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A STUDY OF REAL-TIME CONTENT MARKETING

– Formulating Real-time Content Marketing based
on content, search and social media



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The primary objective of this research is to understand profoundly the new concept of content marketing – real-time content marketing on the aspect of the digital marketing experts. Particularly, the research will focus on the real-time content marketing theories and how to build real-time content marketing strategy based on content, search and social media. It also finds out how marketers measure and keep track of conversion rates of their real-time content marketing plan.

Practically, this research will be useful for digital marketers generally and content marketers or any experts working in content profession such as SEO specialists, copywriters, social media specialists, etc. specifically, who would like to expand their business in digital world and enhance their content strategy in order to reach the audience. Moreover, it is helpful to individuals who are interested in the digital marketing to improve their knowledge which can lead to further researches.

The theoretical framework is coined mainly from the Marketing Flywheel of Shane Snow (Snow, 2014) in which he explained clearly about the connection between content, search and social media in the digital marketing. In addition, the establishment of real-time content marketing strategy based on content, search and social media has been sourced primarily from the book of Rob Garner: *The Definitive Guide to Real-time Content Marketing* (Garner, 2013b).

The data in this research was collected from four semi-structured interviews. The interviewees are digital marketing experts who possess profound knowledge in Digital Marketing. The findings indicate that the real-time content marketing strategy is applying in online marketing world, which consists of phases: market and keyword research, content planning as well as the model of publishing and conversational platforms. Also, the methods to measure the impact of real-time content marketing are diverse from cases to cases depending on the tools and purposes of marketers.

The thesis consists of several findings which can benefit the stakeholders of digital marketing. Suggestions for future researches conclude the studying of internet users' aspects and how real-time content marketing can be conducted in more specific contexts such as within a country.

KEYWORDS:

Real-time content marketing, content marketing, digital marketing, search, social media

OPINNÄYTETYÖ (AMK) | TIIVISTELMÄ
TURUN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

Koulutusohjelman nimi | Suuntautumisvaihtoehdon nimi

Opinnäytetyön valmistumisajankohta | Sivumäärä

Ohjaaja(t)

Tekijä(t)

OPINNÄYTETYÖN NIMI

ASIASANAT:

(Kirjoita asiasanat tähän. Etsi sopivia asiasanoja ONKI -ontologiapalvelun YSA (Yleinen suomalainen asiasanasto) ja MUSA (Musiikin asiasanasto) asiasanastoista.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS

SEM	Search Engine Marketing
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
ROI	Return on Investment
Blog	Short form for Weblog
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
E-commerce	Related terms often used synonymously with e-commerce are e-business and e-markets. The use of information and communication technologies to network economic activities and processes to reduce information related transaction costs and/or gain a strategic advantage that is the most rewarding. (Aoyama et al., 2001, pp.12-15)

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

Nearly 3 billion people around the world could access the internet in 2014 (InternetLiveStats, 2014) and conduct 1.2 trillion searches on Google per year worldwide (InternetLiveStats, 2012). The number is continuously growing with the record of 200 billion tweets are tweeted on Twitter per year (InternetLiveStats, 2013).

These figures illustrate the fact that the internet has become a part of our life and it is true with accompanying products such as search engines like Google, Bing, etc., social media from Twitter to Facebook and blogs. People spend time on the internet communicating, studying, entertaining, and even shopping. It is not wrong to conclude that we are surrounded by all types of online content and these definitely have affected our buying decision-making process. As the result of that, we have “Real-time Content Marketing” which is an evolved version of “Content Marketing” but it allows the marketer to reach out and communicate with the always-on consumers through search marketing and social media in time (Odden, 2012, pp.7 - 14).

Currently, the term “Real-time Content Marketing” has been coined as a trendy topic following the booming of the internet (Bancroft, 2015). On the word of Bancroft (2015), “real-time” or “being present” was emphasized as the future of content marketing landscape, which captures the attention of marketers widely. It also showed that a majority of marketers are trying to develop a good content marketing strategy which allows them to interact in time when the internet users need. However, the concept of real-time content marketing cannot be conceived in one day. Therefore, the research is undertaken in order to gain more knowledge in how to create a valuable real-time content marketing plan and how to measure the impact of real-time content marketing. Plus, the author herself is a Copywriter who would like to explore the digital marketing world. For

these reasons, the author conducted this research to acquire in-depth knowledge of the real-time content marketing strategy and to observe the thorough opinions of professionals in this topic.

Practically, the research will be useful for the digital / e-commerce marketer generally and the content marketer or any experts working in content profession such as Search Engine Optimization (SEO) specialists, copywriters, social media specialists, etc. specifically, those who would like to expand their business in the digital world and develop their content strategy in order to reach the audience. Moreover, it is helpful to individuals who are interested in the content marketing which can lead to possible further researches.

1.2 Research purpose

The objective of the research is to gain more understandings of the real-time content marketing with the focus on formulating content, search and social media tactics in order to build a good real-time content marketing strategy. It also answers the question of how marketers can measure the results of their real-time content marketing plan.

To achieve mentioned purposes, it is essential to answer the following research questions:

- a. How can marketers form a real-time content marketing strategy based on content, search and social media?
- b. How can marketers measure the impact of the real-time content marketing strategy?

1.3 Thesis structure

The structure of this thesis is divided into three main parts:

Section 2 is the overview of real-time content marketing including definitions of search, social media and content marketing as well as the sub-concepts terms based on the content marketer's point of view.

Section 3 contains the theoretical framework which consists of several theories to support the research in understanding the real-time content marketing and how to build a real-time content marketing strategy based on content, search and social media.

The final sections (section 4 and 5) target on analyzing the data collected from the interviews, which would be conducted with digital marketing experts who have deep knowledge in different minors such as Copywriting, SEO and Social media. The result will lead to the conclusion of the researched topic (section 6).

2 REAL-TIME CONTENT MARKETING OVERVIEW

2.1 Digital content marketing

As the term “content marketing” is not relatively new, there are several definitions for it. According to the Content Marketing Institute (2012) “content marketing’s purpose is to attract and retain customers by consistently creating and curating **relevant** and **valuable content** with the **intention of changing or enhancing consumer behavior**. It is an **ongoing process** that is best integrated into your overall marketing strategy.” (Emphasis added)

It states that content marketing is to educate consumers through relevant and valuable information. The materials must be useful for the audience and relate closely to what the brand is selling. From that, the content would create the loyalty for brands and help consumers recognize what they should buy in the future. They also indicate that the application of content marketing into the business is a non-disruptive process where it appears during the entire marketing plan. On one hand, it shows that content marketing does not aim at direct selling. On the other hand, the brand provides “useful knowledge” and “encourages” their audience to have the final purchase decision when they are ready. (ContentMarketingInstitute, 2012).

Although the definition of Content Marketing Institute (2012) has been comprehensive, there is another scope (Clark, 2013) added to the current concept “Content Marketing means creating and sharing valuable **free** content to attract and convert prospects into customers, and customers into repeat buyers.” (Emphasis added)

The key word here is “free” illustrating that valuable information must be accessed, consumed and shared freely by consumers so that the marketer can educate them to “know, like, and trust” (Clark, 2013) in choosing the brand.

In addition, if the content marketing definition has been combined with the concept of digital content marketing coined from Drotner & Schrøder (2010,

pp.10-15), digital content marketing can be understood as the information which can be published and searched on the internet. Therefore, if users are on the internet, most likely they are looking at, watching, or listening to different types of digital content. Those content come in many forms, from text, infographics, videos, images, audios, to Microsoft PowerPoint, etc.

Generally, digital content marketing's objective is to educate consumers by providing all types of relevant and valuable online content (Pulizzi, 2014a, pp.75 - 78). Although the issue of free versus paid content is still on the debate (Mullan, 2011), the core of this marketing is that if the marketer consistently delivers the ongoing valuable content to their audience throughout the entire marketing strategy, they will receive the reward as the purchasing decision and loyalty from the consumers.

2.2 Real-time content marketing

Before understanding the real-time content marketing, we should explore what "real-time marketing" is. Based on the clarification of Rob Garner (Garner, 2013d, pp.3-5), it is "a way of thinking and philosophy that requires business to meet the demands of an always-on digital world, and includes production, communication, organization and infrastructure". Instead of giving strict clarity in the perception, it is implied as *being present* and *fluid* in the activities of marketing and business. Specifically, it is about time, existing in time and applying search and social media as the key to be a part of the ongoing conversations which endure around the brand, as they occur.

Therefore, in the context of content marketing, being "real-time" demonstrates that the marketer has to redefine their position in the digital area by focusing on the **participation** and **connections** via content (Emphasis added). To make it clearer, Garner (2013d, pp.3-5) suggests that during the whole real-time content marketing strategy, search and social media belong to the core principles as they are the means to let the audience find and follow the content as well as engage with the brands. It means that the plan will be incomplete if the marketer

does not possess deep understanding of search and social media to perform them together. (Garner, 2013b, pp.3-5)

This concept of real-time content marketing will be interpreted detailed in section 3.2 through the flywheel model of Shane Snow (Snow, 2014).

2.3 Search

Before understand the concept of search, the definition of search engine needs to be concerned. As described, a search engine term is often used to describe systems like Google, Bing, and Yahoo! Search which allow users to access to the information they can find on the internet (Davis, 2006, pp.3 - 6).

As stated by (SearchEngineLand, 2015a), search in digital marketing “is the process of gaining traffic and visibility from search engines through both paid and unpaid efforts”. It means that search engine includes Search Engine Optimization (unpaid) and Search Engine Marketing (paid).

Search Engine Optimization (SEO): The process of attracting traffic by free, organic and natural search results on search engines. Particularly, popular search engines such as Google, Bing and Yahoo! have primary search results where the content are showed and ranked on the order which are classified as most relevant to users. The marketer does not need to pay for the display of the top ranked results on search engines. (SearchEngineLand, 2015b)

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) or Paid Search is the process of getting traffic to a website by purchasing ads on search engines (SearchEngineLand, 2015c).

