







How to plan a content strategy

A GUIDE FOR **ONLINE MARKETERS**

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Introduction

We have written this as a practical guide to thinking about and planning content for brand marketers on the web.

If you have downloaded this because you need urgent help writing a content plan or a brief to your agencies, turn immediately to page 13 onwards. There we focus on the questions that a content strategy must help you answer. Otherwise, take a little time to read the preceding sections, which give our perspective on content.

To keep us from going off on a tangent – always a danger when writing about, thinking about or working with the web – the main thrust of this eBook is about the preparation you will need to do if you're planning a content strategy for your brand.

It's based on our experience, as a team over the past four years, of planning and creating digital content – from blog posts and Tweets to infographics and videos, and everything in between.

Most of us are editors and journalists by experience, and so we approach online content with an editorial mindset. However, we have been lucky enough to work cheek by jowl with people journalists aren't often close to (although this is changing), including data analysts, search engine experts and user experience practitioners.

This odd setting for a team of hacks has given rise to a world view about how content works online, and how best to think about it, that we think is a bit different.

You may be a marketing manager, a digital specialist, or working in a discipline such as SEO or media buying and simply want to know a little more about this thing we call content strategy. Whoever you are, we hope you find it useful – let us know if you did... or what we can do to make the next version more useful.

Thanks,
The iCrossing UK Content Team

What is content?

We would describe content as the fabric of the web. We'd go so far as to say that the internet is content.

For a brand on the web, content is everything that they have to offer.

As marketers, when we talk about content, we have mainly been concerned with the written word, images, audio and video. It helps now though to broaden the definition to include apps, games, tools and even raw data.

For the record, Wikipedia's current definition of content is:

"In media production and publishing, content is information and experiences that may provide value for an end-user/audience in specific contexts. Content may be delivered via any medium such as the internet, television, and audio CDs, as well as live events such as conferences and stage performances. The word is used to identify and quantify various formats and genres of information as manageable value-adding components of media."

If we were to think of the web as a great big game, content is all the pieces you have or can create or co-opt to your cause. If we think of marketing online as competing in a great big market for attention (and at iCrossing we definitely do) then content is one part of the currency you can use to win that

attention. If your content is great, and truly useful, it will buy you much more than attention.

Beyond your product and service to the customer, then, content is everything when it comes to marketing, especially brand marketing on the world wide web.

At least that's how we see it.

Another eBook from iCrossing, *Brands in Networks*, gives a lot more detail on our ideas about networks, complexity and attention – but we're here to talk about content.

“
THE SINGLE MOST
IMPORTANT THING MOST
WEBSITES CAN OFFER TO
THEIR USERS IS CONTENT
THAT THOSE USERS WILL
FIND VALUABLE

THE ELEMENTS OF USER
EXPERIENCE,
JESSE JAMES GARRETT

“
CONTENT
WITHOUT
PURPOSE IS
NOT CONTENT
- IT'S NOISE
CONTENTINI

Content in networks



What's different (and what's the same)
about content on the web?

Content in networks



**THE WEB IS
ALL ABOUT
NETWORKS OF
PEOPLE, TALKING
AND CREATING
WONDERFUL
THINGS**

Indulge us, with a quick reminisce about the last four years and what we have learned.

Most of us in the content team at iCrossing are editors or journalists and have spent a great deal of our time in editorial roles. When the team was started in 2007, we found ourselves in a very unusual place. We were an island of story-obsessed hacks in a sea of SEO (search engine optimisation) and data-focussed performance marketing experts.

The culture clash that ensued was enlightening for everyone involved. We like to think that our SEO colleagues learned that there was more to content than keyword-loaded “linkbait”, that the search engines were better understood as a means to the users’ end than a funnel to deliver sales.

In turn these technical wizards taught us about how search engines and the things that people type into them can give us genuinely useful insight. SEO analyses provide us with the hard data about the way that people use the web – and the things that they are interested in.

And our colleagues in the social media team helped us to pin down in fine detail what we already knew as editors and community managers – that the web (2.0 or otherwise) is as much about the conversations that individuals are having (with and about brands) as about the things that brands want to talk about (or sell).

