VIDEO KILLED THE INTERNET STAR
It's not a coincidence that Jonah Peretti moved to Los Angeles. The BuzzFeed CEO, who decamped from New York to L.A. a year ago, symbolizes the shift underway in digital media, where the weight of effort is focused squarely on video.

BuzzFeed, which played down Peretti's move as a personal decision, split the company into two groups: BuzzFeed News and BuzzFeed Entertainment. "Having a single 'video department' in 2016 makes about as much sense as having a "mobile department,"" Peretti wrote in a company memo announcing the move and promising to make video central to "every major initiative" at the company. BuzzFeed said it would ramp up its video efforts across both divisions, but it did little to tamp down chatter that it would eventually jettison news in favor of entertainment, and mostly the type that comes in advertiser-friendly video.

Part of video's central role is clearly audience driven: The huge numbers racked up by YouTube and Facebook video testify to the appetite for video. But it is also a business decision, as well-funded digital media companies sour on a commoditized display ads -- and see up to 90 percent of the gains in digital ad revenue going to Google and Facebook. Video isn't a strategy, but it beats dying.

For The Video Issue of Digiday Pulse, we tackled the outsized role video is playing in several ways. Sahil Patel, our resident video guru, tells the story of how Verizon is hell-bent on elbowing its way into entertainment with its Go90 mobile video product. Sahil has also profiled Matt Bellassai, a new kind of star of the social video world, who went from being an intern at BuzzFeed to four years later being repped by CAA. Jess Davies, our U.K. editor, went deep into how The Economist is taking a counterintuitive approach to digital video in betting on long-form documentaries.

Elsewhere, brands editor Shareen Pathak profiles Eriti Dougherty, who is leading the charge at MillerCousins to make its marketing less dependent on frat boy humor. Lucia Moses, our media editor, goes behind the scenes at The Washington Post with Joey Marburger, an unsung hero in Jeff Bezos' quest to make The Post a tech driven organization. We also catch up with Josh Topolsky, the digital media veteran editor who is starting a new digital media company that aims to take the high road.

We hope you enjoy this, our third issue of Digiday Pulse. Making a magazine is a learning experience, humbling at times and exhilarating on deadline. We are enjoying the opportunity to take a step back and look more deeply at subjects away from our daily coverage. Please get in touch with your feedback. And thanks for reading.

When you want to know more about your best customers, you can work the data and rework the data over and over until you’re not sure what it means, or you can just ask them what you want to know. Fluent combines data science with real-time human interaction to serve ads that people actually want to see. We connect with a massive audience of real, logged in consumers every day and use what we learn to help brands acquire large and loyal customer bases as a result.

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For all inquiries, please email help@digiday.com
How YouTube Became the Establishment

In just over a decade, YouTube has become a cultural force. It’s now the place where the TV, film and advertising industries — not to mention countless random teenagers and 20-somethings — come together to distribute video for more than a billion users every day. YouTube has joined the establishment. Here’s how it happened.

BY SAHIL PATEL
Media Grows in Brooklyn

Brooklyn has become a locus of hipsterdom, and media companies want in on the cool cachet. The map below shows where they’ve set up shop and explains why they chose the borough.

BY MAX WILLENS

Atlas Obscura

Address: “The Pencil Factory,” 61 Greenpoint Ave
Headcount: 20
In Brooklyn Since: 2009

“‘The spaces available in Manhattan were abysmal and overpriced...The story of the Pencil Factory itself is one of a company moving from Manhattan to Greenpoint in the 1850s for more space and cheaper rent.’”
— Dylan Thuras, founder, Atlas Obscura

Genius Media

Address: 184 Kent Avenue
Headcount: 56
In Brooklyn Since: 2014

“‘It allowed us to rent an extraordinarily unique space that we wouldn’t have been able to find anywhere else...The building we work out of in Gowanus used to be a printing factory—really poignant for a company dedicated to annotation. We were passionate about finding a space where we could host in-real-life events like concerts, film screenings, tech talks, panels, pop-up shops, dance performances, and hackathons, and we found that here.’”
— Max Ketelbach, head of facilities, Genius

Vice

Address: 49 S 2nd St.
Headcount: 750
In Brooklyn Since: 2001

“‘Brooklyn is our home. Well over half of our employees that work in Brooklyn also live in Brooklyn. After moving here in 1999, this neighborhood is embedded in our DNA. Williamsburg is home to illuminated creative visionaries, and is the perfect location for us to create innovative content for young people.’”
— Vice spokesperson

The Awl Network

Address: 131 Lawrence St.
Headcount: 10
In Brooklyn Since: 2014

“A winning combination of affordability, coziness and proximity to Shake Shack.”
— Michael Macher, publisher of The Awl Network

Slate

Address: Metrotech Center
Headcount: 90
In Brooklyn Since: 2016

“The majority of our NYC team either lives in Brooklyn or lower Manhattan, so downtown Brooklyn is more of a centralized hub than, say, midtown. Second, the new location affords us the opportunity to help build a thriving media and tech culture in a borough that’s already steeped in creative history. It keeps us closer to the creative and cultural pulse of the city.”
— Slate President Keith Hernandez

Gimlet Media

Address: 92 3rd Street
Headcount: 59
In Brooklyn Since: 2015

“‘Brooklyn is a nexus of creativity. There are so many young companies here doing innovative work across all fields, and we wanted to be part of that community.’”
— Alex Blumberg, co-founder, Gimlet

Time Inc.’s The Foundry

Address: 241 37th St.
Headcount: 150
In Brooklyn Since: 2015

“‘Industry City in Brooklyn’s Sunset Park is known as an innovation and manufacturing district. It’s an ideal space for building new products, reimagining content creation and developing advertising solutions.’”
— Time Inc. spokesperson
Remember when the waterfall took control out of your hands?

Time to swing that pendulum back.

But this time...

MAKE IT A WRECKING BALL

STATUS QUO MEET HEADER BIDDING.
The Ad Tech Tuxedo

The ad tech man of mystery — let’s face it, usually a dude — has a certain look. It’s one that says you’re down to get a beer, but first you have to finish your international conference call and knock out a quick meeting uptown.

We asked one ad tech executive to share his tried-and-true ad tech tuxedo, along with a few best practice tips for pulling off with style an outfit that is, at its most quintessential, a blazer with jeans. The exec, who spilled his sartorial secrets under the condition of anonymity, is confident that the outfit has shown no signs of falling out of favor.

“\textbf{This outfit has been done to death by every ad tech male,}” he says. “But it works in nearly every situation — conferences, meetings, dinners — and at every level of seniority.”

BY HILARY MILNES

\textbf{Ad tech tip:} Buy a bunch when they’re on sale.

\textbf{Bonus:} The classic “Ad Tech Tuxedo” look is to go with gingham, but you can’t go wrong with plain white.

\textbf{Ludlow Dress Shirt} \quad \textbf{J.Crew}

\textbf{Ad tech tip:} Don’t skimp. A good wool blazer will last for years and travels well.

\textbf{Bonus:} It has pockets for your business cards, devices, chargers, sunglasses and Advil. Pay attention to fit. It’s easy to buy a blazer in a size too big.

\textbf{Ludlow Blue Blazer} \quad \textbf{J.Crew}

\textbf{Ad tech tip:} This cut is ideal because it’s fitted like your jacket, but not skinny.

\textbf{Caveat emptor:} It should go without saying that faded weekend beater jeans don’t work, but some guys didn’t seem to get that memo. Please: get them dark, buy two pairs, and alternate.

\textbf{Dark wash 484 fit jeans} \quad \textbf{J.Crew}

\textbf{Ad tech tip:} It’s heavy, looks great and can be worn everywhere, even when jumping off a yacht in the Mediterranean during Cannes.

\textbf{Tag Heuer} \quad \textbf{Carrera watch}

\textbf{Ad tech tip:} These look like a shoe but feel like a sneaker, making them perfect for those long days walking New York streets in between agency calls.

\textbf{Chelsea Boots or Oxfords} \quad \textbf{Cole Haan}

\textbf{Nike} \quad \textbf{Lumascrape backpack}

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\textbf{www.glossy.co}


Podcasts for media nerds

**Recode Media**
Host Peter Kafka welcomes an eclectic group of guests from the media world, ranging from documentary filmmaker Alex Gibney to Refined29 CEO Philippe von Borries. Bonus: Kafka reads ads for underwear.

**Recode Decode**
Kara Swisher is the rare industry insider who also calls bullshit. Her no-nonsense interview style translates well to Decode, where she takes a broad look at how tech is affecting society with guests like Rep. Nancy Pelosi, Kim Kardashian and “Hamilton” producer Jeffrey Seller.

**The Information 411**
Subscription site The Information has established itself as a player in breaking news around tech — and media. Host Tom Distant talks to Information writers about the major pieces they published that week. It’s a nice free sampler to the type of differentiated, smart content The Information produces.

**On The Media**
The long-running public radio show is still one of the best places to get a 30,000 foot view of media. Don’t expect deep dives into programmatic. Instead hosts Brooke Gladstone and Bob Garfield dissect media’s role in a healthy democracy — an issue that’s never been more important.

**The Ezra Klein Show**
The millennial editor-in-chief of Vox hosts an entertaining podcast with advanced range of guests, from Moby to the Congressional Budget Office’s Alice Rivlin to Arianna Huffington.

**The Digiday Podcast** features top publishing, agency and brand execs. Here are highlights from recent guests.

**HOT TAKES**

“...we view TV as another platform. We view ourselves as a brand company, not a website company, and a company that’s developing our expertise on bringing our brands to all the right platforms in ways that work for those platforms.”
— Marty Moe, president, Vox Media

“...there’s a herd mentality. Everyone goes to where the audience is. Facebook has clearly leaned in and brought video to the forefront of the News Feed. But I also think there’s a real appetite there too.”
— Athan Stephanopoulos, president, NowThis

“...if you go to a 20-minute video and there’s great photography in it, you’re going to tell me it’s the same thing as telling the story in 30 seconds and getting people to love it and share it? I don’t agree. It’s a different thing. It’s a different story.”
— Nicholas Carlson, editor-in-chief, Insider

“...if we toyed around with the idea of a subscription model. Subscription models are very difficult. I think the Times is probably the best-suited publication to be able to ask people to pay for their content. They’ve experienced some success, but it takes a lot of work and resources to do that.”
— Mark Howard, CRO, Forbes Media

“...digital advertising is going to be a $50 billion market this year. Google and Facebook are two-thirds of the market. The mistake a lot of companies make is they’re worried about market share. In a high-growth market, you focus on the underserved segments than the leaders in the space.”
— Bryan Wiener, chairman, 360i
How a cult beauty product from Korea became mass market

In 2011, Korean beauty company Dr. Jart+ jumpstarted the global BB Cream industry, which is now worth $200 million, after scientists at the company first noticed the skincare-foundation hybrid product in Germany. This launched Korean beauty’s dedication to innovation in skincare, and a focus on discovering new products and methods that will make the processes more efficient for consumers. Since BB creams (the BB is short for beauty balm) have properties of a foundation, moisturizer, serum and sunblock in one tube, Korean beauty enthusiasts embraced the efficiency of the single product. K-Pop stars also began peddling the products, a surefire way to launch a product craze in Korea.

Once the BB Cream gained mass status in Korea, it was time to consider its future in the States. Introducing popular Korean beauty products, from their country of origin into the U.S. has become its own industry. Companies like Peach and Lily, Via Seoul and Glow Recipes, run by two former L’Oréal executives, spend time in Korea working with dermatologists and skincare specialists to find the next up-and-coming product, before vetting the Korean brands that make it for the U.S. market, which can involve upping production or changing a name or packaging.

Stateside, these companies curate top Korean skincare products and share reviews, best use cases, and links to buy new products for Western readers, who often find the Korean beauty industry overwhelming.


For those on the cutting edge of beauty trends, there’s one country to look to for insight as to what’s next: South Korea. The Korean beauty industry, dubbed K-Beauty, is responsible for introducing innovative new beauty products into the mainstream, like BB and CC creams (foundations that also have skincare properties), sheet masks (one-use face masks that you layer on your face, then peel off) and cushion compacts (a foundation package that stores the product in a sponge). The more adventurous skincare aficionados in the U.S. have even been introduced to snail slime facial treatments by way of Korea, which apparently leaves skin glowing and rejuvenated.

But how exactly do these beauty trends make their way to the U.S. mainstream, where mass market companies like L’Oréal and Maybelline are copying them? We talked to beauty industry experts to retrace the steps of BB Cream, the first Korean skincare product to take off globally and catapult the region into high-profile cult beauty status.

1 The trend takes off in South Korea

2 Korean liaisons prep the product for U.S. adoption

3 Sephora picks up

4 It trickles down to mass market

BY HILARY MILNES
How Do You Do, Fellow Kids?

Jargon is a virus that has infected the media and marketing industries. From the thickest of techno-babble that dominates ad-tech to the marketing gobbledegook spread all over everything, nonsense words have crowded into every corner of our conversations. But all of that lingo seems downright transparent compared to some of the millennial slang being thrown around by publishers and marketers these days in an effort to appeal to that demographic. Here is our attempt to decode some of it.

ADULTING
If you have to use the word, you aren’t one.

BAE
Mom, stop.

BASIC
Can’t we all just get along? (Pass the pumpkin spice latte, feecky!)

BITMOJI
Not everybody gets the stipple-portrait treatment in the Wall Street Journal. Sometimes a cartoon version of yourself sitting on the toilet has to suffice.

BUZZFEED
Media for snake people.

CUCK
Definitely not Kik. Trust us, we made this mistake once.

KIK
Shh, don’t tell brands we’re — oops, too late.

LINKEDIN
Tinder for Gen X.

LIT
When fam is on fleek.

MUSICAL.LY
Your chance to star in a music video that no one will see.

ON FLEEK
Just stop.

POKEMON GO
Tinder for Gen Z.

QUARTER-LIFE CRISIS
This isn’t a thing.

SLACK
/giphy productivity tool

SNAPCHAT
Please don’t screengrab this pic. Please don’t screengrab this pic.

