up a Facebook page, someone – they didn’t know who – went ahead and did it.

One of the challenges Facebook presents to brand owners is that there’s nothing stopping pretty much anyone setting up a branded page – providing they’re prepared to tick a box saying that – honest, mister! – they’re the official representative of the brand or product. Here’s one I prepared earlier:



The screenshot shows the Facebook 'Create a Page' interface. At the top, it says 'Official Page' and 'Communicate with your customers and fans by creating and maintaining an official Facebook Page.' Below this, there's a section 'Create a Page for a:' with three radio button options: 'Local business:' (selected), 'Brand, product or organisation', and 'Artist, band or public figure'. Under 'Local business:', there's a dropdown menu showing 'Local business'. Below the radio buttons, there's a 'Page name:' field with 'The Warehouse' entered. A note below the field says '(examples: Summer Sky Cafe, Springfield Jazz Trio)'. At the bottom, there's a checked checkbox that says 'I'm the official representative of this person, business, band or product and have permission to create this Page. Review the Facebook Terms'. A blue button at the very bottom says 'Create official Page'.

Eventually, The Warehouse head office team uncovered who had set up the page – an employee in Christchurch (fittingly, as it would turn out). When he realised he wasn't going to get into any trouble for setting up the page, he was more than happy to hand management of the community over to the company.

When the earthquake hit, The Warehouse's Christchurch Distribution Centre was badly damaged, and several stores were closed due to fallen stock and damaged shelving. Many staff – The Warehouse employs a large number of younger workers – found that the mobile phones they usually rely on were out of action and that the store numbers they were calling were unattended anyway, as they were among the many Christchurch buildings declared (at least temporarily) unsafe to enter. For the company, communicating with staff by landline was made difficult by the fact that many of them had been evacuated from earthquake-hit parts of the city, making their home phone numbers useless.

The Facebook page quickly filled the information void. Warehouse head office team quickly added an "Earthquake" tab as a place to give staff and customers information about which stores were closed and which were open. It also became a place for the company and its staff to share stories about their earthquake experiences, including images of damage to stores and the Distribution Centre. It wasn't just Christchurch staff who used the page; Warehouse people from all over the country used it to post messages of support. For Christchurch Warehouse employees, the page gave them a sense of belonging and community even though they weren't at work.

And for the Warehouse, a Facebook page they knew nothing about became one of the most powerful staff and customer communication tools as the business – and its community – faced its biggest ever natural disaster.

## **Arnott's Tim Tam Breast Buddies:** social media for social good

Like many FMCG marketers, Arnott's commits a chunk of its marketing budget each year to charitable donations. In many countries, breast cancer charities are the go-to causes, and Breast Cancer Awareness Month sees everything from bottled water to Blu-Tack turn pink in aid of, depending on what you want to believe, saving women's lives or leveraging disease to turn over product.

In recent years there's been something of a backlash against the second angle. "Pinkwashing" – marketing a "Pink" product in a way that benefits the marketer more than the charity – has become increasingly unpopular.

At its worst, pinkwashing sees marketers spending many times more money on advertising the donation they're making (and the product they're selling) than they actually give to the charity.

Arnott's New Zealand wanted to reverse that trend, by creating a Facebook-based campaign called Tim Tam Breast Buddies. It was pretty simple: instead of selling specially packaged Tim Tam biscuits as they had previously, Arnott's created a Facebook Fan Page called Tim Tam Breast Buddies. Then every time someone became a fan, they donated \$2 to a breast cancer charity.

Not surprisingly, the offer spread virally, as every time someone became a fan, a message appeared on their own Facebook page telling all their friends what they'd done.

Within days, tens of thousands of people had become "Breast Buddies" and in a couple of weeks the donation target of \$60,000 had been met. The last time I checked the page was sitting at around 45,000 fans.

Breast Buddies also delivered an even more valuable benefit than the cash donation. Many of the people who became fans had been affected in some way by breast cancer. So the Breast Buddies page became somewhere for people to talk about their experiences, offer support and make connections with other women living with the disease.

While Tim Tam Breast Buddies might not have led to directly measurable sales, it used social media in a powerful way to build a community whose members supported each other while at the same time sharing positive stories about the Tim Tam brand. Importantly for me (disclosure: I was involved in this campaign) it showed FMCG marketers a way to support breast cancer charities and build their own brands, without resorting to pinkwashing.

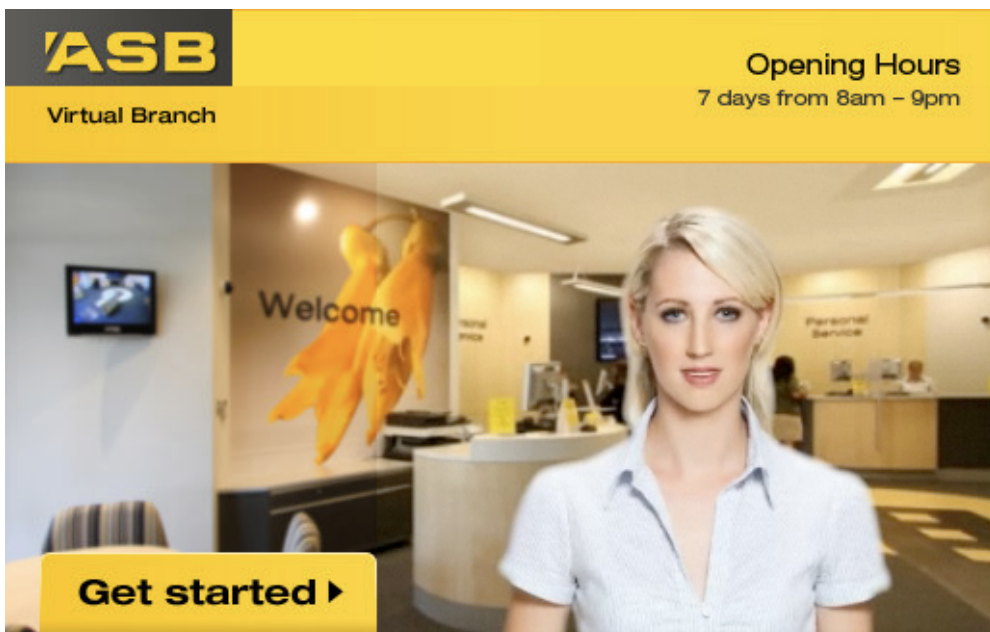
## ASB Bank Facebook Branch

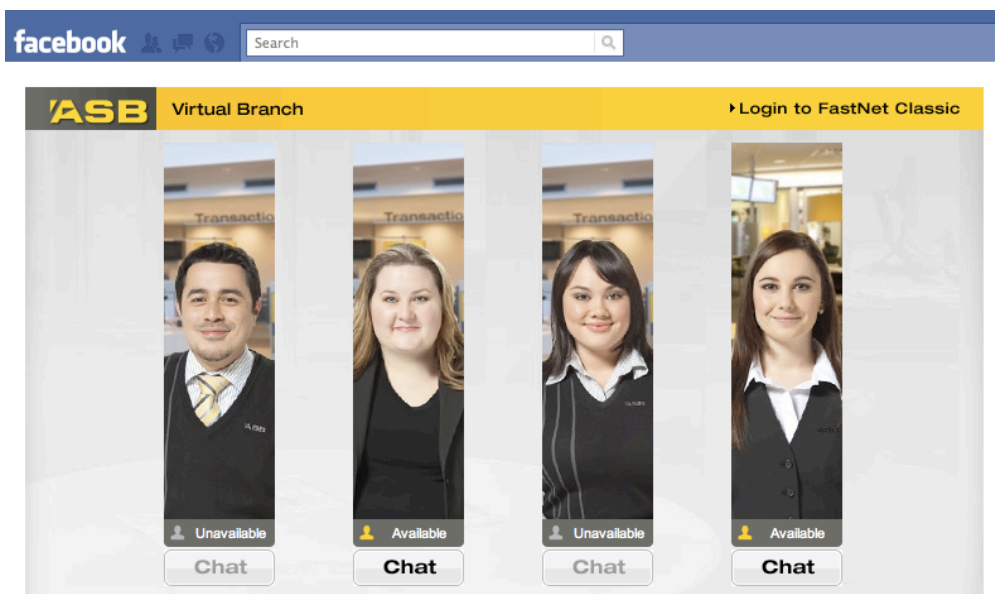
When I blogged this a few months ago, I titled it “Banking where the fish are.” I wasn’t suggesting that ASB Bank’s customers have gills and taste nice with chips, but that what ASB had done was to set up a branch where their online customers already were, rather than creating a brand new online destination and hoping people will turn up.

It’s funny – in the real world banking or retail business this is basic stuff – you’d be nuts to open a branch in the middle of an empty green field. It makes much more sense to build something in the middle of a big town filled with people who want to do business with you.

ASB applied this thinking to the online world, and opened their branch in New Zealand’s biggest online community (or maybe second biggest, behind online auction site TradeMe).