Once you see the web as it actually works, the idea that websites are like magazines, or TV stations, or brochures becomes rather misleading. The web is all about networks, networks of people, talking and creating all sorts of new and wonderful things. All the measures of online success we had ever seen were about what happened on the website. As the social media team began working with the search team to build network maps showing how content travels and where conversations happen online, we realised that success must be just as much about what happens to content away from the originating website.

Websites, it became clear, were only half the story. If that.

When content is successful online, websites can’t hold it. It won’t stay still – it travels. And when it’s unsuccessful? Well, it just sits there unloved and unnoticed.

Content in networks



**HUMANS ARE
HARD-WIRED FOR
STORYTELLING
AND LISTENING
TO STORIES**

Plus ça change, and all that...

The early digital era saw the birth of the phrase “content is king”, but there was an older maxim that most of us had learned in editorial teams that also holds true: the story is king.

Storytelling has been the currency of human culture since those Neolithic campfires. There are any number of sociological, anthropological and communications theory books on how this works and why this is the case, but the common thread is that humans are hard-wired for storytelling and listening to stories.

For us it was clear that stories were as important in content for online marketing as they were in editorial content.

There were other effects we could see in how content worked in online networks that remained the same. For instance, bad news and gossip still travel at lightning speed – perhaps only slightly faster than they travelled when our social networks depended on in-person and telephone conversations rather than instant network-wide updates via Twitter and Facebook.

Content in networks



**NEWSROOMS ARE
ITERATIVE, ALERT,
CLOSE TO THEIR
CUSTOMERS AND
THEIR SUBJECTS
AND READY TO TRY
THINGS OUT**

The newsroom

The way that a lot of content seemed to be conceived was within the media model of advertising or producing a short radio or TV series. Things were commissioned, produced whole and complete and released into the wilds of the web.

Not much seemed to do very well. Not proportionate to the time and money spent (often lots) and the amount of attention that was out there among the people brands were interested in speaking to.

Being editors and journalists by experience, we brought what we thought was a more appropriate model for producing content that would succeed in networks: the newsroom.

Newsrooms are story-obsessed, chaotic (like the web), alive to opportunities and ready to drop everything that has been planned and move like lightning when there's an opportunity for a scoop.

Newsrooms do all the things that early web entrepreneurs and successful online content outfits were saying were necessary: they are iterative, alert, close to their customers and their subjects and ready to try things out, drop them if they don't work and

add more resources quickly when they do.

So we began to organise a newsroom-style approach for creating and managing online content, using blogs, Twitter, Facebook and whatever tools were appropriate as our publishing platforms.

Having experienced editors and journalists on the team proved its worth not just in terms of perspective and propensity for storytelling. There were many practical skills that proved invaluable too: a focus on finding the correct angle for different audiences; applying consistency in tone and approach; sub-editing for accuracy and quality; awareness of legal issues around copyright, libel and defamation; managing networks of freelancers to produce additional or specialist content.

All of these things brought not only the agility of the newsroom, but its commitment to quality produced at speed.

Why do you need a content strategy?



Why do you need a content strategy?



It's amazing, given how vital it is to success in brand marketing, that very often content has been an afterthought - a sub-section of the sub-section on developing the new site or social media campaign, which is part of the big, shiny marketing plan.

Creating a content strategy gives us the space to ask: why are we creating content? Who are we trying to talk to and what do they want from us? And what will it take – really take – to do this brilliantly, now and into the future?

Search engine optimisation and paid, promotional activity may be employed to deliver traffic. Success may be judged on the number of hits, pages viewed and the like.

This tactical, technical-led approach has been common, accepted practice for a while. But the web is changing, and it's no longer enough.

It's time to grow up about content. Content strategy helps us all do just that.

Why do you need a content strategy?



The content-led view of managing brands online

Beyond making the most of your content, we put forward a “content first” view of brand marketing on the web.

This is a contrast we make with the approach that was taken in the past, and was based on models of marketing imported from offline, traditional media. These can be characterised as technical-led and media-led. Sometimes you will see combinations of the two, but either way content loses out in terms of focus, resources and effectiveness.

