

New Marketing Opportunities on the Web

Martin Vejačka

Department of Applied Mathematics and Business Informatics,
Faculty of Economics, Technical University of Košice
Nemcovej 32, 04001 Košice
martin.vejačka@tuke.sk

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Abstract The new opportunities of web marketing emerge with evolution of the web 2.0. Various specific forms of new web such as social networks, virtual worlds, blogs etc. are being used for marketing communication purposes. Current trends in online marketing utilizing the forms of web 2.0 are identified and the outline and upcoming trends in this area are revealed. The potential of marketing communications targeting and obtaining feedback from potential customers by simple efficient method is demonstrated on real examples. Forming new large size groups of customers reachable by these new opportunities of web marketing is pointed out and briefly overviewed.

Key words web marketing, web 2.0, social media, virtual world, mail advertising

1. THE NEW WEB

The web is a media that emerged slightly over twenty years ago, but recorded fast development into very important communication channel. Professionals started to use new terms of web 2.0 in recent years to point out emerging new forms of the web connected mainly with user generated content. Furthermore the web became the most suitable channel for marketing communication for multiple important groups of potential customers. In addition, new web brings unique new forms of marketing communication.

1.1 The term of web

Today is the web a working tool for huge number of economic subjects in the world economy. Web is a relatively young medium, since the initial web design conceived by Tim Berners-Lee and Robert Cailliau during the course of the CERN (European Center for Nuclear Research) in 1990. The concept of the Web (Berners-Lee, Cailliau 1990) was defined as a network of hypertext documents (called websites), viewable through a software (browser) and built on a client – server architecture of Internet. Their aim was to enable scientists (cooperating on research tasks of CERN worldwide) fast and efficient communication and sharing of information in electronic form. As recently reported Berners-Lee, the web has never been so widespread and successful, if it would not be open, ownerless and free. Therefore, Berners-Lee fought that the web would not protected by a patent from its beginnings. Today, thanks to the fact it consists of billions of different websites.

The term web 2.0 in the sense of the second version of web (DiNucci, 1999) is for the first time used by DiNucci, which states: "The Web as we know it, which plays into the browser window with still images

is only a seed of web that comes. The first signs of Web 2.0 are emerging and we are beginning to see how the seed can develop. Web will not be understood as screens full of text and graphics but as a transport mechanism that allows interactivity and we will meet him on the computer screen, on television, on the dashboards of cars, in mobile phones, handheld devices and maybe also microwave ovens. As shown today reality, this prediction was fulfilled, and in some respects was overcome. Web is fragmenting through the widespread use of portable devices that allow connection to it (Knorr 2003). The term web 2.0 reappears later with the process when the web is becoming a universal integration platform based on standards.

The concept of web 2.0 gets to awareness of wider public in 2004 due to action of the first conference dedicated to this concept in San Francisco, USA. At this conference, O'Reilly and Batelle (2004) outlined their site definition of the web as a platform where software applications are web-based, not the desktop-based. Add that unique change in the functioning of the site is that users formed web content (in the form of ideas, texts, videos, or pictures) could be shackled and used to create value. Web 2.0 in addition to traditional sites is thus formed also by web communities (Agarwal 2009), web services and applications, social networks, so-called wiki pages, blogs, therefore its content is largely made up by users themselves.,

Experts in this field also predict further development of the web. According Keen (2008) the return of experts and authorities to the web starts alongside with diversion of users' confidence in user generated web content, which is the cornerstone of web 2.0. Hempel (2009) considered the next evolutionary step in the commercialization of web 2.0 services (such as social networks, blogs, etc.) is a profitable web 2.0 business model. O'Reilly (2005) adds that the use of typical aspects of Web 2.0 for marketing purposes and to build relationships with customers respectively becomes obvious.

2. OPPORTUNITIES OF MARKETING ON WEB 2.0

Web recorded the rapid increase in its popularity and traffic since its beginnings and it so has become an interesting medium for marketing. Primary forms were unaddressed advertising banners and videos on various websites with high traffic. The effectiveness of these funds is relatively low (Javorský 2007) because even the less experienced web user can easily filter out advertising in so called pop-up windows and or skip playing of video advertising. However, even in Slovak conditions revenues from online advertising were increasing very significantly in recent years (Bačík, Fedorko 2014) with exemption of crisis year of 2009.

In recent years contextual advertising appeared with the development of search engines (Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc.) based on search results related to the subject and keywords searched, and charged sponsored links on search results are placed prominently. However, the more experienced users might be less likely to click on a sponsored link in search engines unless it does not match precisely their searched area. Furthermore some online users might use advertising blocking software to block the most of online forms of advertising. Already in 2004 was the internet for big companies like Nike and American Express regular part of advertising expenses. Also the travel agencies in the United States has sold a fifth of their tours online. At that time contextual advertising in search engines became more popular and banners ceased to be modern (Štefko et al. 2013). Contextual advertising sales of market leaders (companies Google and Yahoo at the time) reached billions of dollars.

