

Digital Darwinism Is traditional internet marketing losing ground to social media in firms in the North West.

By

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A Research dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Masters of Marketing, Department of Marketing, Tourism and Leisure, School of Business and Humanities

Declaration

The following is a declaration to say that all research undertaken for this project was conducted entirely by me without the help of any outside partners. All the sources of information are referenced clearly in the reference section of this project.

Signature

Date submission

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family in particular my Granny, Peggy, and my Father, Michael who were a great support to me during this process and have always motivated me to achieve. Thank you

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank my supervisor Alan Kelly, his constant support and encouragement gave me the motivation and belief in my own ability to complete the dissertation. Finally I would like to thank my family, friends and work colleagues for always believing in me.

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to establish if traditional internet marketing is losing ground to social media in firms in the North West of Ireland. This topic was chosen as the author became interested in the idea of Digital Darwinism and wanted to explore how this rapid change in technological advances was impacting upon local businesses.

One huge change to the practice of Marketing has been the evolution of internet marketing and subsequently the emergence of social media as a marketing tool. Social Media is changing the way people find information, share knowledge and communicate with each other. The important factor contributing to the growth of these technologies is the ability to easily produce “user-generated content”. Blogs, Twitter, Wikipedia, Flickr and YouTube are just a few examples of Web 2.0 tools that are drastically changing the Internet landscape today.

Social media is the new buzz word in Marketing. And for businesses it represents a marketing opportunity that transcends the traditional middleman and connects companies directly with customers.

This is why nearly every business on the planet from giants like Starbucks and IBM to your local corner shop are exploring social media marketing initiatives. A year ago, businesses were uncertain about social media. Now it's here to stay and companies are rapidly adopting social media marketing. Much like email and websites first empowered businesses, social media is the next marketing wave.

Along with new technology comes a responsibility for marketers to act ethically, social media has made it easier for disreputable marketers to unethically manipulate information in their companies favour, or provide information to consumers that they are aware is not 100% accurate. This research also aims to identify if companies are aware of unethical marketing behaviour and if they are aware of rules and regulations governing internet marketing communications.

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Abbreviations

On-line marketing - A component of electronic commerce and refers to the use of the Internet to advertise and sell goods and services. Direct Marketing in the On-line environment refers to one to one marketing activities where individuals are targeted. Blog marketing is covered in those instances where personal data is used or processed.

Electronic Mail – Any text, voice, sound or image message sent over a public communications network which can be stored in the network or in the terminal equipment of the recipient of the message until it is collected by the recipient.

Processing of Personal Data – Any operation or set of operations which is performed upon personal data, whether or not by automatic means, such as collection, recording, organization, storage, adaptation or alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, alignment or combination, blocking, erasure or destruction.

Database or List – Means of holding personal information for direct marketing purposes and normally accessed by reference to names and addresses and held in the form of paper or electronic list.

Consent – Any freely-given, specific and informed indication of the data subject's wishes by which he signifies his agreement to the processing of personal data relating to him.

Marketer - includes sole traders, partnerships or corporate bodies acting on a professional basis that either send or commission the sending of an electronic mail message through a communications network.

Internet marketing program- is a written document that details the necessary actions to be taken by a business to achieve one or more online marketing objectives.

Customer Relationship Marketing- is a combination of technologies and business processes used to add value and in turn satisfy customers.

HTTP - Hypertext Transfer Protocol is a networking protocol for distributed, collaborative, hypermedia information systems

IP- An Internet Protocol address (IP address) is a numerical label that is assigned to any device participating in a computer network that uses the Internet Protocol for communication between its nodes. An IP address serves two principal functions: host or network interface identification and location addressing.

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Chapter One.

Introduction.

1.1 Introduction

“The Internet is becoming the town square for the global village of tomorrow.” Bill Gates (quotesgarden, 2009)

The increased importance and use of the internet has lead companies to look towards developing and implementing internet marketing programs. For too many companies, Internet Marketing is seen as a mine field of miss-information, ethical issues and unquantifiable results. The aim of this research is to assess the contemporary internet marketing methods used by different business sectors in the North-west. Furthermore, this research will examine the degree to which firms in the North West are using internet marketing and social media to benefit their company and their customers.

Although Internet marketing has risen to prominence in the past decade, it still causes confusion among marketers, as marketing departments struggle to identify methods that will benefit them. New trends have seen companies move towards the use of Social Media, but should companies totally abandon the traditional methods of internet marketing. Various authors have spent a lot of time analysing the strong interest that surrounds Internet Marketing and the use of Social Media. Internet Marketing and Social Media when used correctly can improve customer loyalty, increase brand awareness, increase sales and in turn lead to competitive advantage. The above points have been discussed by Michael Porter in his article ‘Strategy and the Internet’ featured in the Harvard Business review in 2000. Kotler and Keller’s latest edition of their Strategic Marketing text book talks at length about the advantages of the internet in business and Internet Marketing. The movement of these authors towards the discussion of Internet related topics proves that the Internet is changing the way business is conducted.

The rationale for the study was a feasibility study on traditional internet marketing practices versus the use of social media in differing sectors in the North West. This area was chosen in order to indentify if firms in the North West are aware of all the methods of internet marketing and social media, and to if they are using these methods to their advantage.

The overall research question was to identify if traditional internet marketing is losing ground to social media in differing industries in the North West.

In an effort to reach the above purposes the following research questions emerged:

Identifying the contemporary internet marketing methods, if any, used by firms in the North West?

Defining and analysing emerging methods of Internet Marketing?

Can social media help develop a brand and reinforce business credibility among customers?

Evaluating which methods of internet marketing will gain a firm competitive advantage.

To examine the ethical implications of Internet Marketing and Social Media Marketing?

Chapter one serves as an introduction to the literature on Internet Marketing. It is an overview of the whole topic to be studied and includes the research questions posed regarding various drivers and elements of Internet Marketing. These questions are answered in chapter 5 in the conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter two reviews the literature in detail and also examines the different elements and variables that play a role in the Internet Marketing process. It explores the role internet marketing plays in building a strong brand and company reputation. It also explores the ethical implications for companies using Internet marketing. The literature review was the support necessary for analysing and identifying links in the findings that are provided in chapter four.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology for the research. The qualitative approach was adopted, with the selection of questionnaires as the measurement technique. The method of analysis and limitations inherent in the research are also outlined.

Chapter four is a review of the finding and analysis of this data as a result of the questionnaires. This chapter illustrates the extent to which firms in the North-West use internet marketing and also examines their awareness of the different methods of internet marketing. The sample chosen was ten firms operating in different industries (Pharmaceutical, manufacturing, hospitality, business services and public sector) located in the North-West of Ireland.

Chapter five focuses on the main drivers of internet marketing. It also identifies the conclusions that developed from the research and makes recommendations for the future implementations of internet marketing programs.

Chapter two.

Literature review.

Internet Marketing, Social Media and Internet Marketing Ethics.

2.1.1 History of The Internet

"Anyone who has lost track of time when using a computer knows the propensity to dream, the urge to make dreams come true and the tendency to miss lunch." Tim Berners-Lee

The timeline of the Internet:

March 1989

The World Wide Web has its historical roots in things such as the creation of the telegraph, Leonard Kleinrock in 1962 creating Packet-switching technology and the launching of the Sputnik. The USSR launches Sputnik in 1957, first artificial earth satellite. In response, US forms the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), the following year, within the Department of Defence (DoD) to establish US lead in science and technology applicable to the military. It really all started in March 1989, when Tim Berners-Lee, a computer scientist at CERN (Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire), in Geneva, Switzerland wrote a paper called Information Management: A Proposal. In this document, he wrote "just another program" that happened to revolutionise the world as we know it. (Kyrmin)

The proposal suggested a way of managing information that uses a "hypertext" process to link related documents together over a network. As you can see from the proposal, the requirements are very similar to the Web as we know it today:

- Remote access across networks
- Cross-system compatibility (called "Heterogeneity" in the proposal)
- No centralization - allowing nodes to be created where they were needed
- Access to existing data
- Bookmarks (called "Private Links")
- And more...

October 1990

In October 1990, Berners-Lee is joined by Robert Cailliau and together they create a working prototype of what he dubbed the "Worldwide Web" (ultimately the name was changed to add spaces). This system was viewed and pages edited with the Worldwide Web browser/editor (later renamed Nexus). The Web at that time was only text, as the browser didn't have the ability to display online images.

February 1993

The Web remained in text-only form until 1992 or 1993 (sources differ) when the NCSA (National Centre for Supercomputing Applications) Mosaic browser came online supporting graphics. In February 1993, NCSA released the first alpha version of Marc Andreessen's Mosaic browser for X-Windows.

Late 1993 and Early 1994

NETCOM releases NetCruiser to set up customers with a graphical access to the Internet, it includes a graphical Web browser similar to Mosaic. O'Reilly and Spry announce that they are going to offer a consumer product called "Internet in a box" to allow consumers to surf the Web easily from their homes. Then in March of 1994, Marc Andreessen and some colleagues leave NCSA to form "Mosaic Communications Corp." (Later renamed Netscape Communications). And later in July 1994, MIT and CERN announce that they are forming the W3 Organization to regulate the Web.

1994 to 2003

HTML 2.0, HTML 3.2, HTML 4.0, and finally XML and XHTML 1.0 were all released in this time period. We also saw the rise and fall of the browser wars with Netscape gaining a huge market and then ultimately losing to Internet Explorer. The Web continued to grow as more and more people got on the Internet. In fact, today many people do not realize that the Web and the Internet are actually two different things.

The goal of the Web was to be a shared information space through which people (and machines) could communicate.

The intent was that this space should span from a private information system to public information, from high value carefully checked and designed material, to off-the-cuff ideas which make sense only to a few people and may never be read again.

The design of the world-wide web was based on a few criteria.

- An information system must be able to record random associations between any arbitrary objects, unlike most database systems;
- If two sets of users started to use the system independently, to make a link from one system to another should be an incremental effort, not requiring major operations such as the merging of link databases.
- Any attempt to constrain users as a whole to the use of particular languages or operating systems was always doomed to failure;
- Information must be available on all platforms, including future ones;
- Any attempt to constrain the mental model users have of data into a given pattern was always doomed to failure;
- If information within an organization is to be accurately represented in the system, entering or correcting it must be trivial for the person directly knowledgeable.

Tim Berners-Lee's own experience had been with a number of proprietary systems, systems designed by physicists, and with his own *Enquire* program (1980) which allowed random links, and had been personally useful, but had not been usable across a wide area network.

Finally, a goal of the Web was that, if the interaction between person and hypertext could be so intuitive that the machine-readable information space gave an accurate representation of the state of people's thoughts, interactions, and work patterns, then machine analysis could become a very powerful management tool, seeing patterns in our work and facilitating our working together through the typical problems which beset the management of large organizations.

Basic Architectural Principles

The World Wide Web architecture was proposed in 1989 and is illustrated in the figure. It was designed to meet the criteria above, and according to well-known principles of software design adapted to the network situation.

The internet was initially developed and its use restricted to scientific research by the U.S Department of Defence (Cheung&Huang, 2005). Since its widespread adoption, the internet has impacted the lives of people from all walks of life, including impacts on

business, shopping and social activities (Cheung&Huang, 2005). The increased importance and use of the internet has left businesses scrambling to integrate it into the value chain. The value chain is a framework for identifying all these activities and analysing how they affect both a company's costs and the value delivered to buyers. The special advantage of the internet is the ability to link one activity with others and make real-time data created in one activity widely available, both within the company and with outside suppliers, channels, and customers.

Prominent Applications of the internet in the value chain

Firm Infrastructure

- Web-based, distributed financial and ERP systems
- On-line investor relations (e.g., information dissemination, broadcast conference calls)

Human Resource Management

- Self-service personnel and benefits administration
- Web-based training
- Internet-based sharing and dissemination of company information
- Electronic and expense reporting

Technology development

- Collaborative product design across locations and among multiple value-system participants
- Knowledge directories accessible from all parts of the organisation
- Real-time access by R&D to on-line sales and service information.

Procurement

- Internet-enabled demand planning; real-time available-to-promise/capable-to-promise and fulfilment
- Other linkages of purchase, inventory, and forecast system with suppliers
- Automated “requisition to pay”
- Direct and indirect procurement via marketplaces, exchanges, auctions, and buyer-seller matching.

Table 1: adapted from Porters article Strategy and the Internet published Harvard business review 2001

Operations	Marketing and Sales	After-sales services
<p>Integrated information exchange, scheduling and decision making in in-house plants, contact assemblers, and components suppliers</p> <p>Real-time available-to-promise and capable-to-promise information available to the sales force and channel</p>	<p>On-line sales channels including web sites and marketplaces</p> <p>Real-time inside and outside access to customer information, product catalogues, dynamic pricing inventory availability, on-line submission of quotes, and order entry</p> <p>On-line product configurators</p> <p>Customer-tailored marketing via customer profiling</p> <p>Push advertising</p> <p>Tailored on-line access</p> <p>Real-time customer feed back through web surveys opt-in/opt-out marketing and promotion response</p>	<p>On-line support of customer services representatives through e-mail response management billing integration, co-browse, chat, "call me now", voice-over-IP, and other uses of video streaming</p> <p>Customer self-service via web sites and intelligent services request processing including updates to billing and shipping profiles</p> <p>Real-time field service access to customer account review, schematic review, parts availability and ordering, work-order update, and service parts management</p>

2.1.2 The Growth of the Internet

Since the invention of computers in the middle of the last century, what can be broadly labelled as Information Communications Technology (ICT) has become faster, cheaper, and more important and ubiquitous throughout the world. To users of computers and other information technology, it is obvious that these are more powerful when networked. The growth in data communication services has complemented the growth in computing usage. Just as PCs heralded the emergence of mass market computing, so the rise of the Web and the Internet in the 1990s heralded the rise of mass market computing services. It is inconceivable today to imagine purchasing a home or office computer and not being able to use email, access the Web, or use the Internet to share files among users (Crandall, 2007).

Lacking data of actual experience, early studies sought to project economic benefits based on well-reasoned analysis of how broadband would be likely to impact future growth. For example, Crandall and Jackson (2001) estimated that ubiquitous deployment of broadband may result in \$500 billion worth of economic growth. Using a community-level panel data set, Lehr, Gillett, Sirbu, and Osorio (2005) estimated that communities with broadband experienced faster job and firm growth, and realised higher rental rates than non-broadband communities.

Since these early studies it became apparent to government officials globally that investing in broadband infrastructure was essential for building and sustaining economic growth. The table below shows government commitment to broad band.

Table.2 Government Commitments to next generation broadband networks.

Country	Date announced	Total Investment (U.S \$ millions)	Investment per Capita
New Zealand	2009	840	205
Australia	2009	3300	159
Singapore	2008	710	154
Portugal	2009	1060	100
Greece	2008	1030	92
Malaysia	2008	720	27
Ireland	2009	110	25
U.S.A	2009	7200	24
South Korea	2009	890	18
Germany	2009	200	2

Source: Regulator Web sites; press releases; Booz & Company analysis

Broadband has fundamentally transformed the ways in which businesses, consumers, and governments function. For businesses, broadband has enhanced labour productivity, enabled innovation, and supported the creation of a new generation of entrepreneurs and business models. Some of the biggest success stories of this decade are: YouTube, Flickr, Facebook and Skype, would not have been possible without broadband. For consumers, broadband has facilitated an information explosion increasing the amount of information to be found, managed, and accessed. It also allows them to link to each other in ways that facilitate knowledge, social networks, and communal inclusion.