Media-led approaches will put the emphasis on delivering traffic to the website, by prioritising SEO and paid search and display ads to bring large amounts of traffic to the website. Content in this approach is a function of delivering traffic, with SEO considerations for instance taking precedence over quality and relevance of the content. Looking beyond traffic to engagement measures (e.g. how long they spend using content, viewing videos, ‘Liking’ pages on Facebook, linking to it, talking about it) often reveal the lack of real impact of this approach.

Creative/technical-led approaches will put the emphasis on creating a website that is functionally and aesthetically superior, cutting edge. It will dazzle any expert in the room, and any user who is running a computer and display capable of making sense of it. Above all, it will be expensive and the proportion of the budget left over for content will be minimal, and mainly an up-front cost with almost nothing left over for ongoing production and governance of content.

These approaches often reflect e-commerce priorities, but they’re not appropriate for brand marketing and may lead to risk for the brand. When users feel they’ve been misled into viewing a sales-focused page when they were researching a product, for instance, they will – at the very least – feel frustrated by the brand having wasted their time.

When a brand is also selling direct online, it must balance its approach to the sales funnel by considering how it can support users at the awareness, interest and consideration phases as well as the final conversion stage. Giving content consideration early on in planning and allocating proper resource to it will help to develop a smarter approach.

If brand impact is the priority, content should not just be a necessary component of the marketing strategy, it should be in the driving seat.

Why do you need a content strategy?