Due to the limited length of this research, from this point, when the word “search” is used, it means SEO or unpaid search marketing. The reason for that is SEO requires long term investment in creating valuable content as well as the collaboration with social media in sharing the news so that the brand can be on top of the rank, be visible and attract the audience. In the end, if the audience clicks on the link of the content which is published by the brand on search engine, the marketer is halfway successful in their goal of increasing the

awareness of users. For SEM, the content is not considered as the key value to stand out among other brands because it depends on the fee the marketer is willing to pay to the search engines' providers. (SearchEngineLand, 2015c).

Moreover, the mention of search engine will be considered as Google search since Google takes 66,74% of global search market while the rest belongs to the shared market of Ask.com, Bing, Yahoo!, Baidu, AOL and others (NetMarketShare, 2015).

In addition, since search engines can be used to find relevant information on the internet, it is able to boost the visibility of a website if the marketer knows how to insert the keywords. Specifically, users type the keyword(s) that best represent(s) the topic they are concerning on a search engine's search bar. In responding, the search engine displays the query of content which includes the keyword(s) from the most to least relevance. (Burstein, 2015). Therefore, it is critical for marketers to insert keyword(s) into their content so that it will be visible on the first pages of the search engine in order to be "seen" by potential customers. (Davis, 2006, pp.3 - 6)

2.4 Social media

As stated by "social media" is the term coined to indicate the collective of online communications channels for the purpose of community-based input, interaction and content-sharing. There are numerous types of social media such as forums, blogs, social networking (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace, etc.) and social bookmarking (Scoop It, Stumble Upon, etc.). (Kawasaki & Fitzpatrick, 2014a, p.43)

In social media, the Big-four social networks including Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and LinkedIn are considered to be the most popular for internet users (Kawasaki & Fitzpatrick, 2014a, p.43)

- Facebook is known as the largest social network on the Internet. Google and Bing can crawl info from Facebook and display it in their search engines. (Garner, 2013c, pp.142 - 168)

- Twitter: One of the world's most popular status-based networks. It is a source for marketers to set off a chain of content sharing and a good partner in letting search engines crawl its data. Bing uses Twitter info for its search engine. (Garner, 2013c, pp.142 - 168)
The use of hashtags: those are short links preceded by the pound sign (#). On Twitter, the pound sign turns any word or group of words directly follow it into a searchable link. This hashtag give users right to organize content and track discussion topics based on keywords. For instance, if the user wants to post education in Finland, he can type #FinnishEducation in his tweet to join the conversation. In case the user wants to see all tweets that mention the subject in real time, he can click on the hashtag he creates. Hashtags first used only on Twitter, however; they are now currently being used on other social media such as Facebook, Instagram, etc. (Kawasaki & Fitzpatrick, 2014b, p.44)
- Google+ : Google released this social network in late June 2011. If the marketer is conscious about his SEO position, Google+ will be the answer as Google+ is one of the primary approach of generating the social signals that Google uses for its search ranking. (Garner, 2013c, pp.142 - 168)
- LinkedIn: one of the most common business networks for both professional individuals and organizations. (Garner, 2013c, pp.142 - 168)

The other social media that can be used :

Forums (Discussion boards, discussion groups, message boards, online forums): a general term for an online place where users can ask and expect to see responses from others. Many websites offer the forum tab in their display so that people can log in and discuss different topics. (Turban et al., 2015, p.23)

Blogs (Short for Weblogs): They are designed for content distribution and social interaction. Several blogs created to be search engine-friendly and with social media sharing buttons at the end of each page. (Garner, 2013a, pp.169 - 184)

There is no doubt that if marketers take an advantage of joining big networks like the big-fours, they will be offered more opportunities to reach and engage the audience. Still, social relevancy should be applied which implies that sometimes smaller and most relevant social networks will be more effective and bring back better results, for example in niche markets.

In the next chapter, the author will discuss in details the forming of real-time content marketing based on core values of search and social media as well as the theoretical frameworks which are the foundations of this research.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND REAL-TIME CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

3.1 Why businesses use real-time content marketing

Before studying profoundly the real-time content marketing and its core principles, it is essential to take a glance of how it happens in the consumers' buying process. From the explanation, readers understand why businesses need to use real-time content marketing.

In accordance with Sherlekar et al. (2010, pp.155 - 158), a marketer needs to identify the customer's buying process which is the most important behavior of prospective customers on whether to choose or not to choose a brand. The buying process consists of five stages:

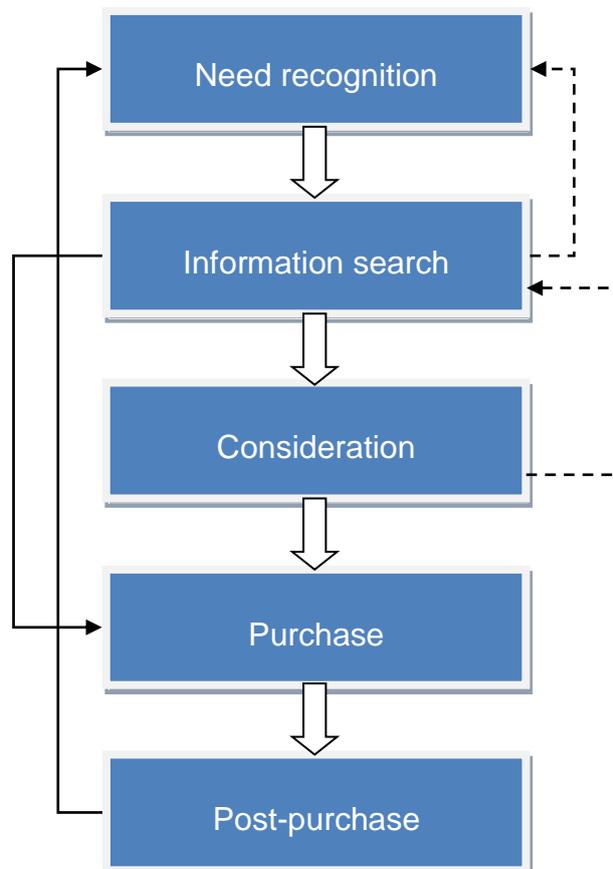


Figure 1: A simplified framework of Consumer's Buying Process (Khan, 2006)

Consisted with Sherlekar et al. (2010, pp.155 - 158), the five steps can be explained in the situation of real-time content marketing

Need recognition: This is the beginning of the buying process when a need has emerged by the stimulation from internal (personalities, emotions, attitudes, etc.) or external (social statuses, reference groups, etc.) factors. In this phase, the role of the marketer is to provide appropriate signals to promote the sale of the product/ brand. To be more specific, the marketer needs to conduct proper keyword research including customer segmentation which will show what types of customer's need that the product/ brand can focus on and provide in time the suitable cues for them. Take the car market as an example: For every type of customer from youth to adult, from the single to couples and from vintage to modern trends, car brands know which segments they want to reach, which topics people are talking about cars as well as through which channels in social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and search engines (Google, Bing, Ask.com, etc.) they can be most visible to their targets. (Sherlekar et al., 2010, pp.155 - 158)

Information search: When a customer assumes that there is a solution for their need, they will conduct the information search to educate themselves. For a car buyer, he will want to know what brands receive good reviews from previous customers, which are popular and which are fit to his need, etc. The searching may relate to anything linked to the need of the car buyer such as brands, warranty services, prices. Since the consumer associates with numerous sources such as friends, family, acquaintances and connections on social media like forums, Twitter, Instagrams, Pinterest, Facebook. Not to mention that each person is free to access to the information on any search engines without creating an account. In this case, a digital expert is asked to provide relevant information through a well-planned marketing strategy from using appropriate social media to right keywords in search engine to press the demand of consumerism. If the information is available on the search engines with many good reviews from reference groups, the brand marketer is likely to gain trust from consumers and they might go straight to the purchasing step. There is a

chance that during the searching process, the car buyer ends up realizing he has other problems or the need at this point is not suitable anymore, then the process returns to the first stage of need recognition.

Consideration: At this point, the car buyer starts comparing different car brands/types from different sellers to assure they are getting the best offer. This is the critical stage in the buying process, which includes elements in the evaluation procedure (Sherlekar et al., 2010, pp.155 - 158)

A product is considered as a package of features. For instance, a car has certain common characteristics such as the model, engine, color, price, and the design of the furniture inside.

The hints about a set of features of the car in brands such as quality, price, distinctiveness, availability of spare parts, etc.

Brand images and brand concepts can help in the evaluation: cars in luxury category, cars in popular mainstream, cars are friendly for families, etc.

Marketers should understand these points thoroughly to design the content and launch good promotion plan. During the consideration of these criteria, consumers will be back to the searching phase to crawl for more relevant answers.

Purchase: After being given adequate useful information, the customer makes his decision and move forward with the transaction.

Post-purchase behavior: The customer provides feedback regarding his experience of the brand purchase and the product usage. As mentioned in the stage of information search, the feedback of customer can be used as one of sources in the reference groups to help the other prospective customers process their future purchase. If the received satisfaction is as high as the expected satisfaction, it creates positive preference leading to potential buying. The marketer can use social media to generate positive responses from post-purchased users, form constructive content on other popular websites so that those optimistic comments can be “heard” by the target audience. Moreover, by

using right tactics in social media and search, the marketer can even interfere, reply and keep the brand images when negative feedback and rumors arise on the internet. (Sherlekar et al., 2010, pp.155 - 158)

Whilst traditional content marketing only affects the first two stages of the cycle by raising the awareness of the need's solutions and educating the consumers of the product or the brand they may have never considered before (Steimle, 2014), real-time content marketing taps into the entire buying process by using social media and search strategy to be always present during the conversations of the target audience (Lee, 2012, pp.15 - 24). The summary of making the content always be present in time during the buying cycle can be described in the figure 2