SNAPCHAT DISCOVER
An oxymoron.

STAN SMITHS
Converse All Stars for millennials.

VENMO
A good way to bill your friends after you hosted dinner at your house.

VINE
Ghost Town.

WISHBONE
Hot-or-not, updated for mobile. (Also a pretty good Italian dressing.)

YIK YAK
Anonymous gossip room for college students/joke thieves.

BY BRIAN BRAIKER & TANYA DUA

HOT TAKES
Brands, agencies and publishers are trying to maximize the possibilities of video. Here, Digiday caught up with past Video Award winners to highlight some of 2015’s notable winning campaigns.

**2015 BEST IN SHOW**

Valspar – “Color for All”

Valspar nabbed Best Brand Video, as well as the coveted Best in Show award. The video series, in partnership with colorblindness-correcting glasses EnChroma, featured individuals around the United States living with colorblindness experiencing color for the first time.

“Our ‘Color for All’ campaign has been a fulfilling and humbling journey. To be recognized for this initiative by the country’s community of creative marketers is an added accomplishment for which we are very grateful and proud.”

– Joel Wasserman, director of brand integration, Valspar

**BEST BRAND VIDEO SERIES**

72andSunny & Truth – “Left Swipe Dat”

72andSunny tapped dating app Tinder for inspiration for its anti-tobacco client truth for “Left Swipe Dat.” The video’s parade of young stars and YouTube personalities sing a song about rejecting prospective dates on Tinder if they have a cigarette in their profile pictures.

“This was the first time that we intentionally set out to create standalone content that could exist in the marketplace as a legitimate music video. Being recognized by industry leaders for this approach further validates our effort to effectively engage this generation to help end smoking for good and ultimately save lives.”

– Eric Asche, CMO, Truth Initiative

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**HOT TAKES**

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But if you use header bidding to offer those ads to even more buyers, and those buyers compete, then your company makes more money. Voila! Cream cheese and lox on Fridays.

WHOSE INVESTMENT IS IT ANYWAY?

It’s a great time for digital media companies with any semblance of scale. The traditional giants, either worried about those that might disrupt their businesses or simply wanting to hedge their bets on the future of media consumption, have actively been investing and absorbing digital publishing startups. Indeed, digital media has become a land of fiefdoms, which just goes to show, what’s old is new again—or maybe it’s the other way around.

A+E Networks
Axel Springer
Comcast/NBCUniversal
Disney
Hearst
RTL Group
Scripps Networks Interactive
Turner
Univision
Verizon

AOL
AwesomenessTV
The Bleacher Report
BroadbandTV
Business Insider
BuzzFeed
Complex Media
DreamWorks Animation
Fusion
Funny or Die
Gawker Media
The Huffington Post
Maker Studios
Mashable
The Onion
Refinery29
The Root
StyleHaul
Tastemade
Vice Media
Vox Media
Yahoo
If you’re going to point your media and publishing strategy toward the future, make sure you’re pointing at the right thing. Case in point: virtual reality ≠ augmented reality ≠ mixed reality, and it pays to know the difference. This breakdown will make you that rarest of creatures: a futurist who actually knows what’s worth talking about.

BY MAX WILLENS

OK, BREAK IT DOWN FOR US

Basics first: Virtual reality is the science fiction stuff, the fake world mapped onto a pricey headset that can be viewed in 360 degrees. This is what Oculus Rift promises. But: VR is not the same as 360-degree video, which uses previously recorded footage of the real world. This can be watched using the same device one uses to experience VR, or cheaper headsets like Google Cardboard.

Augmented reality refers to a real-time visual representation of the real world, usually captured by a smartphone camera and projected on said phone’s screen, that includes visual elements or information laid over the top of it (think Pokémon Go). Mixed reality is, well, a mix, a representation of the real world where the added visual elements are interactive, responding not just to things a viewer does but to the environment they’re laid over.

HOW IS THIS BEING USED IN THE REAL WORLD?

Publishers ranging from The New York Times to ABC News are already using 360° video to bring readers to reporting locations, and the NBA is using it to bring fans closer to the games. Agencies like Blippar are creating augmented reality ad products meant to spruce up existing display advertising. Fewer media players have figured out what to do with virtual reality, and mixed reality is so hard to do that the tech barely exists to create it.

WHAT'S THE TAKEAWAY?

This is going to separate the haves from the have nots real quick. While smartphone adoption allows most everyone to experience 360° video and some AR, the technology and resources required to develop something worthy of putting on a headset is serious. Similarly, delivering ads in these spaces is going to require reinventing the wheel. Interrupting a person’s visit to a website is one thing; leaping into their field of vision to sell them something they don’t want sounds like a bad acid trip. Marketers, proceed with caution.

The Brief Tragicomic History of Harambe

On the Internet, the distance from tragedy to farce is exceedingly short. Here’s how Harambe went from an unfortunate news item to ubiquitous meme this summer.

BY BRIAN BRAKER

May 28

Harambe, a 17-year-old Western lowland silverback gorilla, is shot and killed at the Cincinnati Zoo after a 5-year-old boy climbed into the gorilla’s enclosure. The boy was unharmed. Later that day, a YouTuber named maxi uploads footage of the incident, netting more than 12.6 million views in 48 hours. Many of the 41,000 comments blamed the child’s parents for Harambe’s death.

May 29

A petition titled “Justice for Harambe” is created on Change.org, calling for authorities to hold the child’s parents accountable, netting a half million signatures. The hashtags #JusticeForHarambe and #FRPHarambe begin circulating on Facebook and Twitter.

June 26

Also on Weird Twitter, people begin swapping out popular song lyrics with Harambe’s name. Blink-182’s Mark Hoppus plays along with one of his own songs. The meme makes it onto Twitter Moments.

June 30

Harambe gets his most mentions on Twitter on a single day, driven by this tweet:

June 31

CNN, BBC, NBC, the Mirror, The Daily Dot all report on the story. Outrage morphs into ridicule; On Weird Twitter, Harambe is reimagined as a meme, his likeness is photoshopped onto photos of various celebrities and public figures, featuring him in mixtapes, our logo, and in a recent comedy movie.

July 2

Twitter user @sexualjumanji posts a selfie in which he is brandishing a gun along with the caption, “We comin with them dicks out to avenge haramble!!!”

July 4

Comedian Brandon Wardell tweets the phrase “dicks out for haramble,” and follows it up with several Vine videos, including one of himself with actor Danny Trejo in which the pair say the phrase “dicks out for Harambe.” Within five days, the video hits upwards of 2.2 million loops, 1,100 likes and 700 revines.

August 20

A hacker with the Twitter handle @prom takes control of Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden director Thane Maynard’s Twitter account. They Maynard’s Twitter account, vandalizing his feed with several Harambe-related hashtags and jokes.

August 22

The Cincinnati Zoo deletes its Twitter account. “We are not amused by the memes, petitions and signs about Harambe,” Maynard writes in a letter to the Associated Press. “Our zoo family is still healing, and the constant mention of Harambe makes moving forward more difficult for us.”

August 28

Jill Stein, Green Party candidate for president, tweets that Harambe “teaches us to be a voice for the voiceless.” She’s retweeted 6,000 times in 24 hours.
Exclusive Yahoo data sources
More than any other DSP

Get a complete picture of your most relevant audience

Other DSPs show you pieces. BrightRoll gives you the complete picture. With more deep, diverse data sources than any other DSP, the BrightRoll DSP gives you a richer, more accurate view of the audience you care most about.

www.brightroll.com/demand-side-platform
Media

Facebook traffic reported declined in the 2nd quarter, according to SimilarWeb:

- Yahoo: -45%
- Buzzfeed: -6%
- Time Inc: -25%
- The New York Times: -25%
- NBCU: -19%
- AOL: -22%

Zuckerberg

$6.2 billion
in second quarter ad revenue
32% growth from a year earlier.

Shane Smith

"What you're going to see is a mergers and acquisitions frenzy
where the top two or three big shop buy the last two or three big.
We've got scale, we've got scale, we've got scale.
And the digital guys are going to go, "HECK, I'M OUTDOOR." — more quickly to money."

Arianna Huffington

36% traffic decline at Huffington Post
over the summer, according to comScore.
"I'm fully expected to be able to continue
leading Huffington Post while also leading
Thrive Global.
But it became clear that this was an illusion
as Thrive went from one to a reality,
with winners, staff and office.

Nick Denton

"As far Crawler.com, founded in 2003 and mothballed in 2016,
it will live on in legend. As the short-lived Killer armband
is told in Blade Runner:
"The light that burns twice as bright burns half as long,
and you have farther to go very very bright."

Facebook vs. Adblock

"Facebook is going against the will
of the user and they typically don't end well.
Facebook may have started this game of ping pong
but on the open internet the user always wins."
— Ben Williams, Adblock Plus

Ad Blocking

86% of desktop users
deploy ad blocking software,
according to the IAB.

Randall Rottenberg

"I'm saying...morally and ethically, [ad-block software makers]
are beyond the pale and need to be impacted.
They're the rich, right-wing, older drunks in Germany and Israel
who are trying to steal money from publishers, period."

NBC and BuzzFeed get
2.2 billion views
and nearly 10 million posts
of consumption of their ShapiroPyramid moment during the Rio Olympics.
When Joey Marburger was in high school, he played bass guitar in a punk band. One day, the band was on the way to an out-of-state gig when the van broke down. Marburger knew a little about auto repairs, so it was he who saved the day, getting the parts from AutoZone to get the van going again. “That taught me that a lot about life is that, you still have to perform,” he recalls.

The Washington Post’s Rock Star

Joey Marburger is helping the legacy news organization adopt a tech mindset

BY LUCIA MOSES

Today, it’s widely accepted that being a modern publisher is as much about the packaging and distribution of editorial content as the quality of the journalism itself. That’s led to the rise of the product team at digital news organizations. Whereas in the past it might have been enough to get the paper that broke the Watergate scandal and helped bring down a corrupt president, today the Washington Post considers itself as much a tech company as a media outfit. As director of product, Marburger has had a hand in editorial and business-side initiatives, from apps to web redesign to ad products.

“It takes cool-headed types like Marburger to work in publishing these days, even at The Washington Post. Since Amazon founder Jeff Bezos bought it in 2013, he’s pumped money into the Post, hiring scores of technologists and journalists and moving it into a slick new office space on K Street, a fitting metaphor for its rebirth. Since then, the Post won two Pulitzers and surpassed The New York Times in traffic. But it has yet figure out how to turn that traffic success into a sustainable business. Digital ad revenue is harder to come by, ad blocking is on the rise and online subscriptions remain a tiny part of the Post’s overall revenue.

One of the key people the Post is looking to solve this problem is the 32-year-old Marburger. Marburger isn’t your typical rumpled newspaper executive. In a town where sartorial choices drift toward the French collar, power tie and cufflinks, Marburger dresses nattily in a t-shirt and jeans, skateboard hanging in his office. He proudly flies his geek flag. “I don’t lose my temper, I don’t yell at people. I listen. I don’t try and talk that much.”

His work speaks for itself, though. It’s hard to come by a digital initiative Marburger has been involved with since he started at the Post in 2010 as a mobile design director. Soon after Bezos bought the Post, Marburger joined the calls Bezos has every other week with a small coterie of senior executives. “Short of pulpisher and CEO Fred Ryan, there are relatively few people who have deep and ongoing conversations with Jeff,” says Jeremy Gilbert, director of strategic initiatives at the Post. “When Joey identifies something that’s interesting to him, it’s also interesting to Jeff.”

It’s hard to come by a digital initiative Marburger has been involved with since he started at the Post in 2010 as a mobile design director. Soon after Bezos bought the Post, Marburger joined the calls Bezos has every other week with a small coterie of senior executives. “Short of pulpisher and CEO Fred Ryan, there are relatively few people who have deep and ongoing conversations with Jeff,” says Jeremy Gilbert, director of strategic initiatives at the Post. “When Joey identifies something that’s interesting to him, it’s also interesting to Jeff.”
Post finds itself having to navigate a digital landscape. Today the pace of change quickened, but so did the digital landscape. The Post had decided to integrate its dot-com and print sides, and it needed people to help. Marburger was part of a crop of new digital forward thinkers who joined the Post.

Then one day in the fall of 2013, everything changed. Marburger was at Apple’s Design Lab offices when his boss called and told him to drop everything for an emergency town hall to announce the Post’s sale. At first, Marburger wasn’t sure about having Bezos as an owner. “I wasn’t nervous because I’d dealt with big-name people before, and design challenges. But I’d heard how he yells at people.” In calls with Bezos, he came to appreciate how the new owner didn’t think of as a competitor; today, he says of Facebook, “maybe they’re a threat, but we’re going to be right there.” He contends that the bigger concern is the loss of public trust in the news and the fact that the platforms treat serious news outlets like the Post the same as everyone else, including fake news. “I think Facebook is smart. But any platform algorithm has its limitations,” he says. “So you can look at ‘how do we build more trust’ as a product challenge.”

Marburger is participating in Google’s Trust Project, which is exploring how responsible journalism can stand out from the crowd on platforms. Marburger also is looking more broadly at how he can find and exploit places that people don’t think of for news. “To that end, he’s exploring how to use Amazon’s voice-activated speaker, Echo (another obvious area for synergy between Bezos’ interests). Using components he got from China, he also created what he calls a “smart mirror,” that would display things like the weather and headlines when activated by voice or motion. The mirror sits in his office and there’s no specific plan to put it into action, but Marburger envisions having it on display at events or in the bathroom so people can get caught up while they’re shaving in the morning.

Bezos’ checkbook may give the Post a longer leash as it tries to figure out a business model (as a private company, the Post doesn’t share its finances). But executives say they assume the money won’t last forever. Despite some fanciful products coming out of the Post, Marburger says revenue is always considered in the new product development process, although the idea of revenue has broadened to include the value of buzz and audience growth. “The common misconception is that we’re lighting money on fire,” he says. “That’s not happening. It’s very frugal. It’s more, ‘Is this a good idea?’”

In some ways, the Post has been a victim of its success. Several of Marburger’s peers who were core to the Post’s digital transition, like Melissa Bell, Cory Haik and Julia Beizer, have left for other media companies (though it’s also replenished its talent with hires like Gilbert and Dicker).