Marketing professionals began to talk about the crisis of classic media, which has faced the future of decreasing readership and advertising revenue. At the same time grew fast internet penetration, usability of web browsers and users' skills. Online marketing has had to change if it wanted to remain in sight of consumers. Banners and sponsored links on search engines started to lose their position of primary web marketing tools. However, users did not become automatically immune to these forms of advertising.

They are still among the major forms of online marketing. Now however banners have a less violent and unobtrusive form and bring more fun (such as a short interactive game). During this period so called web 2.0 began to spread. It is represented by sites such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Flickr, where content is created by the visitors themselves. These parts of new web are called social media. Numbers of unique users are growing at great pace, reaching hundreds of millions or even billions. This of course leads to the use of all forms of web 2.0 for advertising and wider marketing purposes.

2.1 Social networks

Social networks are probably the most popular term related to web 2.0 (Mistrík, 2010). Marketing experts consider social networks the most interesting opportunity for online marketing purposes at these days. Typical representatives of social networking sites are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or Google+. Social networks represent place where millions people are reachable. In Slovakia is a typical representative of this category is azet.sk, who holds the top positions of the Slovak sites traffic. Social networking appeals primarily young people, for whom a profile on Facebook already commonplace. Furthermore middle-aged users also joined the trend and use at least one social network. The number of users of Facebook as the largest social network surpassed 1.3 billion users, representing an enormous marketing potential.

There are commonly used classical forms of web advertising at social networks, such as banner ads and pop-up advertisements. Important aspect, however, is that users often provide operators of social network information about their preferences, interests and express their sympathy actively. Analysis of this information can be tremendously valuable to marketers, so that they can target the marketing campaigns and promotional tools directly for the individual for both classic commerce and e-commerce marketing purposes (Bačík, Fedorko 2014). In the entire group of users, the desired segments can be identified as the visitors fill their virtual profiles with basic information, interests and preferences voluntarily. Then identified individuals are easy and cheap to reach by targeted advertising message, e-mail, offer and the like.

Finally, via social networks companies present themselves and their products. Social network users and companies' customers may become fans (or even opponents) and also actively comment on posts and messages. This allows not only addressing targeted groups of potential customers, but also building relationships with the customers and general public and obtaining feedback. And this is not applicable only in commercial area, but it may also be usable in election campaigns, volunteering, third sector activities and many others. Example might be 2014 presidential elections in Slovakia where all the major relevant candidates communicates with potential voters and through social networks and tried to reach by their campaign, especially the younger generation present on the social networks. Social networks became regular and very important tool of online marketing.

2.2 Blogs

One of the basic forms on web 2.0 is blog. It is a classic text page sometimes with graphic elements where its creators (bloggers) publish their views, thoughts and attitudes. Blog is most often emplaced along with blog pages of other authors on the website intended for production and dissemination of blogging. The most popular blogging sites worldwide are Blogger, Tumblr, WordPress or Medium. In Slovak conditions blogs tend to be the sub-pages of web portals significant print media (SME, TREND, Pravda). An important option of a blog is direct feedback from readers, who may respond to a specific post on the blog of the author. While considering company's public relations, the author of the blog should be representative of a firm and his blogging brings great opportunities for obtaining immediate reactions of potential customers for new products, services, upcoming changes and a like. In Slovakia, for example VÚB bank (retail banking number 2) used this form of public relations, when its CEO

blogged about actual topics of local retail banking. Besides the amount of negative and positive responses, he received also constructive criticisms that could be directly used in making of products and communicating with customers. Responses to blogs are obviously valuable information for the company and an important tool for marketing and image building and customer relations.

Such corporate blogs in the world are already a standard form of communication with clients. On the other hand, there is a risk of deliberate inappropriate presentation and communication. For example, when Microsoft wanted to impress the online community in 2009, it created a fake blog, where false stories of bloggers who came to Microsoft from a competitor company Apple and of course favored their new employer. However, it was found that it is so-called flog (fake blog), it provoked strong wave of negative reactions by Internet users and significantly damaged the Microsoft's image. Today, Microsoft operates a blog platform that lets people participate in solving software problems and get valuable feedback. Moreover, a corporate blog is a face of a company, which communicates with the public. Important is the openness of communication, because readers in discussions generally detect even the darkest side of the company. Therefore, when making corporate blog, company should determine in advance which topics will be discussed. Corporate blog should not be used only for advertising of products or the brand without feedback, because it certainly discourages visitors from another site visit. Companies with successful blogs understand and write about topics rather close corporate culture or field of activity.