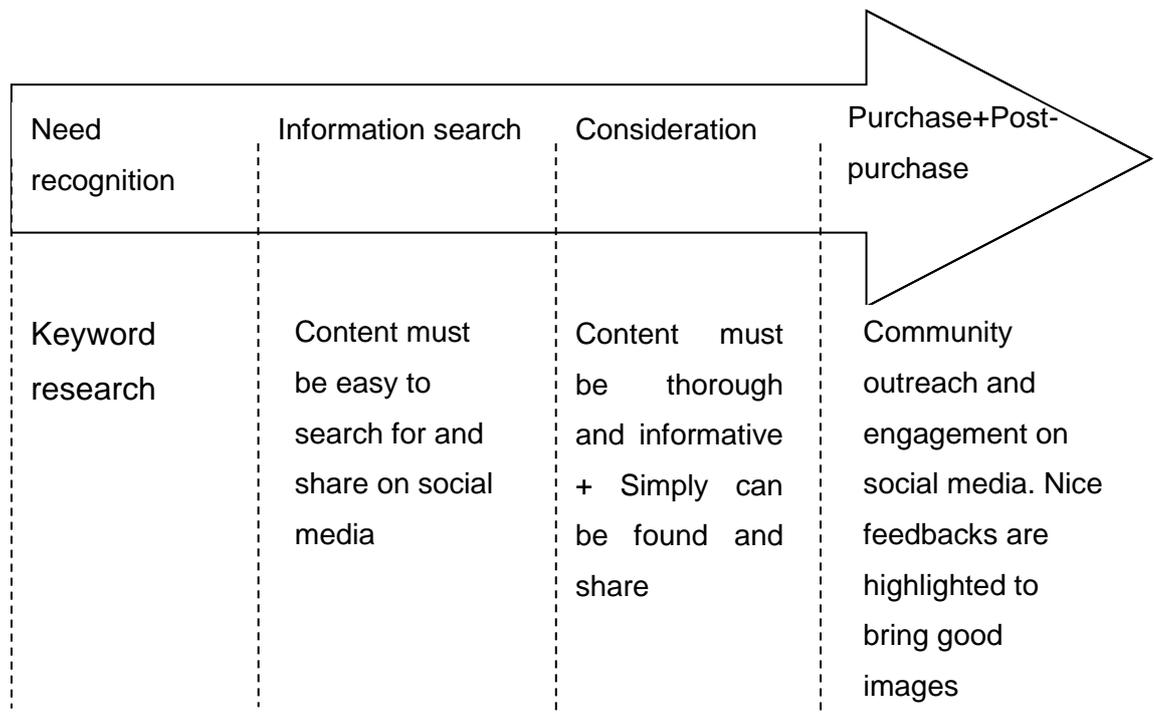


Figure 2: The application of real-time content marketing in consumer buying cycle

3.2 The correlation of content, search and social media in real-time content marketing

According to the concept of real-time content marketing in section 2.3, the relation of content, search and social media can be illustrated under the flywheel of Shane Snow showed in figure 3 (Snow, 2014):

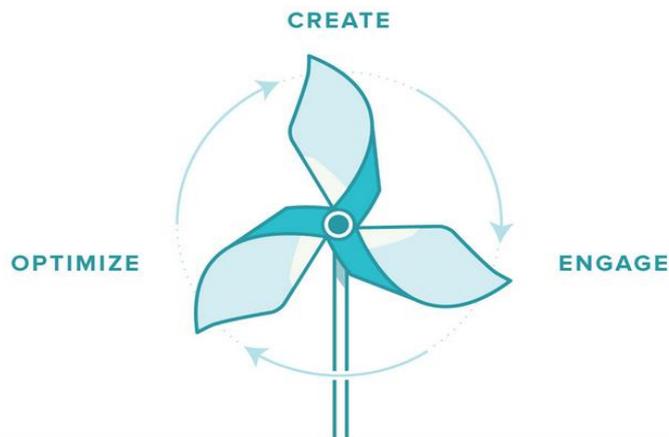


Figure 3: The marketing flywheel (Snow, 2014)

Moderately, the *center* of the flywheel is the real-time content marketing. Surrounding the center is the wings which represent (Snow, 2014)

Create - The content created as relevant and valuable. This must be the owned content from the marketer in order to build the audience for the brand.

Engage with the brand's audience by taking part in the ongoing social conversations on social media and encouraging the audience to share the content broadly. Additionally, the content at this time is the combination of the marketer's owned content as well as the relative and informative knowledge from other sources which can be shared and cited the credit. For instance, a car brand can use their Facebook page to post their own relatively written content such as their car's advertisements, their service promotion, etc. along with some interesting pertinent content (articles, videos, infographics, etc.) from other sources (websites, social media) as long as they put the appropriate reference whenever they mention content to the audience. Therefore, Snow (2014) pointed out that at this phase, social media can be considered as the

marketer's channels to distribute the brand's content. If readers find the usefulness from the content, they are more willing to be engaged to the channels. Thus, the opportunity to pay for the brand's products is high possibly in the future as well as they will be keen on sharing the content to their social media's friends which means more potential customers.

Optimize - On the word of Odden (2012, pp.7 - 14), it is critical for results-oriented marketers to optimize search strategy since the consumers cannot rely on search engines like Google to send them useful content every time a new one is made or updated. If marketers understand the importance of search engines' tools such as Google Keyword Planner for finding the popular keywords tended to be used in searching, Google Trends for realizing the current internet's intense topics or Google Analytics for checking the traffic condition of the brand's website, they can possibly inventory their digital assets and organize a better, more holistic search engine strategy that help the brand's information appear on the top of the search engines' page rank when consumers are looking. Odden (2012, pp.7 - 14) also indicated that the amount of times when content are shared on social media can increase the rank of the website on search engines. Compared this statement to Pulizzi (2014b, pp.19 - 28), it is true that Google revealed one of the principles of determining the websites' ranks which is based on the importance of content sharing and the credible level of social sources. Therefore, it is almost impossible to game the system without a solid content and social media marketing strategy.

These elements prove that the whole real-time content marketing is connected closely to one another based on the content foundation. A good content plan will make it easier in sharing on social media and the numbers of content distributed affect the website's rank on search engine. As the result of that, depends on the collaboration of these three "wings", the entire real-time content marketing flywheel can operate efficiently.

3.3 The strategy of real-time content marketing

This section is about setting the overall establishment of real-time content marketing by highlighting the keyword research, content planning and social network platform strategy in accordance to the publication of Garner (2013b).

In the beginning of the real-time content marketing, conducting a proper keyword research strategy is a key ingredient in the phase of *need recognition* (buying cycle - section 3.1) (Sherlekar et al., 2010, pp.155 - 158). The importance of doing this initial research was emphasized by Hollensen (2007, pp.153-82), due to the unfamiliarity with customers, the market environment and competitors' data as well as the growing complexity and diversity in the landscape, it is increasingly essential to collect hands-on information in relation to target markets. Therefore, Garner (2013b, pp.57-59; 69-77) has covered key methods which can be executed during the phase of market and keyword researches.

Online focus groups - Thanks to the development of internet, the in-person review and analysis activities can be conducted online. Specifically, live participants in online focus groups might experience a product/service to give feedback about or they can answer direct questions from the brand/third-party researchers, or even both of these activities, among other possible methods. Take advantage of marketers' followers, friends and connections on social media and turn them into a first-rate online focus group to inform the brand's engagement and content strategy. For example, most marketers who practice their networks and brand pages on Google+ apprehend that a video-conferencing feature called Hangouts is very convenient to run inexpensive live online focus groups which belong to different interests within their business. Similarly, a marketer can identify their target focus groups based on their hobbies on Pinterest and manage the interview through Skype Group Video Call with such a small certain fee. Moreover, SurveyMonkey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/>) can collect free survey answers on your website as well as brands are capable of creating polls with their followers on Twitter or friends on Facebook while Google Consumer Surveys allow

researchers ask questions on particular demographics. Generally, social media give several tools to reach all types of audience and if marketers are active on their accounts, they can perform the online focus groups effectively and economically. Garner (2013b, pp.57-58)

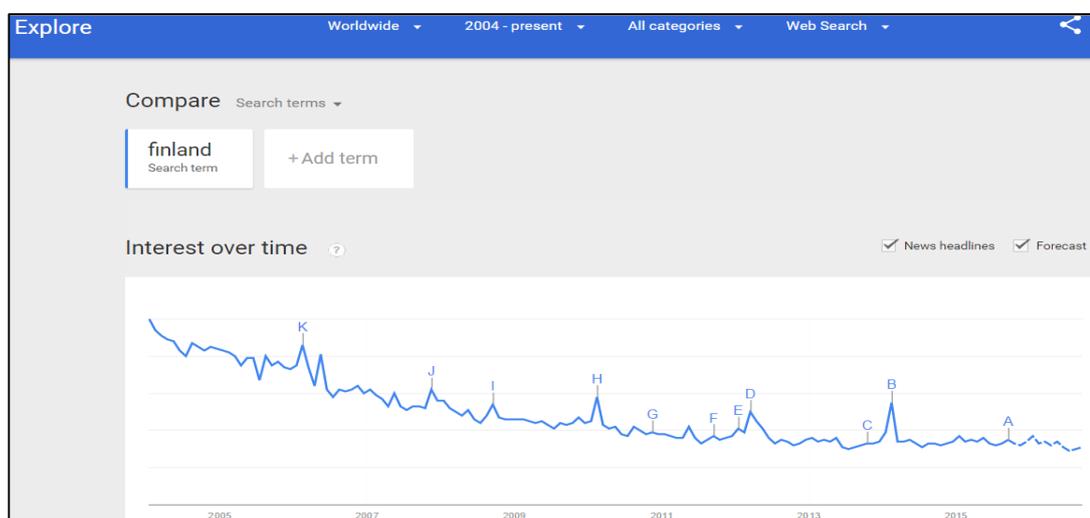
Next section offers a full set of online marketing tools that can help in recognizing the keywords people are searching for, the language they use when searching as well as the gap between consumers' demands and content from which lead the real-time content marketing to the right direction. There are several approaches to manage these aspects, however; in this research the author will focus on the search and social tools which are considered as familiar to the majority of marketers. (Garner, 2013b, pp.69 - 77)

Google Keyword Planner: This tool illustrates directional keyword data for searches in Google – the world largest search engine (section 2.5). Technically, it shows the average number of searches in a month for target keywords and relevant keywords and compares the figures to previous periods of time. It also displays the competition on three levels “low”, “medium” or “high” for the number of advertising showed in the keywords. Therefore, the “low” it is, the higher chances to boost rank of target keywords. This is the main tool to determine the relative search frequency to expect in Google search engine. Picture 2 (Appendix 1) delivers the outcome for the keyword “Finland”, which has the average searches from August to September 2015 increased 21,5% compared to the same period in last year (Retrieved on October 1st, 2015). The similar calculation applied for other relevant keywords. (Garner, 2013b, pp.71 - 72)