The widespread adoption of the internet has meant that marketers have had to change their approach to marketing; this has presented both challenges and opportunities. (See appendix 1) The Internet has meant that companies can reach certain target markets with considerable ease. Internet activity gives marketers a unique way to gain more information about their customers so they can better refine their strategies to meet customers' needs. For example, as prospects visit Web sites, they leave a trail of

information that includes e-mail addresses and information about their lifestyles and interests. (Koprowski 1995) Many firms realized that simply creating a Web site wasn't enough to create a solid Internet presence; they also needed to drive traffic either to their sites or to their specific advertisements.

For example, drug company Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. launched an Internet marketing campaign designed to build brand awareness for Excedrin. For 30 days during the 1997 tax season, the firm proclaimed Excedrin to be the "tax headache medicine" on a variety of financial Web sites. To entice surfers to click on the advertisement, Bristol-Myers offered a free sample of Excedrin to anyone who entered their name and address.

According to *Business Week* writer Linda Himmelstein, "The response was as good as any elixir. In just one month, Bristol-Myers added 30,000 new names to its customer list—some 1,000 per day and triple the company's best-case scenario. What's more, the cost of obtaining those names was only half that of traditional marketing methods."

Hoping for similar results, many traditional firms began incorporating the Internet into their existing marketing plans. Many smaller firms, including Internet upstarts, turned to highly trafficked sites like Internet portal Yahoo!, paying for advertisements such as banner bars. In fact, Yahoo! was one of the few Internet-based firms actually able to earn a profit from online advertising. By developing technology that allowed it to track a visitor's online activity and control what banner bars and button ads that visitor saw, Yahoo! was able to target its messages in a manner never before seen by the marketing industry. Yahoo! could also monitor the number of hits each advertisement received as a means of evaluating an ad's effectiveness. This innovative technology, coupled with the site's intense traffic levels, attracted dot.com upstarts hoping to reach as many Internet users as possible.

The 21st century saw a swing in opinion away from banner advertisements and towards other forms of online advertising. For example, many businesses began to use online newsletters to communicate new product developments to existing customers and solidifying brand awareness. A 2001 study conducted by *Opt-in News*, one out of three online newsletter publishers use the newsletter to generate advertising revenue. In many cases, according to Forrester Research, advertising in online newsletters is more effective than placing a banner ad on a Web site; a Forrester study revealed that advertisements in e-mail newsletters had an average response rate of 18 percent in 2000, versus a banner ad

click through rate—the number of times someone clicks on an ad—of less than one percent.

Some firms began taking advantage of high-speed Internet connections to create things like short films to advertise their goods. For example, BMW spent millions of dollars to create a series of five-minute films available exclusively at BMW-films.com. The marketing campaign targeted men with incomes of more than \$75,000, the same demographic that makes up the majority of individuals with high-speed access to the Internet. BMW advertised the films in magazines, movie theatres, and television. In June of 2001, roughly 1.1 million browsers paid a visit to BMWfilms.com.

As online ad investment continues to grow along with the number of digital touch points, the interactive landscape is becoming increasingly complicated, with marketers left to wonder how to best allocate their digital budgets. (Brandweek 2007) The Internet offers a startling set of advantages as a marketing medium. Technology advances, consumer familiarity and vendor innovation will inevitably drive both marketing programs and customer interaction to centre on the Internet. Marketers need to begin now an active exploration of their key initiatives in light of where and how to apply the Internet's power. The Internet is already an important, and perhaps transformational, marketing medium for business-to-business and business-to-consumer markets. (Ingari 1999) But it is also a brutal, competitive arena, where a kind of “Digital Darwinism,” or survival of the fittest, holds sway, rapidly distinguishing winners from losers. Companies that possess certain preferred traits in their organizational DNA or that have superior skills of self-adaptation are positioned to flourish in this ecosystem. Those without either face almost certain extinction.

The marketing and media ecosystem has arrived at an evolutionary threshold. Old structures and ways of working persist but are fundamentally challenged by newer, more dynamic, more innovative alternatives. Numerous developments have brought the industry to this transition point. Consumers have more control and choice. Their media usage has fragmented. Many more advertising platforms exist. And marketers are insisting on greater precision in targeting and accounting for their ad spends.

The recent economic turmoil only accelerates this evolutionary transition. Companies across the ecosystem have to acquire or develop three dominant traits to survive: relevance, interactivity, and accountability. (Vollmer 2009)

2.2 Traditional Internet marketing

Internet marketing, also referred to as online marketing or E-marketing, is the marketing of products or services over the Internet. The Internet has brought many unique benefits to marketing including low costs in distributing information and media to a global audience. The interactive nature of Internet marketing, both in terms of instant response and in eliciting response, are unique qualities of the medium.

Depending on whom you ask, the term Internet marketing can mean a variety of things. At one time, Internet marketing consisted mostly of having a website or placing banner ads on other websites. On the other end of the spectrum, there are companies professing that you can increase sales and gain a significant competitive advantage by introducing an “Internet marketing program”.

There are many and varying definitions for internet marketing as seen below. Internet Marketing, or eMarketing, is marketing in electronic environments primarily on the internet, on one or more of its services, or offline by enterprises that produce and sell Internet-related products. (Siegel 2004) E-marketing is the application of a broad range of information technologies for: transforming marketing strategies to create more customer value through more effective segmentation, targeting differentiation, and positioning strategies; more efficiently planning and executing the conception, distribution, promotion, and pricing of goods, services and ideas; and creating exchanges that satisfy individual consumer and organisational customers' objectives. (strauss et al 2003) This is the age of the 'e'. E-marketing is the new term for marketing; eCRM is the latest position for customer relation management; e-commerce is an integral part of selling for most companies. Despite its “new media” label internet marketing has its roots firmly placed in the principles and practices of direct marketing.

Today, Internet marketing is evolving into a broader mix of components a company can use as a means of increasing sales - even if your business is done completely online, partly online, or completely offline. The decision to use Internet marketing as part of a company's overall marketing strategy is strictly up to the company of course, but as a rule, Internet marketing is becoming an increasingly important part of nearly every company's marketing mix.

Virtually every commercial website monitors traffic to its own site and captures data on its own visitors. Given the observed behaviour of these visitors, it is possible to develop a solid understanding of the customer base.

Traditional internet marketing encompasses the following methods:

1. Search engine marketing
2. Online display advertising
3. E-mail marketing

Search engine marketing/optimization

Search engine optimization is the art and science of publishing information in a format, which will make search engines believe that your content satisfies the needs of their users for relevant search queries. According to the Jupiter Media Matrix, nearly 47% of web-users surveyed said that the most common way they find products or online stores is through search engines. The top 10 results to search query get 78% more traffic than subsequent listings many firms use SEO to be sure their site is high on the list. Search engine marketing is the practice of marketing or advertising your website through search engines. (Strauss et al, 2003) To begin with the focus is on Search Engines and Search Engine Optimization. The very reason for the existence of search engines is to provide materials that are of value to those who are looking for information they need to find. Search engine companies spend astronomical amounts on research to make their technologies accomplish this. Google spent over \$2.8 billion on R&D in 2008 and Microsoft in particular is also allocating large amounts on research related internet activities. (Park & Fader 2004)

Search engine optimization is the art and science of publishing information in a format, which will make search engines believe that your content satisfies the needs of their users

for relevant search queries. Early search engine optimization consisted mostly of using descriptive file names, page titles, and Meta descriptions. As search advanced on the page factors grew more important and then people started trying to aim for specific keyword densities. Link Analysis; One of the big things that gave Google an advantage over their competitors was the introduction of Page Rank, which graded the value of a page based on the number and quality of links pointing at it. Up until the end of 2003 search was exceptionally easy to manipulate. If you wanted to rank for something all you had to do was buy a few powerful links and place the words you wanted to rank for in the link anchor text. (Wall 2007)

By now a lot of people realise that communication style can substantially affect a Web pages position (ranking) in search listings. This has led to the development of a new employment field of SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) specialists and a lot of Spam from people who say they can guarantee a top 10 listing. However the techniques that they provide are not particularly complicated or unknown. The premise that SEO can make a page rank much higher than it really should goes against the search engine companies' goals of making their results as useful as possible. A significant part of their research involves improving their algorithms to weed out pages whose rankings have been manipulated to be higher than they deserve to be. (Westfall 2009)

Andrei Broder authored *A Taxonomy of Web Search*, which notes that most searches fall into the following 3 categories:

- Informational - seeking static information about a topic
- Transactional - shopping at, downloading from, or otherwise interacting with the result
- Navigational - send me to a specific URL

Companies should strive not only to identify the type of search that the individual is carrying out but also the profile of the user and what their specific needs are. Online executives note that creating a compelling online experience for cyber customers is critical to creating competitive advantage on the internet. (Novak et al) In order to create this compelling online experience marketing departments must get together with I.T departments in order to create a website that a consumer can navigate easily. Getting this

balance right may prove more advantageous than any other marketing ploys to attract consumers to a companies website.

Some authors refer to the above concept as flow, which is defines by Hoffman and Novak as “ the state occurring during network navigation which is (1) characterized by a seamless sequence of responses facilitated by machine interactivity,(2) intrinsically enjoyable, (3) accompanied by a loss of self consciousness, and (4) self-reinforcing.” Jeff Benzos, CEO of Amazon.com, one of the Internets online retailers, notes that creating a compelling online experience for cyber customers is the key to competitive advantage on the internet (Weber 1999). Marketers should keep the flow concept in mind not only when dealing with websites dedicated to online sales but also when designing Social networking sites to promote products or brands, or when creating online communities for brand followers to communicate on. Flow can also be described as the “experience by people who are deeply involved in some event, object or activity...they are completely and totally immersed in it ...Indeed, time may seem to stand still and nothing else seems to matter while engaged in the consumption event.” (Lutz and Guiry 1994).

The job of online marketers is to make each action online whether it is a purchase, a simple product search, a click on an advertisement or a social media interaction auto telic. The consumer must feel the action is worth doing.

Online Display Advertising

A web banner or banner advertisement is a form of advertising on the World Wide Web. This form of online advertising entails embedding the advertisement into the web page. It is intended to attract traffic to a website by linking them to the website of an advertiser.

Online Display advertising; a web banner or banner advertisement is a form of advertising on the World Wide Web. This form of online advertising entails embedding the advertisement into the web page. It is intended to attract traffic to a website by linking them to the website of an advertiser. Online display advertisements have been perceived recently as an outdated tool of marketing, compared to search engine marketing “online display advertising became kind of a forgotten stepchild” according to Ned May director-lead analyst at Outsell, but according to Nelson Media Research-some industry observers are predicting that banner ads are the next big thing in internet marketing. Ad clicking or click through (the number of times that a banner advertisement is clicked upon) is an

important measure of evaluating the effectiveness of online advertising (Dreze and Zufryden, 1997). Compared with other commonly used measures, ad impression, ad clicking is viewed to be more relevant and performance based (The Economist, 2001) In Gong and Maddox (2003)'s study, ad clicking was a significant predictor for advertising recall among Chinese internet users.

Despite the negative press regarding banner advertisements in recent years, General Motors opted for a banner advertisement to generate general interest in the Vibe, a new vehicle under production in 2001. Targeting the young individuals it hopes will be interested in the Vibe, General Motors is allowing Web surfers who click on its banner ad to suggest colour names for the various hues in which the car will be available. According to GM's director of interactive marketing, as quoted in a September 2001 issue of *E-Commerce Times*, "We thought, why should we come up with funky names for colours that we think people will like? Why not just ask them and build a contest around it? Then, we had our objective, and the Web was the obvious channel to accomplish this."

In March 2009, Google announced it plans a form of behavioural targeting for online display text advertising that will appear on its own sites as well as those of its advertising partners. Google calls the new program, which is being beta-tested on its partner sites and YouTube, "internet-based advertising." Instead of simply displaying ads based on the content of the page being viewed, Google's new program will display ads based on an individual's internet browsing history. Industry analysts believe this move is intended to expand Google's revenue stream beyond search, where growth is slowing, and into online display advertising, which appears to be growing again. (Callahan, 2009)

Google's steps towards advancing the type of advertisements appearing to customers will go some way towards solving the problem of advertising standardisation versus specialisation. Many businesses take the approach that they are operating in a global marketplace and due to the Americanisation of so many cultures standardisation is their preferred method of advertising. Proponents of specialisation contend that consumers' cultural background has a profound impact on their attitudes and beliefs, which in turn influence how they respond and/or interpret advertising messages and, accordingly, their purchasing behaviour. (Wang, Y., Sun, S. 2008)

In the current economic climate, many marketers still see the web banner ad as a versatile tool that can be used for branding, for aiding keyword search advertising and for generating leads. (Callahan.s.2009) Nate Elliott, principal analyst at Forrester research has stated that there are two things working in online advertisings favour, that is its tracking capabilities have been improved and it's pricing made more reasonable. Online display advertisements have huge branding capabilities; they have the ability to deliver product information and to tell the story of a brand, which increases brand favourability. Some of these advertisements also have an audio feature that immediately catches the attention of the consumer. With this in mind marketers should be aware that there is a fine line between giving the consumer information and becoming annoying and intrusive. This is particularly relevant in the case of advertisements with sound clips; they can be very irritating to consumers who aren't expecting them.

While display ads have been hammered in the press, a study demonstrates that a marketer should not count them out. Most notably, display ads have a strong ability to deliver product information and affect brand favourability. In fact, marketers who focus on delivering strong display ads improve their overall digital marketing effectiveness by 19 percent and 13 percent, respectively, for each of these outcomes. (Brandweek 2007)

Affiliated Marketing

Because search engines like Google and Yahoo are the most visited sites on the Web, sponsored search results, a form of online advertising in which companies bid to have their advertisements displayed alongside search listings, have become a popular form of marketing. Companies now spend nearly half of their online budgets on this type of promotion, and analysts predict advertisers will pony up a total of more than US\$11 billion annually on search results advertising by 2010.

What makes an effective sponsored search ad? Until recently, most research on the efficacy of these ads focused on placement — that is, it was assumed that the best-performing ads were those that appeared at the top of the list of advertisements. But that is just one of several important variables, according to these authors, who tracked the performance of a mortgage company's sponsored search efforts for a three-month period in 2006. Their research found that although placement matters — ads at the top of a list

did attract more clicks — the content of the advertisement and the amount of competition in the category significantly affected how well a specific ad performed. The research also yielded interesting insights about which types of consumers clicked on which ads: Those interested in quality were attracted to the top-ranked results, whereas bargain hunters were more likely to scan for a listing that offered the best savings.

The results suggest that savvy marketers should pay special attention to their sponsored search campaigns. By targeting advertising to specific demographics, tailoring landing pages — which appear when a searcher clicks on a link — to the searcher's tastes and preferences, and using other easy-to-implement techniques, marketers can use sponsored search to segment and reach a range of different potential customers.

