



AT INTERNET

Online Intelligence Solutions

THE E-REPUTATION ANALYSIS OR HOW TO LISTEN TO YOUR CONSUMERS?

By Jacques Warren

WHITE PAPER



ABOUT JACQUES WARREN

Jacques Warren has been working in the online marketing field since 1996, focusing on Web Analytics since 2002. In 2006 he founded WAO Marketing, a consulting company specializing in the analysis of online data and e-business optimisation for governments and leading companies in Canada, the US and Europe.

Jacques is the co-author of “Web Analytics : Mesurer le succès et maximiser les profits de votre site Web*” Eyrolle editions 2009.

*“Web Analytics: Measuring the success and maximizing the profits of your website”

SUMMARY

CONTEXT	4
MEASURING REPUTATION	5
SENTIMENT ANALYSIS	6
SHARE OF VOICE	7
FILTERS AND SEGMENTATION	7
INFLUENCE	8
COMBINING ANALYTICS AND MANAGEMENT PLATFORMS	9
IMPACT OR LACK OF IT	10

CONTEXT

The rise of what we had become accustomed to calling Web 2.0 over the past few years, now social networks (or social media), figures among the most important Web¹ phenomena to have taken place. We have come to a stage where companies believe that social networks are the most important social media channel nowadays to a point where some of them spend more time focusing on their Facebook page than on their site. Irrespective of what we might think, today's marketers cannot ignore the scale of this phenomenon and must make strategic decisions including, should they be present on social networks, and if this is the case how, where, and what should they do exactly?

.....
As was never the case before, a brand's reputation was starting to depend on an increasing number of factors, a majority of which the brand itself was no longer in control of.
.....

Different functions of a company are affected by social networks, reputation management in particular. We should not be surprised by this as the Web 2.0 introduced the era of self-publishing, meaning that it was no longer necessary to follow a process (publishers, writers, printers etc.) to send a message to thousands, if not, millions of people. Publishing (if the term still applies) means giving to everyone at zero cost.

In addition to the self-publishing phenomenon there was also the social network phenomenon where individuals could connect with one another with the simple click of a button, again at zero cost. Publishing and distribution were now free, and distribution became instantaneous.

It is easy to think that such conditions would offer a dream opportunity for everyone to exchange their ideas for whatever reason and to share their opinion on brands. As was never the case before, a brand's reputation was starting to depend on an increasing number of factors, a majority of which the brand itself was no longer in control of.

If reputation is what we think it is and what people say about us in particular, it has become a key priority to capture the different messages written by Internet users on the Web. It may turn out that no-one talks about your brand which, to be honest, would be quite dramatic, but there is a good chance that you will find a number of messages about your brand (articles, blogs, comments, tweets etc.). We also have the technology available to capture all of this information!

¹ The term Web is used in its most generic sense, in other words referring to all digital content.

.....
The technology used has followed this evolution and marketers nowadays have access to powerful solutions such as AT Internet's BuzzWatcher to capture and process large volumes of data generated by the e-reputation analysis.
.....

We are not aware of any exact studies that have been carried out on this topic, but we cannot fail to notice the unbelievable amount of content that is produced on the Web on a daily basis, even if only a minority of people the world over use these new platforms. We can therefore expect that:

- 1) this phenomenon will increase,
- 2) it will become standard, meaning that it will be used on a continuous basis,
- 3) the role played by these networks will continue to grow so that consumers will be able to use them to find out information about a particular brand and in the end choose one.

Let's now turn to e-reputation. In order to understand your e-reputation you now need to learn how to measure its impact.

MEASURING REPUTATION

The technology used has followed this evolution and marketers nowadays have access to powerful solutions such as AT Internet's BuzzWatcher to capture and process large volumes of data generated by the e-reputation analysis. It is no longer a question of simply parsing a few press articles, but rather detecting what is said about your brand all over the Web, how it is said and how it can influence your online business.

SENTIMENT ANALYSIS

First and foremost the e-reputation analysis is associated with the sentiment analysis, in other words, determining if Internet users speak highly or poorly of a brand. We therefore need to be able to sort the messages that have been captured (negative, positive or neutral) into the categories provided by the different specialist applications in this domain ², and here lies a major challenge. The different solutions available vary greatly in their ability to automatically determine if a comment, article or tweet expresses a negative, positive or even neutral opinion. You therefore need to expect to double-check that a particular message is assigned to the right category.

Once the messages have been sorted into their correct categories, in hoping that the chosen solution is able to correctly assign the sentiment of the majority of the messages that have been examined, it is then necessary to carry out a first evaluation. To help you carry out this evaluation we suggest two simple calculations which can be used:

- Percentage of positive messages: this calculation involves taking the total number of messages that have been identified as being positive and dividing this figure by the total number of messages captured for the period. It is not really possible to give a target percentage but we must accept from the beginning that the percentage of positive messages will never be (or is unlikely to be) 100%.

- Ratio of negative messages: this measurement focuses on negativity by examining the number of negative messages that exist for each positive message. For example the ratio can be expressed in the following manner, 1:2. This means that for every positive message there are two negative messages, which would surely create a state of panic! A ratio of 1:0.5 would mean twice as many positive messages as negative ones³.

² Some solutions add the notions of "true" or "incorrect" to the positive and negative attributes. We can easily understand that a positive yet incorrect comment does not have the same value as a comment which is both positive and true.

³ It is also possible to add the notion of neutral comments in order to obtain a complete overview of a situation. For example the ratio 1:0.5:3 illustrates that, although the minority of messages are negative, the majority of them are somewhat neutral (dare we say indifferent?).