Bing's Twitter and Facebook Search: Bing (<http://www.bing.com/social>) is currently the only search engine which collaborates with both Facebook and Twitter so that users can conduct social search on this search engine. By exploiting the usage of hashtags, observing search trends and latest keywords; marketers can boost the content to higher ranks on Bing social search from which it can be noticeable to the audience. (Garner, 2013b, p.77)

Suggestion tools: The keyword-research tool pops up right in the search box when users type the first letters and can be used in numerous tactics to inform market research strategy. This suggestion tools can be realized in Google, Bing, Yahoo! and Youtube search boxes. Additionally, it is a quick way to get stemmed phrases from the first few words or letters and it is necessary to advise the marketers about possible hints from like-minded searches. Thus, by actively checking the suggesting function of these accounts, researchers will be likely to catch the trends and topic areas to make the content become relevant and valuable. (Garner, 2013b, pp.76 - 77)

Google Trends: This is a very helpful tool to display the seasonal spikes and predict the future trends of content which will be searched soon. Picture 3 indicates that the frequency of being searched and mentioned on social media of keyword “Finland” from 2004 to 2015 and forwards (Retrieved on October 1st, 2015). The graph revealed that the highest peak came from around 2004 which was the time Finland’s education achieved extraordinary results in PISA tests (Simola, 2005, pp.455 - 470). The tool provides marketers a full picture of the content traffic and people can benefit from these spikes because in some case, the spikes can be repeated. In this example, the marketers wait until the time of PISA test happening annually, the searches of Finland keyword possibly peak again. Create more content includes the right keywords people are searching for and talking about around social media will gain marketers more impacts and leads to be visible. (Sfetcu, 2014) (Garner, 2013f, pp.79 - 81)



Picture 2: Google Trends. Keyword example: “Finland” from 2004 to 2015 and forwards (Retrieved on October 1st, 2015)

Twitter Trending Topics on Home, Discover, and Search pages: Twitter Trends can be considered as king of real-time buzz since it supports the discovery of all the news, trends, and conversations as they take place. By using keyword-centered short texts, Twitter conversations can be operated smoothly and excitedly because all users can communicate with one another easily through hashtags. This is the chance for marketers to create buzz conversation among other users about their brands or respond to consumers' feedback immediately. (Murthy, 2013, pp.33 - 37)

In the main, be creative and be active in keeping up with the latest search and social tools which are the core goal for marketers in order to identify their audience and the trending keywords as well as brainstorm the ideas for their content. From these, the other steps of the real-time content marketing strategy can be accomplished. (Garner, 2013b, pp.57-59)

After identify the market and keywords from mentioned tools, marketers continue to the next phase which focuses on the content planning.

3.3.1 Developing content strategy

After having necessary data from keyword research, marketers focus on the content because it is the central element which runs through the research. In this section, the research concentrates on the importance of headline and presents brief SEO Copywriting guide for non-tech readers.

The headline is the message

As Garner (2013b, p.89) stated, the crucial feature which distinguishes the attractiveness of content is its headline. To lay emphasis on this statement, Clark (2006) pointed out the 80/20 rule of headline which means on average, 8 out of 10 internet users will be likely to read the headline, but only 2 out 10 will read the rest of the content. As the result of this, the headline is considered as the gate leading the audience to click on the content and thus, it highly determines the effectiveness of the entire plan (Garner, 2013b, pp.90 - 92).

Quick SEO Copywriting guide for content planning

Due to the target readers who are in general marketing area and the length of the research, the author will address the copywriting aspect of SEO without mentioning the technical SEO assessments.

According to (CopyBlogger, 2014, pp.33 - 38), beside the element of title which has been discussed earlier, there are three considerations in the content that can affect the SEO Copywriting

Content – It is vital to repeat that the content must be consistent to the headline. Otherwise, search engine systems will crawl out the inconsistency and ignore the whole content altogether. Moreover, it suggests that the content body should contain at least 300 words to be easily spotted on search engines. Also, it is debatable whether it might help to bold or italicize the first occurrence of a keyword phrase to be friendlier to search engines. However, the tricky part lies in the copywriting skill in order to make the keyword (phrases) look natural in the content body. (CopyBlogger, 2014, pp.33 - 38)

Keyword frequency – It is the number of times the targeted keywords appears on the content. Be cautious because when a keyword density is higher than 5,5%, it is a signal to warn marketers to review whether they are having keyword stuffing or not, which will cause Google search engine punishes the content to be out of the ranking. (CopyBlogger, 2014, pp.33 - 38)

Linking out – This is the way search engines checking on the marketer's content to make sure that content is associated with other pages/ websites. Basically, it is one of the methods to examine the commitment of the marketer's site. In order to avoid the confusion in the content body by displaying numerous links, marketers practice the linking out through incorporate with the relevant words. See Picture 4 (Appendix 2): The Wikipedia is a good site to take an example of linking out as its one page comprises thousands of other links to make it be trusted from most search engines, hence, help it always appear on the top of search result page. (CopyBlogger, 2014, pp.33 - 38)

Generally, in the search and social world, being “right now” in content planning is not simply creating content and publishing it on marketers’ platforms; it requires flexibility to catch up with the changes and trends while cleverly add keyword phrases and links into the content body without generating irritating feelings from readers. Real-time publishing means being skillful in writing and being careful in choosing proactive approaches to produce quality content which the audience wants to see and can share widely in conversation flows. (Garner, 2013b, pp.121-122; 135)

3.3.2 Developing publishing and conversational platforms

This phase is the key area that marketers publish their content and engage with the audience.

Recognizing niche networks

Apart from the “big-four” social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+) mentioned in section 2.5, Garner (2013b, p.63) proposed the power of smaller networks (niche networks) such as forums, blogs and answer sites to the business. One of the reasons is because those sites are where marketers can tap to the discussions taking place around the company or about the general conversations of the industry, products or services. Although these sites cannot be compared to the big-fours on the number of users, they have the privilege of being the focal points where members from the industry or being interested in the products/ services meet, debate or ask for advices from one another. Therefore, Garner (2013b, p.63) confirmed that the combination of all of the smaller conversations has a greater impact than the sum of scattered activities on the big-fours.

As suggested by Garner (2013b, pp.63 - 67), these followings describe the feasible ways to find smaller relevant networks

Ask audience targets and co-workers - By being recommended by the focus groups (questionnaire, survey, webinar, etc.), marketers can get the idea quickly where their customers go to join the conversation about their product/

service's interest in real-time. One more way to get the knowledge is ask people in marketers' business because there will be someone who is actively on the internet to give the advice on where they usually find the feedback or join the dialogues with their customers in time. (Garner, 2013b, p.64)

Google Blog Search - Nowadays, people think the power of word-of-mouth advertising has disappeared as the other forms of digital marketing take place vividly. However, it is pointed out that this kind of advertising adapts to the trend and turns into one of great ways to help marketers tap into their customers' conversations - Online review. Indeed, bloggers' online reviews are considered trustworthy because bloggers themselves are consumers, and the fact that their opinions on brands can be posted in a few minutes is an opportunity for marketers to show that they are taking care of their customers concurrently by joining and responding instantly the conversational flows. (Davis, 2014). In order to connect to the active and popular bloggers, Google Blog Search is a great tool. Marketers can seek for blogs which consist of the most relevant content and theme they are concentrating on. Keeping track on these blogs, insisting involving and commenting on posts will make marketers be present in time. (Garner, 2013b, pp.63-65)

Link lists (Blogrolls) – If marketers find some blogs and these blogs share link lists of other relevant blogs they read, it is advocated to use these link lists as a map to reach other similar blogs or discussion sites. Moreover, bloggers tend to comment on other relevant blogs. Marketers should consider this for their strategy as well. (Garner, 2013b, pp.64-65)

By looking at more details, marketers can seize opportunity which their competitors are missing.

The following is the general model of social publishing platform which can illustrate the level where marketers decide to release the content

Platform model for real-time publishing (Figure 4 – Appendix 3)

The model describes the examples of social media sites in three separated circles. The inside circle is the owned media assets of brands which they publish, for instance their own websites or blogs. The middle circle is the top-tier media sites which brands use to publish and share their content. It includes the major social sites and networks where brands can be visible and communicate with majority of internet users, e.g. The big four of social media, Stumble Upon (social sharing), SlideShare (infographic creating and sharing), Instagram (photo sharing), Youtube (video sharing), etc. It is a suggestion of key areas where brands focus on publishing and real-time interaction with their great amount of audience; therefore, marketers can develop their own publishing model with or without any these sites in their middle circle. On the outside circle, there are sites and networks which contribute to the real-time connection and engagement but do not have major priority compared to the middle circle. These sites are niche networks mentioned earlier. It can be comments on newspaper websites, answer sites such as Yahoo! Answers or Ask.com and Quora.com, other relevant blogs, product reviews like Amazon.com as well as numerous places where conversation about brands may happen. Although this model is not fixed to be marketers' main publishing procedure, it recommends the levels of potential engagement and content development. The number of sites and networks on circles can be different depending on the size of the plan. (Garner, 2013b, pp.64-68)