Essentially, the ASB Facebranch is a Facebook application (app) that provides visitors (just like a real branch, you don’t need to be a customer to come in) secure real time consultations with online tellers. Once you’ve clicked through to the app (and watched a weirdly sexy introductory video from a rather fetching fembot) you’re faced with names and photographs of the branch’s eight staff, along with an indication of whether each one is free or available. Once you’ve picked a teller, a dialogue box opens up and away you go.





You can't transact here, and the tellers stop short of offering the kind of financial advice that might get them in trouble if you sell your house and invest everything in chickens. (Heard of chickens?) But you can have useful, real, human conversations about banking.

The eight staff are very well trained – they have a great knack for knowing exactly when to link you to a product page or suggest you flip over to online banking.

But trained staff or not, the ASB Facebranch is a hugely brave move for a brand in a traditionally risk-averse category. Looked at with your Risk Goggles on (available on the 85<sup>th</sup> floor of a bank headquarters near you) ASB is essentially letting its staff write its website on the fly.

Looked at through Human Goggles though (usually handed in as you enter the lift on the ground floor of a bank headquarters near you) they're doing nothing more than having the kinds of conversations real-world bank tellers have every day.

The ASB Facebook Branch is officially a trial, but with bank marketers around the world watching it just as closely as the ASB head office team, I don't think it will be long before we see this customer service model pop up elsewhere on Facebook.

# Twitter: what Lance Armstrong had for lunch

Twitter is a little bit like the Fight Club. You have to be a part of it to really understand what it's all about. That said, this would be a pretty rubbish section if I left it at that, so the next few pages will explain what Twitter is, how it works, and why you should give it a go.

Twitter, in its raw form, is an endless stream of short messages from people you choose to follow, viewed on a computer, phone or mobile device.

From those simple building blocks, Twitter can help you not just enhance your real world network, but build an entirely new one online based on shared interests and expertise.

There are several ways to use Twitter. The Twitter website itself, [twitter.com](http://twitter.com) is the obvious one but, at least until its recent redesign, wasn't particularly user friendly. (It's pretty cool now though.) Most Twitter users I know use third party applications such as TweetDeck or Tweetie, or Twitter's own iPhone and iPad applications. Which one you use largely comes down to personal preference and there's no reason you can't use different applications on different devices.

Whichever tool you use, the basic elements are the same:

## **Your Twitter username**

Like any social network, the first thing you do when you join is choose a username. This can be anything that isn't already taken (but be careful about pretending to be a famous person or brand – unless you happen to be one). It's worth thinking carefully about your choice of username. You can change it later on, but if you've built up a bunch of followers a changed username is an easy way to lose touch. I use my own name: [@vaughndavis](https://twitter.com/vaughndavis).

## **Your Twitter bio**

The only time most people will see this is when they're deciding whether or not to follow you. So if you want to be followed, make sure your bio and avatar together give people enough reasons to do that.

## Your Twitter avatar

No, not the movie, but an image that appears alongside each of your tweets. It's a quick way for people to spot a friend in the flow of tweets, so choose a distinctive image. Remember that it will often appear really small – especially on mobile devices – so complicated images or text won't usually work. You can change your avatar whenever the mood takes you, but like changing your username it can confuse your followers. I've changed mine a couple of times, but currently use a cool caricature I had done by New Zealand graphic novelist Dylan Horrocks. On that note, if you're tweeting as an individual, a picture of you is a nice way to connect with your followers, but keep in mind that your tweets are public, so don't use a photo if your privacy is super-important to you.



*My bio as it appears on Tweetdeck*

## Your first tweet

A tweet is 140 characters of text, and that's that. The characters can include links to websites (sharing information is a great way to make yourself useful) or pretty much anything you want.



Believe it or not, I reckon it's a good idea to tweet a few times before you even follow anyone. Why? So when you follow your first person and they look at your tweets, there are enough to help them decide whether or not to follow you back.



## Following

The only tweets you will see on Twitter are from people you choose to follow. There's no right or wrong number of people to follow, but every person you add to the list means more tweets flowing past you ... so there's no point in following people if you're not interested in what they have to say. See the "who to follow" section in a couple of pages for more.

## Your followers

If you're interesting, useful, or people just like you, you'll be followed and people will read your tweets. Sometimes people will automatically follow you back just to be polite. And sometimes people will follow you in the hope of a followback, just to build up their numbers. Raw follower numbers are a pretty crude measure of Twitter engagement ... obviously you'll get more from Twitter with more followers, but who those people are and how often you engage with them counts far more than how many there are.

Here's a bunch of mine, put together in a mosaic by [scoop.com](#). Some of the avatars work better than others.





## **Retweets: sharing the love**

One of the ways Twitter builds online communities is through retweets. A retweet is simply passing on a tweet from someone you follow, to the people who follow you. As well as being useful to your followers, retweets introduce them to people on Twitter they might not know – maybe giving them a reason to follow someone new.

## **Direct messages: tunneling under**

Tweets are public. Let's say that again: tweets are public. Every tweet you send appears on a publicly viewable web page that can be seen by anyone, whether or not they follow you. Even if you delete a tweet, assume Google has captured the data and it will be searchable.

Direct messages are a little more secure. A Twitter direct message can only (in theory) be viewed by the person you send it to. So if you want to say something private or exchange personal information like phone numbers or email addresses, a DM is the way to go

## **OK, I'm on Twitter. Why has my life not changed?**

So you've taken the plunge and gotten yourself a Twitter account, chosen an amusing handle (username), followed MC Hammer and tweeted once about the weather. Now what?

## **The three Rs of Twitterrr**

I reckon you can't go far wrong by starting with my three Rs: relationships, research and recruitment. Weather updates and MC Hammer aside, they cover some of the most useful ways I've used it in my role (goat farming creative director). They're not exhaustive, and I'm sure you'll find other cool uses too. But they're a start, and you have to admit they do all start with R.

**Relationships:** this is the big one. Twitter's power is in bringing people together on the basis of shared interests. So when you see a tweet that interests you, follow whoever tweeted it. Also check out the Twitter Lists that person is on – some of them are sure to relate to an interest you have in common. Follow interesting-looking people from those lists too. Before long you'll be part of a circle of friends defined by what you're all interested in. This is a great way to overcome constraints of time and geography to connect to people in the same profession or whatever else interests you. It also means your Twitter circle becomes a pretty powerful tool for the next R ...

**Research:** OK, you're connected to a bunch of people who are into the same things you are. Looks like you're part of an expert network! The great thing about the network you've created is that, chances are, there'll always be someone who knows more than you do about any given topic. So tweeting a question to the "hive brain" or "lazyweb" is a great way to find quick answers from people you know and trust. Just like Wikipedia, though, take care with treating any one answer as gospel. (Of course, this is a two way street. You're bound to know more than some others in your network about certain things, so if you have an answer to someone's question, tweet it. Karma!)

**Recruitment:** Part research, part relationship, completely brilliant. Assuming your Twitter circle is based on shared professional interests, Twitter can be an unbeatable way to advertise new positions and connect with potential hires. Part of the reason is that job ad tweets get lots of retweets – not surprisingly, since passing on a job lead could be doing someone a real favour. So don't be afraid to ask for retweets. Job title, organisation and a request to DM (direct message) for more details is about all you should need.

There are lots of other ways to use Twitter, but if you're just starting out, these three are as good a foundation as any. And because they all start with R, they're super-handly when someone asks you at a party – just like you once did – what Twitter is all about. Imagine it!

Attractive but ignorant fellow partygoer: "Say, what's Twitter all about?"

You: (momentarily stumped) "Aaaahhhh..."

Her: "Aaah?"

You (remembering this chapter): "R! Three of them in fact. The first R stands for relationships ... speaking of which, are you single?"

## **Look who's stalking: choosing who to follow on Twitter**

This is one of those questions that, once you've been on Twitter for a while, gets filed under "duh". But when you're new to it, "Who do I follow?" is almost as common a question as "What do I talk about?" The short answer is, of course, to follow whoever you like. The slightly longer answer is to follow these pointers to help you quickly build your Tweet stream to the point where it's (hopefully) informative, entertaining and relevant.

**Search for people you know in real life.** This is as simple as using the "Find People" function in the Twitter web interface and clicking "follow" when they appear on the listing that results. Make sure you're following the right person though ... If your friend has a common name you might not. An easy way to check is to look at their tweets before following. If you're after a model train enthusiast friend, wall to wall tweets on scuba diving would suggest you have the wrong person. (Or that your train enthusiast friend is something of a renaissance man.)

**Look at other people's followers and followed lists.** If you're following someone you can see who they're following too, and who's following them. Chances are, you'll know some of these people. Take a look at their recent tweets and biography. If they seem interesting, follow them.

**Look at who's being retweeted.** This is one of the coolest things about Twitter, and one of the main ways it leads to organically formed communities based on shared interests. When one of the people you're following likes a tweet enough to retweet it, there's a good chance you'll like other tweets from the original tweeter too. Click on their username and see what else they've been tweeting about. Sound interesting? Follow!