Blogs are technologically cheapest way for reaching modern consumers, but not the easiest. If corporate blog is to be meaningful, must be regularly supplied with interesting texts and responses to reader comments. The disadvantage of the blog, at least at first glance, is relatively weak traffic. According to the study of PR company Edelman (Javorský, 2007) reads blogs 23 percent of Europeans and 27 percent of Americans, while in Japan, South Korea and China have become mainstream media already. Blogs and social networks commonly called social media experienced enormous growths in recent years. Following table shows estimated monthly active users of selected social media in years from 2006 to 2014 to illustrate this trend.

Table 1 Social media monthly active users

Year	Facebook	Twitter	LinkedIn	WordPress	Tumblr	Google+
2006	12 000 000	1 000	8 000 000	600 000	0	0
2007	50 000 000	750 000	15 000 000	2 000 000	170 000	0
2008	100 000 000	5 000 000	33 000 000	4 300 000	1 000 000	0
2009	350 000 000	15 000 000	50 000 000	8 000 000	2 000 000	0
2010	600 000 000	80 000 000	75 000 000	11 100 000	7 000 000	0
2011	800 000 000	145 000 000	135 000 000	50 000 000	38 000 000	90 000 000
2012	1 000 000 000	182 000 000	200 000 000	60 830 000	86 800 000	150 000 000
2013	1 150 000 000	221 000 000	255 000 000	74 000 000	156 000 000	260 000 000
2014	1 300 000 000	255 000 000	313 000 000	85 000 000	230 000 000	343 000 000

Source: Own processing according to Statista, 2014

In Slovakia, even the most read blogs have up to 10 thousand readers per week. In comparison with print media (in hundreds of thousands) it is small number, but still interesting group in terms of marketing communication. However, according to the agency Edelman the readership of blogs is higher among the so-called influencers i.e. people who actively participate in the media or political life. The expected trend

in this area is the confluence of blogs to social networks due to their more traffic in combination with the advantage of greater scope and value of the blog. The blogs (alongside with social networks) have become online version of "World of Mouth", which represents the spread of oral reports from person to person and is in terms of the credibility and effectiveness unmatched by any advertising message. The best-known example of modern-day World of Mouth marketing is a Gmail e-mail service Google. At the introduction of Google gave email accounts to the small number of key people who had also possibility to invite others. It has become a prestigious to have a Gmail mailbox in early months after introduction.

2.3 Advanced webmail advertising

Google further improved usage of Gmail for marketing and advertising in recent year, when introduced promotional messages in webmail that seem as the newest mail and are at the top of all unread emails. Also other major companies providing webmail service have adopted this form of advertising (e.g. Outlook.com by Microsoft). This advertising is very different from promotional email spamming as long as it can be targeted for interests of email account owner. Interests of mail owner are evaluated according to user's previous searches by search engines. These promotional messages have subject displayed, which shortly describes offer inside whole message. If email user is interested in particular message, he or she can open it a store it like normal email or just read it. Such emails are perceived by users as less intrusive than advertising spam emails. They are more targeted to the user needs and interests and they do not spend any space in email box (unless saved for later reading).

2.4 Virtual worlds

Virtual worlds can be considered as a special version of social networking, being also a meeting place, but communication in a special way by moving them in a graphical environment not only in the framework of the web. The most famous virtual world is probably Second Life. Currently around one million residents "live" their virtual lives, while are having fun, buying virtual goods and services, sell the local currency. Furthermore, they are influenced by advertising of many commercial firms. Companies like Sun Microsystems, IBM, Sony, Dell and AOL have invested relatively large amounts (up to millions of USD) to the developing of their interactive settlements in Second Life, some of which exactly reproduce the real ones. Local users in Second Life can try and buy virtual Adidas sneakers or test a new Mercedes. Another basic opportunity to reach virtual world citizens is to post an advertising slogan, for example, to chat, which is commonly used by hundreds to thousands of users simultaneously.

Alongside with Second Life exist multiple and sometimes even more popular virtual worlds based on game principles where artificial conflict is incorporated. Very popular around the world are massively multiplayer online role playing games. However in these virtual worlds marketing is usually restricted to only the company creating a particular game or virtual world respectively. Still the virtual world becomes another communication channel to present the image of the company, where virtual advertising and testing of a particular product.

3. CONCLUSION

The new web, called the web 2.0, brings revolutionary opportunities of marketing communication. Although, there are still plenty of reasons to stick with the old marketing methods, it is indisputable, that potential of web 2.0 communication channels with vast numbers of potential customers is enormous. Specific forms of new web such are being used for marketing purposes in increasing extent. Social networks allow reaching vast numbers of users with targeted advertising and self-promotion of companies. They also allow collecting valuable feedback. Corporate blogs may be good opportunity for propagation of company's attitudes, public relations and getting feedback on planned steps. Advanced webmail advertising brings targeted non-intrusive commercial emails and reduces spam. Virtual worlds

represent alternative space, where many forms of new advertising may be used innovatively. All these new forms of web marketing are on the rise of usage worldwide.

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