We must insist on the need to continually monitor the trends of the different messages that are written about a brand. Internet users will, of course, transmit positive messages and comments. However, what is unfortunate is that they have a tendency to share more negative messages which leads to a brand crisis (which there are many concrete examples of out there). Very few brands see Internet users enthusiasm spread like wildfire over social networks.

SHARE OF VOICE

What place does our brand have in the discursive space of its category? What is its competitive and advertising weight, as expressed by the conversations of its “market share”? This is what the concept of “Share of voice” tries to find out. It tries to determine the percentage of messages which concern a specific brand in relation to the total number of messages for all of its competitors. The solution which is used must be powerful enough to collect all of the messages that are essential to the calculation. It makes more sense to identify a brand’s most direct competitors in relation to its market⁴. We recommend that you take the comparative analysis that much further by carrying out a sentiment analysis of the competitors. Do our positive/negative/neutral ratios compare with those of our competitors? A larger share of conversations, the majority of which are negative is obviously not desired.

A top of the range e-reputation analysis solution must provide marketers with a tool that has the solid filtering and segmentation features that they need.

FILTERS AND SEGMENTATION

A top of the range e-reputation analysis solution must provide marketers with a tool that has the solid filtering and segmentation features that they need. We would like to be able to filter according to specific terms or groups of terms, and not only messages that mention a company’s own brand, but also the brands of its competitors, range of products, industry categories etc.

Try segmenting by online media and study the differences that may exist between blogs and Twitter, Facebook and YouTube etc. Are there any characteristics which are specific to each channel? Does the volume of conversations about a company’s brand vary greatly? There are so many different methods that can be used to identify and act upon these questions.

⁴ Or national markets; carrying out this calculation on a global level for multinationals would transform the percentage into an average which would be too generalistic, making it impractical.

INFLUENCE

Social marketing, or social networks, focuses on the concept of influence because influencing influencers to transfer our messages is a significant challenge. We believe that companies are unaware of the fact that, for the majority of brands, audiences on Facebook and Twitter represent only a fraction of the audience that brands are used to. Given that they can still reach a modest number of consumers, companies need to place more importance on social networks!

For the purposes of this discussion, influence is defined as the ability, or at least, tendency, to change another person's ideas and/or get them to adopt new behaviour. The great difficulty in measuring changes in opinion influenced by another person means that measuring social networks rests mainly on measuring specific behaviour (Likes, Retweets, etc.).

These different concepts also play an important role in responding to e-reputation questions. The opinions of individuals who have been identified as influencers have more chance of having their messages echoed in the Webosphere and risk having a positive or negative impact on a brand. However, simply counting user actions (Likes, Retweets, etc., an approach which is often favoured in the behavioural analysis of social networks) does not entirely cover the issue of reputation and its measurement.

Several different indexes, such as Klout and PeerIndex, etc., try to establish an influence ranking of social network users. Due to the fact the algorithms used in these indexes are not public, it is difficult to trust them completely. We believe that a solution such as AT Internet's BuzzWatcher, which is more flexible in defining influence factors and their weighting, has many more benefits, if only to work with what influences a specific field or industry. We can also allocate the desired weighting ourselves to better target individuals and sources of influence.

COMBINING ANALYTICS AND MANAGEMENT PLATFORMS

We have noticed that several top of the range e-reputation analysis solutions are combined with a content management system, making it possible to perform actions directly on social media and to respond to comments in particular. These features are also accompanied with a workflow to facilitate internal exchanges.

.....
the need to monitor e-reputation is a real benefit to analytics, whose main goal is to monitor management.
.....

Coupling an analytics platform with a management platform, and not the other way around, seems logical because the strength associated with management has to rely on the strength associated with monitoring online activity. In return, the need to monitor e-reputation is a real benefit to analytics, whose main goal is to monitor management. We suspect that a daily processing cycle, quite frequent in the world of Web Analytics, is more of an obstacle here, due to the need to respond and react quickly in the digital world, and to social networks in particular.

We will leave it to the expertise of others to explain how a company should manage its online presence on social networks. However, we do insist on coupling analytics with management as is the case with the BuzzWatcher offer.

IMPACT OR LACK OF IT

Despite the excess of easily accessible messages expressed by Internet users, for some people the debate on whether there is a link between this activity and the success or failure of an online business remains open. No-one believes that a poor online reputation does not have an ultimate impact on a company. However, what should be kept in mind is that any negative comments will not have necessarily dramatic consequences for a brand. Even the smallest problem becomes dramatic when examined in detail. Be careful not to use your new monitoring skills to interpret any negative message as a source of panic. Something which is published on Twitter, Facebook or on blogs today does not necessarily have the same impact as if it were published in a newspaper or in books.

It will be some time before your PR department will experience the above, but expect to change your corporate culture in the future to adapt.



AT INTERNET

Online Intelligence Solutions

AT INTERNET – AGILE BUSINESS DECISIONS

AT Internet, European leader in the field of Web Analytics since 1995, helps companies drive their online performance and optimise their presence on all online marketing channels such as web and mobile sites, applications, e-CRM, social media etc. The company's Online Intelligence solutions provide reliable, valid, complete decision-making data. AT Internet has placed agility at the heart of its innovation process to provide its clients with an evolutionary and 100%

modular solution that responds to the challenges faced by companies today. The strength of AT Internet's technology and the quality of its customer relations are recognised worldwide. AT Internet has more than 3,500 clients all over the world from all sectors. The company, which has more than 150 employees, is present in 20 different countries through its subsidiaries and partners.

Contact

Bordeaux (HQ) / Paris	+33 (0)1 56 54 14 30
London	+44 (0)20 3178 5356
Madrid	+34 (0)911 105 829
Montréal	+1 514 658 3571
München / Hamburg	+49 (0)89 / 324927-0

www.atinternet.com