There are lots of other ways to find people to follow (including the Twitter Lists feature) but these three are a good starting point.

## **Business time: how can a brand use Twitter?**

Sadly, unless you are very famous indeed, no one really wants to know what you had for lunch, and unless you're a celebrity chef it probably doesn't relate to your brand. A lot of businesses believe, though, that they should "be on Twitter," without considering exactly why, and how it relates to business objectives. Or even asking themselves if enough of their customers are on Twitter to make it worthwhile.

Assuming you've ticked both those boxes though (I am *such* an optimist!) some reasons you might consider investing some time in Twitter are:

**Customer service:** a growing number of customers – especially tech and media savvy ones – are expecting brands to be available and responsive on Twitter. Don't overlook the "responsive" side. Once you hang out your sign in Twitter, people will expect answers to their questions within minutes, 24/7. Here in New Zealand, @telecomnz @asbbank @flyairnz @vodafonenz all run pretty smooth Twitter based customer service accounts.

**Promotions:** follow me and win a pony! Well, why not? This can work as direct Twitter-only promotions or as a way to alert your customers to limited time or availability offers elsewhere. Because of the way tweets constantly flow past your followers though, Twitter isn't always the best way to get a message in front of a customer. "Pull" tactics such as answering customer questions will usually work much better than "push" ones like sending out offers.

@airnzfairy, the Air New Zealand Fairy (formerly known as the Airpoints Fairy) is a good example of combining pull and push. Each day the Fairy asks followers who would like a wish granted. From the requests she receives, she chooses one and makes it come true. Not surprisingly, requests for wishes and discussions afterwards build up a fair amount of chatter each day, increasing her popularity and building her community. The Fairy isn't the airline's only Twitter presence (see the "dozen bonfires" chapter for more on that) but she does one thing and does it well.

**Connecting:** simply engaging directly with your customers through Twitter – or any social network – can be a powerful way to slice through the barriers that usually stand between you and find out what people think about you and how they are feeling. For customers, the opportunity to connect with a real person puts a human face to what might otherwise be an anonymous corporation – strengthening their connection to your brand too.

Twitter also offers brands the opportunity to advertise directly via promoted Tweets and Trends but so far this attempt to (finally) make money from the platform has met with a fair degree of resistance and in some cases has done the brands involved more harm than good. If you're considering this approach, tread carefully!

However you choose to use Twitter, the two main points are to treat it as a commitment – once you're on there your customers will expect you to be active and responsive – and to make sure that commitment is connected to a business goal. If it isn't, and it becomes nobody's job, all you're going to create is a pissed off online community.

## **LinkedIn: Facebook if Amway invented it?**

If Facebook is a school reunion and Twitter is everyone telling everyone else what they had for lunch, LinkedIn is an endless networking event, peopled entirely by sad-arsed middle managers with a bad cup of catering coffee in one hand and a fistful of cheap business cards in the other.

At least, that's what it always looked like to me from the outside. Facebook with a tie on, basically ... a place for the professionally dissatisfied to use their current employer's time, hardware and bandwidth to plot their next ascent on the corporate ladder.

Recently though, things seem to have changed.

Partly, I guess, it's the Recession-with-a-capital-R. When people all around you are swapping their office pass key for a brown filing box, keeping your career network humming begins to sound like a good idea. According to LinkedIn, over 85 million people use the site, with over half of these outside the US. Here in New Zealand they claim 180,000 users.

And partly because it's quickly becoming more than just a place to find your next job.

As LinkedIn gains more members and those members spend more time on the site, it's becoming as much a place to share knowledge as find jobs. Both in open conversations (similar to a Facebook news feed) and more private Groups, LinkedIn is a powerful way to connect with people in your profession – especially if they're outside your organisation or in a different country.

Of course, LinkedIn is also an increasingly useful way to find employment or employees. Posting your CV to LinkedIn is simple, easy to update and – most of all – very Google friendly. A comprehensive LinkedIn profile is likely to be the first hit someone will see when they search your name ... so much more professional than a page full of photos from the office party, hmm?

From a marketing perspective, LinkedIn presents more limited opportunities – so far. LinkedIn members can run ads for their own services and external advertisers can run simple text ads. The big opportunity is for companies looking to develop their employer brand (or as some more enlightened outfits are now calling it, their employee brand) with a well written and maintained company profile.

This can be a bit of a tricky one for some companies – investing time in a platform that at first glance is designed to make it easy for your employees to go somewhere else can be a hard sell. But, at least according to LinkedIn, recent graduates in particular are more likely to consider an employer that encourages them to continue growing their own personal brand – and LinkedIn is a way to do that.

It's all very *Fast Company*, and you could equally argue that numbers of LinkedIn users within an organisation and the amount of time they spend on it is a pretty good measure of disengagement! There's truth in both, I'm sure.

### **The basics: profile, connections, recommendations and groups**

At its simplest – and I'm a Billy-basic LinkedIn user – the four building blocks LinkedIn gives you to play with are your profile, your connections, recommendations and any groups you choose to join or (go you!) form yourself.

Your **profile** is your LinkedIn online CV. Like any selling document – and this is what a CV is – you need to create it with your objective and your audience in mind. Keep it fresh too – a good idea is to get a friend to look at it and critique it from an employer's perspective.

**Connections** are LinkedIn's equivalent of Facebook friends. The critical difference is that you need to jump through a couple of hoops to make them. In theory, at least, you need to know someone personally or have done business with them to send a connection request. Like Facebook, you can search for people you know to connect with, or review LinkedIn's suggestions.

Again, who you choose to connect to should really relate to what you're trying to get from LinkedIn. Raw numbers don't really count for much, and constantly asking to connect to people you don't really know can make you look a bit needy. Once you are connected with someone, their updates appear in your news feed, and you can send them private messages, as well as access full profile information and any contact details they've posted.

**Recommendations** are LinkedIn's answer to references. Once you're connected to someone you can ask them to write you a recommendation for the position you knew them from. It's up to you how many recommendations you show on your profile and you can toggle them on and off whenever you like. Reciprocity rocks, of course, so if you're in a position to recommend someone back, it's polite to at least offer to.

**Groups** are where LinkedIn goes beyond being a glorified job board and begins to operate as a professional networking platform. As of June 2010 there were around 650,000 groups on LinkedIn. Once you've joined a group – and like making a connection, joining a group is usually subject to its owner's approval – you can join discussions the group is having or start your own. You'll also be exposed to some people you might not have met before, which could well lead to some new useful LinkedIn connections.

I started out this section by giving LinkedIn a bit of niggles, and I think for a long time I've been ignorant of the opportunities it offers. I don't think I've been alone in this – it's only been in the past six months I've seen a bunch of people who usually live their lives on Twitter and Facebook (with occasional visits to the real world) put on a tie, pocket some business cards and stake out a corner of the conference room on LinkedIn.

For a company interested in developing its employer brand (all of them, I'd like to think) or anyone wanting to build their professional connections (ditto) LinkedIn is a platform whose time has come, and should almost certainly form a part of your personal and corporate social media strategy.



# Choirs, soloists and other matters of tone

# Talking chiefs, friendly ghosts and horses' mouths.

I was lucky enough recently to find myself on the island of Savai'i – the larger but less developed major island in the South Pacific nation of Samoa.

I was there – largely thanks to connections I've made through social media – to present a documentary on the work of the Fred Hollows Foundation. The Foundation works in developing countries providing incredibly cost-effective cataract surgery to people who might otherwise never have their sight restored. They do wonderful work, and it was a great privilege to accompany them for a week or so.

While we were in Savai'i we were joined by a very famous Samoan New Zealander, Michael Jones. MJ was once a member of the All Blacks – New Zealand's national rugby team – and famously scored the first try in the first ever Rugby World Cup. In recognition of his sporting success and the high regard he's held in in Samoa and New Zealand. Michael holds the title of Matai (chief).

Towards the end of our time in Samoa, Michael joined us for dinner (and an after-dinner singalong – he was also famous as one of the All Blacks' tour-bus guitarists) and gave a speech about his role as an ambassador for the Fred Hollows Foundation. The next morning he was to visit the village of Tafua (where we'd spent much of the week) to lend his mana to the cause and spread the foundation's message. But here's the thing: he wasn't going to say a word.

That's because in Samoan village culture, speaking is something that Matai just don't do – at least in public. Instead, every Matai has a Talking Chief (tulafale) – not necessarily a high born person, but someone with a gift for the gab who speaks at public and ceremonial occasions on the chief's behalf.

Tulafale exist for three main reasons:

1. Efficiency: there just aren't enough hours in the day for a Matai to talk to everyone who wants to talk to him
2. Skill: not every great chief is a great orator. Employing an expert makes sense.
3. Status: speaking to commoners is below a Matai's status

I didn't go to Samoa expecting to learn about social media strategy, but it turns out there are a few things we can take from the Matai / Tulafale approach.