Placement is not the only element to consider in crafting a successful sponsored search campaign. Qualitative variables, such as the wording and targeting of ads, are also key factors to examine. (Animesh et al 2007)

E-mail marketing

E-mail is used for the communication of messages and permission marketing activities. (Siegel, 2004) Email came into existence in the 1990's as the internet was starting to become more popular. Businesses quickly figured out this was a great way to reach customers. It was also less expensive than mailing out advertisements to homes. By 1995 the number of email advertisements sent out that year was more than the number sent out by regular mail. Businesses spend a great deal of money creating email marketing campaigns that won't be confused with spam. (<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/history-email-marketing.html>)

In fact, email marketing hit a huge road block when spam filters became so popular. Many email marketing campaigns had to be altered as they were being wiped out by the filters. Businesses were losing money on the marketing campaigns and not getting any results. However savvy computer programmers and businesses soon learned that popular email marketing titles and headlines as well as using their real email address helped get the emails past the various spam filters. (<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/history-email-marketing.html>)

Email marketing is, as the name suggests, the use of email in marketing communications. This is similar to direct mailing; this allows the user to send messages to current and/or prospective clients. In its broadest sense, the term covers every email you ever send to a customer, potential customer or public venue.

In general, though, it's used to refer to:

- Sending direct promotional emails to try and acquire new customers or persuade existing customers to buy again
- Sending emails designed to encourage customer loyalty and enhance the customer relationship
- Placing your marketing messages or advertisements in emails sent by other people

Email marketing is so popular because:

- sending email is much cheaper than most other forms of communication
- Email lets you deliver your message to the people (unlike a website, where the people have to come to your message)
- Email marketing has proven very successful for those who do it right (email-marketing-reports 2010)

Although email marketing is a popular choice it can be used inappropriately, marketers must ensure that they have permission to contact the customer. They can achieve this by having an Opt-in service on the website. An example of this is when your customer buys something from your online store and they can also tick a box marked "please send me news about product updates via email". You now have "permission" to send that person product updates by email, provided you also give them the opportunity to rescind that permission at any time.

There has been a shift recently towards the belief that the effective use of social media by a business has surpassed the use of traditional internet marketing. This view is both supported and refuted by many authors. While marketers may not be spending huge marketing dollars on social media yet, they know they should be using it to reach consumers. Coremetrics' "Face of the New Marketer" study found that 78% of marketers

see social media as a way to gain a competitive edge, but fewer than 8% have budgets devoted to it. (Bulik 2008) One popular use of social media is the use of viral marketing to create product awareness. Online video advertising is a cheaper way to reach viewers and if an advertisement is particularly innovative it can become a great success on social networking sites as like minded individuals share videos. An example of this is the 2007 Cadbury's Dairy Milk Gorilla advertisement that was heavily popularised on You Tube and Facebook. A more recent example was the new Paddy Power advertisement called "The Takeaway" banned last month from television has become a huge YouTube success.

In 2007 the soft drink companies Pepsi and Coke, recruited new employees to try and compete more successfully with each other through the use of social media. Brands aren't simple brands anymore. They are the centre of a maelstrom of social and political dialogue made possible by digital media, said Unilever Chief Marketing Officer Simon Clift, who warned that marketers who do not recognize that-and adapt their marketing-are in grave peril.(Neff 2009)

2.3.1 Social Media Marketing

Social media is described as

An umbrella term that defines the various activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and the construction of words, pictures, videos and audio. This interaction, and the manner in which information is presented, depends on the varied perspectives and “building” of shared meaning, as people share their stories, and understandings. (Wikipedia 2008)

Social Media has radically changed the way we communicate and share information both within and outside our social networks. The radical shift on the Web, from what typically was a one-way communication to a conversation style interaction has led to exciting new possibilities. Previously when a user posted pictures online from a recent vacation, there was little opportunity to share these with all acquaintances or for friends to comment on the photographs. Now, using sites like Flickr, friends can immediately see the uploaded pictures and post comments in response. Moreover users can post their photos in communities that are often organized around different themes (like pictures of birds, locations, still photography, black and white photos etc). Such communities help foster an environment of sharing and allow users to share tips and receive feedback on their photography skills. A similar communication shift is occurring across media formats as new social media sites allow sharing text, photos, music, videos, podcasts and even PDF documents. (java 2008)

Internet Marketing has moved on from traditional methods towards the use of social media. These new methods of internet marketing include:

1. Astroturf Marketing
2. Viral Marketing
3. Social Networking

Astroturf Marketing

Astroturfing is the artificial creation of a grassroots buzz for a product, service or political viewpoint. Commercially motivated astroturfing is called "Astroturf marketing."

Astroturf marketing has a negative connotation, primarily because disreputable marketers have used deceptive tactics to build their buzz by taking advantage of the anonymity the Internet provides.

Astroturf marketers typically use blogs, message boards, podcasts, wikis, vlogs, chat rooms and social media Web sites like MySpace when building an artificial buzz.

Deceptive Astroturf marketing techniques include impersonating someone in the targeted demographic, creating an entirely fictional character (called a meat puppet) that's meant to appear to others to be a real person.

Viral Marketing

Viral Marketing is a phenomenon that facilitates and encourages people to pass along a marketing message. Viral marketing depends on a high pass-along rate from person to person. Viral Marketing is a phenomenon that facilitates and encourages people to pass along a marketing message. Viral marketing depends on a high pass-along rate from person to person. If a large percentage of recipients forward something to a large number of friends, the overall growth snowballs very quickly. If the pass-along numbers get too low, the overall growth quickly fizzles. At the height of B2C it seemed as if every start-up had a viral component to its strategy, or at least claimed to have one. However, relatively few marketing viruses achieve success on a scale similar to Hotmail, widely cited as the first example of viral marketing.

Social Networks

Nielsen Online has stated that global social networks such as Facebook and MySpace are visited by 67 percent of the world's online population. Consumers making product and brand choices are increasingly turning to computer-mediated communication for information on which to base their decisions. Besides perusing advertising and corporate websites consumers are using newsgroups, chat rooms, e-mail list servers, personal World Wide Web pages, and other online formats to share ideas, build communities, and contact fellow consumers who are seen as more objective information sources. (Kozinets 2002) Social networks can be used for branding, improving customer loyalty, lead generation,

direct marketing and e-commerce. “The beauty of social networks is that they are a place where nearly any marketing goal can be achieved, with nearly any marketing tactic,” said Debra Aho Williamson, eMarketer senior analyst and author of the new report, “Marketing on Social Networks: Branding, Buying and Beyond.”

2.3.2 Social Media in Business

In August 2007 an independent consultancy report, Quocirca Insight Report: Social Networking and Opportunities in the Public Sector, highlighted benefits for the public sector in using social collaboration technologies and platforms. These benefits included easier dissemination of information in a crisis, facilitating planning consultations, enabling more efficient inter-departmental interaction and the provision of local community information through tools such as advanced mashups (online interactive maps) to provide geographical information by local council. (Rasdale, 2010)

International examples would include the NHS and various police forces in the UK disseminating information via social media tools such as Twitter. The concept of crowd sourcing (user generated platforms to capture citizens views on issues) often used in the private sector, has become increasingly popular in the public sector. The US Department of Education has launched a cloud based “Open Innovation Portal” to enable sharing of ideas to help deal with issues such as school drop out rates and academic underperformance. Last year the Dutch government launched a crowd-sourcing platform to enable citizens in the Netherlands to highlight problems and ideas concerning their local neighbourhood. The new UK government has just announced plans to involve citizens in law making by crowd-sourcing views on draft legislation. To borrow a phrase from the data protection authorities, we are seeing a “shift from ‘Web 2.0 for fun’ to Web 2.0 for productivity and services” (Rasdale, 2010).

To date there has been little reporting of the use of collaboration technologies within Irish government. Reluctance to embrace technology can be due to many factors including perceived cost and a lack of return on investment and risk. It might also be explained by a lack of awareness of the degree to which the functionality behind popular social networking tools can be customised and made relevant to public sector activities.

Governments should offer a safe environment and while it seems inevitable that the technology will be adopted, this needs to be done in a controlled way (Rasdale, 2010)

2.3.3 Social media's implications on branding

Increasingly, marketers are turning their attention to building relationships with customers. Relationship marketing has the aim of building mutually satisfying long-term relationships with key parties- customers, suppliers, distributors, and other marketing partners- in order to retain their business (Kotler & Keller, 2008). Harnessing good relationships with customers takes time but this process has been made easier since the introduction of the internet and later the increased popularity of social media. The internet has made business operations and practices more open to consumers; this openness helps a consumer form an opinion of the company and gives them more knowledge than they ever had before. The new empowered consumer has more bargaining power than ever before with companies.

Brands make up a large part of the value of successful companies. Yet managing brands are more an art than a science. Emotional branding is a technique that has risen to prominence over the past decade and has had particular influence over social media campaigns. Emotional branding is a consumer-centric, relational, and story-driven approach to forging deep and enduring affective bonds between consumers and brands (Roberts 2004). Many chief executives wrestling with branding issues have found the experience frustrating. Accustomed to talking about profit, value creation, and expected returns on investment, they suddenly have to grapple with brand image scores, advertising awareness, and repeat purchase levels. They are asked to make major decisions without clear understanding of their effects on earning streams.(Desert et al, 1998) The researcher believes that there is an overlap between the intangible nature of some aspects of brand management and the intangible nature of social media management. The correct use of social media is submerged in, and born out of the principals of branding. "A brand should demonstrate an advantage over competitors. The point of advantage should resonate with customers and be differentiating- that is, represent something different from what competitors provide." (Strategic issues of brand management)

Kevin lane Keller author of “The Brand Report Card” identified five important trends in brand management four of those five relate to Online marketing and the growing influence of the customer. Keller identifies how online marketing has revolutionised consumer and producer information and behaviour. He also identifies the growing importance of satisfying the needs of the consumer as well as tapping into the unconscious thoughts of consumers to unlock new consumer insights. Also noted is the growing role of word of mouth in influencing consumer choices, resulting from the growth of consumer generated media such as blogs, facebook, my space, and so on. His final point centres on the increased pressure to measure the rate of return on marketing investment. Within the current economic environment CEO’s need proof that money invested is creating a return. In the area of Internet marketing this is particularly hard to measure and is subject to a lot of scrutiny.

This researcher has adapted the view of the authors of the article “The end of voodoo brand management” to come up with a model to measure the effectiveness of social media marketing. The Dynamic Social media marketing model should help firms identify and categories their tangible and intangible resources, and should help convince non-marketing personnel of the merits of social media marketing.

Stage One: The Company must identify and quantify resources influencing the value of the social media marketing campaign. This should include an analysis of the relevance of all types of social media used and it’s appropriateness to their industry they operate in. It should also focus on the time and skill of employees running campaigns. The interaction of resources with each other should also be examined (Desmet et al 1998).

Stage two: Understand and map how resources interact with each other. Firms must be able to identify how many social networking fans, and how many twitter followers actually become customers. Marketing staff must also be able to identify what social media programs reach potential customers. The firm must also combine the knowledge of their I.T. staff with the marketing department, as not all Marketing employees are full trained and skilled in the are of new technology(Desmet et al 1998).

Stage three: This stage involves careful analysis of data; the firm must determine how many Internet followers they are converting into customers. They must also ascertain which mediums are attracting in the most customers. The firm must also identify if the employee hours dedicated are providing the necessary return. Regular Web Analytic checks should provide up to date information on customer interactions with the website and indicate necessary improvements. The firm must build a business dynamics computer model that lays out critical resources and the key relationships between them, this is an iterative process and should help in quantifying a marketing activity that is qualitatively based (Desmet et al 1998).

The internet and in particular online communities have made it easier for companies to a) find out what consumers want and b) provide a service where goods are made to order for consumers. Rather than putting consumers in arbitrary “buckets” for targeting, marketers should join them online in communities of passion and interest. (Wreden 2010). CRM which has previously been seen as a must for business has been exposed recently as a time consuming and over technical process which has a high rate of failure. An AMR survey of 190 IT executives in 2007 found that 29% of CRM projects fail. Forrester research reported that fewer than half of 94 businesses surveyed were fully satisfied with their CRM implementations. (Wreden 2010)

The new wave of interest by consumers in participating in online communities means that consumers are segmenting themselves, not only this they are meeting with like minded individuals and spreading their views. This consumer lead marketing is more powerful than other marketing communication the business has to offer. The internet is creating brand ambassadors. One such example occurred in 2005, the revenue had launched an online self-service option so individuals could claim back personal tax owed to them. Although the company had spent considerable time on a marketing program that they thought would entice consumers to use the service, the take-up was poor until one customer who used the service emailed a friend to tell him how quick and easy it was. The email went viral and the numbers using the service rocketed. The Revenue Commission was totally unaware of the affect that, that one customer would have on the business.

Almquist and Roberts (2000, p.18) find that the major factor influencing positive brand equity for one brand over another is consumer advocacy. Online communities are context in which consumers often partake in discussions whose goals include attempts to inform and influence fellow consumers about products and brands. There are different categories of consumers interacting in online communities; marketers need to identify these in order to prevent harmful information circulating. They also need to encourage loyal followers to continue to provide input as long as it serves the business well. Kozinets (1999) has classified the categories as: tourists; who lack strong ties and deep interest in the activity, Minglers; have strong social ties but minimal interest in the consumption activity, Devotees; have strong consumption interests but few attachments, and finally Insiders; have strong ties to the online group and to the consumption activity and tend to be long-standing and frequently referenced members. By their very nature online communities promote loyalty towards a particular cause such as the support of a product, brand, service or cause.

Online communities are not always communities' set up to appreciate a brand or product or service, some are set up to do the direct opposite. Some companies have acknowledged the risks involved with online communities and have established branded communities. These are born out of fear of the free-for-all nature of information exchange in online communities. It is acknowledged that consumer backlash will hurt a brand and decrease sales. Nick Wreden has identified three approaches to self-segmentation, which are social networking, tracking online communication behaviour and mass customisation. The company Dell has used mass customisation to its advantage as this method ensures there will be no over production of goods and consumers are left feeling empowered as they have built the product.

"It takes many good deeds to build a good reputation and only one bad one to lose it."(Benjamin Franklin) (Eccles, 2007)

All of the above has discussed the benefits to a firm of online communities, it would be inaccurate to profess that such communities are all working to the benefit of brands and by extension the consumer. In an economy where 70% to 80% of market value comes from hard-to-assess intangible assets such as brand equity, intellectual capital, and

goodwill, organisations are especially vulnerable to anything that damages their reputations (Eccles,2007) Companies must ensure that they can deliver on their promises to consumers. Internet marketing will only succeed if consumers experience meets expectation. If this does not occur and the company does not live up to its reputation there will be a reputation-reality gap. This may cause a 'doppelganger brand image'- that is, a family of disparaging images and stories about a brand that are circulated in popular culture by a loosely organised network of consumers, antibrand activists, bloggers, and opinion leaders in the news and entertainment media.(Thompson et al 2006)

In the industries researched, this type of negative publicity occurs frequently not due to any particular fault of those operating in the industry but merely because they are the enemy of a particular group of activists. In recent times Public sector organisations have become the focus of media attention, this has lead to the creation of Anti-Public sector social networking sites, blogs and forums. In order to overcome this, the Public sector do not engage with these communities and continue to ensure that they provide a quality services and keep their actual followers satisfied.

In order to combat this companies should ensure that; their emotional branding campaign is free from contradictions that may cause consumers to question their authenticity, look out for indications that consumers or no longer buying into a particular aspect of the brands narrative and finally stay current by ensuring brand narratives fit in with current consumer beliefs.

Virtually every commercial website monitors traffic to its own site and captures data on its own visitors. Given the observed behaviour of these visitors, it is possible to develop a solid understanding of the customer base.