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It was a time of big change at the Post. It was still owned by the Graham family, and it was still deeply rooted in print. The Post had decided to integrate its dot-com and print sides, and it needed people to help. Marburger was part of a crop of new digital forward thinkers who joined the Post.

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ASSessing THREATS

The pace of change quickened, but so did the digital landscape. Today the Post finds itself having to navigate a world dominated by Facebook and Google. Other publishers have been wary of ceding power and content to the platforms when their ability to monetize them and count on referral traffic to keep going is uncertain. Growing audience is the name of the game for the Post as it tracks for paying subscribers, though, so it’s posted all its articles on Facebook Instant Articles and thrown its support behind the Apple News aggregation app and Google’s Accelerated Mobile Pages, its fast-loading articles initiative.

Publishers have softened in their views towards the platform giants. Marburger said in a 2015 interview that he definitely saw Facebook as a competitor; today, he says of Facebook, “maybe they’re a threat, but we’re going to be right there.” He contends that the bigger concern is the loss of public trust in the news and the fact that the platforms treat serious news outlets like the Post the same as everyone else, including fake news. “I think Facebook is smart. But any platform algorithm has its limitations,” he says. “So you can look at ‘how do we build more trust’ as a product challenge.”

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Flannel was fashion, gas was 99-cents a gallon and freelance writers made $2 a word.

We changed. We needed harder numbers to back up our claims. We needed slimmer stacks for leaner operations. For a while, we got by on what we were given to survive. Now, with header bidding, it’s time to get what we’re asking for.
Most media acquisitions fail. Somehow, Turner and Bleacher Report have made their union work.

By Sahil Patel

They were all as young,” recalls Turner Sports president Daniels. “They knew nothing about TV.

The Turner group, which included seasoned execs David Levy and Lenny Daniels, quickly realized this would be a different kind of meeting.

“I gave them credit over the years for realizing where fans were undererved,” says Daniels. “But I think they saw firsthand that partner at sports marketing firm Scout Sports and Entertainment. “That's been fairily remarkable in so far as social content was not considered an area of traditional media, what traditional media wasn't covering effectively,” says current Bleacher Report president and employee No. 12 Rory Brown.

“We were completely blind to the whole social media ecosystem,” says Turner Sports president Daniels. “They knew nothing about TV. They were completely blind to the whole TV business we were in and looked at sports through a completely different lens than we do—which was mesmerizing.”

Bleacher Report executives defend the site’s early approach by pointing out that the company was filling a void that was being ignored by the mainstream sports media. Fans of small-market teams now had a place to go to get the latest updates, rumors and analysis on their favorite teams. Bleacher Report was “aiming to be comprehensive,” says Brown. “There were a lot of underserved markets, social content was available to fans today. They were able to find a blue ocean.”

It wasn’t always easy for Bleacher Report. Founded in 2007 by longtime friends Dave Finocchio, Bryan Goldberg, Dave Nemetz and Sanders Freund, Bleacher Report was criticized early on by the establishment sports media for its open, unfiltered and unqualified content. “We were just a bunch of 20-somethings making content about a cluttered marketplace overall,” says the Turner portfolio meet to talk about what they're doing, what's working and what resources they need,” says Daniels. “Our most recent acquisition, the company come in and institute their brand and business digitally—a move that surprised Turner.

“We think back to four years ago, people were afraid that social was going to destroy their business and take away the eyeballs— the ratings,” says Daniels. “That just isn’t true anymore, but it was watch, in different places and at different times.”

“A TEXTBOOK CASE OF A MERGER GONE RIGHT.”

Today, Bleacher Report employs 350 people, and with Turner investing an additional $100 million into the company over the next three years, that number is expected to surpass 400 very soon. Suffice it to say, Bleacher Report has become vital to Turner’s digital media business. It might have been that way if Turner had not left it alone.

“Building a Brand that Means Something to People.”

With more than a half-a-billion monthly social video views and a mobile app that’s been downloaded 15 million times, Bleacher Report has become a big presence on the platform’s digital universe. Advertisers are bullish on the company, buying anonymously, says a client recently was hesitant to go with Bleacher Report because it wasn’t a mainstream sports outlet. So they picked an established media partner. “We’re still a challenger brand to ESPN and CBS Sports, but you’re getting more bang for your buck,” says Daniels.

For Bleacher Report, the next stage of growth comes from building its brand through original videos. “Game of Zones” animated series has proven to be popular, but so has “Vick,” its first foray into long-form content.

“One thing for sure: It has a good parent in its corner.”

It was 2012, and in the middle of Turner’s year-long courtship of Bleacher Report, a group of Turner executives flew to San Francisco to meet with the digital startup’s leadership team. The Turner group, which included seasoned execs David Levy and Lenny Daniels, quickly realized this would be a different kind of meeting.

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The stark differences between how traditional media has always operated and how digital publishing businesses conduct themselves still confound many people on both sides today. And, as evidenced by the continued wave of “old-media” companies turning into digital publishers – since 2013, BuzzFeed, Refinery29, Vice TV and Vox Media alone have raised $1.6 billion — TV and digital know they need each other.

With more than 10,000 employees and lucrative media brands ranging from CNN to Cartoon Network, it might be hard to imagine why Turner was interested in what was then a scrappy 130-person sports media startup. With broadcast rights to major sports like the NBA and MLB, Turner is the blue-chip McDonald’s All-American to Bleacher Report’s hard charging gym rat. And somehow, it’s worked.

Bleacher Report’s annual revenues have tripled in the past three years, executives declined to say if the company is profitable. But Turner is on board with Bleacher Report’s vision and has been satisfied by initial revenue targets that the company has been able to meet since investing the additional $100 million.

“The economics will follow the audience,” says Daniels. “They teach us every day: be true to your audience and build your brand, and from there we’ll figure out how to make money—they’ve been able to do that and so have we.”

Advertisers are bullish on the company, with some considering it a clear No. 2 after the ESPN juggernaut. One media buyer, speaking anonymously, says a client recently was hesitant to go with Bleacher Report because it wasn’t a mainstream sports outlet. So they picked an established media partner. “We’re still a challenger brand to ESPN and CBS Sports, but you’re getting more bang for your buck,” says Daniels.

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The drive for viewable ads is stoking ad blocking

BY LUCIA MOSES

It’s hard to find many who argue that ads shouldn’t be viewable. The days of buying and selling digital ads that aren’t viewable by humans should be over. But what if solving the viewability problem is indirectly causing that other industry scourge du jour, ad blocking?

It’s easy to see how this can happen. Agencies and advertisers want to ensure their ads are in view. A sure-fire way to do this is by making sure ads are as big and obnoxious as possible. But that’s in direct conflict with the idea that advertising should be unobtrusive, so people aren’t encouraged to block ads. Twenty-six percent of internet users block ads, according to a study on behalf of About.com’s experience shows how hard it is to measure user experience, with all the factors that go into it. It not only can vary by user, but by the site they’re on, points out Geoff Schiller, global CRO of PopSugar. “It’s hard to get attention for potentially more interesting ad formats when they don’t score as high in viewability. And while there might be general agreement on what the most egregious ads are, what makes an ad “bad” is somewhat in the eye of the beholder. It not only can vary by user, but by what they’re doing. A web surfer might not mind flashy ads while visiting an entertainment site but have a much different expectation when on a general news or health information site. The IAB is working on a system to score publishers and advertisers on their adherence to the organization’s “LEAN” best ad practices, but even it admits that it’s hard to measure user experience, with all the factors that go into it.

And measurement approaches are imperfect. Even giant takeover ads aren’t always considered 100 percent in view, depending on how far down the page they are, points out Geoff Schiller, global CRO of PopSugar. “It’s a What a Mole type of scenario,” he says. And viewability vendors’ tracking approaches work best for intrusive units, which makes those units a more popular choice for agencies, according to Kargo. Kargman is trying to push to the solution and say, ‘Use this because it’s viewable.” — NEIL VOGEL

Montgomery believes that the types of ads consumers hate, like animated and unskippable ads, are restricted to a minority of publishers. “I really do think there’s a happy medium. Dancing monkeys and wobbly belly fat and autoplay video ads are happening not because of viewability. I think it’s because publishers are desperate to monetize their sites. That’s what’s irritating consumers and causing them to ad block.”

Part of the problem in reconciling the goals of viewability and user experience has to do with the way viewability is measured. There’s no industry standard, which means a publisher’s viewability score can vary depending on which vendor is doing the measuring.

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Like many publishers, The Financial Times used to treat its error page as an afterthought. Readers would land on it when an article couldn’t be found. It was polite and had utilitarian value, but was drab and lacked personality.

Last year, however, after a staff-wide competition, the British newspaper rolled out a new 404 page that exposes a clever list of economic theories why the page wasn’t found. “Laissez-faire capitalism: We know this page is needed, but we can’t force anyone to make it.”

The page is a result of a new unit: FT Labs. Labs is charged with tackling projects big and small that don’t fit into the normal development processes, like the 404 page, or long-term projects that don’t have an immediate application but are seen as worth exploring.

“We had quite possibly the worst 404 page in the world,” says Chris Gathercole, who heads FT Labs, an ongoing technology team at the British financial newspaper. “It just screamed ‘We don’t care’ to whoever got it.”

Gathercole, with three developers underneath him, is exploring how to bring together disparate departments to work on things together in a place where “there’s lots of Whac-a-Mole,” Gathercole says, “we’re going to look for long-term things that serve everyone.”

Its work also could have bigger implications for Japanese media giant Nikkei, which bought the FT in 2015, and which is looking at applying lessons from Labs to the rest of the company.

Projects that FT Labs has worked on has seen subscribers share articles with friends who don’t subscribe, but the process was clunky. So FT Labs built a way to let subscribers share an article via their own personal email.

“It helps to have a few pairs of eyes focusing on the horizon.” — Chris Gathercole

FT Labs was also involved in part of the FT’s response to ad blocking. In that case, it created a feature where certain ad blocker users would see various words of an article blocked out. It was part of a test that began in July. Other test groups got messages asking them to whitelist the site or were just blocked from seeing the article altogether. Sometimes, the FT Labs team takes on the projects that fell through the cracks, like the FT’s 404 error page.

But things haven’t always been smooth sailing. FT Labs is still figuring out how to make sure the work it does gets off the ground and gets carried on elsewhere. Gathercole readily admits that Labs hasn’t always succeeded. When it built web-based screens to display content around the FT’s offices, the publisher’s in-house communications team adopted them as their primary way of disseminating news to its employees. The small Labs team didn’t have enough people to run them and continue to work on new projects, but it couldn’t just switch off the screens. Lesson learned: FT Labs is in the process of turning the screens’ operation over to another department. “It got really awkward,” Gathercole said. “It’s a thing that happens at hackathons. People have the freedom to go crazy for a couple of days, but then it’s, what happens next?”

It’s hard to get something like FT Labs right, says Andrew Betts, the former head of FT Labs and now a technology consultant at the FT. Publishers tend to assign product teams to work on big projects, but those don’t allow for much creativity. Ideally, a labs team has creative freedom to discover the next big thing, but has a team in place to hand the baton to. “The biggest problem is having to pick the right projects and making sure they won’t take over,” he says. Even Betts admitted he “never got the FT Labs’ haiku project, which discovered the accidental Japanese poetry hidden in FT articles, whereas another initiative, Big FT, digital billboards that display FT news, is ongoing and has made it to the monetization stage.

Having a team that operates with a loose mandate has other risks. FT Labs has wide latitude to do things that focus on the long-term, but that presents a delicate situation. “A lot of dev teams would love to operate the way we do,” Gathercole says. “We’re conscious of not becoming this group of happy smiling people while the dev people do all the hard work.” To that end, the labs team is trying to support the dev team by being an incubator for their ideas. “It’s also thinking about building things that have a measurable benefit, like increased ad revenue or subscriptions, in order to not ‘disappear off an ivory tower,’” Gathercole put it.

But the team still enjoys relative freedom and stability, having a budget in place. “Things are changing so fast, I think the company realizes you can’t just focus on the now. It helps to have a few pairs of eyes focusing on the horizon.”

By Lucia Moses
Marketing
In 2009, Britt Dougherty was reviewing ads for MillerCoors along with its agency. The group was going through storyboards for a new television campaign, and it included lots of ads featuring women. Great.

Just one problem: All of them were for beer.

That means no more frat guys in bikinis.

“Remember thinking, ‘Who is going to speak up about this?’” recalls Dougherty, 37. “And no one did. As I remember being on the subway and thinking of, how they’re marketed to, and how to create a beer culture as nuanced, or normal. And 72 percent of women who self-identified as ‘confident,’ continue to be underrepresented in beer advertising. But if they drink beer, women don’t even like the taste of beer. To market to women, we’d have to alienate men. Beer is manly. Sexism is OK, as long as it’s funny. ‘We really had to debunk those myths, otherwise it was going to prevent us from making progress in the industry,’ says Dougherty, who recently made a presentation about the new realities of beer advertising at the annual MillerCoors distributing convention, asking distributors to help her debunk those myths and in return, she’d get them marketing that was relevant to every customer.

Usually, the stage at distributor conventions is reserved for C-suite executives. There was trepidation among those distributors, a cohort of women who do drink beer, even though many have moved away from the category, potentially, because they haven’t been talked to in advertising. But if they drink beer, they’re going to craft beer, because of a growth of female beer sommeliers and craft communities like Women Drinking Beer, both of which focus on small batch craft beers. In some ways, the small craft beer industry managed to attract women without trying, while big billion dollar brands managed to alienate them.

“One woman was telling Dougherty how she used to not like beer because of its bitter taste, but is learning to like it, through craft beer, because it’s ‘what we do here.’”

“It reminded me that we do hear that from legal drinking age men that they don’t like beer but they like it because they’re hanging with their buddies,” says Dougherty. There is a societal benefit for men to participate in beer. And it’s our job to create a societal benefit for women to participate in beer as well. There are plenty of bitter things like coffee and brussels sprouts, too.”