1. Efficiency. This makes a lot of sense. Social media can be a fantastic way for a brand to form strong, intimate bonds with its customers. But for this to happen, interactions need to be frequent and you need to be responsive. People, especially young, digital people, expect fast answers. Delegating or sharing the social media approach – employing not just one Tulafale but an entire tribe – can give you this.

2. Skill. Forming and maintaining online relationships doesn't come naturally to everyone. Selecting people with the right mix of online experience and corporate knowledge is crucial. If there's a trick to this, it's to look beyond whichever department "owns" your social experience for people with natural aptitude. Telecom New Zealand, for example, uses volunteers from all over the business, including technical specialists. The other advantage to this is that it means collectively the team is far more likely to have a useful answer to a customer question than any one person could.

3. Status. This is where it gets tricky. While the idea of the Matai being too important to talk directly to seems to go down well in Samoa, it's not so likely to fly in other countries. Surprisingly though, a number of CEOs and political leaders take this approach, employing Ghost Tweeters or Facebook Phantoms to speak on their behalves online. I get that if you're running the country – or a corporation the size of one – it can be hard to find time to Tweet.

I think the better approach though is to be open about ghosted accounts – using terms like "Tweets from the office of..." or "Posts from the staff of..." rather than pretending to be the real deal. Then when the CEO/ Prime Minister/Pope *does* engage in person, make that clear. Receiving a personal tweet / text / Facebook update from someone famous and powerful can be a real buzz, but that will quickly get diluted if it's clearly from the some tweetwriting flunky rather than the big cheese.

## Ghost tweeting: the ghoul the bad and the ugly

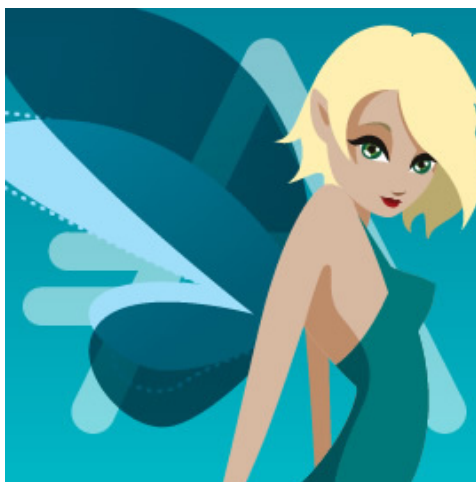
**It's OK to be a ghost.** CEOs and politicians have been doing it forever. Did the boss of the power company *really* write that letter he sent you threatening to turn your lights out? Did Kennedy write his own speeches?

**But the best ghosts are transparent.** If you're going to have someone tweet on your behalf, fess up about it. Then, when you do occasionally drop by in person it will be even more powerful.

## Scared of ghosts? How about a fairy?

This is another approach that gets around several of the challenges inherent in using a personal medium like Facebook or Twitter to communicate as a company. The Air New Zealand Fairy (née Airpoints Fairy) is a character invented by the marketing team at Air New Zealand. Her reason for being is to give away little treats every day to followers she deems deserving.

The Air New Zealand Fairy doesn't disclose who she really is – that's part of the mystery. It's also a big advantage to the airline ... if whoever Tweets for her is away, or leaves for good, someone else can step into her fairy-boots without anyone noticing there's been a change (assuming they've put together a decent enough set of character guidelines).



*The AirNZFairy: designed, if you hadn't guessed, by a guy*

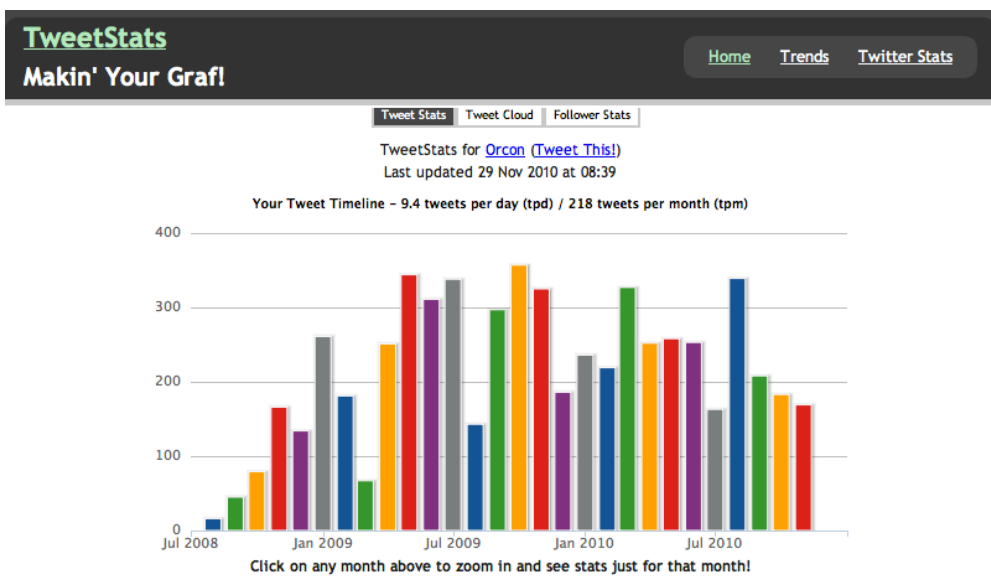
## Flying solo: great until you need to take a pee

I flew planes for a living once; big ones, with a crew of between five and ten, depending on what were doing and where we were going. One of the great things about having a crew – and in particular, having more than one pilot, is that you could get up and take a pee (the toilet was at the opposite end of the aeroplane) without the plane spiraling out of control and plunging into the Pacific, momentarily illuminating the empty ocean with an orange fireball before disappearing beneath an oil-slicked swell, leaving nothing but a couple of cushions and a startled albatross in its wake.

I thought about this recently when I was listening to Duncan Blair talk about his experience as the social media voice of New Zealand telecommunications company Orcon.

As well as running marketing at Orcon and DJing under the name of Phixx, Duncan ran Orcon's Twitter and Facebook account, pretty much singlehandedly. The upside of this was that Duncan's technological and product knowledge and personality shone through, attracting a heap of even non-Orcon-customers to its online accounts.

The downside is that when he got up to go for a pee, things went off the boil. When he took his first extended vacation since setting Orcon up on Twitter and Facebook, tweets, mentions, conversations and new followers all dropped off. Without Duncan at the wheel, Orcon became a much less interesting online brand. Take a look at Orcon's graph from TweetStats.com:





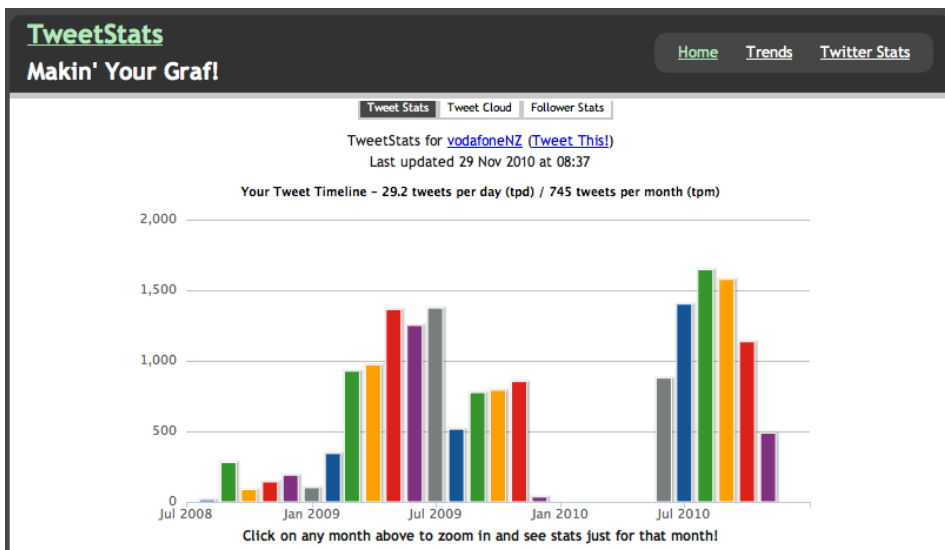
And here's Orcon's Twitter homepage today. Even though Duncan has moved on, they're still largely sticking with the Solo approach – one person is fronting the account with help from others in the company as needed.

Contrast this to what Telecom New Zealand is doing a couple of pages over. Of course, Telecom is a huge company, while Orcon would probably need to get ring-ins to fill a social soccer team. But the principle still holds.

## Vodafone New Zealand: the power and perils of personality

Over at Vodafone, New Zealand's biggest mobile phone operator, Corporate Communications Manager Paul Brislen was in much the same boat. When Paul was on, Vodafone crackled with energy and personality. Questions were answered, conversations were had and Vodafone quickly became a well loved online brand, even if its customers weren't always all that happy in the real world. One media commentator referred to it as the "Paul Brislen effect" – the online community's affection for Paul lifted the Vodafone brand, and shielded it from a lot of criticism it might have otherwise received. Corporations are easy to hate – a regular guy with a wife and kids is a little harder to dig your online claws into.

