

LITTLE BROTHER TAKES CONTROL



“Content is king” was the mantra until a couple of years ago. But that king is dead. Now the battle cry is “Search is king” when it comes to marketing. Online marketing is one of three mega trends and is forging ahead with a growth rate of more than forty per cent on search engines such as Google, according to analyses conducted by JupiterResearch.

“It is crucial for the music and film industry to take these three mega trends on board in order to relieve current pressure. The internet has radically altered the game rules,” says Edward O'Hara, managing director at JupiterResearch, Northern Europe.

In addition to search engines, Mr O'Hara points to video marketing and Network Marketing as other major trends that are revolutionising thinking in relation to content, publishing and marketing. Opportunities for video marketing exist on sites such as YouTube, Flickr and MySpace, all of which have grown at record speed driven

by consumer-created content. But they can have business uses too. “On social sites like MySpace and YouTube you can reach a billion people, as you don't even need to be able to read to use them. Content can include anything from music and family news to documentation, drama and entertainment” says Mr O'Hara.

BIG BROTHER IS DEAD

Earlier anxieties concerning centralised surveillance and “Big Brother is watching you” have been replaced by “Little Brother is always watching”. Little Brother is ubiquitous, and is on the spot with his camera when cabinet ministers exceed the speed limit and generally wherever people make a blunder. “Little Brother is literally threatening the way the Western world has traditionally operated. He's become the producer,” explains Mr O'Hara. As examples, he cites the band Naked Brothers who bypassed the record companies and became a success simply by using the internet, and the unauthorised and manipu-

Record companies must adopt teenagers' internet practices - to survive they need relevant strategies for file-sharing, audio-video downloading and podcasting.

lated version of a Shakira video on YouTube, which has had more viewers than the official version. “Yes. Little Brother has taken control” adds Mr O'Hara “but whoever understands Little Brother and works on his terms has the chance to succeed.”

SOCIAL CONTENT RULES

The third mega trend is Social Marketing and Viral Networking. A rapidly increasing number of people are communicating by means of next-generation tools such as MySpace, forwarding e-mails, uploading videos and pictures, blogging, podcasting and posting in user-review forums. “You create your own content in the form of text, photos and videos. However, transparency and the ethic of fair play on the internet make it impossible to be successful if your only motive is profit. The challenge is to get the consumer to recommend your product to a handful of friends, who in turn recommend it to their friends. The technique is not new, but has assumed a whole new dimension on the internet,” says Mr O'Hara. He points out that content should preferably have an idealistic resonance, such as biking in cities, art or the environment, but can nevertheless be presented in a commercial context.

“Music needs to have a cause, but can be backed by record companies. Just think of U2, who were among the first to successfully exploit these opportunities. Record companies have to be creative and use social marketing as an instrument to influence the young trendsetters. There can be any number of themes, such as, for example, issues relating to social responsibility, child abuse or the environment,” points out Mr O'Hara.

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