A national survey presented at the Craft Brewers Conference found that women continue to be underrepresented in beer drinkers. Some of the reasons “why” are telling: Beer drinkers tended to be women who self-identified as “confident,” implying that cultural mores told women that beer drinking wasn’t something natural, or normal. And 72 percent of craft beer drinkers were also frustrated by brands that treated them as an afterthought.

At the same time, the sheer number of women who do drink beer — and yet, aren’t talked to in beer advertising — is also staggering. Market research company Icasus said that women drank 17 billion servings of beer in 2016, 25 percent of the volume in the category. (That’s down from a decade ago, which means women are now moving away from beer.)

The truth is, a lot of people don’t like beer when they start, but when drinking beer is rooted in the culture, you end up acquiring the taste.”

And that “culture” is what Dougherty wants to fix. The first thing she did is try to figure out why she was seeing the kinds of advertising she was seeing when it came to Big Beer. “We did talk to a lot of people the business, we talked to our partners” she says. “We were asking, ‘Why haven’t we paid more attention, why haven’t we evolved our dialog with a quarter of the volume of the category?’” It came down to myths that had been passed down from generation to generation of marketers.

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A national survey presented at the Craft Brewers Conference found that women continue to be underrepresented in beer drinkers. Some of the reasons “why” are telling: Beer drinkers tended to be women who self-identified as “confident,” implying that cultural mores told women that beer drinking wasn’t something natural, or normal. And 72 percent of craft beer drinkers were also frustrated by brands that treated them as an afterthought.

At the same time, the sheer number of women who do drink beer — and yet, aren’t talked to in beer advertising — is also staggering. Market research company Icasus said that women drank 17 billion servings of beer in 2016, 25 percent of the volume in the category. (That’s down from a decade ago, which means women are now moving away from beer.)

The truth is, a lot of people don’t like beer when they start, but when drinking beer is rooted in the culture, you end up acquiring the taste.”

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people that get kegs, bottles and cases from brewers to local bars, stores and restaurants. Pete Marino, chief communications officer at the company, says Dougherty’s presentation managed to assuage many of their fears.

Among many other points in the presentation, one slide put the onus on everyone, not just MillerCoors employees: “We can create the most appealing, gender-friendly TV spots on air today, but it won’t matter if on premise sampling teams show up wearing short shorts and tight t-shirts.”

Dougherty elaborates: “Beer makes you fat? Women don’t like the taste of beer? We can’t sell beer to women?” Nonsense.

When projects that aren’t in the official budget are thought of by employees, MillerCoors assigns a sponsor in the executive team to each one. Marino was the sponsor for Project Luna. When Dougherty started explaining why she was championing it, he says he was sold. “Beer marketing had devolved. There was a need to evolve it,” he says. “And Britt had the passion and energy to do it. But also, she has universal respect. So when she speaks, people pay attention. That goes a long way into pushing something like this through.”

Dougherty sees her job as bringing empathy into marketing. And one big part is her transformation of marketing inside MillerCoors: to never think about beer drinkers as consumers, or even “targets.” The people buying products are people, human beings. One key shift was changing market research into going beyond focus groups into more anthropological studies. Then, it was to be clear on what Miller’s values were so the brand could create what Dougherty calls “an emotional connection with the brand.”

What that looks like is varied. Internally, it just means MillerCoors is more cognizant about how it thinks of its customers. Externally, it’s reached in more ads that speak to all genders, not just to men or even just to women. That’s because you don’t need separate brands “for women” and also, take out the potential risk of alienating men.

Probably a good thing, since there have been plenty of hamfisted attempts to “get women to drink beer” through pinkwashing: creating specific brands that are made for women. In 2011, Molson Coors launched Animee, a beer made for women that came in yellow, light yellow — and you guessed it, pink. Women thought it was patronizing and also just tasted bad.

Dougherty says that ads in recent campaigns like “Climb On,” which features a series of ads showing both men and women conquering personal goals like a marathon or a rodeo; a female chef working hard all day before enjoying a Coors Light with her staff, are the outward manifestations of her mission at MillerCoors to invite women into a conversation occupied by men. Dougherty said the brand has seen increases in penetration in women with no ill-effects on men. According to Ace Metrix, which measures video ad impact, the four ads from the Coors Light “Climb On” campaign scored “below” the normal for women and performed better among men than women. Women used terms of admiration 11 percent of the time when watching these ads, compared with 14 percent of the time with men.

“We know we have millions of barrels of opportunity if we do this right,” she says. 

Markets: Climb On commercials

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**COLOR CODE**

Pantone is a quiet force in the hue of pop culture

BY HILARY MILNES

**BETTY BOOP’S 2016 REVAMP**

When Betty Boop needed a fresh update this year, Pantone picked a “modern” red for the “toon, who turned 86 on August 9. “You want one color that expresses the nature of Betty Boop today,” says Shah.

**THE WALL OF TOWELS AT BED BATH & BEYOND**

A set of towels available at Bed, Bath and Beyond in taupe, seafoam green, eggplant purple and white got its color palette from a team of Pantone consultants, of which there are hundreds all over the world, hand selected for their expertise in home interior.

**LIMITED-EDITION LUXURY CONVERTIBLES**

Bentley worked with Pantone to release a special limited edition model in two colors: Rose Quartz and Serenity, pink and blue shades designated as 2016’s Colors of the Year.

**THE COLORS OF FASHION COLLECTIONS**

According to Shah, fashion retailers are aware that the color selection within their new collections each season have an effect on how well they sell. Pantone plucks different specialists from all over the world into one “bespoke color consultancy” for each retail client, providing opinions from people in different countries and industries for a well-rounded point of view for the collection.

**SEPORA’S COLOR IQ**

Sephora partnered with Pantone to implement Color IQ, its in-store tool that scans a customer’s skin and then determines their exact shading, as well as the foundations that match.

**COLOR OF THE YEAR**

Pantone makes headlines for having chosen its latest Color of the Year each January. The award, which airs on the side of arbitrary to outsiders, is the result of months of combing the art, fashion and entertainment industries at trade shows, red carpets and fashion weeks. But it’s more than just a presence in the arts, the color (or colors) should reflect the “mood of society.” In 2016, that mood was “balance and harmony,” hence the colors, Rose Quartz and Serenity. Past winners: Marsala, Radiant Orchid, Emerald and Tangerine Tango.

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Pantone is a consulting agency, founded in 1956, that’s responsible for some of the most important color decisions that we see, even if it’s impossible to know that a product or logo has the company’s touch. The Carlstadt, New Jersey, company boasts more than 10 million clients worldwide. Here’s a look at some of Pantone’s highest-profile color projects, as explained by Kathryn Shah, Pantone’s vp of global marketing.

**THOSE MINIONS**

The banana yellow that’s come to symbolize the Minions characters? It was chosen with help from Pantone.

**THE BLUE BOX**

Color consistency is especially important for a brand like Tiffany, whose chosen signature blue has become the jewelry retailer’s most recognizable trait. Pantone counts Tiffany as a client, and whenever the company has a new product roll out or campaign, it works with the color experts to keep its blue-and-white scheme the same as the last.

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“SHE USES SOCIAL TO LET PEOPLE DO THE TALKING FOR HER.”
During the 2016 Democratic National Convention, thousands of Twitter users were sharing or retweeting a link from Clinton’s nomination acceptance speech: “A man you can bait with a tweet is not a man we can trust with nuclear weapons.” This tweet captured many Americans’ concerns about Trump’s temperament. It was a bait: If Trump responded, Clinton was proven right; if he kept silent, he admitted defeat.

This tweet also shows the Clinton campaign’s ability to manage real-time marketing, as well as a major difference between her social strategy and Trump’s. The former is about allowing people to take part in the conversation through relatable content, while the latter is about building his personal brand via self-centered comments, said David Gaines, chief planning officer for agency Malaria.

“Her social content with a sense of humor attached helps people make a point that they may not feel comfortable to say otherwise,” said Gaines. “She doesn’t have polarized opinions on Twitter, Facebook or other channels. She uses social to let people do the talking for her.”

And often that means turning Trump’s words against him. Take Trump Yourself, for instance, a game that lets players put Trump’s offensive remarks—including “[Women are] always griping and bitching,” and “If you need Viagra, you’re probably with the wrong girl”—on their Twitter and Facebook profiles. From July 20 to August 25, the hashtag #TrumpYourself raked in around 60,000 tweets, according to Amobee Brand Intelligence analysis.

The team also debuted a TV ad called “Our children are watching” in July that makes a fundamental argument about the Clinton campaign: “Donald Trump isn’t a role model we want for our kids,” said Olin.

A FOCUS ON DATA
Of course, elections aren’t won and lost on witty tweets. They are frequently won on data, however. When people share and like Clinton’s posts on social or play the “Trump Yourself” game, her campaign team is collecting email addresses, and converting traffic into actions such as her get-out-the-vote efforts.

When Trump says something offensive, for example, an email from the Clinton team would come out with an embedded video right after, saying that “we need to stop Trump and please donate $10.” Obviously $10 is really nothing. What the team wants is your name, address and inclination that is triggered by the activity. It will then analyze your behavior and get you out to vote.

“One thing that is not understood by many is that social media innovations in the Clinton campaign are directly tied to the field grassroots operations,” said the anonymous source.

The source explained that the Obama campaign had five or six different databases for different functionalities like fundraising and volunteering. But now all of them have been integrated into one single CRM system in the Clinton campaign. When her team combines social data with other datasets like the voting files that show who voted in the past elections and who didn’t even though they registered, it can identify potential voters.

Then, armies of volunteers go door to door to identify voters and get them out to vote. They evaluate those supporters and put their information into the centralized database.

“They know which five people in this neighborhood will vote for Hillary and will absolutely get them out to vote,” he said. “That type of on-the-ground operations and sophistication of data and targeting is absent from the Trump campaign. They simply just don’t have it or they just don’t know how to build it. It’s in many ways the secret weapon of the Clinton campaign.”

#ImWithHer
A look inside the Clinton campaign’s social strategy

BY YU CHEN

There, more than 100 people on the digital team are crammed in, trying to figure out the best strategy to help the candidate inch closer to the White House, while 10 millennials in charge of social media are typing out posts.

“T’ll be a media startup, where young people hash out content every hour,” said Edda Collins Coleman, founder and managing director of the White House, while 10 millennials in charge of social media are typing out posts.

“SHE USES SOCIAL TO LET PEOPLE DO THE TALKING FOR HER.”

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Tequila Sunrise

Patrón is leading a renaissance for a liquor once synonymous with bad decisions and worse hangovers

BY TANYA DUA

W hen Philip Ward, Ravi defostini and Justin Shapiro opened their specialty tequila bar Mayahuel in New York’s East Village in 2009, tequila was the ugly step-sibling to whiskey and bourbon. Synonymous with margaritas at best, and hangover-inducing shots at worst, the spirit was far removed from the craft cocktail renaissance that was just beginning to take off.

“Most people would get flashbacks of their 16-year-old selves drinking bottles of Cuervo and getting the most insane hangovers when they heard of tequila,” says Shapiro. “They couldn’t tell the good ones apart from the bad ones, since most had only ever been familiar with the cheap, ‘mexico’ variety.”

Today, tequila has successfully shaken its lick-shot-suck-fruity image. Evolving consumer palates and a shift towards more premium, 100 percent agave varieties has put tequila on a sustained upswing, with total tequila volumes had only ever been familiar with the

competition in the category from brands like Pernod Ricard’s Avión and Diageo’s Don Julio by investing in new product lines and emphasizing “substance over style” in its marketing.

“We relied heavily on our swagger and our market share for the longest time,” says Lee Applbaum, Patrón’s CMO. “But macro trends necessitated that we shifted the focus on our story and process much more.”

FRATTY BEGINNINGS
First launched in 1989 by hairdressing tycoon John Paul DeJoria, the $45-a-bottle Patrón is credited with being the industry’s first “premium” tequila. But it didn’t get mainstream attention until the early 2000s, when nightclub and bottle service culture began to take off and the brand saw itself namechecked in hundreds of rap and hip hop songs of the decade, including the massive 2009 hit “Patrón Tequila” by The Paradiso Girls, Lil John and Eve.

“Patrón’s initial marketing strategy took a page out of Grey Goose and Sidney Frank’s playbook, aligning the brand with fancy events, nightclubs and celebrities,” says Noah Rothbaum, senior editor of food and drink at The Daily Beast. “That strategy and its iconic bottle may have become better known for its hand blown glass bottles and cork stoppers, but it’s more than just a fancy bottle. The brand decided to play up the fact that its tequila is a product of the tahona process, in which a giant stone wheel made of volcanic rock shreds the agave plant to release its fiber and juice, before they are fermented in wooden casks and distilled in small capacity, handcrafted copper pot stills.

Realizing that consumers today are eager for transparency and authenticity, Patrón has been leaning much more on its heritage to appeal to a growing pool of tequila aficionados. “The tahona process had its roots and production process in a campaign called “Art of Patrón.” One such video in the series, for example, highlighted the story behind how the cock in each Patrón bottle is handcrafted, and netted more than 386,000 views. Last summer, Patrón even launched “The Art of Patrón Virtual Reality Experience,” which let consumers take a virtual tour of its distillery, the Hacienda Patrón in Jalisco. Combining Oculus Rift technology with drone-recorded and live-action video, the brand took viewers through its production process, from the point of view of a bee as it flew through the hacienda. It also launched a program called “Know Your NDM,” which lets fans find out where a particular tequila is made by entering the “NOM,” a unique identifier found on tequila bottles that identifies the distillery where it was made.

Patrón has also been doing its bit to make tequila more palatable to everyone, including pushing cocktail recipes out on platforms like Amazon’s smart speaker Echo. Users can ask Echo’s Alexa Voice Service for anything, even cocktail recipes and facts about tequila, thanks to “Patrón Cocktail Lab,” an interactive cocktail recommendation system. They can also save drinks to their profiles, print recipe cards, watch how-to videos and follow favorite bartenders.

“We aren’t trying to distance ourselves from the bro fraternity,” says Applbaum. “We had to start catering to the ‘knows,’ those who didn’t care about the style and the swagger and were more interested in the product quality.”