2.3.4 Web analytics

Business Intelligence is defined as the ability to apprehend the links of facts to guide action towards an aim. It interprets data and transforms it into insights that can be used to guide strategy formulation (web analytics for business intelligence). It is unusual to read a newspaper or listen to a news report without hearing about the results of the latest poll, whether it's about political outlooks, economics perspectives or consumer opinion. There is a fascination with human behaviour and preferences. But collecting behavioural insights is easiest in slow-moving environments, and the Web is the embodiment of a moving target. This need to gather behavioural information has led to the rise in popularity of Web analytics.

Web analytics programs track nearly everything that happens on a Web site, keeping a real-time record of how potential customers find the site, how they behave on it, and why or why not they buy products. A look at the traffic mix can help a business measure the effect of marketing activities, both online and off. If he were alive today, Luca Pacioli would probably love poring over a Web analytics report. Pacioli, a Franciscan monk who published the first balance sheet in 1494, understood the power of data to transform the way companies make decisions. Today, thanks to the Internet, the amount of data available to any company with a website dwarfs anything Pacioli could have imagined. Web analytics programs track nearly everything that happens on a website, keeping a real-time record of how potential marketing and sales (improving your sense of site)

The article, 'Web analytics for business intelligence', highlights twelve reasons why a company should choose Web Analytics:

1. For effective and sustained web presence, it is imperative to use the quantitative, fact-based analysis.
2. Knowledge derived from mined and analyzed transactional data leads to timely and informed decisions.
3. Transparency of data, available to all decision makers simultaneously.
4. Manage performance of web presence with ease.
5. Deliver real-time snapshot of KPIs for timely and factual decision making.

6. Validate intuition with fact and provide fact-based OBE (outcome based evaluation). It also supports the businesses distinctive capabilities such as products and services uniquely offered and liked by the customers.
7. Monitor goals constantly. Make ongoing course corrections based on observed data to predicted outcome, reality checking.
8. Surface the deeply buried knowledge in volumes of data. Uncover previously unknown trends and patterns and leverage them to advantage.
9. Discover who is at the long tail.
10. Improve customer satisfaction, retention, and partnerships.
11. Benchmarking.
12. An automated system, if thoughtfully planned and executed, will be much more accurate and complete than manually analyzed data using spreadsheets. Manual analysis also equates to less extensive data being mined because of human limitations, thus missing out on opportunities.

The principal divide in the Web analytics world is based on how these metrics are collected. One group, dominated by market-research companies such as Nielsen Online and comScore, use so-called panel-based techniques, which like the original A.C. Nielsen television-ratings system, creates a community of users and observes their behaviour and uses direct polling techniques to accumulate personal insights into behaviours and preferences.

The second general approach to metrics collection is loosely categorized as "server-based" and is used by such well-known players as Google, through its new Ad Planner service. Server-based analyses try to mine gems from the enormous amount of user-generated data that can be extracted from web servers, such as page views, duration of visits, link itineraries and Web site loyalty.

Intelligent application of the findings of deep level insights will pay off in making realistic and timely decisions by the strategist, analyst, and marketer that are imperative for companies in maintaining and gaining market share and competitive advantage over other online information providers.

The book *Web Analytics Demystified* by Eric T. Peterson states the need for the continuous updating of information gathered. It also refers to how business goals and strategies must constantly change in line with changing customer behaviour. The application of web analytics to the online marketing function is not flawless; the purpose of this project is to identify how valuable the information is to business.


2.4 Internet Marketing Ethics

'Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing'. (Abraham Lincoln) (Eccles, 2007)

Marketing ethics is viewed as important because it affects many business stakeholders. Recent business scandals associated with Enron, WorldCom, Tyco, Qwest, Sunbeam, and Arthur Andersen have meant that there is a greater need for firms to operate in an open and transparent way. While most of these scandals were associated with accounting fraud, in many cases companies relied on salespersons to help implement the fraud.

Ethics has been termed the study and philosophy of human conduct, with an emphasis on the determination of right and wrong. For marketers, ethics in the workplace refers to rules (standards, principles) governing the conduct of organizational members and the consequences of marketing decisions (Ferrell, 2005). Therefore, ethical marketing from a normative perspective approach is defined as “practices that emphasize transparent, trustworthy, and responsible personal and organizational marketing policies and actions that exhibit integrity as well as fairness to consumers and other stakeholders (Murphy, Laczniak, Bowie and Klein, 2005). Firms have an obligation to consumers to be ethical, as consumers deem that marketing communications by firms are truthful.

The rapid growth of the internet as a marketing tool has lead to increased consumer awareness of issues such as: privacy, unsolicited emails, transactional security, internet fraud, and copyright violations. With all types of Internet marketing communications, Marketers straddle a very fine line between providing consumers with information that consumers want and need, to providing information that is not wanted or needed. When consumers receive unwanted marketing communications they can see it as being intrusive and can form an instant dislike for the company. The topic of, online marketing ethics, is frequently talked about but are they're any rules governing online marketing, and do companies abide by these rules?



Although many companies would not openly admit to it, many companies are using the anonymity of the Internet as a tool to market their company in an unethical and misleading fashion. Having contacted the Irish Marketing institute to determine if there were any rules governing Internet Marketing, the institute stated at present there are no written guidelines for Marketers to abide by. In an era when consumers are frequently turning to the internet in order to make product choices, it is inevitable that not all product reviews are what they seem. This movement has lead companies to monitor consumer forums, which has seen the emergence of Astroturf marketing. How ethical is Astroturf Marketing, is that not misleading to the consumer. A new form of social media technology has emerged, called Four Square giving smart phone users the ability to check into businesses they visit and see comments from other users in the area. This may be potentially harmful for businesses as it makes consumers opinions readily available to other consumers, without them needing to trawl through online board discussions. It remains to be seen how long this technology will stay untapped by Marketers wanting to ensure the success of their company.

When looking into the area of Internet Marketing Ethics the researcher contacted the Data Protection Commission to try to establish if there is any legislation governing Online Marketers, the Data Commission responded and identified new laws introduced by the European Union in June 2010.

“Member States shall ensure that the storing of information, or the gaining of access to information already stored, in the terminal equipment of a subscriber or user is only allowed on condition that the subscriber or user concerned has given his or her consent, having been provided with clear and comprehensive information, in accordance with Directive 95/46/EC, inter alia about the purposes of the processing. This shall not prevent any technical storage or access for the sole purpose of carrying out the transmission of a communication over an electronic communications network, or as strictly necessary in order for the provider of an information society service explicitly requested by the subscriber or user to provide the service.”

This is an amendment of article 5(3) that the working party used to alert stakeholders, engaged in Online advertising, to the ePrivacy Directive.

Most tracking and advertising technologies used to deliver behavioural advertising use some type of client-side processing. It uses information from the user's browser and terminal equipment.

In particular, the main tracking technology used to monitor users on the Internet is based on "tracking cookies". Cookies provide a means to track user browsing over an extensive period of time and theoretically over different domains.

There are two main approaches to building user profiles: *i)* Predictive profiles are established by inference from observing individual and collective user behaviour over time, particularly by monitoring visited pages and ads viewed or clicked on. *ii)* Explicit profiles are created from personal data that data subjects themselves provide to a web service, such as by registering. Both approaches can be combined. Additionally, predictive profiles may be made explicit at a later time, when a data subject creates login credentials for a website.

Ad networks construct predictive profiles by using a combination of tracking techniques, Cookie based technologies and data mining software. Gender and age range can be deduced by analysing the pages the data subject visits and the ads to which he or she gravitates. The profile based on analysis of the cookies stored on the terminal equipment of the data subject can be enriched with aggregated data derived from the behaviour of data subjects who exhibit similar behavioural patterns in other contexts. Online advertising systems often classify data subjects into segments, either by their areas of interest or by their marketing categories (examples are "gardening", "body care", "electronics", etc.).

The European Union has also set out rules governing the use of Email Marketing. The researcher has adapted elements of the legislation for the purposes of this research. In order to send marketing messages to consumers via electronic mail, the Marketer must ensure the collection of the data subject's prior consent. Marketers should remember that

consent to receive marketing messages may be invalid if the recipient was not adequately informed.

In the Context of a Sale:

In the case where electronic mail contact details (email address, SMS details, etc.) have been collected in the context of a sale of a product (good or service), the Data Subject does not need to “opt in” to that data being used subsequently for Direct Marketing, provided all the following conditions are met:

- the Marketer collected the electronic mail contact details in the context of a sale of a product (good or service),
- the Marketer offers an effective unsubscribe facility, at least via the same channel, to unsubscribe from receiving electronic marketing messages free of charge and in an easy manner at the time of data collection and in all subsequent marketing communications sent,
- any electronic marketing communications only relate to products similar to those considered in the context of the sale and provided by the Marketer,
- the identity of the marketer on whose behalf the electronic marketing communication is sent is not disguised,
- the commercial purpose of the communication is clearly identifiable at the beginning of the message

In order legitimately to send information about "similar products", the controller must bear in mind that the boundaries between products are set by the reasonable expectations of the customer (data subject) and not the reasonable expectations of the sending controller/seller. Accordingly, the data subject (consumer) must be informed in advance, at the time of the collection of his/her personal data, of the meaning of "similar goods and services" for the controller (sender)

Chapter 3.

Research Methodology.

3.0 Research methodology:

3.1 Introduction

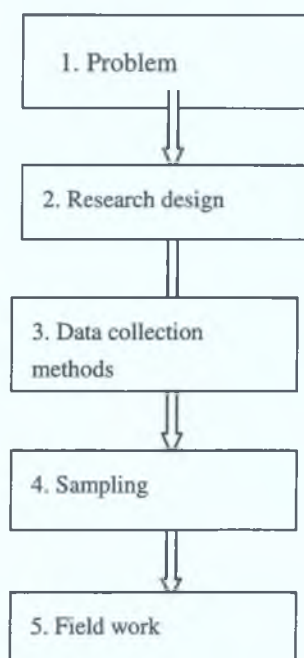
The purpose of this chapter is to give a detailed description of the primary and secondary research undertaken for this research project. This chapter will go through the methods used for conducting the research and the sources used to gather the data in order to answer the research question and to achieve the primary and secondary objectives.

3.2 Research Process

For this research project the seven step marketing research process outlined by Domegan and Fleming (2007) is applied to carry out the project. The seven step marketing research process provided the researcher with structure and a clear direction for executing the research. The marketing research process is a 'set of stages that detail a number or sequence of tasks a researcher undertakes to gather and report valid and reliable information to assist with decision- making' (Domegan and Fleming 2007, pg. 21).

Saunders et al (2007) state that the research process is 'a multi-stage process that must be followed in order to undertake and complete a research project' (Saunders et al 2007, pg. 8).

The Domegan and Fleming (2007) research process



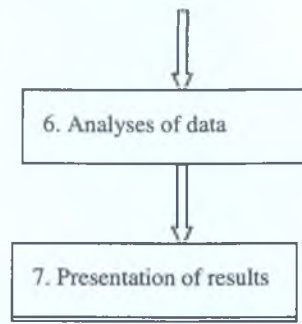


Figure 3.1 The Research Process (Domegan and Fleming 2007, p, 21)

3.3 Stage 1 Problem Definition

Problem definition is the first stage of the research process. This stage involves the researcher identifying and deciding on what information is required to undertake the project. This stage of the research project highlights the main issues to be investigated. Domegan and Fleming (2007) purpose the main purpose of the problem definition stage is to help the researcher determine the rationale behind the study.

3.3.1 Research Question and Objectives

The research was exploratory in nature investigating how businesses in the North West are using Internet Marketing and Social Media. Investigating whether what is actually being practiced aligns with what is discussed in the literature. The researcher formulated the following research question which then leads to the identification of primary and secondary objectives.

3.3.2 Research Question

Digital Darwinism, Is traditional internet marketing loosing out to Social media in different industries in the North west?

3.3.3 Primary Objective

The primary objective of exploratory research is to gain an in-depth knowledge into the nature of current internet marketing programs as little is known about what methods companies are currently using. It is respondents' answers in the survey or interview that are vital rather than the questions posed (Malhotra & Birks, 2006). Exploratory Research is characterised by flexibility and usefulness with respect to the methods.

3.3.4 Secondary Objectives

The secondary objectives were assessing the ethical implications of social media marketing, and also gauging company awareness of unethical behaviour.

3.4 Stage 2: Research Design

Research design is the second stage in the research process. The research design provides a framework which structures the plans and decisions made to guide the project.

Domegan and Fleming (2007) refer to the research design stage of the market research process as a blueprint, because it provides the researcher with a plan of action for the remaining part of the research process. For the purpose of this research, exploratory research will be conducted in relation to the research design. Domegan and Fleming (2007) state that exploratory research 'aims to explore and to discover issues about the problem on hand, because very little is known the situation by anyone inside or outside the firm' (Domegan and Fleming 2007, pg. 24).

For this research project, the main aim is to ascertain whether traditional internet marketing is losing out to social media in companies in the North West of Ireland. The process that was chosen was the qualitative research method. The research was carried out by breaking the companies of the North West down into five specific industries: Pharmaceutical, Manufacturing, Hospitality, Business Services and the Public Sector. It was decided that ten online surveys would be sent to ten companies in each sector. Due to the fact that this study related to Internet Marketing it was thought that an online survey was the most appropriate method.

3.4.1 Research Strategy

It is important that the research strategy chosen for the project allows the author to answer the research question and meet the objectives (Saunders et al, 2009). Research can take either a deductive or inductive approach. Deductive research approach involves using the available literature to develop a theoretical framework for which you use for testing. The inductive research approach involves the author exploring and using their own data to develop theories that they will relate to the literature (Saunders et al, 2009). The survey strategy is chosen for this research project which takes a deductive approach. Saunders et al (2007) state that surveys are a very effective method of collecting data and allow the researcher to gather a large amount of data from a sizable population. The survey is defined as a 'systematic collection of data from a sample of respondents, usually involving the measurement of a large number of variables' (Domegan and Fleming 2007, pg 197). For this research the variables include behaviours motivations and influences of an average company operating in the North West.

3.5 Stage 3 Data Collection

Data collection is the third stage in the research process and refers to how the required information will be gathered (Domegan and Fleming, 2007). This stage requires the researcher to choose a data method and a data collection instrument which best suits the research strategy and research design adapted.

The data can be gathered from two main sources which include primary and secondary. The golden rule in marketing research is to exhaust all the secondary sources of information available before conducting any primary research (Domegan and Fleming, 2007). Both primary and secondary data were conducted for this research project to ensure the researcher was fully able to answer the research question and meet the primary and secondary objectives.

3.5.1 Secondary Data

Secondary data is 'data collected by another person for reasons other than the problem in hand' (Domegan and Fleming 2007, pg. 82). Domegan and Fleming (2007) state that the collection of secondary data is the first step of the data collection process. The main sources of secondary data used for this research project are taken from published

materials. An extensive review of the existing available literature in the areas of sports marketing and the Irish horse racing industry were conducted and revised for the duration of this research project. The main sources of literature used were Journals, books, databases, newspapers and theses. The secondary information available to the researcher on the Irish horse racing industry was limited as much of it was betting associated and based on the impact of gambling addictions. The researcher gathered most of the information on the Irish horse racing industry from publications and reports from the Irish Horse Racing Industry and any other publishing's available that helped the researcher answer the research question and meet the primary and secondary objectives.

Academic databases were a main source of secondary data throughout the research project. The databases included Emerald insight, Business source premier, Jstor, Google Scholar and so forth. The databases greatly aided the researcher in proving a foundation to achieve the research objectives. Journals were continuously used in reviewing the available literature as they provided reliable and specific information on the topic areas.