The downside of the effect, is that when Paul left the company recently it seems much of its online mojo went with him. (Disregard the Jan-Jun data glitch.)



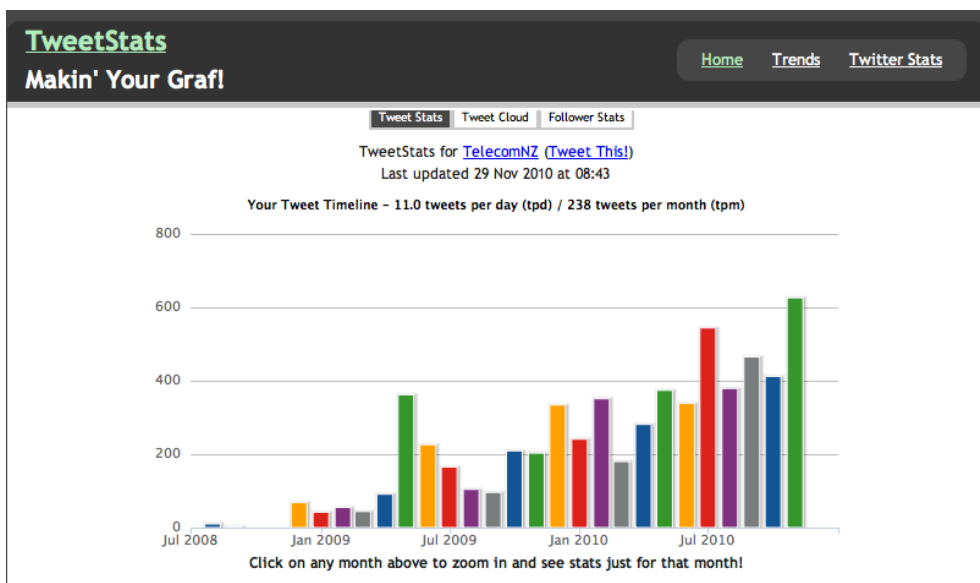
These days Vodafone runs a team tweeting approach – here's its homepage with the team members' names and initials listed at the left.

## Telecom: tweeting as a team

Since we're talking telcos, it's worth contrasting these two with Telecom New Zealand's experience (Telecom is about the same size here as Vodafone). Instead of hitching its social wagon to one online star, Telecom has almost from the beginning taken a team approach. Its online community team is made up of volunteers drawn from across the business. Telecom's Twitter homepage shows nine of the team, and each of them signs off their tweets with their initials; so even though you're talking to one of New Zealand's biggest companies, you retain the personal touch.

Interestingly, none of the people who tweet for Telecom are from marketing, communications or PR; they're subject experts from all around the business. So depending on what kind of question you have, you'll end up talking to a person who knows about the subject – rather than someone trying to put a marketing spin on things.

Again, a peek at TweetStats tells a pretty clear story. Even though people have come and gone from the Telecom Twitter team, none of these individual arrivals or departures has hurt its online presence. In contrast to Vodafone and Orcon its tweet count (which is a crude but good enough measure of engagement) has risen steadily month after month.







Here's Telecom's Twitter page, featuring the name and picture of each of its team members. Tweets are shared between the team so response speed is good and there's usually an expert on hand. Each tweet is signed off with the team member's initials. (Like many companies, Telecom uses collaborative Twitter platform CoTweet to manage everything: cotweet.com). This is also the approach Vodafone New Zealand uses now, and for me is pretty much the gold standard of how to run a corporate Twitter account.

### Cleared for takeoff

Coming back to the flying analogy then, flying solo is great if you're piloting a jet in an airshow and want to inject your personality into the display. Take your hands off the controls though, and things can fall apart pretty quickly. If you want your plane to actually go places, you're better off with a crew. Getting a good one together then giving them the freedom to deal honestly and naturally with your Twitter community is a great way to build your brand online.

# Ear to the ground: the art of listening

# Got your ears on?

In the chapter “Why do social? Because social’s doing you.” I talked about the fact that there are online conversations happening about your brand all the time. If people are saying things in those conversations about you that aren’t true, you owe it to your brand health to get in there and set things straight.

But how do you find out when and where those conversations are happening in the first place?

Listening is just as important to your social media plan as talking. While there are plenty of companies out there who will charge you a lot of money for this (usually framed as “social media monitoring”) there are plenty of cash-free alternatives. Warning though, Will Robinson, they only work if you or someone in your organisation have the time and ability to use them!

**Many spies / many eyes.** I’m not sure if this is really a line in one of the Lord of the Rings movies, or if Flight of the Conchords were just improvising in their song, “Frodo, don’t wear the Ring.” Anyhoo, my point is, if you are a big organisation with relatively online-savvy staff, you’ve got a ready-made social media monitoring framework in place.

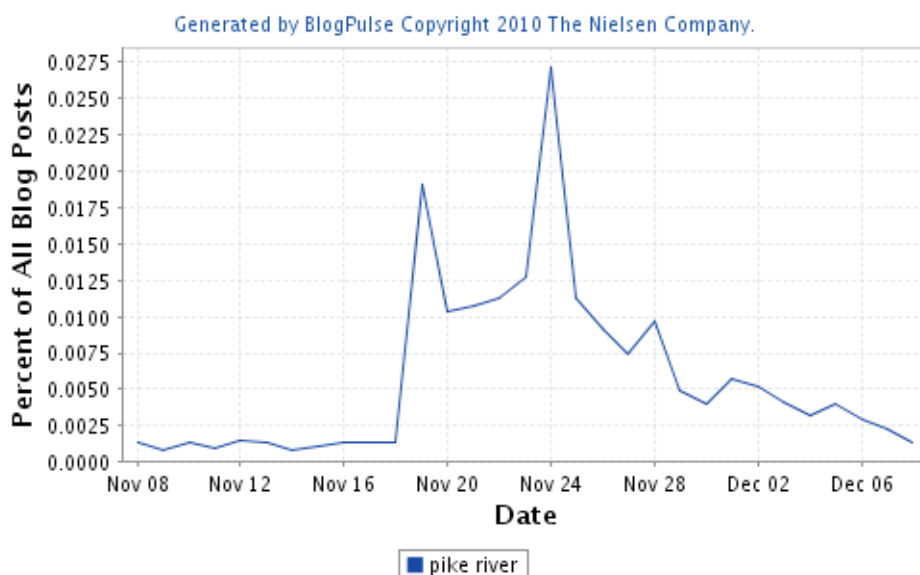
Your staff are already seeing conversations happening about you online. All it takes to make use of this is to make it easy for people to pass those conversations on. This can be as simple as appointing someone in the organisation as your social media point person and letting people know to pass links on to them. What they do with the information, of course, is what really matters, and this comes down to your overall social engagement strategy. Knowing what’s being said is critical though.

**Google Alerts:** these are free, fast and pretty powerful. A Google Alert is basically a standing request for a Google Search, that reports results to you by email. Like any Google search, the trick is to choose your search terms carefully to make sure you get relevant information. Depending on how hotly your ears are burning, you can have alerts sent weekly, daily, or as they happen. Google alerts are free and you can have as many search terms as you like. Take a look at [google.com/alerts](http://google.com/alerts) and have a play!

**Blog search:** and yes, Google does one of these too (you can include blogs in your Google Alerts searches). A few years back, blogs were reserved for the late night keyboard bashers discussing how to tackle the latest World of Warcraft foe or what to wear to the next medieval reenactment society orgy. This has changed with the rise of user-friendly platforms like Wordpress, Blogger and Posterous, and even if they're not all being read by as many people as, oh, I don't know, [vaughndavis.posterous.com](http://vaughndavis.posterous.com), they're certainly being written and in big numbers. Google Blog search and blog/social specialist search engine Technorati are good ways to find out when you feature in these posts and subsequent discussions. (Ironically, the Technorati.com search window takes a bit of searching for because the page is filled with advertising.) Blogpulse adds trend monitoring, but if you're a New Zealand brand your search terms are unlikely to appear in Blogpulse's worldwide stats (unless it's a worldwide trending topic such as the Pike River Mine disaster).

[Home](#) > [Tools](#)

## Trend Search



**Twitter-specific search:** since most conversations on Twitter are open, they're easier to see into than on Facebook or LinkedIn. [search.twitter.com](http://search.twitter.com) lets you look at any search term you choose in real time. Third party services such as [Twilert.com](http://Twilert.com) add a bit of spice to that basic search functionality, summarising your keyword traffic and emailing you the results daily or whenever you choose.

**Socialmention.com** looks at 50+ social platforms (or just the ones you choose) to deliver search results, stats and even a measure of sentiment (to the extent that its robot can work it out). Socialmention also has a free email alert service.