PATRÓN’S PIVOT
Patrón may have become better known for its hand blown glass bottles and cork stoppers, but it’s more than just a fancy bottle. Patrón’s party persona had become a liability. It was around this time that a new generation of craft cocktail-oriented consumers with an affinity for artisanal and handcrafted spirits was emerging, and distillers, mixologists and bartenders were becoming celebrities in their own right.

“We had our equity with the bro, but we had to play catch up with other sections of the audience,” says Applbaum. “We had to start catering to the ‘knows,’ those who didn’t care about the style and the swagger and were more interested in the product quality.”

But by the turn of the decade, Patrón’s party persona had become a liability. It was around this time that a new generation of craft cocktail-oriented consumers with an affinity for artisanal and handcrafted spirits was emerging, and distillers, mixologists and bartenders were becoming celebrities in their own right.

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For the first 20 years of the brand, our messaging had to reflect that,” says Applbaum. “We’re just trying to make sure our fans know that we’re as authentic as any other brand out there.”

But not everyone is convinced.

“PATRÓN TEQUILA”
Patrón, Paradiso Girls feat Lil Jon and Eve

“I’m on Patrón, Tequila I’m drunk on Margarita That Patrón, Patrón Me and Patrón mamacita “BLAME IT”
Jamie Foxx
Blame me on the Goose, got you feelin’ loose Blame me on Patrón, got you in the zone Blame me on all the al-al-al-al alcohol “SHOTS”
Lit
Patrón’s on the rocks and I’m ready for some shots The women come around everytime I’m pouring shots “SNAP YO FINGERS”
Lit Jon
What’s happenin’, what’s up Got ya purdy fired up What’s happenin’, what’s up Got Patrón in my cup I got my drink I’m on Patrón and purp, I can’t thank I’m blown, to tha do’ don’t know how the hell I’m gettin’ home “MY DRINK N’ MY 2 STEP”
Comedy feat Swizz Beatz
I got my drink and my two step, my drink and my two step Got my drink and my two step, my drink and my two step It’s on! It’s on, it’s on (and I’m home) (Get the Patron and sell’em that it’s on)
FASHION DESIGNER PRABAL GURUNG WAS SITTING IN A TAXI ON HIS WAY TO A VICTORIA’S SECRET SHOW last November when a bus roared past.

The advertising on the bus—Lane Bryant’s “I’m No Angel” campaign—turned out to be the answer to a question he’d had for two years.

“I wanted plus size to be a big part of my brand’s DNA. I was thinking, ‘How the hell am I going to do this on my own? Do I launch it?’” and when I saw the bus it really hit me: that’s it,” he said.

It took less than a year for the two brands to announce a plus size partnership. Gurung, who regularly uses models up to size 22 but struggles to sell them to stores, was Lane Bryant’s 50th partnership with a luxury designer.

Gurung is unique in that he’s one of the few luxury designers devoted to luxury plus size fashion, a market that is growing year on year. Increasingly, many women are old girls buying plus size clothing because they love fashion and designers trying to increase the available.

In February, Sports Illustrated featured model Ashley Graham, who’s a size 16, on the cover of its 2016 Swimsuit edition. Four months later, Ghostbusters actress Leslie Jones tweeted that no designers wanted to dress her for movie premier. Luxury designer Christian Siriano tweeted back saying he would.

The result of both situations put the conversation around plus size front and center. Siriano, widely praised for dressing Jones, was quick to respond it shouldn’t be exceptional to work with people who aren’t sample size. “Congratulations in order, a change is,” his Facebook comment read.

Data shows the conversation on the issue is growing. Over the past six months, the term “plus size” was mentioned 2.9 million times across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, among other platforms, according to social analytics firm Neilsen.

Toni Fox, senior director of social and content at PMX Agency, says of the Facebook posts, Tweets and Instagram comments that included “fashion” and “plus size,” 61 percent were negative and in response to how a plus size women was defined. The comments that mentioned “luxury” and “plus size” together, which only accounted for 1 percent of the total comments, were all negative, and focused on calling out luxury brands who are not making larger sizes.

“Judging by the data, it seems that the luxury space, to some extent, still excludes plus size,” she says.

“The issue is that most designers design because they love fashion and creativity, and not necessarily to solve a problem or answer a market need,” says Shira Sue Carmi, founder of the business management firm, Launch Collective. “It’s this thinking and design process that’s holding luxury designers from entering this space, as well as their experiences with fashion magazines and runway photos which are centered around an idea of a “fictionalized” woman, not one whose body needs to be addressed and flattered, she said. “You only need to look at designer’s stashes to see how most of them think about clothing and bodies.”

Two thirds of America’s female population wears a size 12 or larger, but luxury designers are largely ignoring those figures, says Lane Bryant’s CMO Brian To petite. “The high end market is gaining curiosity, but I wouldn’t tell you high end is running into a curvy customer space.”

The brand’s collaborations with luxury designers including Isabel Toledo, who designed Michelle Obama’s 2009 inauguration outfit, and Christian Siriano, is just one example of retailers and designers trying to increase the options of high end fashion for the plus size market. The collaboration with Gurung, which is due to hit shelves next March, will also be priced lower than his typical collections, ranging from $48 for a t-shirt and $398 for a leather jacket.

Gurung is outspoken and critical of how slow the luxury fashion industry is to change. He says when he offers up to a size 22, retail and department store buyers rarely take the size. But he doesn’t lay all the blame with them.

“Retailers are all trying to figure it out, they have logistics and it’s unfair to tell them they’re not changing fast enough.”

“Social media has been a catalyst for conversation, but Gurung believes the biggest driver of change will happen through small boutiques, and he thinks that’s where conversations need to start happening. He says his brand is launching e-commerce later in the year, but declined to give any details as to whether plus size pieces would be readily available.

Smaller retailers have the advantage of being on the shop floor with customers and knowing what they want and need, says Dawn Klohs, one of the owners of A’maree’s, a duo of small California-based clothing boutiques.

“Department store buyers are not on the floor with their customers. There’s a disconnect,” Klohs says. She stocks high end designers including Peter Cohen, Valentino Kova and Arts and Science, up to sizes XXL, or size 16. “A lot of people create larger sizes, but it’s not what a larger size wants to wear.”

Brand reps need to shift their thinking too, Klohs adds. Many reps will call a size 12 and 14 will be too large when she requests them and her buyers have to reinforce their customers want them. “We’re like, ‘No, you don’t understand we need that size.’ A lot of people don’t think that way,” she says.

The fashion trends forecaster, WGSN, says acceptance towards plus size models and fashion has seen some major turning points this year, noting the increasing number of Lane Bryant partnerships. Ashley Graham’s appearance in Sports Illustrated, and plus size model Candice Huffine’s appearance in designer Sophie Theallet’s Spring 2016 show. “The plus size market is definitely on the verge of another revolution,” says Lourdes Linera, WGSN’s West Coast editor.

From Gurung’s perspective the conversation has started, but it still has a long way to go.

“The conversation should no longer be, ‘X, Y, Z is doing it,’” he said. “It should be, ‘Why isn’t everyone doing it?’” Still, he’s optimistic that winning over the small boutiques is the first step. “Big changes happen in small places.”
Video

TV

"One of the things that Pinterest has done through Snapchat is that it’s given people an expectation that is content there. It’s not B2B, it’s a great entry point for shows to stream out. And that’s something—we have a lot up on versus what a print or pure online publisher could do." — John Nasioni, Nickelodeon

Esports

Going mainstream

Weekly TBS broadcast of parent company Turner’s "ELeague" averaged 271,000 viewers, according to Nielsen. It’s not the millions that the NFL and NBA get, but it’s up significantly from the 94,000 ESPN2 had for an eSports competition the year prior.

Facebook Live, by numbers:

$150 million: How much Facebook is paying media companies & celebrities to regularly create live videos for its platform.

140: The number of media companies and celebrities on the platform.

$2.1 million: How much BuzzFeed, the highest paid Facebook Live partner.

807,000: Peak viewership for BuzzFeed’s "I’m getting to go live between March 2016 and March 2017."

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"Everyone is awash in the millions of videos people are putting on live-weight servers. They make it as if they’re putting on Facebook that the money is going to hit them before it hits anyone else."

— Keith Hernandez, Slate

TED

Sarandos

"If you don’t like what you’re watching on Netflix, it’s just the click of a button."

"We knew we were making a bet on the revenue model. We were making an ‘investment declaration’ and it’s not cheap. So we have to take these big swings every once in a while."

"We’re not competing against ABC sitcoms. We’re competing against Princeton Geo, we’re competing against 200 million blockbuster movies."

Gracenote

VS

AI

"If the moments could be captured in real-time and at scale, then once we were able to actually identify these moments."

"We have a system that lets us see what moments are happening within a TV show, and we can trigger to go to a deep dive and build a menu that captures the viewers' interest."

Justin Smith

"The digital world is interesting because..."
Matt Bellassai had never written a book proposal before. But there he was, four days before he was scheduled to meet with book publishers earlier this year, getting a stern talking-to from his literary agent at CAA. His first stab at a proposal could be personally rewarding, but a Facebook video series called “Whine About It,” in which Bellassai would get drunk and rant about various things that were on his mind. Typical videos come with titles like “Reasong Mornings are the Absolute Worst” and “Reasons Growing Up is the Worst.” (Grownup parties are the fucking worst, go the drunken rant. “You have to wear a bow tie, talk about khaki pants and carry a briefcase.”)

It grew to be incredibly popular — 1.5 million fans and 5.5 million views per week by January 2016 — and Bellassai thought there was an opportunity to bring a popular web format — albeit, unlike most videos — in a scripted form to the social network.

To be fair, internal politics played a role in the decision. YouTube, Facebook and other social platforms have made it easier to create videos and distribute them to the masses. Now anyone with the right idea or face can become a video icon. It’s great for companies like BuzzFeed, which can leverage their growing talents to grow a big video business. On the other hand, it can be a headache if the talent wants to move on or do something else. (Earlier this year, for instance, BuzzFeed fired two of its stars, Brittany Ashley and Jenny Lorenzo, after they appeared in a web series produced by America Ferrera — breaching the company’s non-compete contract.)

Bellassai’s not done. He still has his website, Facebook series and is working on another web series unaffiliated with his show. He’s also looking to do more stand-up specials later in the year.

NR

BUZZED AND ALONE

About two and a half years into his time at BuzzFeed, Bellassai came up with the idea to bring YouTube-style, straight-to-camera videos to Facebook. Facebook was just beginning its explosive foray into video, and Bellassai thought there was an opportunity to bring a popular web format and it was easier to just put it on Facebook. A program that offered career support for its homegrown talent in exchange for a two-year exclusivity on their content. Seven BuzzFeed stars, including The Try Guys and Abyl Perez signed the dotted line — Bellassai didn’t.

“I was thinking about the long term,” says Bellassai. “When I worked at BuzzFeed, the page I published to had my name on it, but it wasn’t mine; it was owned by BuzzFeed. It felt counterintuitive to be investing all of this energy in growing a page with my name on it where, if at some point I were to leave, I would have to give it up. It’s a relatively new conundrum in the media business. The rise of YouTube, Facebook and other social platforms has made it easier to create videos and distribute them to the masses. Now anyone with the right idea or face can become a video icon. It’s great for companies like BuzzFeed, which can leverage their growing talents to grow a big video business. On the other hand, it can be a headache if the talent wants to move on or do something else. (Earlier this year, for instance, BuzzFeed fired two of its stars, Brittany Ashley and Jenny Lorenzo, after they appeared in a web series produced by America Ferrera — breaching the company’s non-compete contract.)

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As for that book proposal?

“Two weeks after I went to the meeting and she left the room, I just wrote — something like ‘Thank god, thank god you left before the first meeting and she was nothing is going to come your way, from the standpoint of massive brand dollars, unless you have a significant enough of an audience,” says Rafi Mamalian, CEO of influencer marketing firm The Amplify. “It takes a lot of work to develop that audience, and it’s not something that’s going to happen in a day. Even the ones who are really succeeding are putting in a lot of effort.”

On Facebook, Bellassai has been restablishing his following. His new Facebook page has grown to 441,000 followers since January. His new series, “To Be Honest,” which he writes and shoots on his own — and is a virtual copy of “Whine About It” — generates more than 2.5 million views per month, according to Tubular Labs.

But Facebook does not keep the light on.

“The challenge is, in the movie business or TV business, it’s just not possible for someone to go make their own movie or TV show in their spare time,” says Chris Dorr, executive director of the Global Online Video Association. “It’s a situation that all of these [new media] companies will have to find ways to navigate.

Bellassai does not have any regrets about his departure from BuzzFeed, but he doesn’t have any regrets either. In fact, he remains friends with several of the creators that elected to sign with BuzzFeed. “It was a learning process for everybody,” says Bellassai. “It was difficult for [BuzzFeed] to suddenly have a situation where they are basically a studio and a talent agency and needing to figure out what to do with the talent.”

DRUNK AND ALONE

Fame can be fleeting. For an independent online video star, that means working double — even triple — to stay current, relevant and interesting for an audience that has too many distractions just a click or tap away.

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Inside Verizon’s struggle to build a digital entertainment business

BY SAHIL PATEL

Can You Stream Me Now?

On a humid Thursday night in August, a team of Verizon marketing execs and PR handlers invited reporters to a private theater in the basement of the Wythe Hotel in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. The purpose of this “off-the-record” gathering was to screen six upcoming original series for Go90, Verizon’s fledgling mobile video-streaming app, and receive feedback on the shows.

The projects themselves varied. There was the football series starring former members of the “Jersey Shore” cast, which is about fictional washed-up football players; another scripted comedy about fictional washed-up fashion-week models; a former members of the “Jersey Shore” cast, which is about fictional washed-up football players; another scripted comedy about fictional washed-up fashion-week models; a scripted sports comedy of former members of the “Jersey Shore” cast, which is about fictional washed-up football players; another scripted comedy about fictional washed-up fashion-week models; a scripted sports comedy about fictional washed-up fashion-week models; a scripted sports comedy about fictional washed-up fashion-week models; and a former members of the “Jersey Shore” cast, which is about fictional washed-up football players.