Numerous books were also used that had detailed information especially in relation to Internet marketing. The books were bought and sourced from the library in IT Sligo and the researcher's supervisor also provided various books that were invaluable to the researcher throughout the dissertation. The books provided the researcher with a base of knowledge which was then built and expanded upon using the Journals.

The internet was a key tool for gathering secondary data throughout the research process. Search engines such as Google and Yahoo were invaluable to the researcher, and accessing the library databases, journals and media archives was extremely efficient using the internet. Newspaper articles were also a great source of up to date information to the researcher.

The internet was used to access most of the articles used for the research. Newspapers and supplements such as The Economist, The Financial Times and The Irish Times were mainly used.

The researcher used the above sources to gather and analyse information and adapt it to fit the research been carried out. The secondary data was not enough to answer the research question and meet the primary and secondary objectives of this research thus primary data had to be collected to enable the research objectives to be met.

3.5.2 Primary Data

The primary data collection method chosen for the project must allow the researcher to answer the research question and meet the objectives of the project. There are a number of different collection methods that are more suited to particular research designs than others. For this research project and in relation to the strategy and design of the project, surveys were chosen as the primary data collection method as the researcher believes this method will best answer the research question and meet the objectives of the dissertation.

The research will be a qualitative study using questionnaires to answer the research question and meet the objectives of the project. The results of the research will be determined by the procedures and data collection methods used (Saunders et al, 2009).

The literature in Saunders et al (2009) define a questionnaire as ‘a general term to include all techniques of data collection in which each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order’ (Saunders et al, 2009 pg 360).

Saunders et al (2009) state the importance of designing an effective questionnaire to ensure validity and reliability. The authors propose that in order to ensure effective response rates the questionnaire must be carefully planned and designed, have a clear layout, pilot tested and delivered effectively (Saunders et al, 2009).

The researcher decided that the best way to deliver the survey for this research was to administer it to the respondents by email. The questionnaire designed for the research project includes both open and closed ended questions. This format allows the researcher to answer the research question and meet the objectives more effectively. Open questions give the respondents the opportunity to answer the questions in their own way; in contrast closed questions give respondents a choice of answers from which they must choose.

Pilot testing is a key element in delivering a well designed survey and ensuring effective research results. Pilot testing involves testing the questionnaire on a number of people to ensure the questions are clear and understandable. By doing this it allows the researcher the opportunity to identify errors and to make adjustments before the questionnaire is given to the selected sample (Saunders et al, 2009). Once the questionnaire was structured by the researcher it had to be pilot tested to see if any adjustments or changes were required.

The first draft of the questionnaire was taken by the research supervisor. The research supervisor was able to examine the questionnaire and comment on the layout and wording of the questions. The first draft of the questionnaire was slightly leading which may have resulted in bias results; also the wording of a number of questions was overcomplicated and confusing. Alterations and adjustments were made and a second draft of the questionnaire was given to two companies in the North West that the researcher had access to. The pilot questionnaires were administered in person therefore instant feedback on potential flaws was received. The participants of the pilot test sample noted that the questionnaire was clear and understandable but there was a slight grammatical error in one question. The researcher took note of the respondent's comments and made appropriate changes to the questionnaire. The survey was then ready to be conducted in the field.

3.6 Stage 4 Sampling

The fourth stage of the marketing research process is sampling. Sampling refers to the techniques and procedures required to collect data to answer the research question and meet the objectives. The sampling techniques available to the researcher are divided into two types; these include probability and non probability sampling which each have individual separate sampling techniques. Probability sampling means that each case is known from the population and is more than likely equal for all cases. Non probability on the other hand means that each case in the population is not known and is not equal in all cases (Saunders et al, 2009). Domegan and Fleming (2007) provide a sampling plan which can aid a researcher in choosing a representative sample.

3.6.1 Step 1 Define the Population

The first step in the sampling frame is to define the population of interest. The target population for this research project included all companies in the North West operating in the pharmaceutical, manufacturing, hospitality, business services or public sector.

3.6.2 Step 2 Select a Sampling Frame

A sampling frame is 'a list of all the units of the defined population, where no member is excluded and all members are mentioned once, and only once' (Domegan and Fleming 2007, pg. 379). This research was conducted without a sampling frame.

3.6.3 Step 3 Choose a Sample Method

Probability sampling method was chosen over a non-probability sampling method for this research project. Probability sampling is when 'each unit has a known chance of being selected' (Domegan and Fleming 2007, p, 379). Non probability sampling is 'inherently subjective, and not objective, as the samples are chosen consciously by the researcher' (Domegan and Fleming 2007, pg. 381).

3.6.4 Step 4 Choose a Sample Type

Quota sampling was the method chosen for this research project. Quota sampling 'attempts to replicate the population without using random selection' (Domegan and Fleming, 2007). For this research Quota sampling was most appropriate as the

respondents had to be well known companies in the North West, with easy to find contact details.

3.6.5 Step 5 Determine the Sample Size

It was decided between the researcher and her supervisor that 50 questionnaires would be given distributed with ten questionnaires going to each business sector. It was decided that this would be a sufficient representation of the population and allow the researcher to collect the data required to answer the research question and meet the objectives of the dissertation.

3.7 Stage 5 Fieldwork

This stage of the marketing research process involved the researcher assessing which companies operated in the nominated industries and ensuring questionnaires were distributed to all the companies.

On the email with the link to the questionnaire it was explained to companies who the researcher was and the purpose of the research, it was also clearly stated that all information received would be highly confidential. The respondents were made aware of the time it would take to fill out the questionnaire which was between 5-6 minutes, which was the estimated figure from the pilot test. Gaining responses proved difficult but eventually the desired figure was achieved.

3.8 Stage 6 Analysis of Data

After the collection of the data, the researcher then proceeded to analyse the data. A detailed analysis of the data will be described in chapter 4. An outline of the data analysis will be provided below.

Survey Monkey online questionnaire service was used to collect and analyse the data.

3.9 Stage 7 Presentation of Results

Presenting the data is the last stage of the process and is very important in the research process (Domegan and Fleming, 2007). This stage involves the researcher writing up the analysis and findings that resulted from the data analysis stage of the research process. The results of the data analysis are presented in detail in the next chapter, followed by the overall results and conclusions to the research in chapter 5 and 6.

3.10 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability assist the researcher in avoiding errors when conducting research and ensure that a research project is valid and reliable. Validity and reliability should be considered throughout the research project as they have a major impact on all the decisions made regarding the research been carried out.

3.10.1 Validity

Validity is defined as ‘the issue of whether or not an indicator (or set of indicators) that is devised to gauge a concept really measures that concept’ (Bryman and Bell 2007, pg. 165). There are a number of different types of validity purposed by Bryman and Bell (2007) that a researcher should consider. These include internal validity, external validity and ecological validity, measurement validity. Internal validity refers to the measure of accuracy of an experiment (Malhotra, 2007). This type of validity would be more suitable to experiential research as it looks at the cause and effect of the survey itself rather than a more general measure of the survey.

Internal validity does not apply to this research project.

External validity refers to ‘whether the results of a study can be generalised beyond the specific research context’ (Bryman and Bell 2007, p, 42).

Ecological validity refers to ‘whether or not social scientific findings are applicable to people every day, natural social settings’ (Bryman and Bell 2007, p.g. 42).

3.10.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to consistency of results and measurements made in the research process (Domegan and Fleming, 2007). Reliability is concerned with ‘the consistency, accuracy,

and predictability of the research findings' (Kinnear and Taylor, 1996, pg.232). In order for a survey to be accurate and valid it must be reliable. Reliability in a questionnaire is essential in order to produce consistent findings and to enable the researcher to answer the research question and meet the primary and secondary objectives of the project (Saunders et al, 2009). Reliability of the questionnaire used for this research project was ensured through pilot testing. There are a number of threats to reliability which mainly concern error and bias on either the researcher or participant's behalf.

Participant error occurs if a respondent fails to answer a question either due to lack of understanding or refusal to answer a question. Participant error was hard to avoid as the researcher could not prevent a respondent from answering a question or from not participating in the questionnaire. The pilot testing did allow reduction in participant error as some changes had to be made to make the survey more flowing and understandable.

Participant bias is where the respondent might give the answer they think the researcher wants to hear instead of giving their own honest opinion. This was also difficult to control but the researcher made it clear to participants before they took the questionnaire that all information would remain strictly confidential.

Observer error is another threat to reliability. This can be very evident in personally administered questionnaires as the researcher is present. This did not apply as the research was carried out online.

3.11 Limitations to the Study

The researcher tried to the best of her ability to avoid and eliminate errors throughout the research, however there was a number of limitations which affects the research methodology and the research project as a whole.

The sample size was mainly focused in the Sligo, Galway, Donegal and Leitrim areas which may not represent an overall population of the North West as a whole. Further locations could have been surveyed but once the quota was reached the researcher felt there was nothing to be gained. Responses were hard to obtain as respondents did not

have the time or were not committed to completing the survey. Reaching the desired quota was quite difficult and time consuming.

The researcher did not have knowledge of SPSS software and did not require this knowledge as Survey Monkey online questionnaire service would analyse the data.

3.12 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the research process that the researcher undertook in order to achieve the primary and secondary objectives. The chapter described the different methods and routes taken in obtaining the data necessary to complete the research process effectively. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used in carrying out the research.

The chapter started by explaining the research process which was the Domegan and Fleming (2007) seven step research process. The chapter explains each step in detail and how it was applied to the research.

The chapter then explained the research process and how the secondary sources of data were gathered first and then the primary research was conducted by distributing personally administered questionnaires. The different validity and reliability measures were considered and outlined along with the limitations the researcher experienced when conducting the research.

Chapter Four.

Research Findings.

4.1 Research findings

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings obtained from the data analysis stage of the research process outlined in chapter 3. From the analysis undertaken the following findings were obtained by the researcher. The conclusions that proceeded from these findings will be outlined in detail in the next chapter.

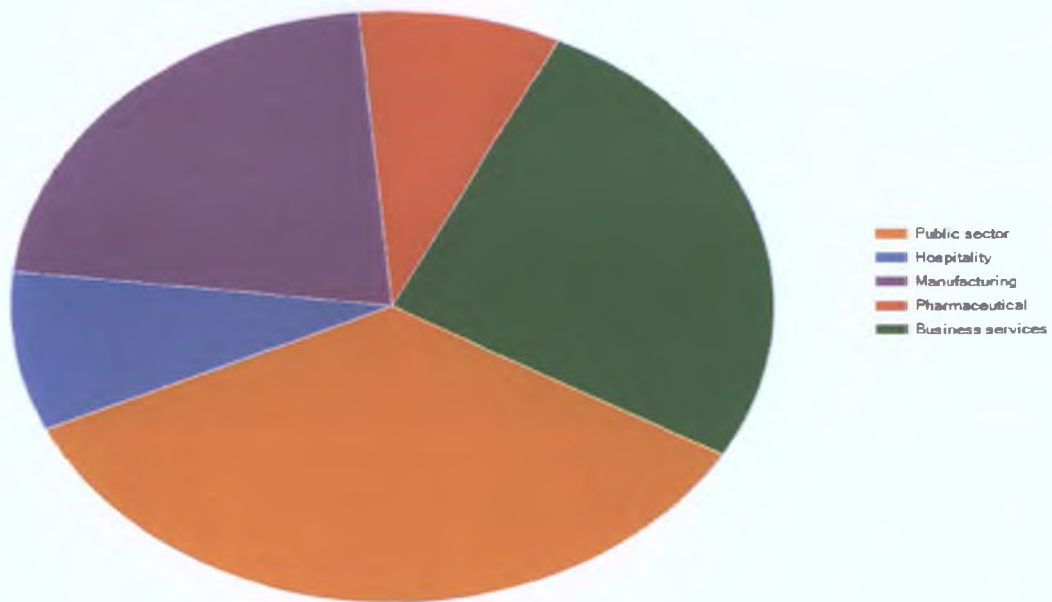
The primary research undertaken consisted of 50 questionnaires that were Emailed to business in the North West. 10 of the questionnaires were distributed to businesses in the Pharmaceutical, Hospitality, Manufacturing, Business services and Public sector.

It is acknowledged that the response rate for surveys can as little as 10-15%. When the researcher was satisfied that sufficient responses were received the campaign was closed. The response rate in this case was over 40% with 23 responses to questionnaires. The data was analysed using Survey Monkey online survey programme and further findings were achieved using Microsoft Excel to access responses to open ended questions.

The questionnaire includes 15 questions including open and closed ended and a Likert scale rating question. The questions were divided into three groups which included a section on the Traditional Internet Marketing, Social Media and internet marketing ethics

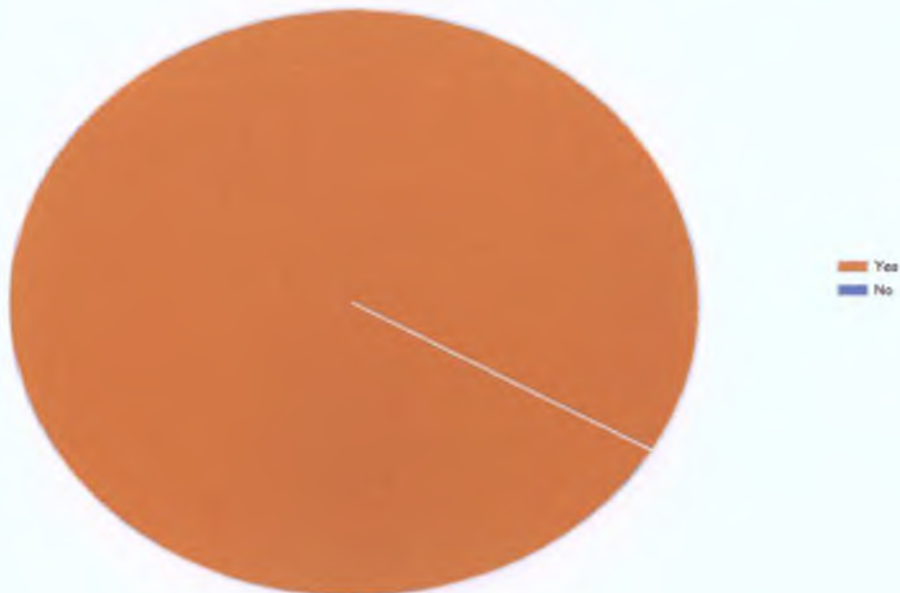
The Questionnaire can be viewed in appendix 2.

Define the industry your company operates in?



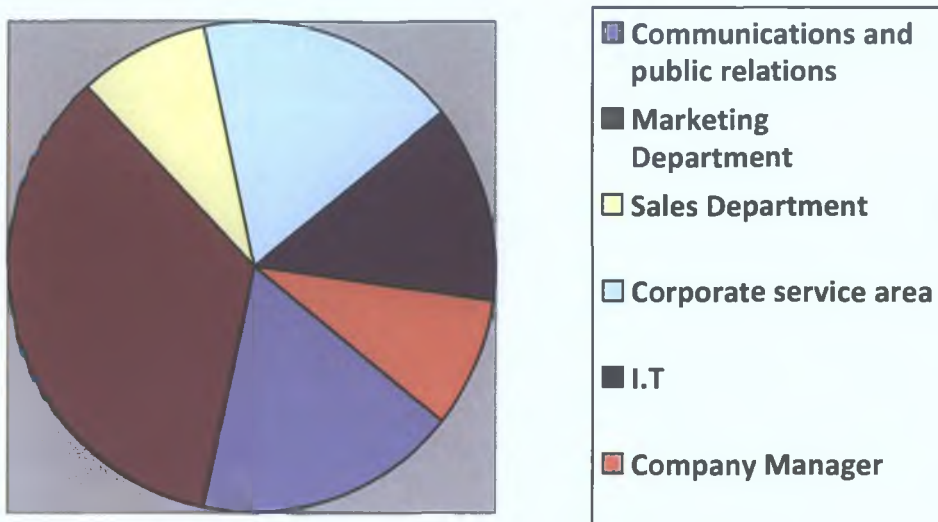
The first question is designed to give a breakdown of the respondents to the questionnaire. Public sector accounted for 34.8% of respondents, hospitality sector 8.7%, manufacturing 21.7%, pharmaceutical 8.7% and business services 26.1%.

