DK, Founder, MediaSnackers
Online behaviour – insights and opportunities

DK is the founder of MediaSnackers, a term he coined back in early 2006 to describe what young people were doing with media. DK has an educational background in communications and media, plus a professional background in local government. He was the UK's first and only corporate youth officer. His passion for working with young people (and youth professionals) has been his main focus for the past eight years. The name DK comes from the initials of his old name; one of the first young people he worked with called him DK and the name stuck.

This session provided insights into how and why people use digital technologies, with a particular focus on young people. DK looked at how use may be changing with the advent of new tools such as social networking sites, podcasts and vodcasts and at how we might develop our digital marketing in line with the way that people use interactive media.

<u>Online Behaviour – insights and opportunities</u>

MediaSnackers use young people as a barometer for measuring the impact of social media, gaining insight into why and how some methods are more successful than others. It is important to remember that:

- social media is no longer an online phenomenon as people can now surf on their phone

- The web is value neutral; whatever is good or bad, it's what *we* do with it that gives it value, so we need to interact with it

The world has changed… and is not turning back. That's the bit that scares organisations.

MediaSnackers has identified young people's attitudes to social media. They want it:

- whenever
- wherever
- multilayered
- free

A brief history of social media

Napster	1999	downloading music for free
PlayStation 2	2000	
Wikipedia	2001	creating the cut-and-paste generation
iPod	2001	it has taken only six years for this to become a design classic
Second Life	2002	the first virtual economy
MySpace	2003	
Technocrati	2003	search engine for blogs

Skype, Flickr	2004	this created free talk and photos anywhere in the world
YouTube	2005	
Twitter	2006	
i-Phone	2007	
????	2008	We are seeing exponential change, whatever is coming

New phones on the market can do all of these things listed above – functionality is built-in. What is clear is that we have to match the pace of change. We must see this as a wave to catch, not a missed opportunity.

The history lesson highlights two key questions for arts organisations:

• Why would young people need to come to the theatre when they've got YouTube?

• Why do they still need us?

The answers are simple:

• Connecting – all humans need to connect

• Communicating – mainly telling everybody how well we've done

Whereas technology changes, humans don't; we essentially do the same stuff but with different means. Everyone can now be a:

• Creator

• Critic

• Joiner

• Spectator

Young people are tooled up to this engagement as we reach a point of convergence (where one phone will do everything you need).

The new media breed has gone from being provided for to a point where they are making their own choices and content. Here are some statistics relating to the 12 to 15-year-old age range 2008 (Ofcom's UK's Media Literacy Audit (2006 & 2008):

• they watch 17.6 hours of television per week, which is seven hours less on average than the last audit (2006).

• 42% of television is watched on the computer by this age group and more than half produce content themselves

- 54% have a profile on social networking sites

- 24% have two or more profiles

- they spend at least 13.8 hours a week online (this itself is split down into many subgroups)

Look at how television is watched by the internet generation: in the two months since the BBC i-Player was launched:

- 17 million BBC TV programmes have been downloaded

- there are 1.3 million unique users per week

- 500,000 downloads each day

The trend of social networking sites is also getting younger and younger; Club Penguin is aimed at eight to 12-year-olds, all making friends that they will never meet.

The other important development is mobile media because this fulfils the 'anytime, any place, anywhere' need. 'Martini media' means that organisations need to have a checklist of the ways in which they communicate. The group was asked to consider on an individual basis how they have communicated with their peers, colleagues or young people in the past week.

The challenges

Businesses are not run by IT departments, but the people who hire and fire IT departments and IT departments should be helping marketers, not hindering.

Consultation is dead, because conversation is king now.

> - People expect to be able to respond and engage. The Foreign Office has six bloggers and profiles on Flickr and YouTube. If they can use social media, why not arts organisations?

So that delegates could see this interactivity in practice and understand how some of the tools apply to the arts sector, the session then moved into a practical demonstration of how arts organisations can use a variety of free sites and tools to make their online presence more attractive, interesting and interactive. For example, interactive tools could remove the need for paper reports, and convey the experience more vividly.

Firstly, a blog was set up using blogger.com. This allows you to set up your own profile.

DK used a digital camera to take a photo of the group and sent it by Bluetooth to the website. Animoto allows you to edit and download photos – essential to give your blog an identity (for free). Flickr works in the same way.

Bluetooth is very popular with young people for linking up with each other, again this is free. Most phones and other mobile computers come with Bluetooth fitted, but Bluetooth dongles can now be purchased to upgrade or add functionality to old equipment.

The key thing to remember is that functionality is built into equipment now, so that interfacing is no longer difficult or fiddly. This removes the barrier to entry and arts organisations can make use of the widest range of tools possible.

The blog acquired some text, but needed more to be interesting, so DK demonstrated other tools – online magazine publishing from issuu.com, timeline tools from dipity.com etc. The key is to aggregate activities, so that everyone can participate. These tools can also be used internally by organisations as permissions can be controlled making a more effective use of resources.

Another resource is dipity.com, which is currently being used by teachers for reflective practice and idea sharing. This website is good for the free timelines and cross posting.

Finally, DK demonstrated how easy it is to set up SMS polling – instant quantitative research, which can be structured by the user for a nominal fee, by asking the group to text their feedback about the session: OK, great, fantastic.

At the end of 20 minutes the presentation had gone from text and photos, to a blog, to a timeline, to a slideshow, with an instant snapshot of reaction to the presentation. These online and social media resources allow arts organisations to embellish what we're doing in terms of communication.

Question: how do you get people to link to a blog?

Content is king, and interactivity queen. We need to invite people to join in, for example using moo.com.

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Notes and References

Websites/online platforms:

- mediasnackers.com/report: weblog
- twitter.com: subscribe to 'people'
- technorati.com: search engine for weblogs
- bebo.com: most popular UK youth social network
- myspace.com: another very popular social network
- facebook.com: the most popular social network

Videos:

- MediaSnackers Explained: youtube.com/watch?v=2ou6_Dv8Heo

- Cup Stacking World Record(s):
	youtube.com/watch?v=xNG3sgk02Lc
	youtube.com/watch?v=1Em36g-vlOY

- Future vids (Microsoft Surface and Apple iPhone):
	youtube.com/watch?v=EYrJ1IkPNLc
	youtube.com/watch?v=PQLTjiAfdLY

- One Year Old with iPhone: youtube.com/watch?v=oZwKPDvYA2M

Stats:

- Ofcom's UK's Media Literacy Audit (2006 & 2008)
- Forrester Research (June 2007)

Other:

- skype.com: free chat and phone client
- pbwiki.com: free wiki's for all
- clubpenguin.com: immersive platform for tweens (8-12s)
- fco.gov.uk: Foreign & Commonwealth Office site

Masterclass

- blogger.com: free weblogging platform
- flickr.com: free photo hosting site with geotagging
- dipity.com: create virtual timelines
- animoto.com: create amazing MTV-style sldeshows
- issuu.com: virtual mags from pdfs
- smspoll.net: real time sms polling