

## **Twitter, MySpace and Facebook Demystified** - by Ted Janusz

**Q:** *I hear people talking about Web sites like Twitter, MySpace and Facebook. What are they? And, even more importantly, should I be using them to promote oral implantology?*

First, you are not alone. A recent survey showed that 70 percent of American adults did not know enough about Twitter to even have an opinion.

Tools like Twitter, Facebook and MySpace are components of something else you may have heard people talking about: **Web 2.0**, a popular term for Internet applications in which the users are *actively engaged* in creating and distributing Web content.

Web 1.0 probably consisted of the Web sites you saw back in the late 90s, which were nothing more than fancy electronic brochures. Web 1.5 would have been something like Amazon or eBay, sites on which one could buy, sell and leave reviews. What Web 3.0 will look like is anybody's guess!

Let's look specifically at the three applications that you mentioned.

### **Tweet, Tweet**

**Twitter** - "Twitter is like text messaging, only you can also do it from the Web," says Dan Tynan, the author of the Tynan on Technology blog. "Instead of sending a message to just one person, you can send it to thousands of people at once. You can choose to follow anyone's update (called "tweets") simply by clicking the Follow button on their profile, or vice-versa. The only rule is that each tweet can be no longer than 140 characters."

Former CEO of Twitter Jack Dorsey once accepted an award for Twitter by saying, "We'd like to thank you in 140 characters or less. And we just did!"

According to ComScore, Twitter is the fastest-growing major Web site in the United States with 17 million registered users. That's up 3,000% from a year ago.

This is fine, but what is the business application of Twitter?

In the past, says Natalie L. Pethouhoff, an analyst at Forrester Research, companies would depend on focus groups to get the reactions of customers during a two-hour session that can cost \$10,000 to \$15,000. Now companies like Comcast, Dell, HR Block, Kodak, Southwest Airlines and Whole Foods can "follow" what real customers are saying about them in real time. And they can

answer questions and resolve complaints from real customers immediately, if they so choose.

The *Toledo Blade* even sends tweets that are fast-breaking headlines, along with "tiny URLs," which are links back to the full story.

### Top Four Web sites

According to Google Trends, the number one Web site in the United States is **Yahoo**, followed by **YouTube**. The third most visited site, is **Facebook**, followed by **MySpace**.

**YouTube** was started by three former employees of PayPal, and then sold to Google about a year later for \$1.65 *billion* dollars. (Wouldn't you like to know what they're going to do next? You'd probably be willing to lend them a few shekles to invest in their future venture.)

Unlike the other sites we'll discuss that allow for the posting of words and photos, YouTube is the number one video-sharing Web site. Best of all, you can post your video on the site for free. A simple Flip video camera (priced at under \$150 on Amazon.com) can do the trick for you.

What is the business application of YouTube?

Let's examine some successful examples:

- **Blendtec** - a Utah-based manufacturer of blenders posted a series of videos entitled "Will it Blend?" In these videos the company attempted to pulverize items such as golf balls and iPods. The first eight episodes resulted in three million downloads in a week. Even better for Blendtec, they sold out of the \$600 blender - in the first 24 hours.
- **Diet Coke + Mentos** - Check out the geysers this combination creates! While Coca-Cola stayed away from promoting this phenomenon (perhaps out of fear of litigation), Perfetti (the maker of Mentos) jumped in with both feet, posting both a large link to YouTube on its Web site and sponsoring its own contest. In the process, they sold a *lot* of mints.

The key to business success on YouTube:

Do *not* post a video of your company president in a head shot saying *blah-blah-blah*. Nobody will view it. To be noticed on YouTube, be sure to be **humorous**, **offbeat** or **very personal**.

And take good care of your customer. What kind of damage do you think United Airlines' customer Dave Carroll has done with his video "**United Breaks Guitars**" on YouTube? So far the video has over 5 million hits. You might want to use the video to teach proper customer service to your staff.