For all the investments Verizon has spent an additional $75-$100 million. Since last year, the company has spent more than $200 million during this spree — and that doesn’t even including money spent on marketing Go90, for which sources estimate the company has spent an additional $75-$100 million. Individuals deals vary between $50 million to $150 million, depending on the amount of content, whether any originals are involved and if the seller has agreed to help with marketing.

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THE PHONE COMPANY WANTS TO BE A MEDIA COMPANY

It’s hard to build something from scratch. It’s even harder if you’re trying to build a streaming video business in an environment dominated by Netflix, Hulu and YouTube. Oh, and Amazon. And Snapchat. Come to think of it, Facebook, too. Let’s just say that video in 2018 isn’t exactly what the MBA types would call a “white space.”

That hasn’t stopped Verizon from trying to make Go90 happen. The phone company wants very much to be a media company. If it’s Verizon dropped $4.4 billion to buy AOL and $8.1 billion to pick up Yahoo. Together, these portals give Verizon a distribution pipeline of 363 million monthly users in the U.S. alone, per comscore.

Those are a lot of eyeballs to sell to advertisers. All Verizon needs is the content — or so it thinks.

Since last year, the company has been one of the most active buyers in the video market, scooping up libraries of existing TV and digital content as well as commissioning original shows from the likes of AwesomenessTV, BuzzFeed and Vice. It also offers live soccer, NFL and NBA games, though some of those are restricted to Verizon Wireless subscribers and NBA League Pass subscribers.

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The “thousands.” One even jokes that the service should be called “slow 90.”

“Early on, we thought the platform had promise, but it was an absolute clunker when it launched,” says one Go90 publishing partner. “We get the sense that unless you’re one of the premier folks they paid piles of money to for original content, there isn’t much there from a traffic perspective,” said another.

But this was no ordinary focus group. Money — real money — was spent on marketing Go90, for which sources estimate the company has spent an additional $75-$100 million. Individuals deals vary between $50 million to $150 million, depending on the amount of content, whether any originals are involved and if the seller has agreed to help with marketing.

It does take a big investment to succeed in video,” says Brian Wisser, senior analyst at Factiva. “The issue is, if you have a business that’s only generating a billion dollars a year — that’s not really meaningful for a company the size of Verizon.”

Writing Checks Isn’t a Strategy

But money doesn’t equal eyeballs. For all the investments Verizon has made in Go90, content partners paint a picture of a video service that’s still trying to figure out the ground and attracting viewers.

Multiple content partners say individual video-viewer number is the “thousands.” One even jokes that the service should be called “slow 90.”

“The sell was essentially: Go90 can’t do any worse, here’s an opportunity for you to reshape, reform and grow this,” says a headhunter who worked with Verizon to seek a search for head of content.

In July, Kirkhride is currently building out a content team that can build close-working relationships with studios and creators in Hollywood. This team would complement the two dozen people Verizon has on its content and acquisitions team, which also oversees the company’s Fios TV business.

“These are real executives who know what they’re doing, who have long-term relationships [in digital and entertainment],” says Marc Lieberman, svp of business development at Above Average, an online comedy network owned by “SNL” boss Lorne Michaels’ Broadway Video. “They’re not going ‘Oh, we’re going to put some digital shows on this job who haven’t developed any original content and wish them the best of luck.”

IN IT TO WIN IT

Carter is aware of the hard task ahead of him.

“Go90 is nearly 20 years old; Hulu is 10; YouTube is 11. None of these things happen overnight,” he says. “They have all taken certain positions. As we develop our video portfolio, we believe there is a space for premium content targeted for a younger demo that’s ad-supported and combines the best of originals, live sports and acquired content.”

Since joining, Carter’s set out to refine the Go90 product to focus on a core set of eight verticals in comedy, drama, sports and other genres. Within these verticals, Go90 is rebuilding its efforts to make distinctive, quality original series and pairing them with everything else that viewer might enjoy. A sports fan might want to watch NFL highlights, but he might also enjoy a comedy about washed-up former football players.

From there, Carter’s focus is on improving search and discovery within the app, as well as building out a distribution infrastructure that goes beyond the mobile app. With AOL, Yahoo, AwesomenessTV and Complex Media now under Verizon’s growing portfolio, there are plenty of ways to not only distribute shows but also market them to specific audiences, Carter says. “The Reporter,” for instance, aired on Go90 as well as on AOL.com.

Carter also stresses that Go90 is only a part of a growing digital entertainment business that will go beyond just the app and explore subscription streaming options in the future. It’s also partnered with Fandango to launch two new digital channels, Rated Red and Seriously.TV, which exist both within and outside of Go90.

“If we focus on and market these franchises and present them to the right fan, then that fan is going to come back for more, and we can tee up other content they might like — now different from what Netflix and Hulu do,” Carter says.

For the most part, content partners are willing to give Verizon a longer leash.

“It’s a longer term bet on people who are going to experience media and brands, and they’re going to have a number of fits and starts along the way,” says Keith Richman, President of Daily Media, which has an original content and distribution partnership with Go90.

“The hard part is, you want the players to narrow down, and the ones that you make as a show with them, it’s a big deal,” adds Lieberman. “There’s a reason getting a show on HBO is a big deal. The more Go90 becomes, the more meaningful it is to us.”

Not all are convinced, of course. “Given the amount of money and effort poured into it, I can’t see it bringing a positive return. It’s easier to just kill it and start over,” says a distribution partner.

There are no guarantees in media and entertainment. All of the money in the world can’t save your first flop. But where independent startups like Jason Goldberg’s Tribeca Film quickly go out of business, the Verizon-backed Go90 is on a longer-term runway to successfully execute a business idea, Go90 still has the backing of its parent company.

“At one point, at least, we thought the goal was to reshape, reform and grow this,” says a headhunter who worked with Verizon to seek a search for head of content.

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Danish Brands Ghosting
Meet The X Factor’s secret Snapchat weapon

BY LUCINDA SOUTHERN

In Denmark, as in other markets, Snapchat has a solid grip on teenagers with two out of three Danish teens using the platform everyday. Unsurprisingly more media companies turn to influencers for reach. Television show “The X Factor” has gone further and hired Snapchat influencer Rasmus Kolbo, (online he’s Lakeserryteren, which means “Salmon Rider”) as a member of the social media team from January through to April to produce three shorts a week for its account. “Snapchat is usually so individual, something you create on your own so it was great to collaborate with a whole team,” says Kolbo.

The 24-year-old graphic design graduate grew his followers from zero to 50,000 in a year, after posting daily stories during a trip to New York last August. Since then he has reported on the national handball championships and interviewed the Prince of Denmark several times. “Each time it goes viral,” he said, “it’s so amazing to have a person you don’t expect on Snapchat laughing out of control and being genuine.”

For “The X Factor”, Kolbo filmed games with contestants, backstage at judges’ houses and regular trips to a local zoo to visit a camel with powers of premonition. In three months the number of views on the X Factor account grew from 40,000 to 70,000.

“He knows how Snapchat works,” agrees Rasmus Thaarup, audience researcher at the Danish Broadcasting Corporation. “To produce interesting stories they have to have the same feel as the rest of the content, they almost have to look ugly,” Thaarup adds. “Think about the first 10 seconds, they should work with the sound off. Tell the audience what they can expect in the first few seconds, then tell them over the next five minutes and evolve the story.”

But it will take a bit more flexibility from the TV networks. “Traditional media organizations need to stop thinking we are stealing their viewers,” Kolbo says. “Otherwise influencers will keep on making better produced content.”

Dutch Banks Loosen Up
ABN Amro is finding its voice on Snapchat

BY GRACE CAFFYN

Snapchat – with its emoji stickers and wonky doodle art – is one of the last places you’d expect to find a bank. But ABN Amro, a state-run financial institution in the Netherlands, has found its Snapchat account since February.

The company is running a customer support system aimed at the millions of Dutch youngsters using the video platform. Anyone who adds ABN Amro to their list of Snapchat friends gets “friended” back. After that, they can exchange emoji-filled messages with the bank’s ‘webservice team in private.

“People don’t expect a financial brand to be on Snapchat,” says ABN Amro’s social media manager Jeroen van der Ven. “The creative part makes it fun for us, and people react with amazement. They like it.”

For ABN Amro, the move to Snapchat is important in keeping up with the changing behavior of its student customers as they shun traditional media. And Snapchat is reaching the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics found 32 percent of teenagers in the Netherlands spend three or more hours on social platforms every day.

Customers can message the bank at any time, but most of its requests come in after its weekly Stories, which are themed around student advice.

As there aren’t ads in the Netherlands yet, attracting a following on Snapchat requires an organic approach. Despite posting only once a week, the bank has amassed 1,500 friends on the platform. Each of its snaps gets between 15 and 20 views, and are viewed by 95 percent of its friends.

Germany’s 360-degree turn
Die Welt explores new places

BY LUCINDA SOUTHERN

As Ed Springer’s Die Welt is busy charging, 360-degree videos for a year, with 10 under its belt, on subjects ranging from former U.S. cellist playing the violin in a Greek refugee camp, to mourners in the Grand Place hours after the Brussels terrorist attack, to a feature on Highway I in California.

“360-degree video is all about the place connected to the story,” says Martin Ege, head of video innovation at McCann in Oslo. Up until now, McCann has produced videos for a variety of clients, but it was “sparring partner.” “We’re not a sexy brand like Audi or BMW, so it’s a new challenge,” he says.

“For now the goal is to be a Snapchat ‘sparring partner’. “We’re not a sexy brand like Audi or BMW, so it’s a new challenge,” Ege says. “But it will take a bit more flexibility from the TV networks. “Traditional media organizations need to stop thinking we are stealing their viewers,” Kolbo says. “Otherwise influencers will keep on making better produced content.”

A Norwegian pastime is home redecoration. In fact, Norwegians spend about $7.3 billion a year on fixing, painting and making our homes look even prettier.

In the old days, skills were frequently learned from parents or from manuals. But nowadays YouTube is the first place many young people look for inspiration and instruction, says Linda Ege, head of communication at one of Norway’s leading chains of construction material shops, Maxbo.

Maxbo launched a YouTube channel, where films with tips and instructions related to all aspects of redecoration are published. This is where they want Norwegians to go when they wonder how to clean a paintbrush or how to make their own headboard.

“We know our content is good, and we are happy to share our knowledge with more people. YouTube felt like the best and most natural choice, and all the new films have been made especially for this channel,” says Ege.

It has worked with the YouTube channel together with the advertising agency, McCann in Oslo. Up until now, McCann has produced 65 videos. Ege says the response both on the channel itself and the videos has exceeded their expectations, with one of its videos getting almost 600,000 views. “What we’re seeing is that advertising on YouTube has also shown very good results,” said Ege. According to McCann, videos have been seen 2.5 million times since April, and people have spent more than 2.7 million minutes viewing the films, with an average view of one minute and three seconds.

The goal is to build Maxbo as the brand you go to get the content you need. Tone Helene Angsund, head of video innovation, says McCann’s work on YouTube has been key in the overall strategy.

As social media isn’t yet an official customer contact channel, members of the bank’s 24-hour ‘webservice team’ can only deal with simple banking queries. Anything that requires verification needs to take place over the phone.

While that may change someday, for now the goal is to be a Snapchat ‘sparring partner’ rather than a sexy brand like Audi or BMW, so it’s a new challenge,” Ege says.
China’s YouTube Clone
Youku is massive and just getting started

BY YUYU CHEN

In China, everything is big. Youku, the Chinese equivalent of YouTube, is no exception. Like YouTube, Youku has become a hub for content creators. The platform has carved out a section on the website, called “Youku Channel,” to let creators manage and distribute their work, interact with subscribers, and monetize their content. Some of them have even become big social media influencers.

“We are the largest user-generated content community in China,” says Jay Chen, director of marketing for Youku. “[Influencers] work with us over the long run. Very few people became celebrities first and then came to Youku Channel.”

To monetize its content, Youku is offering pre-roll, post-roll and pause ads that can be 15 seconds, 30 seconds or even one minute. In July of this year, the video provider further tested an “ad-free” format for the first time with China’s biggest cocktail brand Rio, during singing contest “Sing! China.” (Think of it as “American Idol.”)

Rather than placing clickable pre-roll ads, Rio bought the show’s exclusive online title-sponsor rights from Youku, where it only served a five-second-long pre-roll. Other branded content was integrated into the show – there were no commercial breaks.

Meanwhile, Rio exclusively sponsored the landing page of “Sing! China” on Youku, with all banners linking back to its flagship store on Alibaba’s online retail platform Tmall. Rio also purchased keywords on Youku’s search engine to further enhance its exposure, according to Ken Zhang, strategy director for agency OMD in Shanghai.

“I haven’t seen many successful campaigns like this lately,” he says. Virtual reality also took off on Youku in May of this year. It now has more than 20,000 VR videos (mainly 360-degree videos) and is adding 1,000 titles every day.

“Youku has become the largest video platform for VR content in China today,” said Chen. “Our goal is to gain 30 million VR and 360-degree users this year.”

THE BASICS
Youku has 23.6 billion monthly views (580 million unique views per month) and nearly 60 percent of its users are under the age of 30. Youku was taken private by Alibaba in a $3.5 billion deal last year.

ADVERTISING ON YOUKU
Advertising represents around 80 percent of Youku’s overall revenues, says Jay Chen, director of marketing for Youku. In the first nine months of last year, the platform made about 1.4 billion yuan (about $212.2 million) in ad revenue.

Pre-roll ads are the most popular on Youku, which can last 15 seconds, 30 seconds or even one minute. So oftentimes Chinese viewers feel sick of seeing so many ads on Youku, especially when the pre-rolls are too long and repetitive, according to Ken Zhang, strategy director of agency OMD in Shanghai.

But this year Youku has been subtler in advertising when working with big ad spenders. Take Unilever-owned shampoo brand Clear, it became the title sponsor for Youku’s popular original talk show called 太空家族, whose name translates to “Mars Intelligence Agency.”

