Do you Twust Me? -- Measuring the Impact of Social Media on Trust and Credibility
IPRRC
March 7, 2014

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Methodology

- A technology celebrity contracted with KDPaine & Partners (now Salience Insight) to measure the degree to which his audiences trusted him.

- After further discussions, it was agreed that while a survey was a normal way to measure trust, given the nature of his stakeholder group (100% were online) we agreed that a content analysis would be an acceptable proxy.

- We collected 7,529 social media items between October 1 and December 31, 2012. Each item was analyzed for specific qualitative characteristics that would reveal how the author perceived the celebrity. In other words, did they trust him, did they feel positively about him, and did they understand his philosophy and beliefs. 91% of all items discussed some aspect of relationship.

- We used Grunig’s relationship theory as the framework for our analysis.
Definitions

The Relationship Concepts
In order to tease out from conversations how people felt about their relationships with the celebrity, we have defined a list of key words, phrases, and concepts that were associated with each concept. We used trained humans to analyze the content and categorize each item for one or more of these concepts. Examples of some of the words that were associated with each concept were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Long term commitment, committed, long term, maintain, bond, value, like the way he works, like the way he thinks, loyalty. Reverse: Not into him, don’t give a rats ass, don’t care, walk away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Faith, confidence, integrity, dependability, competence, relied upon, keeps his promises, do what he says he will do, honest, principled, doesn’t lie, truth. Reverse: Lies, cheats, steals, liar, thief, corrupt, unprincipled, shark, nasty, snake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Satisfied, delighted, thrilled, wonderful, awesome, delivers, consistent, reliable. Reverse: Didn’t deliver, fail, short changed, disappointed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>Gives to the relationship because they have received benefits in the past or are expecting to see something in the future. Reverse: Expects something in return, expects a favor, takes care of his own, manipulative, doesn’t care, takes advantage, steps on people, not helpful, upper hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>Concerned, caring, good citizen, CSR, helps out, has a sense of community. Reverse: no sense of community, criminal, displays no care or concern.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Top Line Findings

1. Trust was the second most frequently discussed concept. Most people discussed the celebrity in terms of a communal relationship as opposed to exchange. Only 1% of all conversations reflected the perception of an exchange relationship. (There was virtually no discussion of control mutuality, and we therefore eliminated it from the analysis.)

2. Discussions of the celebrity’s social media activity, political involvement, and biography did not generate as much trust as did his Philanthropy. The celebrity’s primary charity was also a significant driver of trust.

3. In terms of specific events, the celebrity’s activities around Hurricane Sandy, Military Families/Veteran support, and discussion of accurate journalism were key drivers of conversations that conveyed trust.

4. Trust was most frequently expressed via Twitter, followed by Facebook and Pinterest. Trust was seldom expressed in blogs posts, LinkedIn, or Google+. Comments on Facebook posts yielded a great deal of high quality conversation in which trust was expressed.

5. Retweets of the celebrity’s posts about Hurricane Sandy and a Twitter fundraising campaign were responsible for more than half the mentions of trust. Trust was also frequently expressed when the celebrity distributed media, or gave a heads up about something he noticed or events he was involved in. People trust that what the celebrity shares is worth reading.

6. Only 1% (44 stories) were negative, mostly driven by politics and election discussions. There was a minor amount of negativity about the produce with which the celebrity is still frequently associated.

7. The high degree of nature conversations that convey a communal relationship are a bit misleading since there is no way to identify whether someone is sharing a post because they like the animal or they like the celebrity.

8. Curiously, there were few comments on the celebrity’s posts to Pinterest as people were most interested in repining infographics rather than discussing them.
Quality of Conversation:

Each post was analyzed to determine the quality of the conversation. We defined quality as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>Discussions that are informed, intelligent implied knowledge of the celebrity. Understanding of motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>Expressing support, thoughtful, but with not too much depth of thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>Simple greeting, joke, sharing media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NONE</td>
<td>Straight retweet without comment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perceptions of communal relationship were most frequent, generated by philanthropic efforts that portrayed the celebrity as caring, concerned, and helping others.