Does your company have a website?



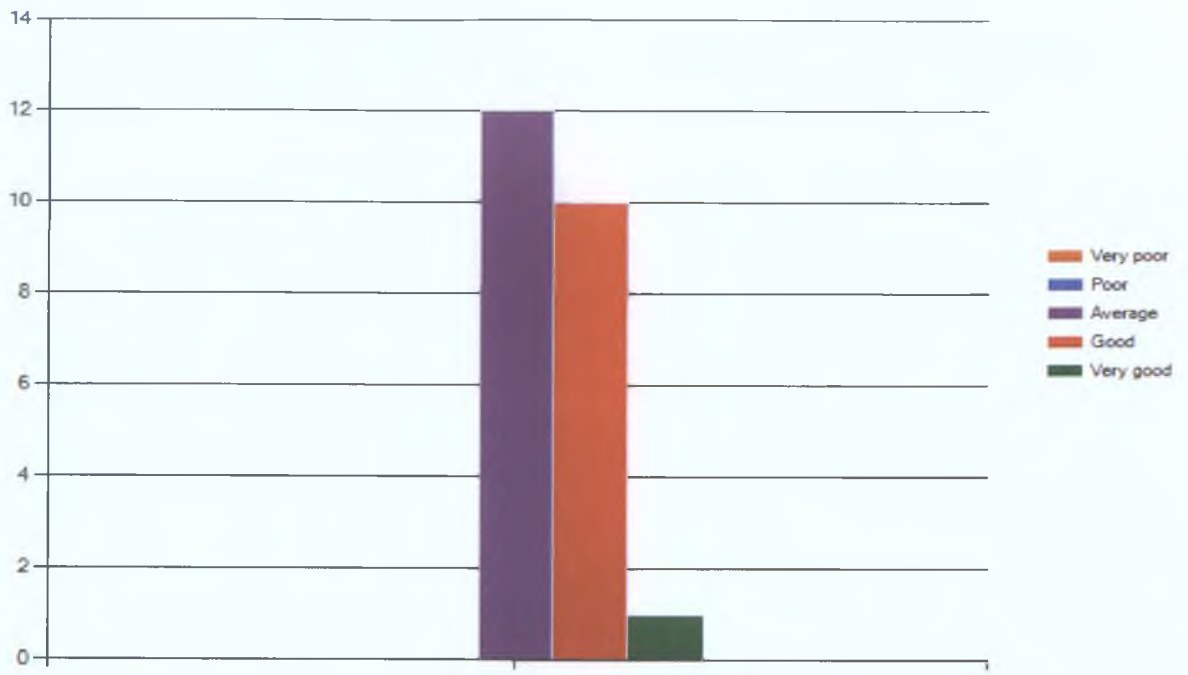
This question was to gauge the number of respondents that actually operated online. In this case all respondents answered Yes therefore they all operate online.

Who is responsible for your internet marketing program?



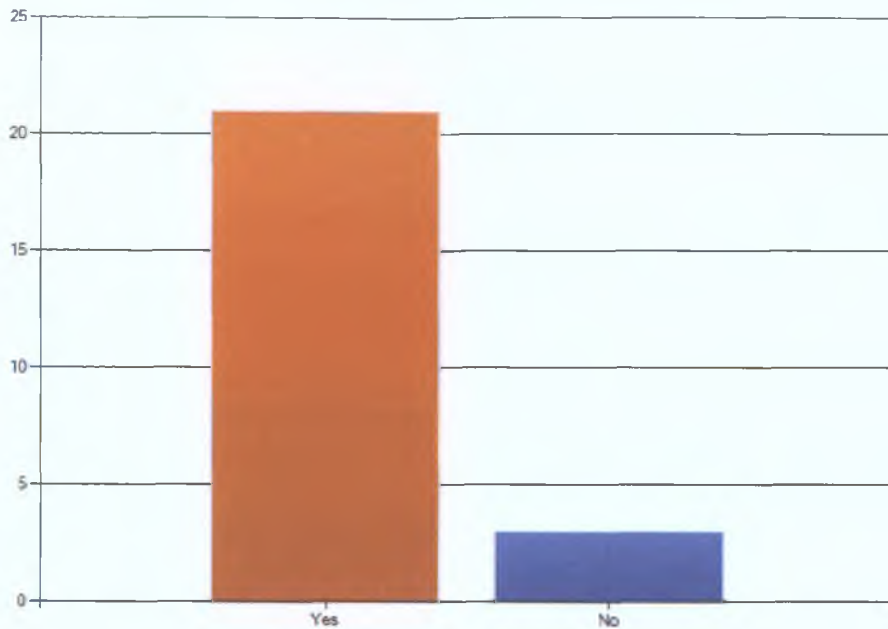
This question was an open ended question to which respondents wrote of the above six responses. Although the marketing department covers a significant proportion of the chart with 8 business (34.8%) identifying that department as being responsible for the companies internet marketing program. 4 businesses (17.4%) stated the communications and public relations department with a further 4 businesses (17.4%) identifying the corporate service area as the main department in charge of internet department. 3 businesses (13%) use the I.T. Company manager and sales department account for the further 4 final business with each department accounting for 8.7% respectively. It is interesting to note that the greater area is covered by the other five functions. 15 businesses use a department other than the Marketing department to manage the companies Internet Marketing Program.

How would you rate the current internet marketing program of your business?



It is clear from the above diagram that when respondents were asked to rate the businesses current internet marketing program that 12(52.2%) thought it average 10(43.5) thought it good and only 1(4.3%) thought it very good.

Do you believe internet marketing is an essential business function?



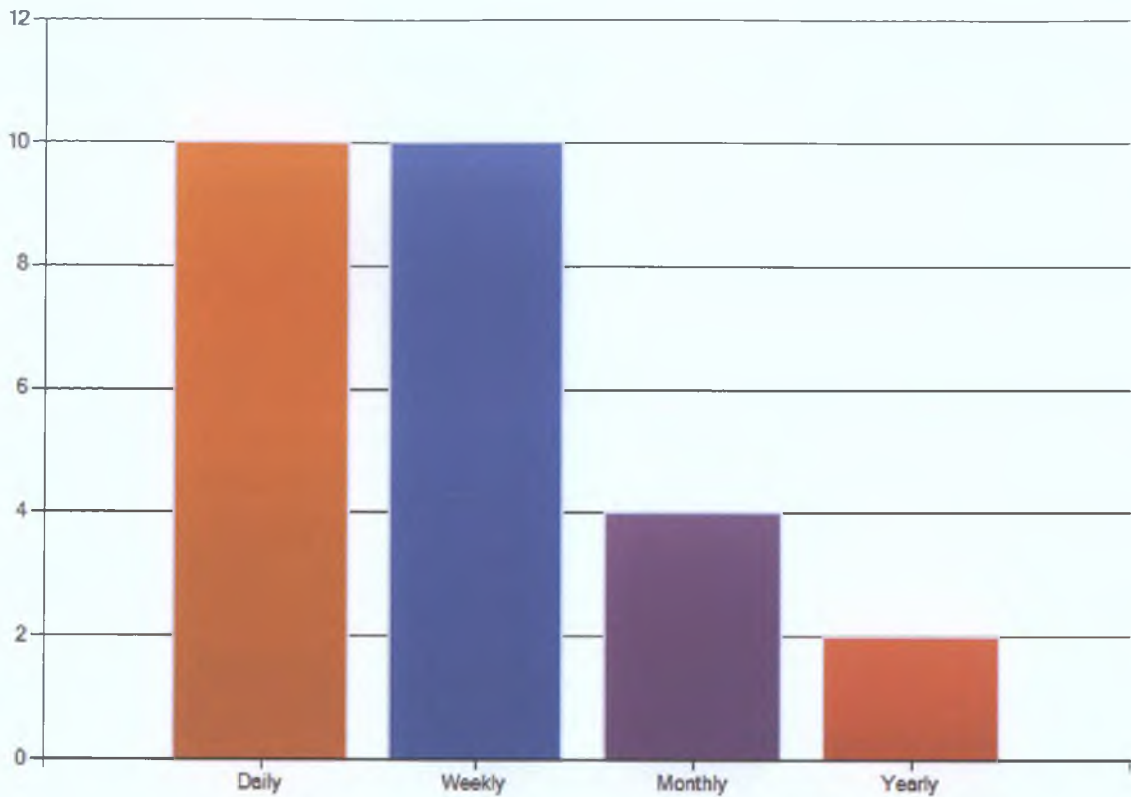
21(91.3%) out of 23 respondents felt that internet marketing is an essential business function with only two respondents feeling it a non-essential business function.

Respondents that replied Yes were asked why and these answers are displayed in the table below.

1.	In the current day it's likely to be a research mechanism for potential customers.
2.	Long established pharmaceutical companies would not rely on Internet as the primary marketing requirement.
3.	Currently the internet is the easiest and the cheapest method to develop your product.
4.	Huge amounts of traffic on internet.
5.	I don't know.
6.	Everyone is online now so it would be foolish to avoid it.
7.	Can reach numerous customers with little cost to the business.
8.	In the Health care profession products are more show cased rather than marketed through the internet as surgeons need to see the upfront benefits of the new product.
9.	A lot of business is done on line today. Direct access to your target market i.e. to individual e-mail addresses.
10.	Internet marketing is such an important aspect of sales as soon all households will have a pc and whether users are just looking or buying you have to be able to cater for all needs.
11.	It is becoming more important generally and as an organisation anxious to promote electronic business with our customers it is very important to us.
12.	Absolutely. The internet has a huge amount of users who are open to receiving information about

	products/services and it is very affordable, and can even be free.
13.	As a recruitment website it is important to promote our brand as an employer of choice.
14.	Internet and social networking is becoming more important than the old ways of doing marketing as in Newspapers etc Everything these days is done on line, i.e. social sites as in Twitter, Facebook, & Linked In, its the way forward
15.	Yes - as almost all householders in Ireland have internet access, without even considering the amount of internet enabled mobile phone users. It is the first point of call for most consumers who want to research a purchase and by marketing on the most appropriate sites for your brand, your message can be very effectively targeted.
16.	Enables greater targeting of audiences Lower Cost Allows for varying messages and greater detail which suits our product offering
17.	Having an on-line presence is vital because traditional media consumption is declining and consumers are spending more time on-line; it is also very cost effective and easy to track performance
18.	I sell digital marketing services, I fundamentally believe that digital marketing is the most targeted, cost-effective and useful channel available as part of the marketing mix.
19.	It's an essential component of a marketing plan in particular marketing & sales communications.
20.	New communication

How often do you update your website?



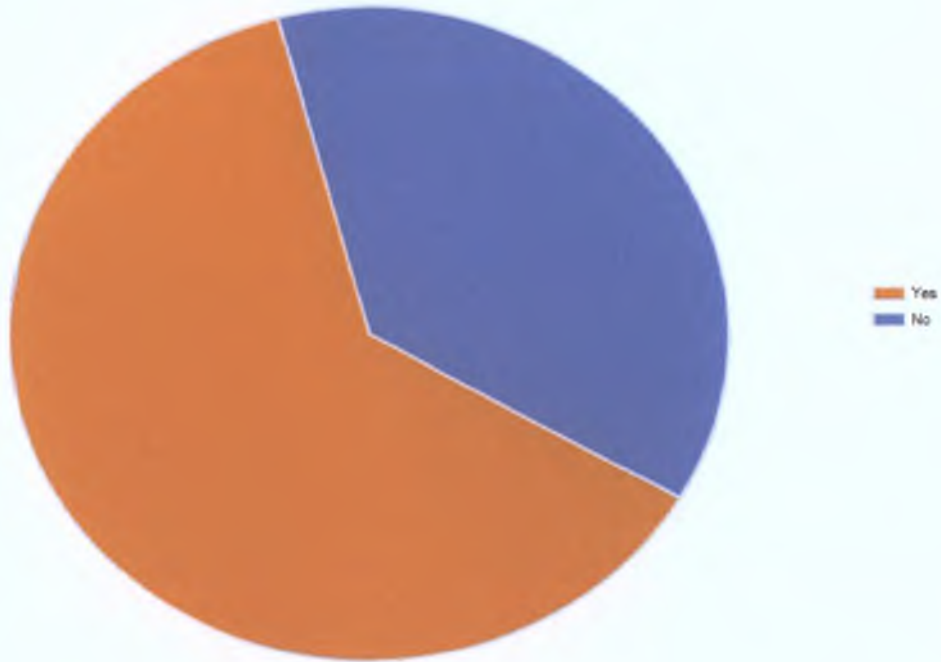
10 businesses (43.5 %) update the business website daily, a further 10 businesses (43.5%). 4 businesses(17.4%) update the business website monthly and 2 businesses (8.7%) update yearly.

In order of importance list the different types of traditional internet Marketing tools used by your business.

List	Search engine Marketing	Online display advertising	Main website	Boards & blogging	Email	Click through	Google AD words	Affiliated	Zuuala	Surfwax	Online magazines
1	12	8	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	4	4	0	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	0

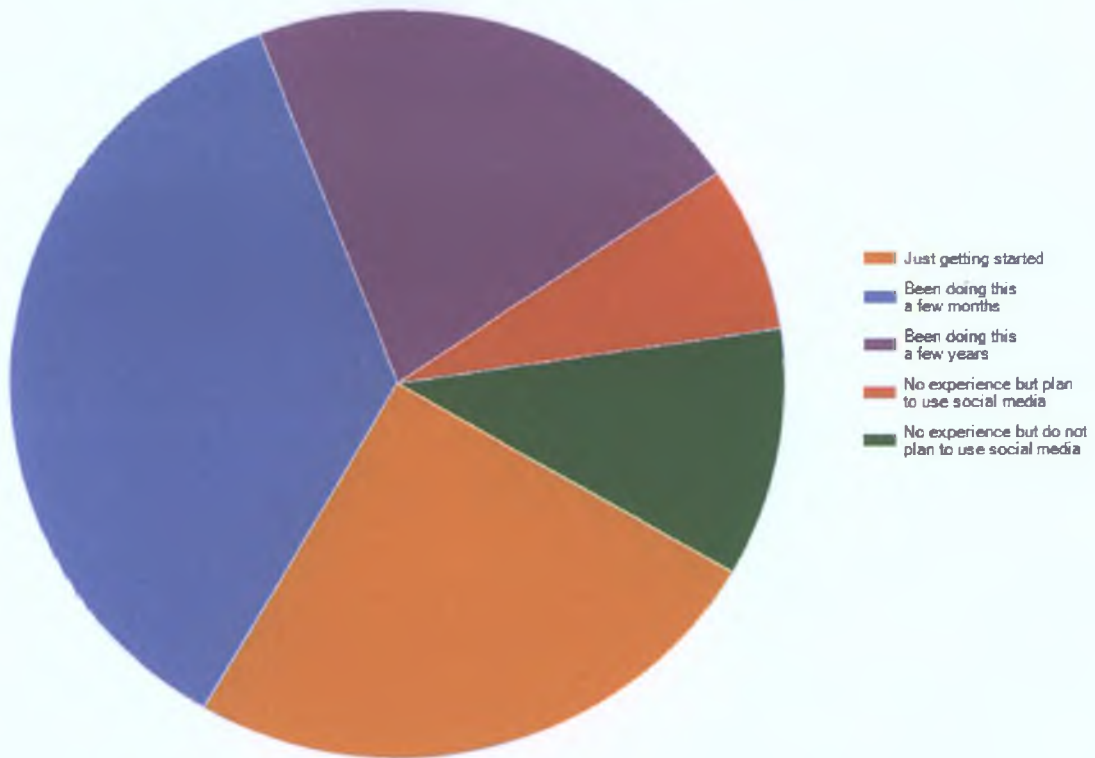
3	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

Is your business on a social networking site?