Aside from the obvious brand signage, Youku placed the Clear product into the show and even customized a song for the brand in one episode, because viewers are more likely to understand the product value when they are emotionally invested in the content, according to Chen.

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The Online Privacy Problem
Youku is reportedly rife with pirated content from Hollywood movies as well as online video produced by other Chinese companies. Just this year, Baidu (China’s Google) and Youku have sued each other for copyright infringement. But Chen says the platform spends billions of yuan buying copyrights every year, and has developed technology to block pirated content automatically. “We are one of the largest [copyright] buyers in the industry,” he says.

WTF is Youku (优酷)
A look inside China’s biggest online video provider

BY YUYU CHEN

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Going Short to Go Long

How The Economist uses social video

BY JESSICA DAVIES

Publishers piling into video face a Catch-22: Longer-form video holds the most promise for making money, but the big view counts come from Facebook clips.

That’s why The Economist developed a two-pronged video model strategy centered around expensive and highly produced mini documentaries from its 15-person Economist Films team, and quick hit social clips to drive awareness and viewership. Using social media as a driver for its commercial content is also a brand awareness booster: The Economist is a subscription-based business so mass reach isn’t its sales pitch. By doing this, it can guarantee more reach to advertisers.

“Good luck if you can find a way to make money from Facebook video alone,” says The Economist’s deputy editor Tom Standage. “Our strategy depends on having both long-form and social video, because each one supports the other. I can’t see a business model for social-

It’s taken its cue from Vice, which proved the publishing model for branded content with its Creators Project format, securing Intel as its longstanding partner. The likes of Buzzfeed have gone entirely down the branded content route, avoiding display or pre-roll video advertising entirely. The Huffington Post is also prolific at using social media content to drive people back to its own sites. Those documentaries often have their logos on all videos made, having their brands underwrite the production, making money. Typical deals involve having both long-form and social video, which is something that’s coming back into conversations with clients again.”

Harris also believes some publishers are too quick to default to pre-roll for their video strategy. “The likes of Huffington Post are among those who good at driving people to their site from social media and then hitting people with pre-roll. Though there’s always the question of how much pre-roll a consumer wants to be exposed to. On some publisher sites, the pre-roll also isn’t premium because they’re in the volume game. Whereas The Economist has that quality factor to making content that is respected,” he adds.

Fewer people watch the documentaries on YouTube, than on Facebook, but people more often watch the longer films to the end on YouTube, according to Standage. The videos also go out on all the platforms the publisher sites like Amazon Fire and Apple TV.

This summer The Economist Films increased the output of the shorter films, and The Economist will introduce it all into its daily, bite-sized mobile app Espresso. It’s also reaching a bunch of new short form video formats, which are currently in development. One new format it’s tried is an animated cartoon series, which has reached one million views across its social platforms. “Both long and short form videos get around 1 million views a month across all our platforms and Facebook and Google. We get very little of that on our own sites. We have to go where the viewers are, but with a model that works, and helps us bring in serious revenue from sponsors so we can do the really high-quality video,” says Standage.

People still have a love about reach and frequency, for all the progress digital has made in making communications more individually relevant. “We see publishers who want to be digital publishers, and then assume it all has to be digital. But some of the digital stuff is too small scale.” Sometimes a TV show created by a broadcaster or publisher, which is fairly “analog” in its execution, can still get the reach if boosted with all the social media commentary and warrant free PR, he adds. “That can be more powerful because it still has the scale side, which is something that’s coming back into conversations with clients again.”

Harris believes some publishers are too quick to default to pre-roll for their video strategy. “The likes of Huffington Post are among those who good at driving people to their site from social media and then hitting people with pre-roll. Though there’s always the question of how much pre-roll a consumer wants to be exposed to. On some publisher sites, the pre-roll also isn’t premium because they’re in the volume game. Whereas The Economist has that quality factor to making content that is respected,” he adds.

Fewer people watch the documentaries on YouTube, than on Facebook, but people more often watch the longer films to the end on YouTube, according to Standage. The videos also go out on all the platforms the publisher sites like Amazon Fire and Apple TV.

This summer The Economist Films increased the output of the shorter films, and The Economist will introduce it all into its daily, bite-sized mobile app Espresso. It’s also reaching a bunch of new short form video formats, which are currently in development. One new format it’s tried is an animated cartoon series, which has reached one million views across its social platforms. “Both long and short form videos get around 1 million views a month across all our platforms and Facebook and Google. We get very little of that on our own sites. We have to go where the viewers are, but with a model that works, and helps us bring in serious revenue from sponsors so we can do the really high-quality video,” says Standage.

That’s why The Economist developed a two-pronged video model strategy centered around expensive and highly produced mini documentaries from its 15-person Economist Films team, and quick hit social clips to drive awareness and viewership. Using social media as a driver for its commercial content is also a brand awareness booster: The Economist is a subscription-based business so mass reach isn’t its sales pitch. By doing this, it can guarantee more reach to advertisers.

“Good luck if you can find a way to make money from Facebook video alone,” says The Economist’s deputy editor Tom Standage. “Our strategy depends on having both long-form and social video, because each one supports the other. I can’t see a business model for social-
When National Geographic launched “Wild Life with Bertie Gregory,” a new digital series on Vancouver Island’s predators, for its Nat Geo Wild channel, there were YouTube videos at the hub, supplemented by videos specifically created for Snapchat, Facebook and Instagram.

Two years ago, Nat Geo would have shot one digital video and published that exact same clip on every platform it distributed to. Today, with the advent of new social platforms, its videographers are expected to shoot video that can run horizontally and vertically so it can be spun up into different versions designed not just for its own site but YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. From 2014 to 2015, Nat Geo has nearly quadrupled the number of videos it produced.

This is digital video in 2016, where the ability to reframe video seems to be as important as its creation in the first place. The tipping point came in 2015, with the advent of vertical video on Snapchat and rise of silent autoplay video on Facebook. Suddenly, you couldn’t just publish the same thing everywhere. Viewers, with increasingly specific expectations for each channel, would tune out. Each platform demands its own style, length and format.

“The advent of Snapchat Discover was a big eye opener for us,” says James Williams, director of digital video for Nat Geo, who oversees a 15-person team. “At Facebook video began to rise in popularity and video became more of a priority for us, unless we adapted to what viewers were looking for, we were going to be fighting a steeper uphill battle to get views.”

But some of these platforms lack a clear path for publishers to monetize their video, so repurposing all this video also had to be cost-effective. Nat Geo has an informal process. It employs experts for all the different social platforms, and they all talk to each other. “Anytime you send anyone out in the field, you want them to get as much content as they possibly can,” Williams says. “You can’t reinvent the wheel every time you need to make a video.”

The process has become somewhat routinized. Adapting a four-minute video that’s bound for the website for, say, Facebook or Snapchat, would involve identifying the main idea, then building a story around it that could be told in a fraction of that time, because if people will watch videos of varying lengths on a website or YouTube, publishers only have a few seconds to catch a viewer’s attention on Facebook or Snapchat. Assuming the video will be watched on silent, the next step is figuring out what text will be needed to carry the viewer through the narrative.

Facebook has been aggressively pushing live video in the news feed as it tries to figure out how to ultimately capture TV ad dollars. But for the publishers that are actually producing the content, the financial return has been unclear, which has them thinking about how they can give those assets a longer shelf life, whether by turning them into a text article or cutting shorter segments from them.

Business Insider has a New York video studio where it conducts 30-minute Facebook Live interviews with personalities. Those then get whittled down into as many as five or six different segments that are then published inside stories on BusinessInsider.com. A Tony Robbins Q&A ran as a 40-minute Facebook Live video, is expected to be cut into four or five shorter segments when all is said and done. Food videos also lend themselves to this treatment. A video to cover a new Shake Shack burger was turned into a 70-second clip for the site and other platforms, for instance. In this way, BI can produce about 35 videos a day for the main BI as well as Insider, its general news spinoff. The Huffington Post similarly has taken its Facebook Live and Snapchat videos and repurposed them into content to run on its site. With BI and Insider producing three times as much video today as they were a year ago, Justin Maiman, head of video at BI, says, “We’re always thinking about how we can get the most out of a story, short or interview we’re doing.”

In some cases the publishers get a helping hand from the platform. YouNow, a live-streaming social network that’s popular with teens, lets publishers download their broadcasts and republish them to other platforms. But as long as platforms’ appetite for video continues, it seems like publishers’ work will never be done. “Not only are we constantly thinking about our audience,” says Williams, “but whatever new platform may be coming about.”

By Lucia Moses & Sahil Patel

Be Kind Please Rewind

How publishers repurpose video for multiple platforms

when national geographic launched “wild life with bertie gregory,” a new digital series on vancouver island’s predators, for its nat geo wild channel, there were youtube videos at the hub, supplemented by videos specifically created for snapchat, facebook and instagram.
In August, Digiday gathered together executives from 150 brands, agencies, publishers and technology vendors in Park City, Utah, for the Digiday Content Marketing Summit. Over three days, executives convened in town halls and sessions to discuss the ongoing challenges they face when it comes to creating great content. High on the list of issues: getting senior management to understand the value of content creation and not getting bogged down in internal competition.

*BY SHAREEN PATHAK*
‘You can’t get the buy-in’: Marketers confess their biggest content challenges

BY SHAREEN PATHAK

Making great content is hard work for brands. One consistent question at the Digiday Content Marketing Summit this week in Park City, Utah, was how to ensure that great content is championed and executed in the right way.

We asked attendees from the world’s top brands to write down the single biggest challenge they have when it comes to creating good content, then asked them to anonymously expand on the issues. The themes that came up more than once touched upon internal issues, silos and getting senior management to buy into measurement.

Organizational Silos

“There is so much internal competition. Everyone wants to own content, but maybe the group who is owning it doesn’t understand content. Anyway, it’s not like the customer understands or knows the difference between content produced by marketing, PR, or public affairs. It’s not cohesive.”

Who should own content? One team? Multiple? Comms or marketing?

“I personally think content marketing is a marketing function because it’s about perception of a brand by a consumer. But internally, there’s always a fight where either it is disorganised so everyone is doing it differently, or nobody is owning it. Or worse, there are three teams, all creating content that competes with each other.”

Senior management Buy-in

“If you don’t have a CMO who is willing to invest some of the media budget in the content and understand it has different metrics than a banner ad, then your life is hell. It makes your job 10,000 times harder. And let’s face it, you can’t get the buy-in. You can’t get the buy in. You won’t ever get it. Go work somewhere else. If your CMO is someone who is not a marketer at heart, they are never going to take $50 million out of digital and put it to social. You’ve always gotta hit a wall.”

Resources

“Internally, budget is always a struggle. When you come up with a campaign, it’s always about who is paying to make it successful, and it’s always a battle between marketing and e-commerce. It sort of evolved, and we realized it. And we’re always fighting to get budget for digital. Digital is the first thing that gets cut. And internally, an e-commerce team wants everything to be direct response and they don’t focus on brand affinity. For us, we want to focus on brand affinity.”

“I can’t believe we have another channel for an identical product. This just makes everything more difficult.”

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Marketers confess their biggest content challenges

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Marketing Movers
On the ground and in the mountains in Park City
One

The

Crafty

One

For Brit Morin, building a business was a lot like assembling one of her brand’s DIY boxes.

BY JORDAN VALINSKY

Brit Morin laid out the idea in front of her: Build a digital company focused on creating physical things. The initial iteration of Brit + Co. was to create a suite of apps centered on topics attractive to female millennials, like cooking and weddings. It didn’t take off.

“The content side of the business was growing faster than the app, so we shifted focus to be a full-out media company,” says Morin, 30. Today Brittany + Co. is a content and commerce hybrid website focused on DIY projects, make-up tips and healthy cooking. The lifestyle media brand has attracted over $27 million in venture backing.

While the website’s traffic is small — Brit + Co. attracted 2.4 million U.S. visitors in June according to comScore — its audience is passionate, she says. Across its social media platforms, including a unique pop-up Snapchat channel around major holidays, Morin claims to reach 80 million users each month.

Roughly 98 percent of its advertising revenue comes from native ads. Brit + Co. also makes money from selling DIY kits, instructional videos and tickets to events, like its annual Re:Make festival in San Francisco, which attracts 15,000 fans. Morin said the company will “soon” be profitable.

She walked us through a typical day in her life.

6:00 a.m.
Wake up, scan the news. This includes, but is not limited to: email, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter. My text messages, stocks I’m following, and the New York Times.

6:15 a.m.
Work out, or if it’s going to happen. (There’s often a snooze alarm that gets in the way of me and my team abuses) If I do work out, it’s generally a trail run on one of the beautiful northern California trails right outside my house. I listen to podcasts along the way, never music. I’ve been running to podcasts since I was in college and always added.

7:00 a.m.
Baby time. My newest addition, Austin, was just born in May, so he’s still nursing first thing in the morning. Luckily he’s a pretty consistent sleeper, though, so I’m a safe bet for breakfast.

7:30 a.m.
Toddler time. My oldest, Ansel, is 21 months now and business off the walls with happiness when he wakes up in the morning. I love getting a few minutes of playtime in with him before I get ready for the day.

8:00 a.m.
Sneaking through a shower, hair, makeup, and wardrobes decisions. I usually have the Today Show, which I appear on from time to time, on in the background — gotta keep up with my crew over there! Every morning I consider dumping out my closet in lieu of a capsule wardrobe soon to cut down on decision making. Steve Jobs may have really been onto something there.

8:30 a.m.
Breakfast! Which, for me, generally means green juice, coffee and Ezekiel toast. I’m a kind of health nut.

8:45 a.m.
Work out, if it’s going to happen. (There’s often a snooze alarm that gets in the way of me and my team abuses) If I do work out, it’s generally a trail run on one of the beautiful northern California trails right outside my house. I listen to podcasts along the way, never music. I’ve been running to podcasts since I was in college and always added.

11:00 a.m.
One-on-one meeting with Anjelika Temple, my personal assistant. I love getting a few minutes of playtime in with her before I get ready for the day.