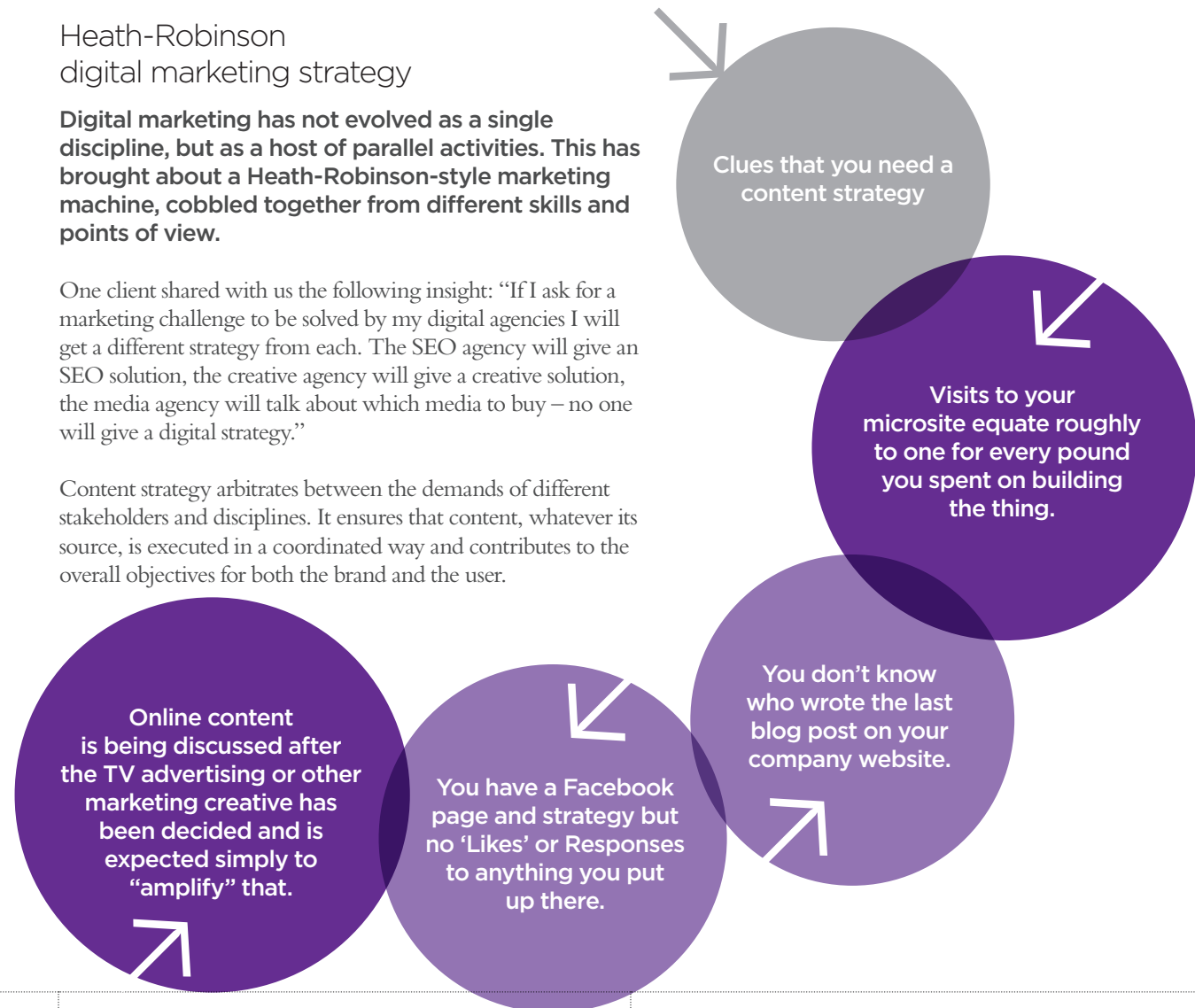


Heath-Robinson digital marketing strategy

Digital marketing has not evolved as a single discipline, but as a host of parallel activities. This has brought about a Heath-Robinson-style marketing machine, cobbled together from different skills and points of view.

One client shared with us the following insight: “If I ask for a marketing challenge to be solved by my digital agencies I will get a different strategy from each. The SEO agency will give an SEO solution, the creative agency will give a creative solution, the media agency will talk about which media to buy – no one will give a digital strategy.”

Content strategy arbitrates between the demands of different stakeholders and disciplines. It ensures that content, whatever its source, is executed in a coordinated way and contributes to the overall objectives for both the brand and the user.



In summary: content strategy in questions answered



In summary: content strategy in questions answered



How to summarise how a content strategy develops? At iCrossing, we've found that breaking it down into the questions that we have to answer along the way can be a practical way to demonstrate the process.

1. Objectives

- What is the scope of your project? To sort out the entire organisation's content, on and offline? Or to plan for a new platform or campaign?
- Are your overall business goals and the requirements of your customers clearly understood and articulated?

2. Context

- What do you have (existing content, in-house expertise, partnerships) that could already be an asset for the future?
- Where are the people and conversations online that matter to you most? What content works for them?
- What are the opportunities for your brand to be useful to these people in these places, and earn attention and engagement?
- Are there "no brainer" things your content must do? Are there big gaps of opportunity that you can get to first?

3. Principles

- Are all your stakeholders clear about how user attention works online, and what it takes to produce successful digital content?
- Online, divisions between marketing, product information, customer service and PR are blurring – is your organisation ready for a strategic approach to producing content that capitalises on this, and puts the user first every time?

4. Approach

- Given your shared understanding of the objectives, the context for your content and the principles you have agreed – in what direction will your content strategy take your organisation?
- Before you get stuck into the detail: is everyone who has a stake in this new strategic direction on-board?

Continued...



5. Platforms

- What platforms will you require to execute this strategy?
- What guiding principles for content can you apply to the use of each platform?
- How much effort will each require? Processes for production are essential – quantify what's involved.
- Will your strategy result in a renewable and reviewable activity plan that is more than just a single creative idea or even a series of them?
- How will the content offering you have be promoted away from spaces over which you have direct control, for example via online PR and outreach, and through paid media?

6. Resource

- Do you have the people and the budgets you need? Don't gloss over this. Content creation and governance should be accounted for realistically in the working day.
- How will you access the specialist expertise you need? If possible ensure you or your agency have trained editors and community managers attached to the project, and that the content production team has access to SEO, technical, online PR and legal support when required.
- Will you be able to move quickly to capitalise on success? What contingencies do you need to have in place to allow for this?

The planning process



The planning process



Developing your content strategy and plan should begin as early as possible in the creation of a new website, campaign or other online activity. If it is a case that content has been left until last - well, better late than never to get your strategy together.

When does content strategy happen?