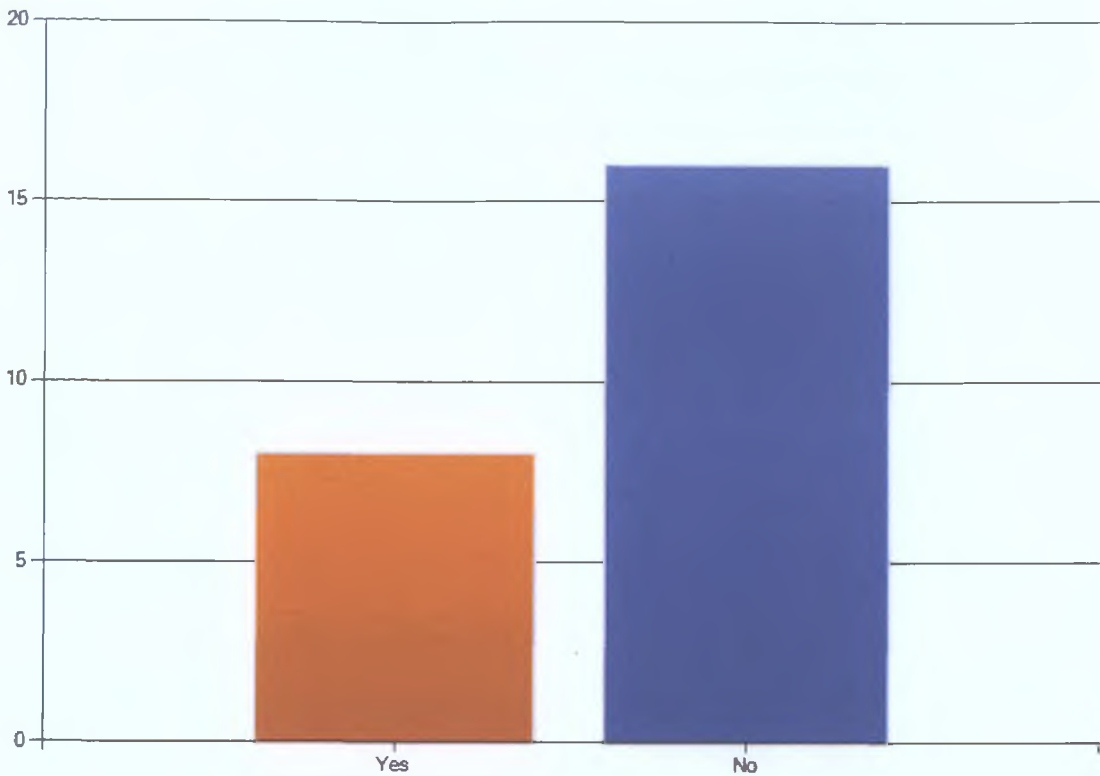
15 businesses (65.2%) have a business social networking site and 9 businesses (39.1%) do not have a business social networking site.

How would you rate your experience of using social media?



This question was designed to gauge respondent's familiarity with social media and it is clear from the chart that most respondents were either unfamiliar with social media or just getting started. Which highlights that social media is still a relatively new concept for business. 7 businesses (30.4%) were Just getting started, 10 businesses (43.5%) being doing this a few months, 6 businesses (26.1%) been doing this a few years, 2 businesses (8.7%) no experience but plan to use social media, 3 businesses (13%) no experience but do not plan to use social media.

Does your business have a social media marketing program?



8 businesses (34.8%) have a Social Media Marketing program and 16 businesses (69.6%) do not have a Social Media Marketing program. The below are the reasons why companies do not have social media marketing programs.

1.	I don't believe the business has a social media marketing program.
2.	Not 100% sure.
3.	I don't know
4.	We play it by ear on a weekly basis
5.	not totally familiar with the technology but hoping to get educated on it.
6.	N/A
7.	No formal program in place as yet. May or may not deem it necessary to put one in place. Will see as time goes on.
8.	We have used twitter to market and sell off peak tickets.
9.	presence on FB and Twitter as well as Boards.ie and AskAboutMoney.com but no formal program.
10.	A social media policy is under consideration.
11.	However it is in its early stages of development.

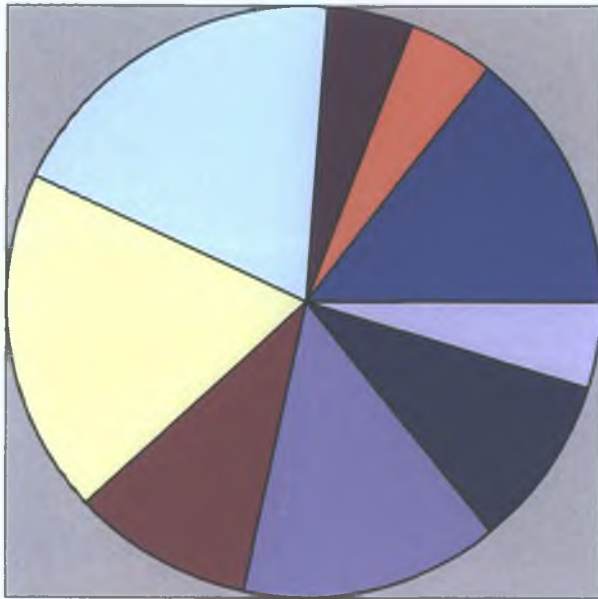
12.	Pharmaceutical products under European law are not permitted to be marketed to the end consumer. They can only be marketed to healthcare professionals who prescribe the product. We are also obliged to report any adverse events reported form product use and for this reason, any social media would have to be strictly monitored which takes away from its benefits. Any social media campaign would have to be non product based and in the current environment, our efforts are totally focused on maintaining/growing the business through more direct campaigns
13.	In development
14.	This is just being developed
15.	We have a LinkedIn company profile, a Facebook page and I regularly tweet
16.	This ties in with our overall marketing plan

In order of importance list the different types of social media used by your business.

Order of preference	Not applicable	Twitter	Social Networks	Online forum	EAcademy	Rss feeds	Popal	Moodle	You tube
1	10	2	10	1	0	0	0	0	0
2	10	3	6	2	0	0	0	0	0
3	10	3	2	1	1	0	0	1	1
4	10	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0

It is clear that with this open ended question due to the fact that a lot of businesses do not have internet marketing programs they did not answer the above question. The greatest percentage of the respondents chose social networks as the number one type of social media used by their business.

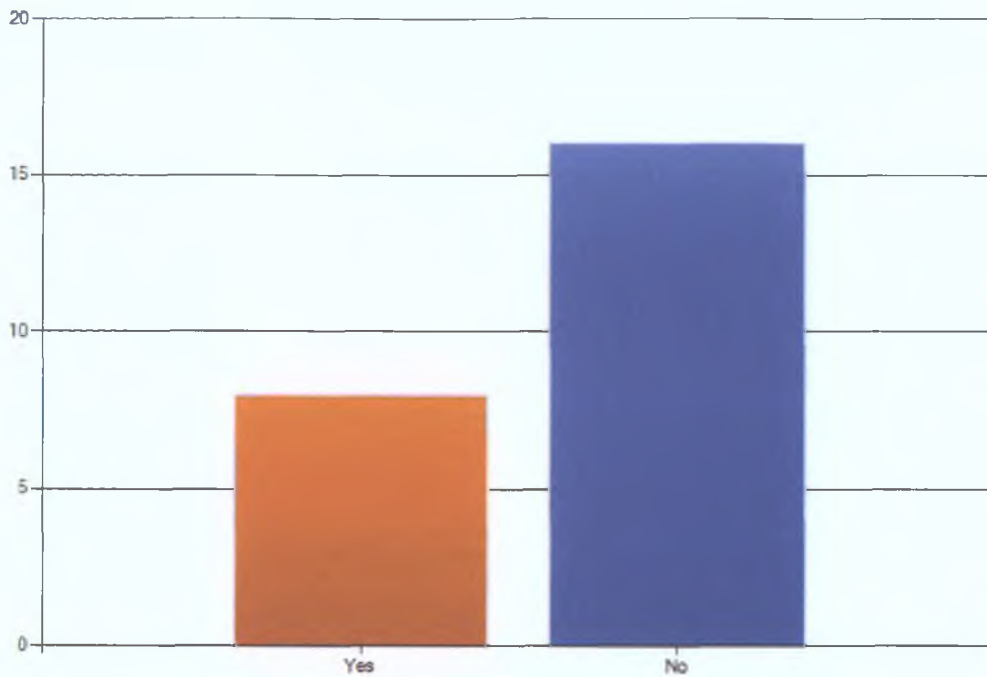
Which methods of internet marketing and/or social media do you feel provide the business with the greatest return on investment?



- Company website
- affiliated marketing
- Online Display advertising
- Social Networks
- Google Adwords
- forums
- S.E.O.
- RSS
- Email

Company website	Affiliated Marketing	Online Display Advertising	Social Networking	Google ADwords	Forums	S.E.O	RSS	Email
3 13.04%	2 8.7%	4 17.4%	4 17.4%	1 4.3%	1 4.3%	3 13.04%	1 4.3%	2 8.7%

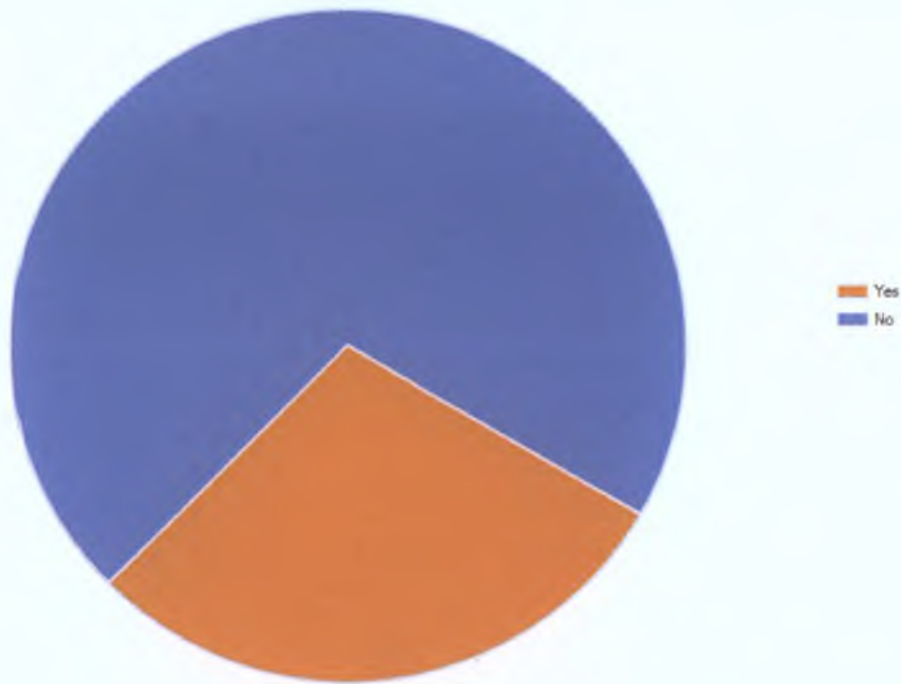
Are there any written rules followed by the company in the use of the internet as a marketing tool



8 businesses (34.8%) have rules governing the business when using the internet as a marketing tool and 16 (69.6%) of business do not have rules governing the use of the internet as a marketing tool.

1.	Don't know.
2.	Internal Laws
3.	Don't know them.
4.	Don't know
5.	Try to keep updates relevant to your business and if you don't have something interesting then don't communicate at all...
6.	We would have written rules to follow on a national level.
7.	It is part of our ICT policy which all staff must abide by in order to ensure the brand image of the organisation is not damaged / brought into disrepute.
8.	Company rules cannot notify you of these Private company policy
9.	Branding guidelines,IPHA code of conduct
10.	Too long to cover in great detail here but it covers data protection laws, confidentiality, security, corporate governance etc

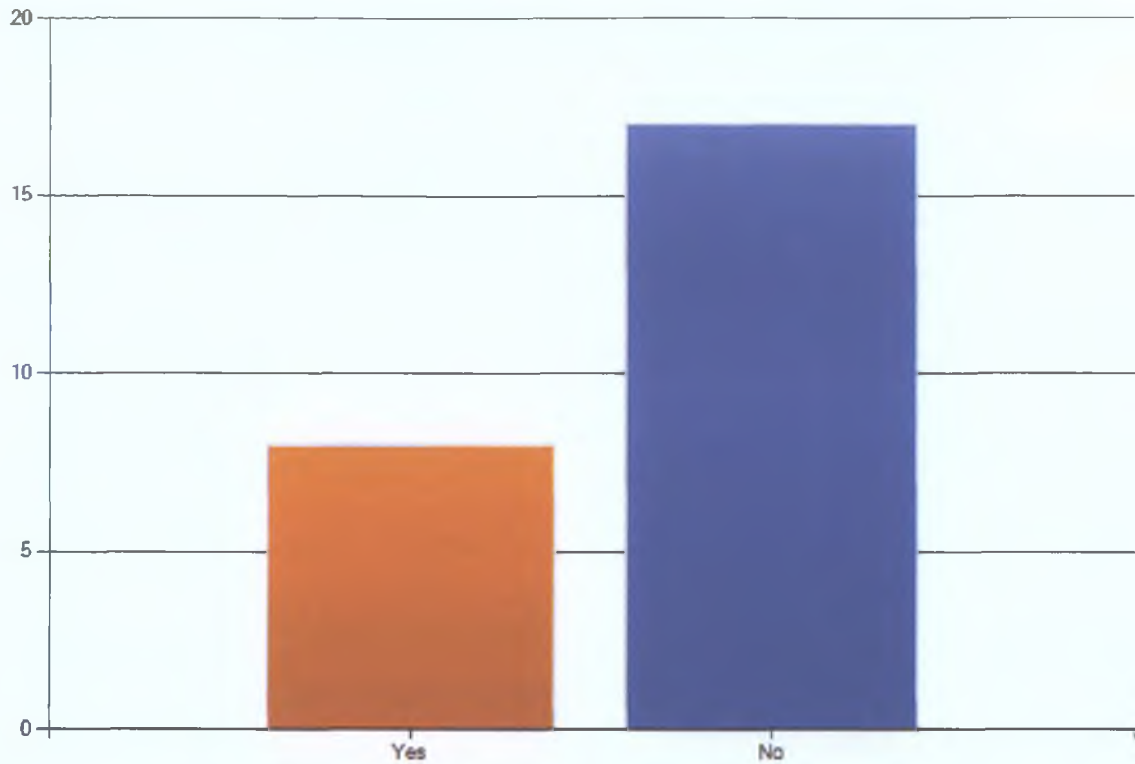
Have you encountered a company using internet marketing or social media in a way you felt was unethical or unprofessional?