An example of real-time publishing platform for a hotel marketer

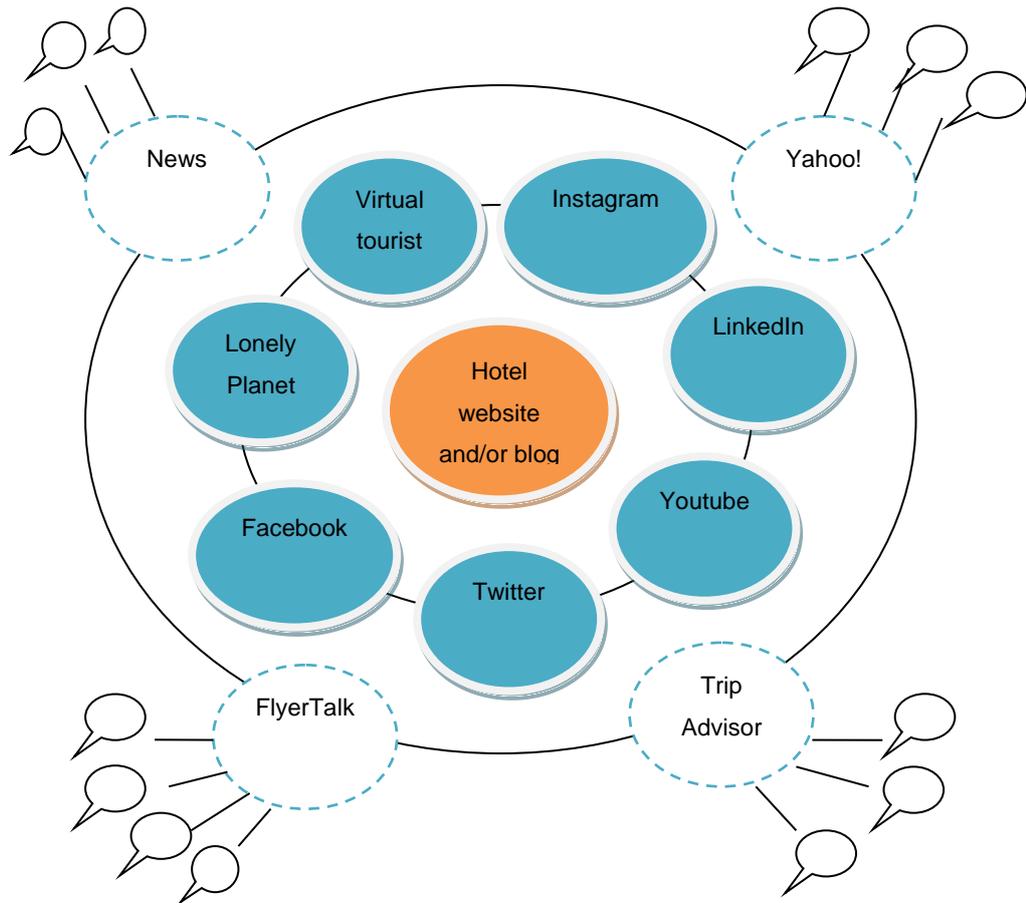


Figure 5: Example of model publishing platform for a fictional hotel marketer (Garner, 2013b, p.66)

In this sample, the hotel marketer's website and/or blog remain in the center circle. On the middle circle, there are seven main fields which the hotel marketer decides to publish on and involve in real-time: Instagram to publish their photos about their hotels and travel destinations where they serve their hotel services; LinkedIn to attract business travellers and recruit talents; Youtube will be the video channel to provide interesting videos of the hotel and its region where they locate; Twitter and Facebook are places to respond customers' feedbacks and connect with new or returning customers at the moment; the Lonely Planet and Virtual Tourist forums to participate in conversations, answer questions and offer hands-on knowledge in their expertise. On the outside circle, the hotel marketer performs the connection to other networks: Yahoo! Answers and other Q&A related sites such as Ask.com and Quora.com are places where they can find a large amount of unanswered

travel and hotel-related questions. These outreach networks can bring the hotel close to the customers when they are in the “information search” and “consideration” phases of the buying cycle (section 3.1). Besides, Trip Advisor is a helpful site to answer and reply to feedback about their properties. Although Trip Advisor is important to be visible on the search engines as it is often the first results found for high-ranking travel searches, the involvement of these outreach networks should not outweigh the engagement of the primary publishing sites. The reason lies in the random frequency of questions related to the hotel on Trip Advisor. Surrounding the outside circle are the FlyerTalk and other hotel-related forums as well as the online newspaper’s comment section. (Garner, 2013b, pp.66-67)

Generally, there is no set model since the owned strategy is very subjective and it needs specific data to analyze. This model is the recommendation for marketers’ platform strategy so that they can have a glance of what they should start, how they can exploit the niche markets and reach their target audiences.

3.4 Summary of the real-time content marketing plan

In conclusion, here is the recap to help marketers realize their real-time content marketing strategy

Marketers should understand the difference between real-time content marketing in the buying cycle model and the traditional content marketing. They should comprehend the importance of real-time factors and apply them in the content marketing approach. Moreover, one thing marketers cannot ignore is that they must identify the intersection among content, search and social media in the entire real-time content marketing

There are three steps in formulating the strategy included market and keyword researching, content planning and platform building. In each phase, it is very essential to remember main points which are

Keyword research: Know how to use and combine the most popular search and social online tools to determine the audience and the keywords needed.

Content planning: Focus on the vital characteristics in headlines and being as consistent as possible among the headline, keyword(s) and the content body as well as a brief introduction to SEO copywriting.

Platform developing: Recognize the necessity of niche networks and practice the generic platform building model.

After covering the key aspects of the theoretical framework, next section is the methodology and the interview where the author explores the insight views of experts in digital content marketing as well as answers the research's questions in section 1.3.

4 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

4.1 Research methodology

The research is conducted through qualitative method. The reason for this approach is based on the study of Myers (2013, pp.7 - 9), which shows that the qualitative research is most suited for social and cultural phenomena. Additionally, the author would like to explore the research subject in depth by studying first-hand knowledge from experts, which matches to the statement of Myers (2013, pp.7 - 9) – “[Qualitative method] is good for exploratory research”.

The author intends to perform the research by doing semi-structured interviews. According to Myers (2013, pp.121 - 123), this is the type of interview sits somewhere in between structured and unstructured interviews. It comprises the prepared questions, but it does not force the interview to go precisely as the pre-formulated questions instruct. One of the advantages of the semi-structured interviews is the inheritance of the mutual benefits from both structured and unstructured methods. During the interview, there is no strict devotion to the questions. However, the author tried to focus on ten main prepared questions. New questions can emerge during the interviews based on the context and the important insights of the interviewees are encouraged to express while the focus of the interview is keeping on track thanks to the prepared questions. (Myers, 2013, pp.121 - 123). To face-to-face interviews, the questionnaire was sent initially to participants due to their requests.

The research’s target group includes experts in Digital Marketing in which their professions related to real-time content marketing: Copywriting, SEO and social media. They are the specialists who have experienced the application of real-time content marketing. Moreover, according to Myers (2013, pp.7-9), the quality of interviewees in qualitative research will help to avoid the collecting of irrelevant data. The long-term professional experience of interviewees can also provide the possible suggestions which may be valuable for further researches.

The interviewees’ overall information is presented in Table 1

Table 1: General information of interviewees

	Interviewee #1	Interviewee #2	Interviewee #3	Interviewee #4
Level of expertise	+Former Lead Senior Content Writer at Lazada and CDiscount + Master Student in Digital and Mobile Business - Abo Academy	+Former SEO specialist at DigitalMoz Sourcing Inc. + Copywriter at Affinity X Inc.	+Former Online Marketer at Ojela Inc. and Social Media Manager at Social Metric Inc. + Social Media Manager at Limitless Enterprise	+Digital Marketing expert with fifteen year experience in digital, advertising and communications agencies in Finland +Brand Manager of Turku University of Applied Sciences
Sector	B2B and B2C	B2B and B2C	B2B and B2C	B2B and B2C
Working region	Vietnam	The Philippines	The Philippines	Finland
Length of the interview	50 minutes	45 minutes	50 minutes	55 minutes
Method	Face to face interview	Internet/ Text-based conversation	Internet/ Text-based conversation	Face to face interview
Language used for the interview	Vietnamese	English	English	English

Interview #1 is Thu Phuong Le. She has more than three years working as a Senior Content Writer and Editor for leading E-commerce companies (Lazada and CDiscount) in Vietnam. Additionally, due to her work, she collaborated with

SEO teams and did SEO Copywriting several times. Currently, she is pursuing Master Degree in Digital and Mobile Business in Abo Akademy, Finland.

Interview #2 is Rasha Tiozon from the Philippines. She possesses over four years in Digital Marketing including Copywriting (Affinity X Inc.), Social Media Management and SEO campaigns (DigitalMoz Sourcing Inc.). Her clients are varied from the locals to internationals.

Interview #3 is Helen Avinado, Social Media Manager of Limitless Enterprise in the Philippines. She has been experiencing more than eight years in Digital Marketing and her expertise is mainly in Social Media area. During the time working for Social Metric – a Singaporean advertising agency based in the Philippines, she managed social media campaigns to her international clients, which particularly administrated Facebook pages through fan engagement, word-of-mouth and content related to brands. She admitted that by applying real-time events into the content of social media, her clients' sales increased and brands' recognition had positive impacts (Interviewee #3, 2015).

Interview #4 is Mari Hartemo, Brand Manager of Turku University of Applied Sciences (TUAS), Finland. Before that, she has been working in different advertising, communications and digital agencies in Finland for fifteen years. She is also a PhD student in Turku University of Economics, Finland. Currently, her team is doing the Marketing and Communications plan for TUAS in 2016 and she revealed that she would drive the strategy to “the digital direction” (Interviewee #4, 2015).

The author conducted four separated interviews from October 26, 2015 to November 30, 2015. There were two text-based/Internet conversations because the interviewees are located oversea (the Philippines) and this method was chosen for their convenience. The first interview was an audio record in Vietnamese since the interviewee felt more comfortable in using her mother tongue to discuss the topic.

The goal of interviews was to answer two research questions in section 1.3

- a. How can marketers form a real-time content marketing strategy based on content, search and social media?
- b. How can marketers measure the impact of the real-time content marketing strategy?

Therefore, the interviewees were asked to explain their opinions on the role of real-time elements in content marketing and in their marketing plan, their experience in real-time content strategy based on content, search and social media which mentioned in section 3, and methods of measurement. The set of questions for the interviews is included in the Appendix 4.