Repots of content generated by the celebrity provided a high level of trust amongst the public. Repins of info graphics on Pinterest along with reTweets and Tweets containing the celebrity’s quotes all showed a level of trust.

Efforts to aid military families, Hurricane Sandy victims, and NWF combined with the celebrity’s love for nature generated feelings of commitment, trust and satisfaction.

One exchange relationship) a squirrel rehab coordinator was responsible for the majority of exchange conversations. Profitina had daily social media conversations with the celebrity about nature and her squirrels, but her main focus was the squirrels, not the celebrity.

Conversations that conveyed a sense of shared values (Communal) represented the majority of conversations, primarily for the celebrity’s philanthropic efforts as well as his love for nature and support of NWF.
Highest level of relationship discussions were around Hurricane Sandy and nature-related philanthropy.
Discussions of nature, specifically the celebrity’s Twitter fundraising efforts were most successful in conveying positive relationships concepts.
Most conversations about the celebrity gave a heads up about his activities or distributed media that he posted

People love to spread the word, especially when the celebrity is donating money to a worthy cause. Giving a heads-up was filled with this type of activity. It also revealed how many communal relationships are out there with people giving a heads-up on current issues or distributing media they think the celebrity needs to see.

Posts where individuals quoted what the celebrity says, were tagged as Making an observation.

Making a suggestion came up quite often due to many individuals recommending the celebrity as a #FF candidate.
Even low quality conversations and retweets conveyed positive aspects of relationships with the celebrity.

Politics, Veterans, Squirrels, Hurricane Sandy all contributed to High level conversations in communal relationships.

Advocacy in Voting and assisting military families/veterans as well as philanthropy and all received high praises to the celebrity – reflecting High quality in satisfaction.
Appendix A: Definitions

Qualified Outlets:
- Blogs
- Twitter
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Google+
- Reddit
- Digg
- Tumblr
- Pinterest
- LinkedIn

Owned Media:
Items from the celebrity’s media sources were tagged as ‘Owned media’

Examples of Owned Media:
- Twitter: @thecelebrity
- Facebook: facebook.com/the celebrity
- The blog for the celebrity’s charitable efforts
Appendix A

Comments:
Comments were collected and human coded if the item was relevant to the study. Comments were collected for 7 days after the original post appeared.

Outlet Types:
The type of outlet from which the item appeared
• Blog
• Micro-blog (i.e. Twitter)
• Social Networking Site (i.e. Facebook)
• Video (i.e. YouTube)
• Forum
• Social Bookmarking
Appendix A

Tone:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POSITIVE</td>
<td>An item leaves the reader more likely to support, recommend, or work with the celebrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEUTRAL</td>
<td>An item contains no sentiment at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEGATIVE</td>
<td>An item leaves the reader less likely to support, recommend or work with the celebrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BALANCED</td>
<td>An item includes both positive and negative sentiment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix A

## Subjects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philanthropy</th>
<th>Donations, Charitable activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Activity</td>
<td>Discussions of the celebrity’s activity in social media (i.e. Klout score, Tweeting, Foursquare, etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>Voter Protection, voting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>Mentions of the celebrity without any connection to his other efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>The celebrity’s activities to promote free speech and keeping the internet open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>Biography write ups about the celebrity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A

Conversation Types:

1. Acknowledging receipt of information
2. Advertising something
3. Answering a question
4. Asking a question
5. Augmenting a previous post
6. Calling for action
7. Disclosing personal information
8. Distributing media
9. Expressing agreement
10. Expressing criticism
11. Expressing support
12. Expressing surprise
13. Giving a heads-up
14. Responding to criticism
15. Giving a shout-out
16. Making a joke
17. Making a suggestion
18. Making an observation
19. Offering a greeting
20. Offering an opinion
21. Putting out a wanted ad
22. Rallying support
23. Recruiting people
24. Showing dismay
25. Soliciting comments
26. Soliciting help
27. Starting a poll
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