73.9% have not encountered a company using internet marketing or social media in an unethical or unprofessional way. 30.4% have encountered a company using internet marketing or social media in an unethical or unprofessional way.

1.	Including insurance on deliveries without clearly defining option to purchase or not.
2.	tobacco companies as per that New Zealand study that was released today, its on http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-11088426
3.	service companies contributing to online discussions pretending to be consumers
4.	We have had 3rd party websites bidding on our name to help their web optimisation.
5.	A group set up an Anti-VRT facebook site which was unethical in the sense that it included scurrilous allegations and misinformation. We monitored the site and had to contact Facebook to have defamatory comments removed (which they did).
6.	Too many postings which became irritating & intrusive

Do you believe your company is maximising the benefits available to it from the use of internet marketing?



It is clear from the above bar chart that 17 respondents (73.9%) felt that the company was not maximising the benefits available to it from the use of internet marketing. This figure was to be expected considering the unfamiliarity of respondents with Social media. Only 8 businesses (34.8%) feel that it is maximising the benefits available to it from the use of internet marketing. The businesses were asked the reason for the above responses which will be listed below.

1.	The company I work for would be conservative in its approach to internet marketing. It would be hard to combine that with maximising the benefit.
2.	The company is beginning to embrace other forms of marketing including the Internet compared to traditional methods in the past
3.	Could probably get more from internet marketing by investing more into it.
4.	don't know
5.	we have more to do and are actively trying to get up to speed with new technology
6.	BSIL products are show cased and require demonstration, highly technical and specialised
7.	Yes at present. There is always room for improvement but budget would be a constraint at times.

8.	Yes, we were one of the first companies to actually use twitter to sell tickets online.
9.	We are doing as much as we can but as we are a public service company we have budget constraints.
10.	However we have some distance to go yet.
11.	To increase disease awareness, more work could be done on online marketing educational campaigns e.g. Your tubes clips of patients, supporting the establishment of online communities for patient support and online educational programmes for healthcare professionals.
12.	This area is only being developed at present
13.	Could do more with social media
14.	I believe that we're doing a good job but ultimately I do a much better job for my clients than for myself. We could do a lot more to promote Bua Marketing and plan to implement a more comprehensive strategy over the coming months.
15.	There's still a lot to be done but it's a work in progress

Chapter 5.

Conclusions and Discussion.

5.1 Conclusions and discussion

This chapter looks at the drivers of Internet Marketing and Social Media in companies in the North West. It looks at how and if companies in the North West are using Internet Marketing and Social Media. It also looks at the relationship between current literature on the topic discussed in Chapter 2 and the findings of the research.

It is clear in the literature discussed earlier that the internet has become a significant driving force for businesses. Although it is globally acknowledged, this research was designed to measure the prevalence of the internet in businesses in the North West. All businesses surveyed had a website but internet marketing is about so much more than websites. A website will give your company a web presence but will not ensure sales. It is clear from the research that there are diverse departments of the business overseeing the companies Internet Marketing Program, it must also be noted that the sector the business operates in has an impact upon the department in charge. Public Sector organisations market in a different way, a lot of their communications are informing the consumer of services, essential they are not selling products but the services they provide and their impact upon public life. Due to the nature of these communications Internet Marketing is normally handled by the Public Relations Office.

Due to the fast moving changes in technology companies need a Marketing department with I.T skills. The way forward for business is to combine both Marketing and I.T departments in order to have the knowledge and the skill to keep pace with rapidly changing marketing techniques. The research highlights that although the majority of businesses are aware that Internet Marketing is an essential business function, the ratings of the company's current internet program were between average and good, with only one respondent indentifying the company as having a very good Internet Marketing Program.

Koprowski 1995 identifies the internet as a method of gaining information on customers in order to great customer specific business strategies. Among the reasons given by businesses surveyed as to why businesses believe Internet Marketing is an essential business function were: Low cost, increases sales and ease at which information can be communicated to customers. Only three respondents mentioned that the internet can be

used to gather information on consumers, this is a huge oversight on the companies behalf. Information gathered on the consumer is necessary for companies to provide useful Internet content, to be able to segment consumers and provide a flow. Lutz and Guiry, 1994, identified the relevance of search flow to Internet Marketing, it is a concept that the I.T department may try to ensure but many companies have not related it back to marketing.

A website alone will not give a company increased sales or competitive advantage, the company needs to ensure that consumers are going to the website. This can be done in two ways: Search Engine Marketing and Online display advertisements. Search Engine Marketing is the art and science of publishing information in a format, which will make search engines believe that your content satisfies the needs of their users for relevant search queries. This method was the first listed in order of importance, which shows companies are actively trying to direct traffic towards the company's website. The other method is Online display Advertising which entails embedding an advertisement into a web page. It is intended to attract traffic to the website of the advertiser. This was the second most popular method used by business, this shows again of companies understanding of the need to get traffic to the website. The literature in Chapter 2 discusses the re-emergence of Online Display Advertisements as versatile tool that can be used for more than just generating website traffic. Companies in the North West must realise this in order to maximise the benefits available to them. Online Display Advertisements should be used to create a strong brand image and communicate a company's brand personality.

The researcher identified that the questionnaire highlighted unfamiliarity within most companies about the use of Social Media as a marketing tool. This was due to a lack of knowledge about methods of Social Media Marketing and confusion about how to use this method successfully. One method that companies did mention that has become increasingly popular is the use of online forums and boards. This offers businesses an opportunity to communicate directly with consumers and to gather information on consumers. This research project should be of use to companies in the North West when trying to establish a Social Media Marketing program, it will identify methods to be used

and also explain why these methods will add value to the business and in doing so create a competitive advantage.

5.1.1 Contribution

In achieving the primary and secondary objectives of the research project, some contributions can be applied to theoretical and practical situations.

5.1.2 Implications to Theory

This research project contributes to the already existing literature on the general concept of Internet marketing. The existing literature on Internet Marketing in Ireland is very limited. The research combines the perceptions of academic authors, behaviours of businesses and legal and ethical implications of Internet Marketing.

The research identifies the importance of implementing an integrated Internet marketing and Social Media mix that is delivered in an ethical way.

5.1.3 Implications for practice

This research also has implications to practice as it could help Companies in the North West identify areas of improvement for the practice of Internet Marketing and Social Media Marketing with the aim of delivering an overall satisfying experience to customers. The findings from the research show that from the respondents surveyed the majority were able to identify the need for Internet Marketing Program and the methods used but struggled to identify the need for a Social Media Marketing program and the methods used. The findings from the research could assist the Companies in the North West to become familiar with methods of Social Media Marketing. It may also create awareness amongst Companies of information available online about consumer's perceptions, preferences and motivations

5.1.4 Limitations of the Study

Throughout the research there were a number of limitations the researcher had to consider. The researcher tried to minimise the affect of each limitation.

One limitation the researcher experienced was getting the online survey emailed to the relevant department within the business. It was essential that the correct individual within the company answered the survey to ensure accurate responses.

Another limitation the researcher experienced was meeting the target quota of respondents for the questionnaire. It is acknowledged that the average return for questionnaires is between 10-15%. It proved difficult to get participants to complete the questionnaire but with patience and encouragement the desired quota was achieved

Time and cost restraints were also a limitation throughout the research.

5.1.5 Summary

At a global level The Internet, Social Media and online Networking is here to stay and the rate of change is accelerating all the time. This is pressurising businesses to be ever more innovative to compete, businesses in the North West are not experiencing the same rate of change however they have acknowledged the use of the Internet in their businesses and they have to be receptive to this change, today the good ideas and strategic direction of a business can be driven from outside the organisation.

References from an article from SearchCIO.com by Linda Tucci (Sept 2010)

Tucci (Sept 2010) Whether you are part of the Joy of Pepsi generation, or you'd like to buy the world a Coke, the two soft drinks are indistinguishable in one respect: Their parent companies are convinced that social media and networking are good business.

Instead of spending \$20 million on Super Bowl ads in 2010, PepsiCo Inc. launched the Pepsi Refresh Project, a social media site that is doling out \$20 million in grants this year to projects submitted by and voted on by the public. The Coca-Cola Co. had already sunk its usual millions into Super Bowl advertising when Pepsi made its big announcement, but Coca-Cola went one better. It launched a social media and networking promotion that

called attention to its philanthropic arm, Live Positively.com. Coca-Cola fans could preview the company's Super Bowl commercials in exchange for sending their friends on Facebook a "virtual gift" of a Coke bottle logo and news feed. For every brand-boosting gift, Coca-Cola donated \$1 to the Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

This is a very positive example of companies exercising their Corporate Social Responsibility through Social Media, in the example below United Airlines were on the receiving end of negative publicity which impacted on their share price. The suggestion is that this resulted from one user's bad experience with their baggage handlers.

United Airlines Inc., which learned the hard way how effective a corporate social media campaign can be when singer Dave Carroll's musical complaint about the airline's baggage handlers, United Breaks Guitars, went viral on YouTube. The ditty racked up more than a half million hits three days after it was posted, and by some accounts caused the airline's shares to drop 10%. More than 9 million people have viewed the spot.

John Sviokla, vice chairman, Diamond Management & Technology Consultants Inc. stated:

"The challenge for CIOs is akin to the one they faced when personal computers were introduced and corporate IT departments were forced to react to a new wave of consumer electronics, Sviokla said. Since then, corporations have enjoyed a long period when technology inside the organization was better than technology outside. "We are on the other side of that cycle," he said. CIOs that ignore this "third wave of capitalism," as Sviokla calls it, do so at their peril.

Growing pains notwithstanding, companies will have to work with social media and networking, Sviokla said, because the third wave is all about the collective: collective consumption, collective absorption of risk, collective financing.

The numbers are compelling with 500 million users; Facebook would rank as the third-largest country in the world, after China and India and ahead of the United States. The amount of time users spend on Facebook has just eclipsed the amount of time spent on Google, he said."

In addition, the threat or promise of social media marketing and networking will grow, fueled by mobile technology and the use of the Internet. In 2007, a Kaiser Family

Foundation study found the average time that eight- to 18-year-olds spent consuming media (cell phones, YouTube, computers) was nine hours and 33 minutes per day. In a 2009 follow-up study, the average time had increased to 10 hours and 45 minutes per day -- and to more than 11 hours per day for a 12-and-up subgroup. Tucci (Sept 2010).

Digital Darwinism is a fact for business today, there will be winners and losers. The Marketing components for a business are still the same but the rules of engagement have changed dramatically and the most significant factor is the environment.

Businesses will have to embrace a world where controlling the external threats to the business is potentially global in the Internet and Social Media world. Protecting and maintaining the reputation of the business demands new skills both internal and external to the business.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1.

DATE	NUMBER OF USERS	% WORLD POPULATION	INFORMATION SOURCE
December, 1995	16 millions	0.4 %	IDC
December, 1996	36 millions	0.9 %	IDC
December, 1997	70 millions	1.7 %	IDC
December, 1998	147 millions	3.6 %	C.I. Almanac
December, 1999	248 millions	4.1 %	Nua Ltd.
March, 2000	304 millions	5.0 %	Nua Ltd.
July, 2000	359 millions	5.9 %	Nua Ltd.
December, 2000	361 millions	5.8 %	Internet World Stats
March, 2001	458 millions	7.6 %	Nua Ltd.
June, 2001	479 millions	7.9 %	Nua Ltd.
August, 2001	513 millions	8.6 %	Nua Ltd.
April, 2002	558 millions	8.6 %	Internet World Stats
July, 2002	569 millions	9.1 %	Internet World Stats

September, 2002	587 millions	9.4 %	Internet World Stats
March, 2003	608 millions	9.7 %	Internet World Stats
September, 2003	677 millions	10.6 %	Internet World Stats
October, 2003	682 millions	10.7 %	Internet World Stats
December, 2003	719 millions	11.1 %	Internet World Stats
February, 2004	745 millions	11.5 %	Internet World Stats
May, 2004	757 millions	11.7 %	Internet World Stats
October, 2004	812 millions	12.7 %	Internet World Stats
December, 2004	817 millions	12.7 %	Internet World Stats
March, 2005	888 millions	13.9 %	Internet World Stats
June, 2005	938 millions	14.6 %	Internet World Stats
September, 2005	957 millions	14.9 %	Internet World Stats
November, 2005	972 millions	15.2 %	Internet World Stats
December, 2005	1,018 millions	15.7 %	Internet World Stats

March, 2006	1,023 millions	15.7 %	Internet World Stats
June, 2006	1,043 millions	16.0 %	Internet World Stats
Sept, 2006	1,086 millions	16.7 %	Internet World Stats
Dec, 2006	1,093 millions	16.7 %	Internet World Stats
Mar, 2007	1,129 millions	17.2 %	Internet World Stats
June, 2007	1,173 millions	17.8 %	Internet World Stats
Sept, 2007	1,245 millions	18.9 %	Internet World Stats
Dec, 2007	1,319 millions	20.0 %	Internet World Stats
Mar, 2008	1,407 millions	21.1 %	Internet World Stats
June, 2008	1,463 millions	21.9 %	Internet World Stats
Sept, 2008	1,504 millions	22.5 %	Internet World Stats
Dec, 2008	1,574 millions	23.5 %	Internet World Stats
Mar, 2009	1,596 millions	23.8 %	Internet World Stats
June, 2009	1,669 millions	24.7 %	Internet World Stats

Sept, 2009	1,734 millions	25.6 %	Internet World Stats
Dec, 2009	1,802 millions	26.6 %	Internet World Stats
June, 2010	1,966 millions	28.7 %	Internet World Stats

Appendix 2 Questionnaire.



*** 1. Define the industry your company operates in?**

- Public sector
- Hospitality
- Manufacturing
- Pharmaceutical
- Business services

*** 2. Does your company have a website?**

- Yes
- No

*** 3. Who is responsible for the internet marketing program of the business?**

*** 4. How would you rate the current internet marketing program of your business?**

- Very poor
- Poor
- Average
- Good
- Very good

*** 5. Do you believe internet marketing is an essential business function?**

- Yes
- No

Explain your answer

*** 6. How often do you update your website?**

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Yearly

*** 7. In order of importance list the different types of traditional internet marketing tools (search engine optimization,online display advertising etc) used by your business**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

*** 8. Is your business on a social networking site?**

Yes

No

*** 9. How would you rate your experience of using social media?**

Just getting started

Been doing this a few months

Been doing this a few years

No experience but plan to use social media

No experience but do not plan to use social media

*** 10. Does your business have a social media marketing program?**

Yes

No

Explain

*** 11. In order of importance list the different types of social media used by your business**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

*** 12. Which methods of internet marketing and /or social media do you feel provide the business with the greatest return on investment?**

*** 13. Are there any written rules followed by the company in the use of the internet as a marketing tool**

Yes

No

If Yes describe these rules

*** 14. Have you encountered a company using internet marketing or social media in a way you felt was unethical or unprofessional?**

Yes

No

If Yes please elaborate.

*** 15. Do you believe your company is maximizing the benefits available to it from the use of internet marketing?**

Yes

No

Explain your answer