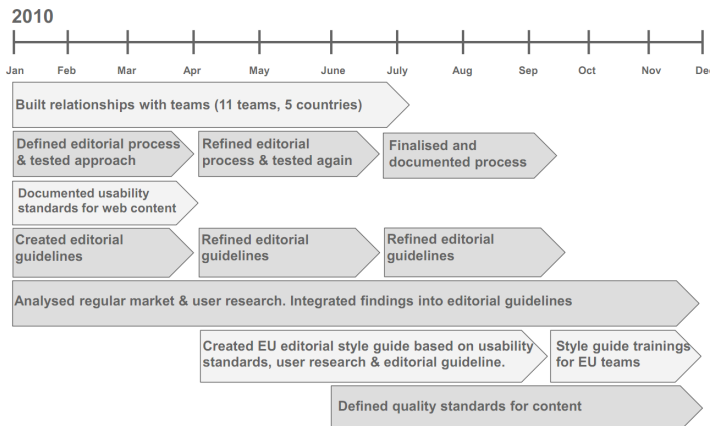
If you are planning user research to understand what your website needs to do, content strategy should be the next step on your project plan. If you aren't planning user research, it should absolutely happen before you start wireframing or developing site architecture. Content strategists and information architects

/ user experience specialists should be working in partnership from the very earliest stages of design and build.

Planning should be seen as a process of establishing your content team or function and then sustaining it. After the initial phase of getting things going ensure that time and milestones have been set for regular reviews and updates of the approach.

Be prepared to make your best bet on what will be successful, then adjust or completely change tack as you start to see the impact of your content online. Use analytics and user research to check what you need to do more of or less of, and what you just need to stop doing altogether.

TIMELINE



This timeline illustrates the process for a content strategy project at eBay, focused on its business sellers across Europe. Note the seven-month period spent building relationships between teams - a lot of content strategy is about creating sustainable conditions for the ongoing planning, creation and governance of content, which may well mean bringing stakeholders together in a new way.

Slide produced with permission of Nikki Tiedtke, EU Senior Content Strategist. The full presentation can be viewed at www.slideshare.net/nikkitedtke/content-strategy-applied-an-ebay-use-case.

The planning process



**BRANDS THAT ARE
CLEAREST ABOUT
THEIR OWN IDENTITY
AND VALUES HAVE THE
EASIEST TIME DEFINING
OBJECTIVES FOR THEIR
CONTENT**

Who needs to be involved?

Apart from timing, the other consideration will be involving the right stakeholders from across your organisation and any partner agencies. Don't think of this as developing a strategy by committee (that way lies madness) but of having contacts in the right places to contribute to and support the overall content strategy.

Remember: you probably have more content than you think. Much of your marketing materials and corporate communication may well find a new life online with a clever and clearly defined content strategy. Your stakeholders will help you to uncover the treasure trove. Your strategy will make sure it's used appropriately.

Obviously legal, IT, PR and customer service may all have a direct supporting or partner role in the development of a content strategy, but it may well be the product development team, retail buyers or local managers who will be the best source of stories and content ideas.

Be clear about the why

A good content strategy should begin with a clear line being drawn between an organisation's business and/or marketing goals and those being set out specifically for content.

As a rule, brands that are clearest about their own identity and values tend to have the easiest time defining objectives for their content.

Simple articulations of the purpose behind a content strategy may go something like:

- Why are we creating content online? To visibly meet the needs of our customers and demonstrate our unique expertise.
- What will the benefits be? Customer satisfaction, visibility, engagement and feedback – leading directly and indirectly to increased sales.

You and your team may be clear on the reasons to develop online content according to an overarching plan, but being able to consistently tell the story of why you are doing so to your colleagues will help eliminate confusion and grow support for the strategy.

The planning process



**GOOD EDITORIAL
CONTENT IS CREATED
WITH THE USER IN
MIND RATHER THAN
THE BRAND**

Approach and Principles

Being clear about your principles is an important part of creating an effective content strategy. Following on from the “why”, this is the “how”, as in how you will behave to be successful. Clear principles help to inform editorial decisions, defend content’s approach alongside the rest of the marketing mix and give editors, writers, producers and other creatives on your team licence to try interesting approaches they might otherwise presume were off-limits.

It is best to articulate your own principles, most likely relating to your brand’s own. But let us share some of our own here, many of which have been borrowed and adapted by our clients.

As we have mentioned, iCrossing’s approach to content strategy is best expressed as editorially driven, informed by data. We like to use the newsroom as a model, with the ethos, processes and practices that follow.

