



KYSEN Social Media Watch



Welcome to the Autumn 2016 edition of our Social Media Watch. This e-update aims to summarise the best of the last couple of months' press articles and online discussions about digital and social media as they apply to the professions, to help you keep a watching brief.

Some of the topics discussed here are specific to the professions; some detail developments in other sectors, included because they have a particular relevance to the professions.

As always, we hope you find this summary helpful in keeping track of a fast-changing area of communications. As ever, we welcome your feedback.

Best regards,

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Social Media Watch – November 2016

The US election has confirmed one thing: social media is the new frontier. The internet opened up new forms of communications but now social media are taking us deeper into unknown territories. The Trump camp had less cash to spend on a campaign and decided to use it primarily [on social media](#) rather than traditional television advertising – an approach that clearly paid off.

In many ways, however, as *Social Media Watch* has previously observed, this may be no more than the reflection of a world increasingly driven by our appetite for technology. What, for instance, should we make of reports that actors are now cast based on their [social media presence](#), of the rise in [fake news](#), or of [Kim Kardashian's robbery](#), days after she posted pictures of herself wearing jewellery worth millions of pounds?

Meanwhile, how social media platforms apply their 'acceptable content' policy still raises concerns: Facebook took down a [well-known war photo](#) of a Vietnamese girl but it is also being sued for not removing a nude picture [posted online in revenge](#). And, who would have thought, it's even possible to create a [biased algorithm](#).

But one market trend that emerges particularly strongly as we enter the last quarter of the year is the dominance that Facebook is asserting across the social media landscape. Having acquired WhatsApp a couple of years ago, the social media giant sought to leverage the chat app's user data without securing consent first. This data-sharing was found [unlawful](#) by the German data protection watchdog. The Facebook-owned app has also launched a series of new features to [rival Snapchat](#). Meanwhile, Facebook itself is also developing a new host of services such as a [new marketplace feature](#) to rival eBay, and it is [investing heavily in hardware](#), a move it believes is essential to achieving its ambition of connecting people around the world.

Competitors are trying to keep up. Google is launching its own [mobile messaging service](#), but observers are not entirely convinced. And other stakeholders are trying to readjust the balance of powers. One is an Austrian law student who has brought a number of claims against Facebook in Ireland and Germany – [some successfully](#). Another is the record and film industry. Faced with sharp declines in revenue, the sector has been lobbying for a slice of the social media platforms' success. Now they have the European Commission on their side, with [proposals for new laws](#) that would do just that.

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US ELECTION

Social media at the heart of Trump's campaign

The US presidential election was fought on different battlefields, with Donald Trump eschewing expensive advertising in favour of social media and Hilary Clinton following the more traditional television ads route.

According to advertising consultants Advertising Analytics, the Trump campaign has only spent \$17.3m on ads, compared with an estimated \$96.4m for Clinton. Trump's much smaller campaign fund and his unorthodox campaigning style are the main explanations for this difference.

Trump's views and manners have made him a polarising figure. A search on his name in Google produces 381m hits, with only 259m for Clinton. He has 11.6m Twitter followers for only 8.88m for Clinton.

However, separate research conducted for Cnet revealed that neither candidate would fare well at prospective job interviews. The tech newswire said a joint survey with social media screening company Social Intelligence showed negative impressions for both candidates, ranging from racism to potentially unlawful activities.

Nearly 80 per cent of US citizens have an online profile which benefitted Trump's campaign may have paved the way for a new strategy that is less reliant on traditional spend and instead leverages the power of online networks.

Source: [DM News](#), 20 September 2016; [Cnet](#), 4 October 2016

FILM INDUSTRY

Artists talk back about social media self-promotion

Actress Gemma Arterton is the latest artist to criticise the trend in film and theatre circles to encourage actors to be active on social media and build up their following if they want to have a career.

Arterton's remarks follow comments by casting director Mike Fenton last year that if there is a choice between two equally good actors, the one with the greater number of followers is likely to be given the part.

The actress isn't the only one to object. Earlier this year, Emma Thompson warned against the growing pressure on actors to promote themselves online. "Actors are becoming attached in a sort of business way to their social media profiles, and I think that's a disaster," she said at the time.

The trend has also been criticised in the book publishing industry where it appears to have started, with authors – younger authors especially, according to novelist Jonathan Franzen – being coerced into self-promotion instead of developing their craft.

Source: [Telegraph](#), 18 September 2016

NEWS AND MEDIA

Twitter and Facebook join news verification coalition

Twitter and Facebook have signed up to a media businesses' network aimed at improving reporting from social media and tackling fake news.

Google-backed First Draft is a coalition of news organisations designed to assist its members with their social media news gathering and story verification. About 20 have

already joined, including Channel 4 News, the Telegraph, the New York Times, Washington Post, BuzzFeed, Australia's ABC News and Agence France-Presse.