4.2 Evaluative criteria

According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), the level of a research's trustworthiness is extremely vital to criticize its value. Therefore, a set of criteria including credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were built in order to point out the reliability and validity of a research study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility - This is the criterion where the research assures that its findings are true to be trusted. This research uses the member-checking technique in which the research's data, interpretations and generalizations are tested with participants from whom the interviews are made. This method has several positive aspects to prove the credibility of the findings consisting of the opportunity to let the interviewees double check, confirm the results and correct the errors as well as the misinterpretations of the interviewer. It also triggers additional information from the interviewees when they re-examine the entire interviews' data. Finally, it delivers the prospect to sum up preliminary results. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, the member-checking technique has drawbacks which can affect the validity of a qualitative research. The most typical problems include the participants have different views on the account and they might disagree with the researchers. Moreover, they might change the data after reviewing the findings due to the new experiences (from the time of the interviews) might happen. (Morse, 1994, pp.220 - 235) (Angen, 2000, pp.378 - 395). To avoid these negative issues, the interviews were conducted

with experts in the same area of digital marketing and the confirmation was made right after each question between both parties. Furthermore, the member-checking was organized six weeks after the data analysis had been finished to shorten the duration between the interviews and the checking as best as possible.

Transferability – This criterion indicates whether the findings can be applied in other contexts. By using thick description method in which the findings are described in sufficient details (interviewees' background, countries, companies, clients and specific working experiences), the research can value the scope in which the conclusions are able to transfer to other times, situations, settings, and people. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Dependability – It shows that the findings are consistent and can be repeated. By applying the external audit technique in this criterion, the research had a researcher (in this context is the research supervisor), who did not involved in the research process, checked both of the process and the findings. This method strengthens the validity of the research and develops a stronger and better coherent results. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Nevertheless, like the member-checking approach, this procedure contains the drawbacks which are the confusion if the external auditor and the researcher do not share the same point of view. It leads to the disagreement in analyzing data as well as the interpretations of records can be controversial. (Creswell, 1998) (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the context, the external auditor were invited to examine the entire process and findings from the beginning to keep track of the research as well as the double check should be conducted to avoid the misunderstanding between both parties.

Confirmability – It refers to the extent of neutrality where the research process and products are achieved by interviewees, not by the researcher's bias. To satisfy this criterion, the audit trail technique, which is about keeping transparent records of what have been done in the entire process, was chosen for this research. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As Schwandt & Halpern (1988) suggested, it is very essential to have a well-defined description of the research study

including the research methodology, research design, data collection and the steps to analyze as well as report the findings. Also, it should have the trustworthiness notes relating to credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

All in all, the study is reliable and valid due to the aforementioned evaluative criteria.

The next chapter is the data analysis where the research questions are examined and generalized.

5 DATA ANALYSIS

Question 1: The role of content marketing

All four participants agreed that content marketing is very beneficial to them and their clients' brands. Interviewee #1 confirmed that when marketers invest in high quality content, they can increase the traffic while decrease the bounce rate to their website or blog, grow the awareness of the brand name and engage the audience to your content as well as maintain their loyalty. Shortly, good content marketing can contribute to sales promotion, therefore; boost the profit. Interviewee #2 had the similar opinion to Interviewee #1, but she stated clearly that with the combination of search and content marketing nowadays, in just a click, people have an access to different reference materials, thus "we should take advantage of this and exploit more in the content marketing". These opinions correspond with Burkholder (2012) that "Content marketing helps prospects find your business" and marketers should keep in mind that "quality search content is key". In the case of Interview #3, she mentioned her experience which is thanks to the use of content marketing at the right time, she used to create more than 2000 leads for her client's Facebook page, which means the engagement of the audience (likes and shares of posts) in that month rose 40% compared to previous months. Meanwhile, interviewee #4 emphasized "the essence of tailored content to the target audience". Particularly, the Survey of Roper Public Affairs & Corporate Communications (2011) shows that 68% of consumers value custom content because it is tailored to their specific tastes and 77% consumers understand that companies are selling something but "feel it is okay", since the information is giving to the right targets.

Question 2: Role of "real-time" in the content marketing

Simultaneously, three of the participants used the word "urgent" to describe the concept of "real-time" in the content marketing (Interviewees #1, #2, #3). To them, being in present in the context of content marketing demonstrates a sense of urgency in providing relevant information. Interviewee #1 clarified that

it means catching up with “hot news” or “hot trends” people are following at the moment, marketers can make them pay attention to the products/brands. It matches the findings mentioned earlier in consumer’s buying process (section 3.1) in which marketers carefully study the behaviors and interest of consumers to provide the relevant information and interaction to them. Interviewees #2 and #3 added that being “real-time” can be understood as offering what readers need at the right time using the right media while interviewee #4 highlighted it as “constant responses to the target audience’s inquiries or needs”. The opinion suits the definition of real-time content marketing in section 2.2: suitable content, search and social media is the proper combination to comprehend the tastes of consumers, connect them and deliver to the targets on right channels (Garner, 2013b, pp.3-5). Noticeably, interviewees #2 and #3 recognized that they have been applying real-time content marketing to their clients’ marketing plans for at least three years while the interviewee #1 and #4 exploited the element without knowing that they were using such a strategy. However, all of them confirmed that the necessity of being real time today is undeniable.

Question 3: Prior tests or researches about being in time to catch up with the trend of internet users

All four interviewees admitted their companies or themselves conducted certain tests to keep up with the internet user’s trends in time. Though interviewee #1’s specialty was Copywriting, she used to collaborate with the Marketing team, which was responsible to making tests for the trending changes on the internet. These tests were varied from social media to search engines but those were definitely “supportive” to the content. Moreover, interviewee #2 revealed that one of her pilot programs was based on worldwide trending hashtags and country-based trending hashtags as these tell marketers what people are talking about. Interviewee #4 used her experience with Finnair in which her team researched the common keywords leading people to Finnair website and then spread those keywords in the content of the website accordingly. Besides, interviewee #3 pointed out an important insight that she has failed several times for her clients’ Facebook pages could not attract much audience. The reason

given was “trends changed so quickly and we could not respond soon enough”. These statements show the importance of managing the forgoing researches to understand the market, especially the digital market where Google performs 3.5 billion searches per day (InternetLiveStats, 2015). It implies that it is difficult to run tests in the phase of keeping track with trending, while there are several methods to choose for the market and keyword research (section 3.3) as well as failures might take place.

Question 4: Tests or researches about being in time to engage the audience to the content

Four of the participants said that they have conducted different approaches, however; they all have been trying/ tried to apply the trends in the content to attract and engage the audience. The common among their answers is the way they focused on the trends’ timeline of products/ services. For example, interviewee #1 said that most of her client’s products were cameras. In 2013, people were in favor of retro cameras while the trend in 2014 was instant cameras. She updated these trends into her content so that the audience would likely to be interested in. Additionally, the interviewee #2’s clients were both product and service providers. During the holiday season, she tried publishing topics that include holiday preparations, gift ideas, etc. She verified that this engages the audience more because the topic was about “real-time”. This means that real-time content marketing can be applied for both products and services. The interviewee #3 agreed that choosing the “relevant trends at the right time would pull the audience to the content”. Prominently, the interviewee #4 gave out one important point of view that “engaging the audience is getting easy nowadays thanks to numerous digital tools”, but the role of the marketers cannot be ignored as they are ones who shape the plan and develop the messages to targets.

Question 5: The real-time content marketing plan – separation or integration

In the case of interviewee #2, she illustrated that the real-time content marketing has been integrated to the marketing plans for her clients. Her

companies have not had the separate one for each of client. In the case of the interviewee #4, she is making the marketing plan for TUAS and she confirmed that the digital marketing plan approach [including the real-time content marketing] will be integrated to the entire plan from the beginning. This relates to the statement in section 3.1 in which the real-time content marketing taps into the whole customer buying process and it appears in every single step of it. Nevertheless, interviewees #1 and #3 expressed that it was depend on the “size of companies” they worked for. Some firms had separate plans for being in time with trends and audience’s conversation while some divided into SEO team and Online marketing team alongside with Content creation team. Despite being distinct, they assured that all teams “cooperate closely” to each other (interviewee #1 and #4, 2015) or “should work together” (interview #3, 2015). It is concluded that whether the plan is being integrated or split, it is not the matter to the efficiency of the entire strategy.

Question 6: Challenges for applying real-time content marketing strategy

Relatively, interviewees acknowledged that the first difficulty should be the sense of “urgency” in publishing real-time content. Interviewee #1 emphasized that marketers have to be cautious as trends are limitless and they are always progressing. Therefore, it is suggested that instead of following all trends on the internet, first classify the customer segmentation, do proper market and keyword research, then keep track of trends inside each segment (Section 3.3). Interviewee #2 and #3 mentioned that for strategies fitted in short-term trends, it was tricky to fix and update those because of the lack of time. Last but not least, interviewee #4 wondered that whether her team has enough knowledge and education to perform the real-time content marketing or not since the plan will require using digital tools and being fast adequately to follow pilot programs.

Question 7: Phases in real-time content marketing

Based on theoretical framework – section 3.3, the set of answers below was the results of questions related to three steps of forming real-time content marketing

strategy which are market and keyword research, content planning as well as building publishing and conversational platform model.

Table 2: Participants' answers to the phases of real-time content strategy (Theoretical framework – section 3.3)

Questions	Interviewee #1	Interviewee #2	Interviewee #3	Interviewee #4
Search and social tools were used	- Google Keyword Planner	- Google Keyword Planner, Soovle	- Mostly Google Keyword Planner - Rarely, she used other tools	- Google Analytics, Google Adwords - Her team would apply more search tools on social media for next year
Important features in SEO Copywriting or Copywriting in general	- Pay attention to keywords and insert them to the whole content naturally	- Proper grammars and structures - A messy article cannot make people to read through the end	- Focus on the headline as it will draw the interest from the audience - Choose right keywords to the content	- Common languages and terms - Appealing headings and sub-headings - The consistency between the heading and the content
The essential of niche networks	"Incredibly crucial". By interacting with these niche networks in the long term, marketers' would be considered as "influential" and gain more trust from right targets	"Very important" because the knowledge of people in these sites is more in-depth.	She considered niche networks as "necessary channels" to reach right targets where people actually are interest in the subjects and talk about them	She saw the "value" in those networks For the upcoming plan, she intended to approach targets (new students) by using niche networks as these would "show the right

				messages to right audiences”
The model for real-time publishing and conversational platforms	First were the companies’ internal systems, main website and blogs, then the relevant forums for the content. Sometimes she posted content on the companies’ social media but it was not her focal responsibility	- First was the business website itself, then blogs, answer sites, social media and some business forums - She revealed that except for main website and blog, the order was decided by the number of viewers	The first channel to be published on was the clients’ websites and blogs, then the social media and suitable forums. - The social media were concentrated most as the number of her clients’ audience there were high	She does not have the model for publishing yet. It will be in the upcoming plan for next year. The model is considered “very important” to her plan as it will make the publishing more “organizing and easy to keep track of”.