Here are some of the ways we think about content strategy as a result:

- **Be on the side of the user:** Good, editorial content is created with the user in mind, rather than the brand. This mind-set is more likely to create things which are useful to users and therefore earn attention and be passed on to others.
- **Be platform agnostic:** We do not start with a Facebook strategy (or a blog, or a YouTube channel), we start with good content that will be interesting to our users. When we create content, we look at which platforms and tools are going to give this the best chance of being seen and shared.
- **Make it portable, findable, shareable:** Good content is built to travel, so users should be able to copy, download, embed and share it as they like. Search engine optimisation is essential; search engines have to be able to see and make sense of our stuff so they can show it to our users.
- **Fail fast:** What we learned from the techies was an attitude that works for content as much as it works for start ups and apps: release early, release often. Things that work get more effort behind them, things that don’t we learn and move on from.
- **Stay close to the data:** We talk to the data analysts and social media analysts who sit near us about what data might be telling us about our content, how it is being used and where there might be opportunities.
- **Be prepared to be surprised:** It’s a liberating principle and one which has given rise to some of our biggest successes for clients. When opportunity comes and it isn’t what you are expecting be prepared to move quickly, be prepared to ditch the plans for that week and go after it with everything you have at your disposal.

Audits and research



Audits and research



WHY WOULD YOU TRY AND GUESS WHAT YOUR CUSTOMERS WANT WHEN YOU CAN JUST ASK THEM?

You cannot put together a content strategy without research. There is no getting around this. If an agency proposes content strategy without research, be very suspicious. What they probably mean is “some content ideas from a brainstorming session we had”. They might be great ideas. But content strategy is about understanding where your marketing and brand objectives overlap with the content needs of users online. That takes research. To put it another way: why would you try and guess what your customers want when you can just ask them?

There are three main elements to the research we do at iCrossing. Armed with these, you should have sufficient insights to start planning your own approach and activity.

Network research

Often we call this a social media audit, but it inevitably takes in all forms of online content. The goal is to understand the networks around your brand, or communities of interest.

Take time to look at:

- Where your brand (and peers) are discussed online.
- What the themes that are related to your brand and its products or services are.

For some brands and sectors, where conversation online is very limited, or very negative, network research can help to identify

networks and topics that might “suit” your brand if you were to move to a content sponsorship strategy to build brand awareness or positive sentiment.

Depending on the extent of these conversations and communities online, you will need to simplify and prioritise which you will develop content for and which you’ll continue listening to.

User research

There is still no better way to find out what someone wants than to ask them. User research will help you to cut out the “gut instinct” decisions and direct your energies towards activity that is going to please people rather than bore or annoy them.

Of course budgets don’t always stretch to this form of research, but at iCrossing if we don’t have budget to find out what people want we will still conduct informal research to help understand users. You can do the same. Make use of your intranet if you have one – put up a short survey and ask people to take part and even share it with their friends beyond the organisation if possible. Ask friends of friends who fit your user profile if they’ll answer a few questions in their lunch time in return for a book token or a bottle of wine. Get someone in your family to try to do some specific tasks on your website while you observe without helping them. All of these things can give you a huge amount of insight about what it’s like to be someone who doesn’t know as much about what your website it supposed to be doing as you do.

Audits and research



Content profiling

Once we know what the online world looks like for a brand and what users have on their minds, we can start looking for opportunity.

A method that has worked well for us at iCrossing is to take a good sized sample of the most relevant websites, be they independent media, user-owned or belonging to competitors, and analyse the forms of content being made available there.

This exercise can throw up two types of insight in particular: it shows which types of content are popular within a given network, and also highlights where there are gaps in provision that may constitute an opportunity.

Below is an example of a grid we've used to analyse the online content in a particular sector.

Sponsored content?	Aggregated content from 3rd party?	Content partnership	Partner competitions	Course reviews?	Live scores	UGC	Equipment review	Gossip	Frequency of updates	Other content type
\	Yes (LPGA, PGA, Golf Digest)	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Daily +	Heavy coverage Open, Ma
\	Aggregates social media content on-site http://www.pgator.com/FanZone/	No	\	No	Yes	No	No	No	Daily +	Fancy less rich co
No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Daily +	Instructi
Yes	No	No	\	Course finder	Yes	No	Yes	No	Daily +	How-to industry
No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Daily ++	Womer
No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Daily ++	Junior, a pro, colle trav

Audits and research



Other research inputs

As well as researching user needs and profiling networks, we value the insights that can be gained from the following types of research whenever they are available:

→ **Existing brand-owned content:** Reviewing what is already available can reveal all sorts of materials that are either under-used or not online at all. Historical advertising campaigns, newsletters, reports and even raw data might all be potential assets in the hands of a smart, editorially-minded team.