Facebook's involvement is seen as especially significant given the social media network's role in the distribution of news, including a growing number of fake stories.

First Draft will work with tech companies on solutions to help members assess the reliability of sources and to educate social media users in the assessment of news they find on social media platforms.

Source: [Guardian](#), 13 September 2016

CRIME

Kim Kardashian robbery a warning to social media users

Kim Kardashian's robbery in a Paris hotel last month is an extreme example of the dangers of posting private information on social media, a security expert has warned.

TV reality star Kardashian was reportedly robbed at gun point in her hotel room and locked in the bathroom while five armed men made away with jewellery worth an estimated £9m.

Colin McLean, lecturer in ethical hacking at Dundee's Abertay University, said social media was "a bit of a balancing act" requiring a bit of common sense before posting private information which could be used by criminals.

McLean's recommendations echo ongoing concerns by crime prevention organisations such as the government-backed Get Safe Online campaign.

Source: [The Courier](#), 5 October 2016

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Zuckerberg accused of condoning censorship after photo removal

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg has been accused of abusing power and threatening freedom of speech after the social media took down a photo of a young Vietnamese girl running away naked from a village destroyed by a napalm bomb.

The well-known photo, taken during the Vietnam war, was part of a Norwegian author's series of historical pictures on military conflicts.

In an open letter to Zuckerberg, Espen Egil Hansen, editor-in-chief of Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten*, said he was "upset, disappointed — well, in fact even afraid — of what you are about to do to a mainstay of our democratic society" and called Zuckerberg "the world's most powerful editor."

Facebook explained it was difficult to know the context in which the picture of the nude child was posted and that its policy was to try and find the right balance in all circumstances. "Our solutions won't always be perfect, but we will continue to try to improve our policies and the ways in which we apply them," the company said in a statement.

Source: [Time](#), 9 September 2016

REVENGE PORN

Teenager sues Facebook over nude photo

A 14-year-old Northern Irish girl is suing Facebook for misuse of private information and breach of the Data Protection Act after the company allegedly failed to stop the re-publication of a nude photo of her.

The girl's barrister told the High Court in Belfast that the photo was taken from her as blackmail and used as revenge against her. The picture had apparently been placed on a 'shame' page and Facebook could have prevented its republication by taking it down.

Facebook said they always took down such pictures when notified. The case continues.

Source: [BBC News](#), 8 September 2016

DISCRIMINATION

LinkedIn denies gender discrimination in search results

LinkedIn has rejected claims that its algorithm was biased after a US newspaper said searches for female members returned results for male names.

The Seattle Times said a dozen of the most common women's names were affected. It gave the example of a search for 'Stephanie Williams', which it said prompted a search for 'Stephen Williams' instead. Searching on male names in 100 cases did not return suggestions for female names.

LinkedIn explained the algorithm was based on frequently searched names and that it had since updated it to take explicit account of people's names, so that alternative names would not be suggested.

Facebook encountered algorithm criticism too in the summer, with users saying its Trending feature appeared to be biased in favour of left-wing stories.

Launched in 2002, LinkedIn was bought by Microsoft in June this year for \$26.9bn. The deal is yet to be finalised.

Source: [BBC News](#), 8 September 2016

PRIVACY

WhatsApp data-sharing deal with Facebook illegal

WhatsApp's data-sharing deal with its parent company Facebook, which bought the phone chat app two years ago, breaches privacy laws, the German data protection agency has ruled.

The two businesses announced in the summer that Facebook would host WhatsApp users' data and that adverts would start appearing on the app, prompting anger among users.

In a statement in September, the Federation of German Consumer Associations said Facebook had broken its promise that WhatsApp would remain independent and threatened legal action if the company didn't reverse its decision.

In its decision finding the arrangement unlawful, the German privacy watchdog also ordered Facebook to stop collecting and storing German WhatsApp users' data and to delete all previously collected data.

Source: [Independent](#), 20 September 2016; [Guardian](#), 27 September 2016; [Independent](#), 27 September 2016

CHAT APPS

WhatsApp deploys new Snapchat-style features

WhatsApp's latest update includes a host of new features delivering users an experience similar to Snapchat, including new editing and drawing tools as well as new ways of taking pictures.

The drawing tools, brought up simply by taking a picture, appear as a series of icons. Users can, for instance, tap on the pencil icon to draw on the picture, on the T to write text, or on the small face to overlay an emoji.

It's not the first time that a Facebook-owned company has borrowed new features from Snapchat. Replicating popular Snapchat features has helped Facebook bring its services to places in the world where Snapchat hasn't launched yet. Recently, Instagram imported the concept of 'stories' that had been one of Snapchat's successes, prompting undocumented speculation that legal proceedings had ensued.