**Paid search:** in the paid space, Radian6 is the best known platform (among a growing number of alternatives, including TrackUR and New Zealand-made M-Savvy and Chatterbox). Its promotional material is focused on sales-oriented companies and is as cheesy as any number of pizza kitchens: “The social phone is ringing – are you ready to answer?” But it does present a sexy dashboard view of what people are saying about you and where.

Critically, Radian6 (and other tools like it) can’t see into private conversations on Facebook or LinkedIn – leaving you blind to an important volume of conversations – but maybe that’s a good thing. Radian6 isn’t cheap – you’ll pay AUD125 a month per user plus AUD700 a month per “topic profile” – but it does seem to do the business and is the monitoring weapon of choice for a bunch of big US brands as well as advertising and PR agencies.

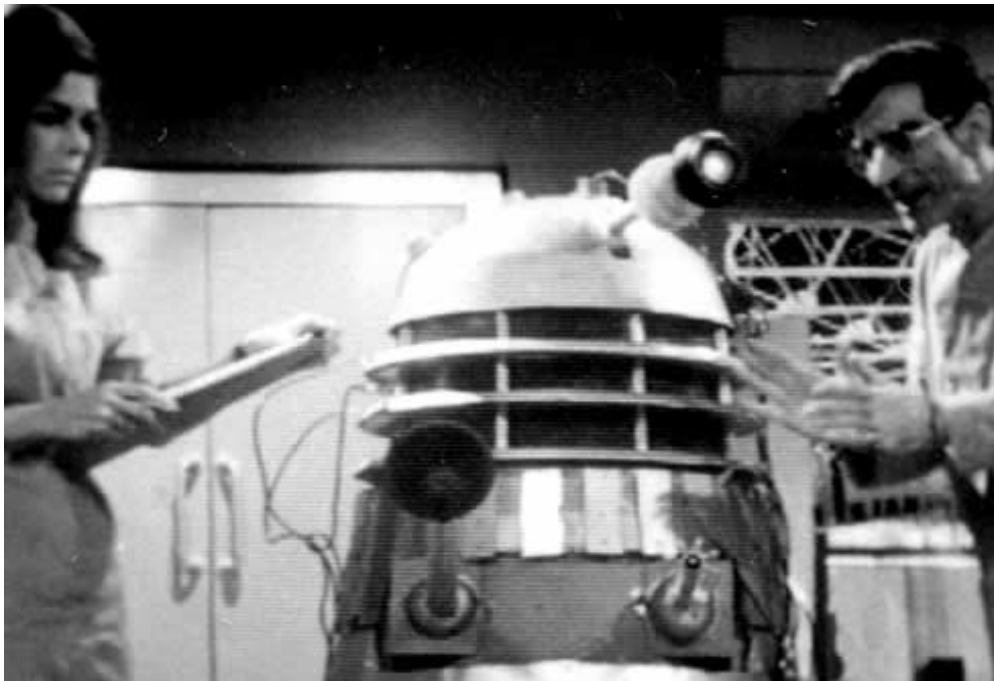


*Spooky: when I downloaded this sample dashboard shot from Radian6.com I was briefly freaked out to see that right there in the middle of the “Mentions” column was ... me (my previous Twitter Avatar was a photograph of a black V on a yellow roadside sign).*

## Search isn't the same as sentiment

While social media monitoring tools – as of late 2010 – are getting very good at plucking the most casual whisper about your brand out of the social sphere and reporting on their frequency and whereabouts, what none of them seems to have cracked is an accurate measure of sentiment. Philosophically, this could be to do with computer algorithms not being well know for their emotional quotient (if we discount C3POs occasional bursts of paranoia or HAL's musical acid trip when Dave Bowman starts yanking out his processors). More likely, it's just a matter of time until someone creates a programme smart enough to differentiate mean (as in cruel) from mean (as in wicked, by which I mean the complimentary meaning of wicked) from mean (as in average, by which I mean the sum of the values in a data set divided by the number of values in the set) from mean (by which I mean the verb form of mean, meaning denote or signify).

What does this all mean? You need a human being to gauge human emotions. Social media monitoring tools can tell you when everyone is talking about you, and give you an idea of the topics they're discussing, but you need to poke your virtual nose in yourself to understand how people are really feeling about you and your brand, so you can decide whether or not to get involved in the conversation.



*So to be clear, when you say “exterminate,” are you referring to our pest control business or threatening to kill us all?*

# Has digital killed the video star?

# The marketing revolution will not be televised

A couple of years ago I met up with expat Kiwi Mark D'Arcy in his frankly enormous New York office at Time Warner, where he was Chief Creative Officer. (He was something even more impressive the last time we met, and will have no doubt been promoted again by the time you read this.) Unlike plenty of people in American companies with fancy titles, Mark was a real actual Big Swinging Dick, heading an important part of the company. His team created branded content and built partnerships between advertisers and Time Warner film, TV and online properties. Like me, Mark was once a Creative Director at a big multinational advertising agency. He jumped ship – and Time Warner set up the division – because of the way our relationship with media is changing.

“It used to be you’d come into work on Monday morning and talk about that great ad you saw on TV the night before,” said Mark, as he stood in front of the million-dollar Central Park sunset view from his office window while his six-foot blonde former supermodel personal assistant mixed our drinks in the far corner of his office, 30 metres away. “These days, apart from the Superbowl, those shared experiences are gone. Even without the drift from broadcast TV to the Internet, we’ve now got hundreds of channel choices here in the US – and advertisers just can’t be everywhere anymore.”

When I returned to New Zealand (this was around 2007) it was pretty clear that not many local brands were thinking that way. The big “above the line” campaign was still the standard approach for most advertisers and spending a million on making a TV ad didn’t raise many eyebrows. Over at Air New Zealand, though, changes were afoot ...

## **Frequent fire: how air New Zealand is changing airline marketing**

Air New Zealand used to market itself like any medium sized airline. Most weeks it would run retail offers on TV and in newspapers, flogging seats to wherever it had space. Most years it would spend a big chunk of its marketing budget on making a beautiful, epic TV ad, then run it alongside the retail stuff.



That all changed on GM of Marketing Steve Bayliss's watch. The way Air New Zealand advertises itself now is very different to traditional airline advertising, and its use of social and other digital channels forms a big part of that. Steve described the approach in a newspaper interview earlier this year. (As it happens, he left the company soon afterwards but his marketing philosophy seems to have remained in place.)

For me, it sums up how social media has changed the way smart brands approach advertising. Like any good story, it's grown in my mind since I first heard it. Here's the long version:

Every year, brands would compete to build the best and biggest fire. Most of each year was spent preparing for the year's fire. Building a popular fire involves a lot of planning and a lot of important decisions.

Where shall we build the fire? Up high where it can be seen? Or in a sheltered spot so the wind doesn't blow it out?

Could the fire use any extras, maybe some herbs to make it smell nice (for the female household fire-lover demographic) or some non-lethal explosives (for the man of the house)?

And then, on one special night, when the moon is high and full and the wind is just right, the fire is lit. If you're lucky – if you've planned well, thought about what kind of fire the modern fire-fan is looking for today and executed perfectly – a crowd will gather around your fire, quite possibly cook sausages on it and tell their friends what a great fire it was.

If you're unlucky, no one will come. The fire will burn itself out, the sausages will go back in the fridge and the firebuilders will make their way back to the office, wondering if their LinkedIn profiles are up to date.

For most big brands – beers, airlines, carmakers, utility companies and more – the single bonfire approach sums up their approach to marketing. Yes, there'd be other activity in support, but the Big Television Commercial still forms the heart of the annual marketing calendar for some very big, and very smart brands.

This is a great strategy when it works (but aren't they all?). I've made big TV ads myself, and know how quickly they can change the way an entire country feels about a brand. For Air New Zealand, though, one fire wasn't enough.

## The dozen bonfires theory



*"Where do you put your passport then?"*

*"Not telling."*

I'm not sure if Steve Bayliss has ever met Mark D'Arcy but I think they'd see eye to eye on this one. Like Mark, Steve has seen the writing on the wall for the blockbuster TV ad (aka the single bonfire.)

Instead, Steve and Air New Zealand take a dozen bonfires approach: when they see a marketing idea they like, they do it, and see how it goes. In Steve's words, "we light a lot of little fires, then wait and see which ones people stand around. Then we throw petrol on those ones."

For Steve, the day of the big annual brand ad – the single bonfire – is dead. The new digital and social world is both the driver and the enabler here. The driver, because the audience fragmentation Mark D'Arcy saw at Time Warner is now even more real, and it's made even worse by the commercial-zapping abilities of platforms like TiVo, MySky, Apple TV and other PVRs. But it's also the enabler, with social and digital technologies allowing brands to go to market with far more speed, and far less risk (of wasted investment, anyway) than ever before.

Today, we can film and load a piece of content to YouTube for less than the catering budget of a conventional TV shoot. And unlike broadcast TV, campaign reach is purely driven by the power of the idea, not the size of the budget. (Which is good or bad news, depending on how you look at it!)