To view these YouTube videos, please see my blog:

<http://web20madeeasy.blogspot.com/>

According to ComScore, in May 2009, **Facebook** for the first time surpassed MySpace in the number of users in the United States. Facebook also stands as the number two Website in the rest of the world (behind YouTube), surpassing MySpace internationally in April 2008. Since its usage has doubled in the last year, total Facebook users outnumber MySpace users worldwide, by 200 million to 125 million.

Facebook was originally created by Mark Zuckerman, intended for use by his fellow students of Harvard University as "The Facebook." It was meant to be an online replacement of the book one receives as freshmen when entering college or university containing photos and other information about our new freshman classmates. Within 30 days, about half of the students of Harvard had a profile on the site. Facebook soon spread to other Boston area colleges. Presently, approximately 85 percent of all college students have a presence on Facebook.

Facebook has been able to overtake MySpace as the number one social networking site in the world because it no longer has the stigma that it is "just for high school or college students." Anyone may now join Facebook.

Sites like MySpace and Facebook are so popular because social networking allows so much more than e-mail or text messaging. In addition to writing on someone else's "wall" on Facebook, sharing photographs and videos. With over a billion photos and over 14 million added each day, Facebook is the number one photo-sharing site on the Internet. At a glance, you can see what all of your "friends" are up to. And because you choose your friends on Facebook, you can virtually eliminate spam, spam composes up to 90% of all e-mail.

What is the business application of Facebook?

People have a "profile" on Facebook, whereas a business has a "page." You and I can have "friends" on Facebook, while a business has "fans." Businesses on Facebook can really benefit from on Facebook is: *the trusted referrals of their friends*, which is something missing from the monologue of advertising.

**MySpace** - Tom Anderson and Chris DeWolfe designed a Web site to provide a service at no charge to regular people looking for a way to connect with others having similar likes and dislikes. The site was initially popular with bands, who didn't want to go through the hassle of creating and maintaining a Web site, but sought a way to distribute their music, photographs, videos and other information to their fans and would-be fans. MySpace usage has since spread like wildfire to people of all interests and ages.

Yes, MySpace initially appealed to teenagers, but now *half* of the visitors to the site are age 35 or older as the site's demographic composition continues to shift.

What is the business application of MySpace?

Successful marketing using any of the Web 2.0 applications means *an ad cannot look like an ad* or else it will be rejected immediately by the social networking visitors. Your customers on average are subjected to 1,500 to 5,000 advertising impressions each day. Since they have successfully learned how to block most of these interruptions, they are six times more likely to read an article from you than an advertisement.

To see how companies have successfully launched a presence on MySpace, check out Cartier International ([www.myspace.com/lovebycartier](http://www.myspace.com/lovebycartier)). But for my favorite, look for Miss Helga, a spokesperson for Volkswagen ([www.myspace.com/misshelga](http://www.myspace.com/misshelga)).

### **How can you put it all together?**

According to *USA Today*, Harley-Davidson's corporate profiles on MySpace (36,000 friends) and Facebook (175,000 fans) let it solicit comments from fiercely loyal customers. Harley also uses Twitter (@harleydavidson; 4,000 followers) and produces videos of its motorcycles on YouTube.

### **The New Free TV?**

There is a danger for businesses to view the social networking sites as the new television, but a business can advertise on them for *free*.

"If you are going to go there, you had better go for the right reasons," says Seth Godin, author of the best-selling book on marketing, *Purple Cow*. "And if your reason is to sell more stuff, please don't bother. It's not going to work. People don't care about you. They just don't."

On the other hand, if you can use social networking sites as ways to connect to real people, just for that sake alone, not because you want to sell anything, then it's a great way to spend a half hour a day."

Godin concludes, "And what we are finding, as a by-product of that . . . yes, in fact, your business will do better, because you are a trusted member of the community. Not because you are trying to sell stuff."

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*Ted Janusz is a professional speaker, author and entrepreneur, who presents "Web 2.0 - How to Harness the Power of Social Networking to Promote Your Business." Janusz has been invited to appear on the **Geraldo** show on FOX News Network. His Website is: [www.januspresentations.com](http://www.januspresentations.com)*