Source: [Independent](#), 4 October 2016; [iDigitalTimes](#), 3 August 2016

ONLINE TRADE

Facebook launches marketplace service

Facebook is capitalising on the current growth in online selling and buying within its platform by launching a marketplace services that is expected to rival established platforms such as eBay, Gumtree and Craigslist.

"Facebook is where people connect, and in recent years more people have been using Facebook to connect in another way: buying and selling with each other," the company said in a post on its website. "To help people make more of these connections, today we're introducing Marketplace, a convenient destination to discover, buy and sell items with people in your community."

Facebook said more than 450 million users were already selling to each other in Facebook Groups, announcing that the new feature would be rolled out in the US, UK, Australia and New Zealand.

A smartphone app will be made available in the next few days with a desktop version due in the coming months.

The new feature puts Facebook in direct competition with increasingly popular local online selling platforms.

Facebook will not be involved in the payment process and will not charge for putting items up for sale at the moment.

It is not the first time the social media giant has tried to expand into the second-hand market. It originally launched a desktop-only classifieds marketplace in 2007

Facebook shares traded marginally higher on Monday in the US while shares in eBay fell by more than 1%.

Source: [Facebook](#), 3 October 2016; [BBC News](#), 4 October 2016

HARDWARE

Facebook buys modular-gadget start-up

Facebook has bought modular-product start-up Nascent Object, a company specialising in the production of connected objects with turn-around manufacturing time similar to software development.

“By combining hardware design, circuitry, 3D printing and modular electronics, our technology allows developers to go from concept to product in just weeks, much faster and less expensive than traditional methods,” said Nascent Objects CEO Baback Elmieh following the acquisition.

The Nascent Objects team will join Building 8, the social media giant’s hardware incubator headed by former Google executive Regina Dugan and whose purpose is to facilitate Facebook’s objective of connecting people around the globe.

The social network has already invested in a 22,000-square-foot hardware lab where engineers are developing not just the next generation of data storage servers but also solar-powered drone Aquila and virtual-reality headset Oculus.

Source: [TechRadar](#), 19 September 2016; [Guardian](#), 4 October 2016

MOBILE MESSAGING

Google launches AI-powered messaging service

Google has launched a new AI-powered mobile messaging service in a bid to break into this increasingly popular but crowded market.

Designed like an advanced version of a spellcheck function, Allo will be able to analyse conversations and pictures to suggest responses to users. A picture of a friend’s pet could prompt to respond ‘Cute dog!’ or it might suggest friends discussing food a list of nearby restaurants.

Previous attempts by Google to get into the messaging market have been short-lived, with established brands such as Facebook and WhatsApp steadily gathering more users. But analysts suggest that the AI technology underpinning the new service could be a significant aspect differentiating it from other mobile messaging services.

At this stage, Allo only includes an option for messages to be sent using end-to-end encryption, prompting criticism by privacy campaigners that it is vulnerable to hackers. There are also concerns that the data would be made available to enforcement agencies.

Source: [Financial Times](#), 21 September 2016

PRIVACY

Facebook privacy case referred to European Court of Justice

A privacy case brought by Austrian campaigner Max Schrems against Facebook has been referred to the European Court of Justice, who will have to decide whether the social network’s customer data handling processes are in breach of European law.

Schrems launched a class-action suit in 2014 against Facebook on behalf of 25,000 other people, but the internet giant said Schrems did not have capacity to represent other consumers.

In a ruling last year, the ECJ quashed an EU-US data transfer agreement under which international businesses could easily transfer personal data between the two continents.

The court found the protection offered to data relating to EU residents was not satisfactory.

Mr Schrems is also involved in a case about model contract clauses, which have been widely used in an attempt to comply with EU law following the annulment of the EU-US data transfer agreement. The application was filed in Ireland, where Facebook has its European headquarters.

Source: [Financial Times](#), 13 September 2016

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Online video sites should take active part in rooting out copyright breaches

The European Commission has put forward proposals for the reform of copyright laws that would require video-hosting companies such as YouTube to take greater responsibility in ensuring their users are not posting illegal content.

YouTube and other social media platforms enabling the posting of videos currently only remove content in breach of copyright on a case-by-case basis, usually after notification by rights-holders.

The move follows representation by record labels and media companies keen to gain more leverage against internet giants such as Google and Facebook. But critics say this would impose an unfair burden on internet businesses and could drive thousands of smaller internet companies out of business.

The proposed reforms would also require internet platforms to reach terms with news publishers over fees payable for displaying some of their content, including in search results. A similar scheme failed in Germany after traffic to news websites fell in such proportion that some newspapers waived their rights. And Google closed down its news service in Spain, where fees are mandatory.

Source: [Financial Times](#), 14 September 2016

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