And when preparing for a site redesign, a full content audit of the existing site is essential. Sites typically grow without a single point of oversight, and staff change over time. In many cases, no one person knows the extent (or quality) of what's already in existence – and how can you plan what you need if you don't know what you've already got?

→ **User experience (UX) testing:** UX evaluation can give valuable insights into the ways users access content and how they want to use it. It's not always the focus of UX research, but at iCrossing we have specifically asked users about content formats and styles, which has led to some key decisions around the eventual provision of content.

→ **Search language and behaviour:** Working with SEO and data analysts can give us unique insights into the demand for content (e.g. topics, seasonality) and the language people actually use – not just say they use – when they search online.

Some likely outputs from your strategy



Cookbook

Toms	Rocket
Potatoes	

Carrot
+
leaf
beet
(cavender)

Dwarf
fennel
beans

Rasp
berry

Some likely outputs from your strategy



**YOUR CONTENT
IS A VALUABLE
BUSINESS ASSET,
SO TREAT IT
WELL**

Your content strategy should give you clear direction for what content will be produced, where, when and by whom - and how it's going to be managed over time.

To develop the detail, and make it practical for everyone involved, we break down the strategy into themes and activities.

Here are some of the key elements that your strategy will need to consider.

Content calendar

An integrated content calendar is the backbone of your digital programme, aligning editorial, PR and marketing efforts. It may include scheduled product content releases, editorial articles, video, Tweets, Facebook status updates and promotions, and it must show the relationships between different platforms.

Style guide

A style guide is not a light version of your brand guidelines. In a content team it is much more a guide to tone of voice and your brand's ethos when it comes to creating different forms of content. As well as helping the team to define their approach internally, it is vital to them for briefing freelancers and commissioning third party content.

Owned content

Your content is a valuable business asset, so treat it well. Live content, cared for by an editorial team, should be as current and accurate as possible. The strategy should outline a regular review process to establish what content should be updated and what can be archived.

When archived, content should be marked clearly as such, so that a user is able to tell immediately that this is historical rather than current.

The other path for curating owned content is – when it seems to be consistently popular – to develop a dedicated landing page or area for it. This could mean, for example, migrating an old blog post to a dedicated page.

Commissioning

Depending on the skills that your content team have, it is likely that they will benefit from being able to commission specialist content, be it longer-form content such as e-books, or things that require specialist skills such as video, infographics, Facebook and mobile apps and audio podcasts.

If possible, allow budget to create some of these types of assets; pre-plan some and allow others to be defined by the content team. Once the content programme is live, new opportunities will become clear, so be flexible.

Developing the activity plan



Third-party content

Content planning often ignores the opportunity that third-party content represents. You can be useful by directing people to the “best of” content that’s out there on a given subject, whether it’s a hot consumer issue or conversation about one of your own products.

Mindful of licensing and copyright (see your legal team for specific advice) you can link out to or post great content from elsewhere – even on competitors’ sites if you are feeling brave. On-site widgets for sites like Flickr and YouTube can help you to showcase some of these on your own website.

As well as being useful to people visiting your website or social media presences, it can be a great way to connect with the wider network of individuals and communities interested in the same themes, thus making your brand a genuine part of the conversation.

Resource: what will you need?

You need to have a dedicated resource to create content for your brand. Experienced online editors and writers would bring highly desirable skills to this role and ideally they should also have community management experience. Otherwise a community manager is also an important role for your team.

Where that is not possible, ensure that the team members – usually part of the marketing or PR teams already have:

- Journalism or copywriting skills.
- Commissioning experience.
- Clear guidance on how much time they have to dedicate to content creation and governance – it should not be an add-on, extra-curricular activity or nice-to-have.
- Access to legal, IT, PR and customer service team support as required.