*“Rico”: this deliberately controversial campaign stars an innuendo-happy puppet created by the Jim Henson Company*

That said, some of Air New Zealand’s biggest online successes have involved considerable production investment – such as their “Nothing to hide” bodypainting spots and current “Rico” puppet campaign. Just because online content *can* be cheap doesn’t mean it *must* be cheap – quality production still helps!

To work well, though, the dozen bonfires approach needs (duh) a dozen bonfires. This has a pretty big implication for advertising agencies, who are traditionally experts at the plan-all-year-then-light-the-fire approach. Taking the power away from the agency planners and handing it to the punters is a pretty painful shift. For Air New Zealand – at least on Steve Bayliss’s watch – it meant fundamental change to the agency-client relationship, with Bayliss declaring publicly that he was happy to consider good ideas from anywhere, even Twizel (a very small and very isolated town in New Zealand’s South Island, better known for its hydroelectricity than its marketing ideation).

Yes, the Big Television Commercial will remain a powerful and potent thing for some time to come. We’ll still make them, our peers will still award them, and if conditions are perfect, people may still talk about them at work on a Monday morning.

But they’ll become less common. The immediacy of social, combined with the lower production and media costs of digital, guarantees it.

For marketers, the trick is to build an environment that encourages the creation of lots of smart ideas, then execute them with the expectation that some will fail. When an idea takes off, give it all the fuel it needs.



*Downtown Twizel, yesterday*

# Building a personal brand network

# Why this is the only chapter in this book worth reading

The best way to learn about social media is to experience it for yourself.

While in an earlier chapter I suggested the best way to do that is to jump right in, it doesn't hurt to have at least the hint of a plan. (It also doesn't hurt if you decide what your plan is after you've started executing it.)

In the next couple of pages I've jotted down two simple plans that might work for you. They worked for me – I started with the first one and moved to the second.

Whether you go for the entry level or the full fruit version, there are two keys to your personal brand network, and they're the same for any social media plan whether it's personal or corporate.

## **Connections amplify content Content rewards connections**

**Connections:** these are your Facebook friends, Twitter followers, LinkedIn connections and so on. There's no point having great content if no one sees it! (OK, unless you're the Dalai Lama and don't need external validation.)

The most basic thing you can do to build connections is to make it easy for people to find you. If you have a business card, make sure your Twitter handle and Facebook URL are printed on it. Same goes for any other printed material you use in your business. (And if it's not too late, make sure your name isn't HotKitty69 – unless that's how you want the world to see you.)

Then make sure you spend at least a little bit of time every day, every week – whatever you can stick to – making new connections. Look at your new followers on Twitter and follow back the ones who interest you. Browse the friend suggestions on Facebook and suggested connections on LinkedIn.

**Content:** it's the tasty treats you serve at your social media party. It's what people talk about afterwards and what keeps people coming back.

At its simplest, content is just the, um, content of your Tweets and your Facebook or LinkedIn updates. But you can only get so much enlightenment into 140 characters. A smarter way to use your updates is to link to content somewhere else.

If you have a personal or company website, linking to interesting and useful parts of it is a good place to start.

But you can also be useful to your connections – and “being useful” is a pretty handy strategy – by just linking to relevant stuff you've seen on the web. The Internet is huge. It's just not possible for one person to have seen everything that's interesting or relevant to them. So passing on links to the good stuff is a great way to reward people for connecting with you.

Take a look at the first diagram – it pretty much describes how my personal brand network started out (if you exclude a couple of false starts with Bebo, MySpace and – shiver – SecondLife).

My business card has my Twitter handle – I got in relatively early so was able to grab my real name before the half dozen or so other Vaughn Davises around the world could. (In your face, other Vaughn Davises!)

My Twitter account is the hub of my network. It's the only social network I was active on to start with. This was great for meeting the kind of people you meet on Twitter (see the Landscape chapter for more on that) and a simple and easy way to get started.

I used Twitter to pass on my own content (yes, including what I had for breakfast) and built in features like images (Twitpic) and videos (Twitvid) from my phone.

I also used it to pass on links to interesting things on my company website (which was a multinational advertising agency at the time, not a Goat Farm) and stuff I'd seen on the web.

It was simple, straightforward, and as long as I kept tweeting it built and maintained an OK personal brand network.

## Turning up the juice: adding more content and more connections

But this simple network only went so far.

It excluded the 90% of social media users who prefer Facebook to Twitter.

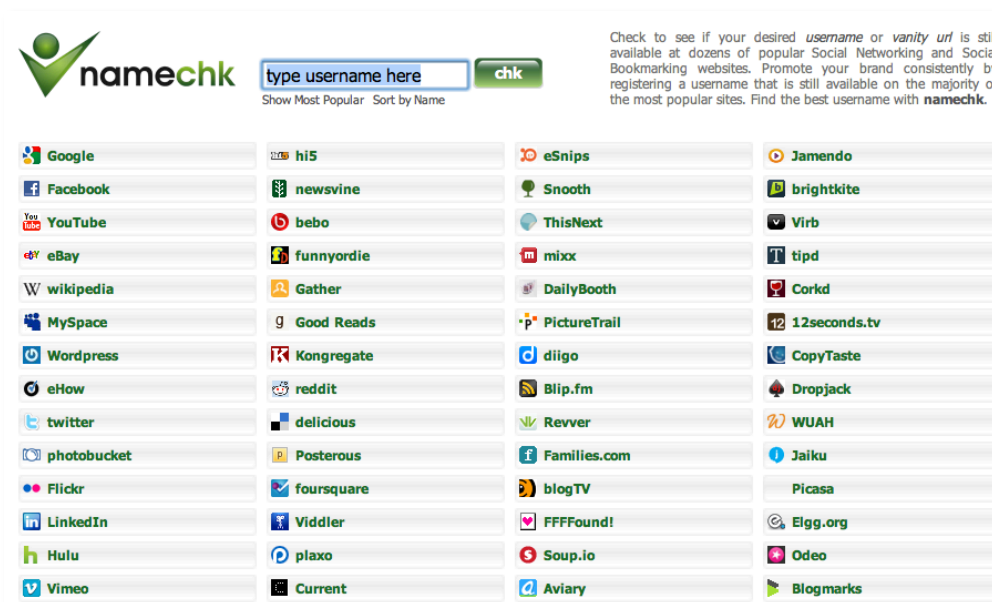
It didn't let me generate and share my own content

It didn't leave a lasting record of who I was and what I've done

These shortcomings led me to kick things up a notch, and evolve my network to what you see in the second picture.

On the connections side, I've ramped up my presence on Facebook, and added LinkedIn to my network. You simply can't ignore Facebook – Twitter really is only a niche medium, and with 1.9 million New Zealand users and more than 500 million worldwide, Facebook is an essential part of any personal brand network. Make sure you reserve a relevant personal URL the moment you open a Facebook account though – it's still not a widely used feature so you may well strike it lucky. (I almost did – so settled for VaughnDavisNZ, the same as my YouTube channel.)

***Tip: use namechk.com to see if your preferred username is available at pretty much every social network there is (it's also a good place to see just how many networks there are!)***



Namechk.com, showing about a third of the networks it covers

LinkedIn is my other addition on the Connections side. For a long time I saw LinkedIn as nothing more than Facebook for the unemployed and disengaged. Not surprisingly, it's much more than that. If you're in the business of selling your services, a comprehensive profile on LinkedIn blows a conventional CV out of the water. LinkedIn's "Recommendations" feature is a great way to give potential clients an idea of what you're like to work with too. Finally, LinkedIn Groups are a fantastic forum for discussing things that interest you professionally.

The biggest change on my personal social map, though, has been the addition of a blog.

A blog is really just a simple, DIY website. Publishing a blog was once something you needed to be at least a little bit technically capable to do. This has changed in the last couple of years, as platforms like Wordpress, Blogger and Posterous have made blogging as simple, in some cases, as sending an email.

For me, it was Posterous that tipped me from a blogging wannabe to a regular blogger. While Posterous doesn't offer all the features and ability to customise that some other platforms do, it is as simple as it could possibly be. Once you've registered your email address and chosen a blog name at posterous.com (Posterous is free to register and post) you just send an email to publish a post. If you want to include images, video or audio, you just attach them to the email and they appear as part of the post.

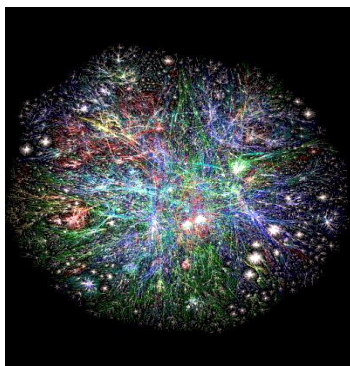
Take a look at the next few pages to see how I've grown my personal network over the last couple of years. Then, if you haven't already, give it a go yourself!