To sum up, Google Keyword Planner is a widely used tool in searching for relevant keywords. The other tools were used by interviewees are fragmented. Plus, the critical requirements in Content planning phase were matched to the section 3.3.1 – Developing content strategy, implying that the findings were reliable and valid due to previous studies. Finally, four of participants acknowledged that they did not have a specific model to monitor, but they kept in mind the order of sites for publishing which meets the model of publishing and conversational platforms in section 3.3.2 (Garner, 2013b) correspondingly. It implies that the model can be applied broadly including the center which is the main website/blogs. The outside rings can be social media and other niche networks (forums/blogs/answer sites). The priority of these outside layers can be decided on the number of followers but usually the outer rings will be niche networks which help to maintain the conversations to the right audience while the middle rings will have more audience and followers.

Question 8: Measure the impact of real-time content publishing

Interviewee #1, #2 and #4 said that they used Google Analytics and some other internal tools [from their companies] to measure the impact of their websites and blogs. Additionally, she [Interviewee #1] highlighted the role of bounce rate as it points out the problem to maintain the audience viewing through the whole website although the number of traffic entered the site seems incredibly high. Interviewee #2 mentioned that her team also gathered feedback from target audience to understand what they were missing. Besides, she stated that she relied on KPIs intensively both qualitative and quantitative ones to measure the impact of digital marketing plan. Interviewee #3 benefited the Insight tools that social media provide, which can be free or paid based on the importance of the social media. In addition, her company had a social media analytics team to take care of the ROI of each project so that they can manage things effectively instantly. Especially, she admitted that she used KPIs to measure and ROI is one of them but did not give out any other specific names. Interviewee #4 mentioned that currently, her team only gathered the statistics from social media's Insight tools and worked with a third-party agency to collect data for them. She added that in order to measure the impact of marketing plans, the first thing to notice is setting up goals and keeping them measurable as well as realistic. In conclusion, companies use versatile approaches at different levels to measure the impact of their real-time content marketing depending on their needs to control and adjust flaws or changes. However, they all implied that as long as the objectives of their projects are clear and measurable, they can record the conversion of their plans.

6 DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

6.1 Conclusions based on the interviews

The theoretical framework together with the data analysis have satisfyingly answered two research questions mentioned in section 1.3

Research question 1: How can marketers form a real-time content marketing strategy based on content, search and social media?

The theories generalized in section 3.3 – The strategy of real-time content marketing - and the results collected from four interviews match, thus showed the reliability and validity when forming real-time content market strategy. As the result of that, the overall studies of establishing the entire real-time content marketing plan constructed on content, search and social media can be applied in business cases. Whether product/service business as well as companies/individuals, real-time content marketing still brings similar findings, considering that when being asked about types of clients, interviewees #2 and #3 said they all worked with international clients who can be individuals or companies whilst interviewee #1 confirmed that she collaborated with both startups and corporations. One notice from four interviews is that all four participants have not realized that they have been using the real-time content marketing strategy, even though the theory has been applied in almost every aspect of their tasks including content writing, search and social media management.

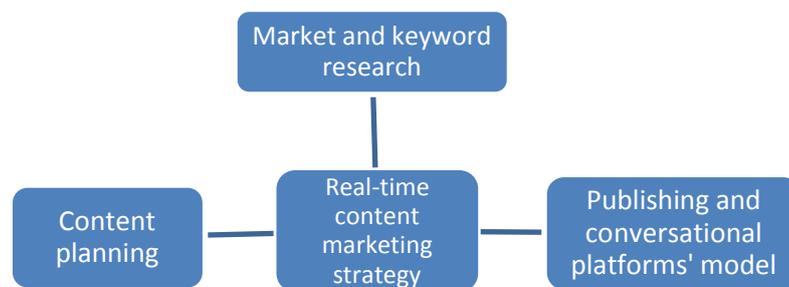


Figure 6: Real-time content marketing strategy

Research question 2: How can marketers measure the impact of the real-time content marketing strategy?

The research leads to the structured answer: There are several methods to measure the impact of the real-time content marketing depending on the purposes of marketers. However, the most common tools are Google Analytics and social media's Insight tools. Three of participants mentioned the bounce rate and ROI statistics when focusing on the measure of real-time content marketing, highlighting the importance of these figures in checking the efficiency and content's attractiveness of a website (GoogleSupport, 2015a).

Next section helps reader understand ROI and Bounce rate's definition as well as how to calculate them because they place an important role for marketers to measure the impact of their digital marketing strategy.

ROI – It is known as the ultimate performance measure used to evaluate the efficiency of an investment. ROI measures the amount of return on an investment compared to the investment's cost (Phillips & Phillips, 2006). Based on the definition, ROI in Adwords, for example, can be measured by the ratio of the net profit over costs and can be expressed as this calculation:

$$(Revenue - Cost\ of\ goods\ sold) / Cost\ of\ goods\ sold$$

If it costs \$10 to produce a product and it takes \$20 to buy it, as a result of using AdWords to advertise, the producer sells six pieces. Therefore, he spends \$65 for total expenditures including AdWords' \$5 cost and his total sales are \$120. The ROI will be estimated as:

$$(\$120 - \$65) / \$65 = 84.6\%$$

In this example, the producer gets 84.6% ROI which means that for each \$1 he spends, he receives \$1.846 in return. This simple instance implies that by determining ROI, marketers figure it out how much they have earned from using digital advertising. ROI is also undertaken to verify which performance is less effective than others from which marketers can have better decisions on

whether they should invest in more successful other campaigns. (GoogleSupport, 2015a)

Bounce rate - It is the percentage of the session where the viewer left the first entry page without making any interaction to your site. There are many reasons for bounce rate figure, which can be the technical errors or poor design of the website, boring or irrelevant content to the interest of the audience. If the bounce rate is high, it means that it is time to re-evaluate the whole website and find where the problem starts. (GoogleSupport, 2015b)

Likewise, two out of four interviewees (Interviewee #2 and #3) mentioned directly KPIs, which is Key Performance Indicators, as the index to measure digital marketing effort. According to Barker et al.(2013, pp.285 - 287), there are quantitative KPIs which measure directly the interactions between users and platforms and qualitative KPIs which address the impression of the platforms and the customer relationships. On one hand, based on Barker et al.(2013, pp.287 - 295), depend on the businesses, there are different detailed KPIs to be concerned such as number of page views or the amount of traffic the content brings to the site; page rank by search engines; likes/favorites/comments and shares/tweets/reblogs, etc. Indexes which can be measured and seen as statistics are considered quantitative KPIs. Therefore, the ROI and Bounce rate belong to this type of KPIs. The Interviewee #4 stated that her team was using "statistics from social media's Insight tools" and interviewee #1 said she focused on ROI index, thus, they do use quantitative KPIs to calculate the wellbeing of their content. On the other hand, the qualitative KPIs consist of which countries where most of the audience comes from, which operating systems/browsers the audience uses most, which languages they use to search most, etc. Both types of KPIs are important to determine whether marketers' digital marketing strategy works and on which level they are performing the plan. (Barker et al., 2013, pp.287 - 295).

Additionally, interviewees #3 and #4 recommended using criteria in S.M.A.R.T so that the impact of strategies can be measureable and detectable. As (Baxter,

2015) verified that by utilizing S.M.A.R.T goals, projects' deliverables can be clarified and quantifiable.

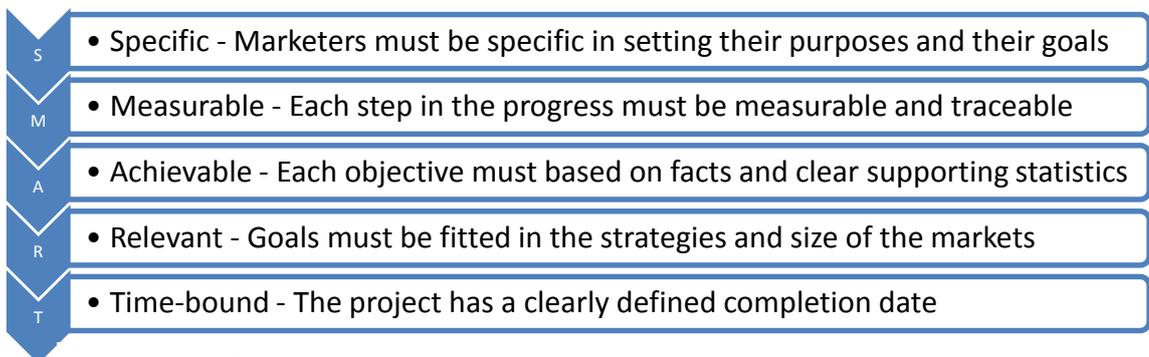


Figure 7: S.M.A.R.T goals to assure that the strategy can be evaluated and appraised (Baxter, 2015)

The research indicates that like other processes, real-time content marketing can fail. Four interviewees altogether declared that there is a chance of failure with real-time content marketing. According to the challenges marketers might confront (section 4.3. Question 6), the trends change constantly, therefore; it is likely to happen if marketers miss or cannot keep up with changes. Interviewees #1 and #2 also pointed out that the trends should be matched with target markets. Also, interviewee #3 advised that the target market's responses to every trend should be considered since choosing the negative trends will even decrease the image of brand and lose the audience's engagement. In addition, interviewee #4 suggested that with trends or topics which are in debates, it will be likely that marketers can exploit these to attract a certain curious audience, thus evoke the interaction and share of viewers. Therefore, always carefully design the real-time content marketing plan and follow up the conversion rates of the plan's performance to avoid the failure of the entire strategy.