As well as support from the above functions, the team should be close to (in the same office if possible) those who look after website analytics, social media listening and other research and measurement related activities.

And don’t forget that your team will need tools to help them – access to site analytics, a user-friendly content management tool, and software to help them manipulate images and graphics in a simple way.

Developing the activity plan



Distribution

Ensure that regular consideration is given to distribution strategies. While SEO is an essential part of content creation online, it may be that paid search, advertising, syndication or content partnerships might also be useful elements in a distribution plan. The content team should be able to have frequent discussions about opportunities with other internal teams.

If possible, make sure that any social spaces, from a Facebook page to a blog, are linked to or promoted in relevant spaces that the brand owns, including intranets and employee communications.

Online content teams should have access to your website's analytics so that they can see user activity as soon as the data is available. As well as this focus on the website, they should use listening tools to listen to what users are saying about their content and related themes.

The IAB's social media measurement framework is very similar to iCrossing's. Take a look at it for some more detail on this approach if you are interested:

<http://goo.gl/xyHx8>

Measurement and listening

Measurement is too often something that is only used retrospectively, to judge how successful a given activity has been. While this is important, content measurement is often useful immediately, giving valuable clues and insights into what users want from your content.

Further reading and links



We hope that this brief collection of thoughts and suggestions about developing your content strategy has been useful.

Want to know more? Have a read of the following.

Blogs

Brain Traffic

<http://blog.braintraffic.com/>

Connect

<http://connect.icrossing.co.uk/tag/content-strategy/>

Predicate

<http://www.predicate-llc.com/category/link-blog/>

Books

Content Strategy for the Web

Kristina Halvorson

<http://www.contentstrategy.com/>

Other content strategy resources

Content Strategy Google Group

<http://groups.google.com/group/contentstrategy/>

Content Strategy Knol

<http://knol.google.com/k/content-strategy#>

LinkedIn Content Strategy Group

<http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Content-Strategy-1879338>

Twitter

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About the authors



Trisha Brandon

Trisha joined iCrossing in 2010 to help grow its content strategy services. She has 15 years' experience in digital content, product development and creative strategy, working with leading women's, health, food and lifestyle brands.

Since joining iCrossing, Trisha has worked with World Vision, Manchester City Football Club, STA Travel, Kaspersky Labs, Holiday Extras and P&O Ferries, developing future-proof approaches to on-site, social and off-site content that's useful and desirable to readers as well as helping clients meet their goals. In her spare time she likes to create order and simplicity out of messiness, like organising socks and unpicking knots.



Tamsin Hemingray

Tamsin is the Director of Content at iCrossing. She has 14 years of web, management, editorial, research, marketing, content management, project management and digital media experience.

She loves the challenges that the new digital landscape presents – and thoroughly enjoys working with clients to generate innovative and ground-breaking content which gives users something interesting and something to talk about and helps brands to find new ways to communicate with consumers.



Charlie Peverett

Charlie joined the company as a journalist in 2007, and developed the content team's news and blogging services with brands such as MORE TH>N, Charcol and Toyota.

In 2009 he became iCrossing's first Content Strategist, and has since worked on content strategies for brands including Virgin Atlantic's vtravelled, STA Travel and Visit Wales. He specialises in editorial content strategy and social media, and is driven by the potential for non-traditional publishers to become trusted providers of content. He tweets as @cpev.

About iCrossing

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iCrossing UK is a digital marketing agency that specialises in search and social media.

We design and build search and social media strategies for some of the world's biggest brands, including The Coca-Cola Company, Toyota, Virgin, Bank of America, and TK MAXX.

iCrossing UK is part of iCrossing, one of the world's largest, digital marketing agencies, which employs 600 staff in 12 offices around the globe, including 100 staff based at UK offices in London and Brighton.

iCrossing has won numerous accolades, including the number one-ranked agency for both paid and natural search in Forrester Research's 2009 Wave report of US search marketing agencies, OMMA's Search Agency of the Year, Best Use of Search at the Revolution Awards and a finalist for Revolution's Agency of the Year award. We are also the only agency with two Forrester social-media case studies to its name.

iCrossing is a unit of Hearst Corporation, one of the world's largest diversified media companies.

For more information please visit www.icrossing.co.uk or contact us at results@icrossing.co.uk

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