# Version 1.0: a simple personal network



twitter



# Version 1.0: a simple personal network

Your **business card** is still a great way to drive connections to your network. Technologies like Bump and LinkedIn Connect are cool, but nowhere near critical mass. Hey, if you have an iPhone, check out the application BC Reader – it pulls data from photographed business cards straight into your contacts folder. Cool huh?



A **Twitter account** is just about the simplest way there is to get into social networking. If it's for professional purposes, make sure your user name reflects that. Then it's just follow, follow, tweet tweet. Easy!



The **World Wide Web** is so big and filled with information – useful and otherwise – that no one can hope to know it all. Tweeting links to sites or news that interest you is a great way to remain useful to your followers and attract new ones.



Your own **company or personal website** might be familiar to you, but if you look at it from a customer perspective it's probably full of interesting and useful things. Tweeting links is a good way to drive traffic to the site too, if that matters to you. Don't overdo it though: being sold at can turn a lot of people off

# Version 2.0: adding sprinkles

**Vaughn Davis**


Goat Farmer  
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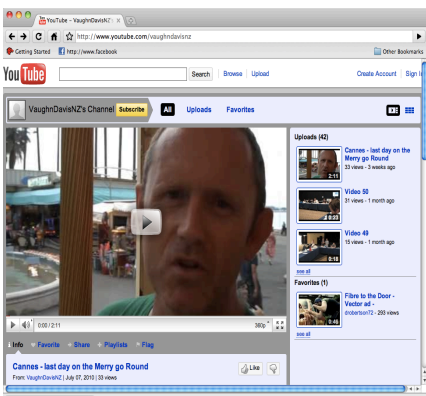
vaughndavis's posterous

November 16, 2010

### Can someone please tell New Zealand marketers that the TV ad is dead?



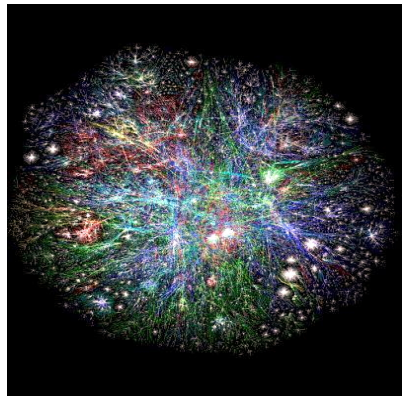
Meanwhile, inside their warm houses, the family are all on Twitter



YouTube - VaughnDavisNZ

VaughnDavisNZ's Channel

Cannos - last day on the Merry go Round



The Goat Farm

contact « work « links « follow

# Version 2.0: adding sprinkles

Your **business card** is still a great way to drive connections to your network. Technologies like Bump and LinkedIn Connect are cool, but nowhere near critical mass. Hey, if you have an iPhone, check out the application BC Reader – it pulls data from photographed business cards straight into your contacts folder. Cool huh?



**Facebook** is the 500 pound gorilla of social media, so if you want your business or personal brand to have broad reach, it's the place to be.

A **Twitter account** is just about the simplest way there is to get into social networking. If it's for professional purposes, make sure your user name reflects that. Then it's just follow, follow, tweet tweet. Easy!



Being on **LinkedIn** is a great way to form and maintain relationships within your profession beyond your organisation. LinkedIn is good for finding new career and business opportunities too.

Your **blog** is the heart of your social network. Use it to store your own content, host discussions, showcase your work ... it's easy and it can be cash-free. Like anything "free" in social media though, you should expect to put plenty of time into your blog if you expect anyone to read and recommend it. Key platforms are Wordpress, Blogger and Posterous.



A channel on **YouTube or Vimeo** is a cool place to share video content. Cheap, high-quality tools like the iPhone and the Flip Mino have made it super-easy to create video. Of course, you need to have something to say and like being on camera! Don't forget to name and tag your files to make them easy for people to search for.



The **World Wide Web** is so big and filled with information – useful and otherwise – that no one can hope to know it all. Tweeting links to sites or news that interest you is a great way to remain useful to your followers and attract new ones.



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**That's  
that  
then**

Tweet this book [@vaughndavis](#)



**Three years ago, this book would have been about Bebo, MySpace and SecondLife.** (That's me on the left). I would have been talking about how laying down some Linden Dollars and having some 12-year-old in his bedroom build you a virtual showroom – or hell, why not, terraform an entire virtual island – was the next big thing.

Possibly.

Despite the freedom it gave me to appear to be – not just pretend to be – a fetchingly hot 19 year old girl online, SecondLife never lit my virtual candle and now seems to be promoting itself as little more than a venue for online flirtation if not outright, as the English say, rumpy-pumpy.

The point I'm making (and that phrase is a sure-fire indication that I'm straying from it) is that it's easy to get swept up in the technology or platform du jour, and lose sight of the fundamentals.

This isn't about Twitter, or Facebook, or LinkedIn, it's about the people who use it and the relationships they form.

New Zealand technology commentator Ben Gracewood (@nzben) summed it up nicely at one of the first meetings of the Social Media Club: "it's just fucking people." (To be clear, his emphasis was on "people," not "fucking." The second version would probably fit SecondLife though.)

Ben's right.

New Zealand Maori have a less concise but more poetic take on it:

**He aha te mea nui o ta ao?**

**He tangata! He tangata! He tangata!**

What is the most important thing in the world?

It is people! It is people! It is people!

I just plugged the text of this book into wordle.net (you can see the results on the last page). Wordle is cool. It looks at any document – any text at all, really – and creates a rather beautiful image based on its content. The more often a word appears in your text, the bigger it is in the Wordle.

The biggest word in my Wordle is “people.”

And that feels about right.

Vaughn Davis  
The Goat Farm  
December 2010





*Eventually, this page will be an index. In the meantime, here's a picture of my opulent corner office at The Goat Farm*



# Appendix: how to publish a book for free

From the beginning of this project, I was determined to use free platforms to create, publish and distribute this book. Partly, of course, because I'm giving it away, so there won't be any income to balance out any cash I put into the project. But taking this path attracted me for two other powerful reasons:

- It's fast. From start to finish this project has taken me about a month. Total time spent on writing and design (if you can call it that) has been just over 200 hours. Paper-based publishing is nice if you want something at the end of it to put on your bookshelf next to Moby Dick and your Edmond's Cookbook. But it's rubbish if you're trying to write about something as new and constantly evolving as social media.
- It's two-way. Choosing an ebook format means that as comments and corrections come in, I can incorporate them into revised editions of the book without pulping the ones I've already printed.

## Tools of the trade

This book was laid out in an old and almost certainly legal copy of (don't hate me) **Microsoft PowerPoint**. I scratched my head a bit when trying to find a platform to build this on but PowerPoint won in the end because (1) I already have it, (2) I know more or less how to use it and (3) it does an OK job of laying out pages. I'm sure the moment I publish this someone will point out a far more powerful free platform I should have used, but I'm pretty happy with how it worked. (Copy linking between text boxes would have made my life a bit easier though). The "Save-as PDF" button transformed my slides to the document you're reading now.

**Dropbox** is a free (or freemium, strictly speaking) FTP site / application that I've been using a lot in my work recently, so it was a natural choice for hosting the finished book. Dropbox integrates beautifully with the Mac OS – it feels like part of the furniture. It's also "cloud based" which makes me feel very modern indeed.

**Pay with a tweet** is my favourite part of the whole shebang and partly inspired the title. You've already used it to download this book, but on the off chance that you're a crusty old CEO and you had your assistant print this out for you to read in the back of the Bentley, here's the background. Pay with a tweet was invented by a US-based advertising creative team called Innovative Thunder (yes, that's really what they call themselves) to distribute their book "Oh my God what happened and what should I do?"

To distribute my book via Pay with a tweet, I just filled in a form at [paywithatweet.com](http://paywithatweet.com) including the location of my file on Dropbox. This generated some HTML that I pasted into my post on Posterous (this is as technical as I get) which led to the magical appearance of a "Pay with a tweet" button on my blog.

Hitting the button connected you to the download page on Dropbox, and sent a Tweet or Facebook status update including a link to the blog page.

**Posterous** is a simple, free blogging platform that I've already said too much about. It provided a home for the paywithatweet button as well as a brief description of the book.

Finally, I kicked off the book through my personal networks on **Twitter**, **Facebook** and **LinkedIn**.



*“Vaughn has a great ability to respectfully challenge and influence across all layers of the organisation.”*

Brent Colbert, Director – Partner Strategy, Microsoft

*“Vaughn’s ability to walk in the shoes of customers and tell it like it is to the client is engaging and builds an honest trust that defines him and his approach.”*

Blair Vernon, GM Marketing and Distribution, AMP

*“His body bulges with intellect, which is lucky as it doesn’t bulge with much else.”*

Brett Wilson, CEO, Professionals Real Estate Group

*“If you read just one book about social media, it probably shouldn’t be this one.”*

Vaughn Davis, Goat Farmer and Author