11:30 a.m.
Interview with a candidate who has applied to be an executive on our engineering team. I’m judging him on how to drive deeper engagement on our site, but also how he thinks about reaching a distributed audience with new technologies.

 Noon
Grab my lunch and head to a last-minute meeting with a few team members to put together a response to a multi-million dollar IF/WE just received. My college degree was in advertising, so I’m always excited to think about how to build successful campaigns for our clients. I love to think big and outside of the box.

12:30 p.m.
Content review for our Snapchat Discover channel. I’m extremely close to the content we put out on Snapchat and review everything in extreme detail, from the inception of article/video ideas to tiny tiny grammatical or design errors.

1:30 p.m.
Tidy up the office on my route to my next meeting. I can’t stand crooked frames on the wall. (Didn’t I mention I was OCD?)

2:00 p.m.
Meeting with a few of our partners from Pinterest (who are also our neighbors, just down the street here in San Francisco) to discuss some of the new, exciting things happening on their platform. Brit + Co has a pretty massive organic reach there given our focus on creativity and DIY, so we check in with the team at Pinterest frequently.

2:05 p.m.
Product/tech review of a new page redesign that will be rolled out soon. We do the review from our mobile phones since that’s where 70 percent of our users are consuming our content.

2:45 p.m.
One-on-one meeting with Angika Temple, our executive creative director and my first hire. Sometimes it’s all about logistical things, but today the agenda was light, so we just decided to take a few minutes to brainstorm crazy ideas for the business. We literally have a Google Doc entitled “Things that should be things” — it includes a bag of pants as well as many other wild topics.

3:00 p.m.
We just kicked off prep for Halloween and it’s time for one of our first photoshoots! I am in and out of 5 costumes in 30 minutes, thanks to all the folks who have prepared beforehand. And yes, we’ve Snapchatted the whole thing. Naturally.

3:30 p.m.
Quick finance review of our latest profit and loss with my CFO ahead of our board call immediately following. Things are in order, which as a CEO, is the No. 1 most comforting thing to see.

4:00 p.m.
Board call. Today we talked through the company’s changing media landscape and relevant business updates, then had some time for discussion about a few big deals we are working on. My board is incredibly supportive and super media savvy, so I always look forward to our chats.

5:00 p.m.
Check on the @Brit Slack feed once more before heading home to make sure I haven’t missed anything major in the last hour or so.

5:05 p.m.
Out the door and on the way home with all the other parents. Thom, it’s playtime, dinnertime, bath time and bedtime for the kiddos. They are out by 7 p.m.

7:30 p.m.
Dinner with a small group of female entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley. We get together from time to time to compare notes and cheer each other on. Life is tough out there, and it’s helpful to know you’re not in it alone.

9:00 p.m.
Finish the day’s emails and work, usually from my bed.

10:30 p.m.
Confrontation: I’m a huge content junkie. So I DVR almost all major morning, daytime and late night talk shows. I catch up on them the hour before I go to bed to study the types of content that everyone is making on television those days. If I’m lucky, I’ll have a “Game of Thrones” or “Silicon Valley” episode ready to watch as well.

11:30 p.m.
Head to bed and get ready to start the whole thing all over again.
“The Tonight Show” producer Gavin Purcell will clean the shit out of a fridge

BY DRIAN BRAinker

"The Tonight Show" did not conquer the internet by accident. Its producer, Gavin Purcell, is perhaps the first late-night show producer in history to have spent his childhood obsessing over video games. With a keen intuition of how to make stuff go viral online (having the Roots "slow jam the news" with President Obama doesn’t hurt), he also understands how important it is to work really, really hard — no matter how mundane the task might seem.

So how does one become Jimmy Fallon’s producer?

I was the executive producer of “Attack of the Show!” for G4. Jimmy was a fan of the show and didn’t know that at all. I got a call from Jimmy’s manager. He wanted to meet with me about something coming up; I don’t think he mentioned the show. I had heard from someone that he was taking over “Late Night” as I thought at least I’d write up a bunch of things that I think should be different about “Late Night” than it is now. I got a call later that afternoon saying Lorne Michaels wants to meet with me in New York, which was really cool. It seemed like a vibe check: Jimmy liked me.

Have you ever been fired?

I’ve never been fired but I’ve been not brought back on purpose, which to me is kind of the same thing. I was working at a very fancy restaurant in Seattle in the grunge era and I had a fat goatee. I didn’t think I did a good job of reading the room in how to present myself. I didn’t live up to the standards of the service level they wanted. So I wasn’t asked back at the end of the season. It was a very good lesson. You have to know the environment you’re in and be ready to live up to it.

Were you ready to live up to “Late Night?”

The benefit when we started was we were all coming at it fresh. Very few people who had worked on that kind of show, Jimmy and "Saturday Night Live".

What advice would you give to someone starting out?

Know that if you work very hard people will notice. When I was a production assistant I got the illustrious job of cleaning up the refrigerator at our work. I was just a person who had worked at restaurants for a long time. I was a janitor in high school. I had not had the most illustrious jobs in the world. So I cleaned the shit out of that refrigerator. The executive producer at the time said, “I want to take a moment to shout out that person who cleaned the fridge.” If you bust your butt, people do care, no matter what you do.

What advice has worked for you?

The best advice I got as a producer is that your job is to put the pieces in place and then let it play. Once you set it up you have to step back and hope it works. So it pays to know how to set it up.

What’s the biggest change you’ve seen in online videos in the past five years or so?

Autoplay video is a big thing. In the beginning everyone couldn’t believe it was happening. It was such a disruption. Now everyone is used to it. There’s a tendency for people to say they saw something even if they’ve just seen the headline for a bunch or read about it. You may convince yourself that you watched it but then you talk to someone and you realize, ‘oh, no! I actually haven’t seen that.’

You work in TV yet you have a track record for making stuff that does very well online. What’s the secret there?

There are two secrets: One is surprise. You have to be surprising. That’s something we’ve done really well. We also just work really hard at making stuff that’s good. Good stuff connects, no matter how long it is. It could be a Vine. We make segmented stuff anyway; we’re not creating a half-hour sitcom. We make an hour of TV a night and it’s segmented already into other pieces. We have to do five hours of stuff a week. That’s relentless. So, yes, there’s a lot of stuff that goes viral, but we are making a lot of stuff all the time.

Who’s your media crush?

[Blogger] Jason Kottke is my long term crush. What he’s doing — and been doing for a long time — is weirdly the future. People like him who are tastemakers. There’s so much stuff out there, there has to be people you trust to make your feed for you. He’s been making your feed for you for 10 years. In some ways he’s the future and the past. For me, 10 years from now, you’ll have a much more pared-down version of your Twitter feed. So the future of digital media is curation?

I really do believe it. There’s not going to be any stop to the amount of content being made. You have old media people and new media people making stuff for the web. There’s no way to stop it. More and more, there will be curators with special preferences who will curate it down for you. What I love about YouTube is that there’s so much stuff there. But they’ve done a bad job of curating their home page. We need more people like Jason who can do that.

What’s an app or piece of tech you can’t live without?

The biggest piece of tech that’s impacted my life in the last five years has been Spotify. The fact that I can have a significant portion of music history at my beck and call at any given time is the biggest gift; $10 a month feels like too little to pay for the amount of music I have access to. People nowadays don’t have to become the old person who is out of touch with pop culture. I am just as in touch with new music as I was when I was young and going out to Cellophane Square.

The Funny Guy

“’The Tonight Show’ producer Gavin Purcell will clean the shit out of a fridge”

John
Producer, “The Tonight Show, Starring Jimmy Fallon”  
Age: 42

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The Contrarian

Josh Topolsky believes that he can build a sustainable digital publishing model without being obsessed with scale.

BY LUCIA MOSES

After years as a technology journalist, at Engadget, The Verge and Bloomberg Media, Joshua Topolsky has seen a lot — and there’s a lot he doesn’t like. So now that he has a chance to start with a clean slate with his forthcoming site, The Outline, he’s betting that there’s another way to make money in publishing that doesn’t require joining the race for scale or doing Facebook’s bidding. He laid out his case for why there’s a financial future for fresh stories on politics, business, culture and the future, presented in innovative ways.

While others are going for scale, why do you have a very different goal? Why?

In a business that’s been preoccupied with scale, it’s very hard to justify a story only 5,000 people read about some corruption in a small town somewhere. Those stories are important, but no one’s creating the right vehicle for them. So there has to be another way. The goal is to get a nice-sized audience that really gives a shit, and get the right set of partners who really give a shit and want a different kind of audience — and to work in concert with those partners to develop something that isn’t a turnoff.

But it will keep you out of consideration with a certain number of advertisers, that’s fine. Monocle’s out of consideration with a certain set of advertisers, but they’re making pretty good money. They have this great 24-hour radio network, a pretty good digital experience, they have stores. Quartz is out of consideration with a certain number of advertisers, but they’re making pretty good money. I’m interested in sustainable business models. I’m interested in what happens when you make Trader Joe’s versus Twitter. Ten years out, I think we could be an interesting family of businesses.

Can you have a media business without programmatic advertising?

I think programmatic is part of the problem. It’s like a Band-Aid. If you go back 20 years you have publishers who want to be online but don’t know how to monetize it and you have Google saying, we have a technical fix for it. That has been the way we’ve solved the problem for 20 years. It doesn’t serve the consumer or publisher or advertiser.

Very few things are being done to fix it. Then all of a sudden you have ad blocking. And click fraud became a thing. But very few people are taking concerted, technology first action to address it.

I’m guessing you’re on the side of the ad blockers.

The reality is, advertising is disgusting on the internet. The basic concept of ad blocking is offensive because you should be able to monetize the work you do. But I get why you would turn on an ad blocker. It’s not like we’re giving an audience something that’s fair. We’re giving them something offensive and intrusive. So our track was, let’s not do any of that.

Why not have a subscription model if what you’re doing is going to be so valuable to your readers, as The Information did?

I guess if a few thousand subscribers is all you need, it limits the audience opportunities. I’m interested in being part of the conversation that happens on the open web and increasingly connected world.

What kind of story is The Outline going to do that isn’t being done today?

Something of the caliber of The New Yorker hasn’t really been created for a modern audience. Inside the millennial audience, I think there’s an audience that’s not being spoken to, or it’s being spoken to in fits and starts. At Bloomberg Politics, we did a story when the Supreme Court struck down a number of gay marriage bans. One reporter discovered that of the top 50 newspapers, 20 showed female couples and a handful showed male couples. The question is, how do you tell that story? We created a story form that hadn’t been done before that showed all 50 papers broken down by type. You had an interesting position to put forward and interesting way to put it forward. That’s what The Outline is all about.

You’ve been critical of publishers that overly rely on Facebook. What are some of the underused tools you see besides social media that you want to take advantage of?

Video, gaming, inventive uses of text, audio. There are millions of colors we can paint with in digital and we use four or five. The reason I’m interested in platforms that aren’t just social is, that’s how we can figure out what the audience will respond to. What people want is evolving and what we’ve done hasn’t evolved along with it.

What’s the answer to Facebook’s dominance?

We should all be fighting tooth and nail not to get on their platform but to diversify around their platform. I do think we’re a little waaay out in the ocean. We will nit not be the only waves. Audiences adapt really quickly. Already there’s a new generation of audience that is not that interested in Facebook. There’s a new generation of audience that is not that interested in Snapchat. The only constant in technology is change.
Tech Killed the Big Idea

The Mad Men have gone extinct. The Mad Women, too, for that matter.

BY MARK DUFFY

W

e're not talking about Don Draper here. Real Mad Men and Women have nothing to do with the TV show. They existed before the TV show, were called "mad" before the TV show. They were advertising’s creative leaders from the beginning of the advertising creative revolution in the late 1950s through the mid-1990s — before internet advertising, which started advertising’s creative devolution that we’re in the middle of right now.

To be a Mad Man (or Woman), you of course had to be good, very good, at creating ads. You also probably were a little crazy in the head. For instance, there was legendary art director George Lois who started his own New York City agency in 1960.

Once, while presenting a campaign to Goodman’s matzos, Lois climbed out of a window onto the ledge and threatened to jump after the client balked at buying the work. Said Lois: “You make the matzos, I’ll make the eyes water,” as Lois said in the 2009 documentary “Art & Copy.” (Note: Lois, now 85, just opened another new New York City ad agency earlier this year. If I had a brand, I’d call him first.)

Now, most ideas are group "brainstormed" to mush by people who have no business working on creative executions. The result: No more Big Ideas, or big campaigns or concepts, period; those take a lot of work and talent. Instead, you get "projects" and "activations" and “apps” and “stunts” and “Snapchat lenses,” here today gone later today.

This situation developed because tech is beginning to overtake creativity as the most important part of advertising. This is an astounding mistake. A brand is built by a consistent brilliantly conceived benefit or image message. Not by techniques to an idea, not an idea to your techniques. “The statement is more true now than ever. His New York agency, Doyle Dane Bernbach, created all the brilliant Volkswagen ads of the 1960s.

Check the rosters of agencies in 2016. Look at all the new “Chief” titles. You have Chief Digital, Experience, Knowledge, Culture, Innovation, and Content Officers, and other such pointless, vainglorious titles. And all of these people are invited into the “creative process” despite never creating an ad in their lives. This makes sense, how?

Mad Men and Women had one of two titles Copywriter or Art Director. Of course many become bosses and were given the title “Creative Director.” But unlike today’s big agency CDs, they kept making ads, every day. The term Creative Director has now also become pointless. In-house creative studios at social media news sites like Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, and Mashable feature many kids in their 20s with a couple of years of experience sporting the title. This is just sad.

Back in 1981, copywriter Tom McElRigott, the son of a preacher, opened his own agency in Minneapolis — Fallon McElRigott Rice. And from 1981 to 1988, he produced some of the greatest copywriting and creative work that ever ran or aired.

He’s not considered one of the “traditional” Mad Men, which is an injustice. He was crazy — crazy for producing great work. He often puked before presentations out of fear, fear that the client wouldn’t have the foresight or guts to buy his amazing work.

If today’s presenters ever puke, it certainly isn’t from fear; it’s probably from a stomach bug.
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