



THE LATEST TRENDS IN SOCIAL NETWORKING

Some say it's the phenomenon that is creating a paradigm shift in communication.

Wikipedia described it as the "umbrella term that defines the various activities integrating technology, social interaction and the construction of words, pictures, video and audio".

Simply put; online, everyone can be a journalist, broadcaster or reviewer with a potential worldwide audience of millions.

Heralded as the biggest development of the information age since the introduction of the internet its speed in growth is remarkable. It took 4 years for internet usage to reach 50 million users, and yet Facebook added 100 million users in less than 9 months. If Facebook were a country it would be the fourth largest in the world with the 35+ age range being its fastest growing demographic.

A massive 1 billion videos are viewed on You Tube every single day. In 2009, Twitter became the fastest growing member destination increasing its unique visits by 1,382%.

With stats like these, it can't be written off as a fad and smart businesses are taking note.

Traditionally, conversation between brands and their audiences has been one-way with the flow of information being controlled by the powerful few. With the development of digital technology and the internet, our ability to create user-generated content has shifted the conversation allowing a more natural two-way dialogue.

Those now willing to listen, engage and interact with their audience (through social media channels) are reaping benefits not only in terms of sales but also brand recognition, influence, collaboration and customer loyalty.

A company's reputation can spread in a matter of hours – good or bad, via millions of conversations taking place online, and how they choose to react (or not) can have a huge impact.

The future, Generation Y – it's not going away.



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