6.2 Future research

Real-time content marketing is relatively a new topic which just has noticed recently (Garner, 2013b), thus viewpoints might be limited. This thesis concentrates on digital marketers' insight knowledge, yet in fact, in order to

understand fully how it is perceived on consumers' aspect, it needs much effort in conducting the research on the internet users' side who receive the effect of real-time content marketing. Moreover, the whole concept of real-time content marketing has been undervalued as all of the participants focused on keeping up with "trends" on the internet and passed over the urge of providing relevant information at the right time as well as engaging and responding in real-time to the audience. Consequently, it is advised to understand thoroughly the real-time content marketing to exploit and take advantage of it fully.

Will real-time content marketing be applied in long-term? Specifically, which trends can be utilized? Even long-term trends can be possible to be employed? So far, these questions have not yet had any concrete answers. These matters should be considered to have a better perception in real-time content marketing, hence separate researches are recommended.

Moreover, up until now, the topic has been studied generally whereas the applications of content marketing, SEO and social media depend partly on the languages and the audience's mindsets. Therefore, the author suggests having tests and researches on these concerns, in a more particular context such as within a country and culture, etc.

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Picture 1: Google Keyword Planner. Example: Keyword “Finland” (Retrieved on October 1st, 2015)

The screenshot displays the Google AdWords Keyword Planner interface. At the top, the navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Campaigns', 'Opportunities', 'Reports', and 'Tools'. The main header shows 'Keyword Planner' and 'Add ideas to your plan'. The search criteria are set to 'Your product or service: Finland' with 'Get ideas' and 'Modify search' buttons. The interface is configured for 'United States', 'English', and 'Google and search partners'. The date range is 'Sep 2014 - Aug 2015', comparing with 'Sep 2013 - Aug 2014'. The 'Keyword ideas' tab is active, showing a table of search terms with columns for 'Avg. monthly searches' (Sep 2013 - Aug 2014, Sep 2014 - Aug 2015, Total change, Percent change), 'Competition', and 'Add to plan'. The search term 'finland' is listed with 90,500 searches in 2013, 110,000 in 2014, a total change of 19,500, and a 21.5% increase. Below this, a 'Keyword (by relevance)' table lists related terms like 'helsinki finland', 'where is finland', 'capital of finland', 'map of finland', 'finland map', and 'finland population'. The 'finland population' keyword is highlighted in yellow and has a blue 'Add to plan' button.

Search terms	Avg. monthly searches				Competition	Add to plan
	Sep 2013 - Aug 2014	Sep 2014 - Aug 2015	Total change	Percent change		
finland	90,500	110,000	19,500	21.5%	Low	»

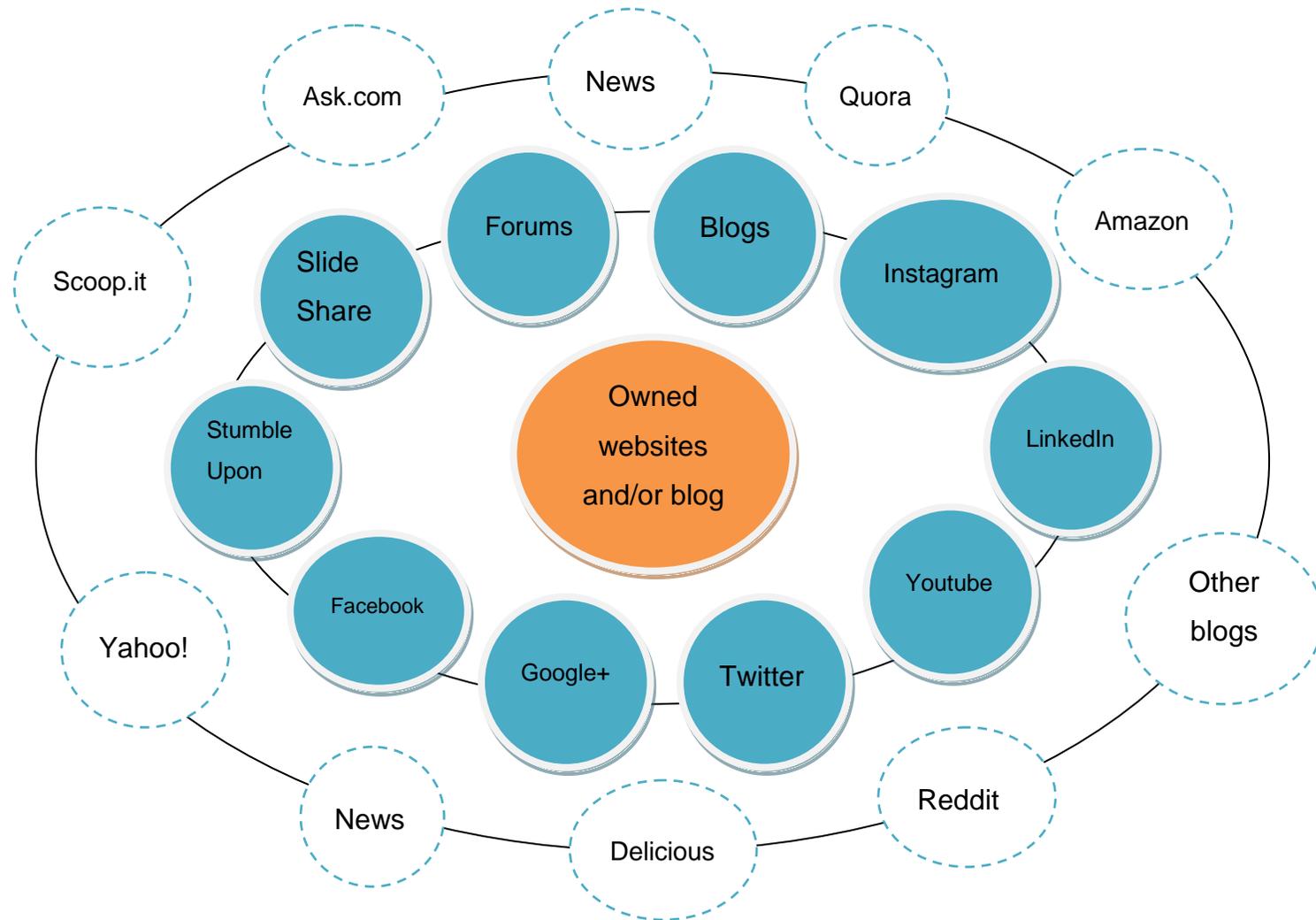
Keyword (by relevance)	Avg. monthly searches				Competition	Add to plan
	Sep 2013 - Aug 2014	Sep 2014 - Aug 2015	Total change	Percent change		
helsinki finland	9,900	12,100	2,200	22.2%	Low	»
where is finland	1,600	1,900	300	18.8%	Low	»
capital of finland	5,400	8,100	2,700	50.0%	Low	»
map of finland	2,400	2,400	0	0.0%	Low	»
finland map	2,900	2,900	0	0.0%	Low	»
finland population	1,600	1,900	300	18.8%	Low	»

Picture 3: A view of Wikipedia shows the consistency of the keyword “Finland” - between the headline and the content.

An example for the linking out from page Finland to page Nordic countries via the link under “Nordic country” phrase (on Finland page) (Retrieved on October 4th, 2015)

The image displays two overlapping Wikipedia article screenshots. The background screenshot is the 'Finland' article, and the foreground screenshot is the 'Nordic countries' article. A red arrow points from a red-bordered box containing the text 'Nordic country' in the Finland article to a red-bordered box containing the text 'Nordic countries' in the Nordic countries article. Another red-bordered box highlights the word 'Finland' in the first sentence of the Finland article. The 'Nordic countries' article text includes: 'The Nordic countries are a geographical and cultural region in Northern Europe and the North Atlantic. It consists of five countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) as well as their autonomous regions (the Åland Islands, the Faroe Islands, and Greenland). The Nordic countries have much in common in their way of life, history, their languages and social structure. Politically, Nordic countries do not form a union, but they co-operate in the Nordic Council. Especially in English, the term is used as a synonym for the Nordic countries, but that term more often refers to the three monarchies of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Scandinavian is used to refer to the region and covers mainland Norway and Sweden as well as the Åland Islands. The combined area of the Nordic countries would form the 11th largest landmass in the world. Uninhabitable icecaps and glaciers comprise about half of the area. In January 2013, the region had a population of around 260 million. The Nordic countries cluster near the top in numerous metrics of national development, such as income per capita, life expectancy, quality of education, and economic stability.

The 'Finland' article text includes: 'This article is about the European country. For other uses, see Finland (disambiguation). Finland (/ˈfɪnlənd/; Finnish: *Suomi* [suo̯mi] ^a ^b; Swedish: *Finland* [ˈfɪnland]), officially the **Republic of Finland**,^[7] is a Nordic country in Northern Europe bordered by Sweden to the west, Norway to the north, and Russia to the east; Estonia lies to the south across the Gulf of Finland. Finland is part of the geographic region of Fennoscandia, which also includes Scandinavia and parts of Russia. In 2013, Finland's population was around 5.5 million, with the majority living in its southern regions.^[8] In terms of area, it is the eighth largest country in Europe and the most sparsely populated country in the European Union. Finland is a parliamentary republic with a central government based in the capital Helsinki, local governments in 317 municipalities,^[9] and an autonomous region, the Åland Islands. Over 1.4 million people live in the Greater Helsinki metropolitan area, which produces a third of the country's GDP. Other large cities include Tampere, Turku, Oulu, Jyväskylä, Lahti, and Kuopio. From the late 12th century until 1809, Finland was part of Sweden, a legacy reflected in the

Figure 4: Real-time publishing model (Garner, 2013b)

INTERVIEWS' QUESTIONS

1. Can you tell me the benefits of using content marketing in the marketing plan nowadays?
2. What pop out in your mind when mentioning “real-time” element in the content marketing?
3. Have you done any tests or research about being in time to catch up with the trend of the internet users?
4. Have you done any tests or research about being in time to engage the audience to your content
5. Do you think being “present” in time is an important part of digital content marketing nowadays? Explain more why you say that.
6. Currently does your organization have marketing strategy to be present in time or catch up with trends? If yes, can you please elaborate how you and your team do it?
- Does this strategy is being integrated in the entire marketing plan or do you have a separate plan for it? If no, can you tell why your company does not have it?
7. What kind of challenges do you face or will face if applying this strategy?
8. Use your knowledge and your experience to answer these questions:

Real-time content marketing plan (Theoretical framework)

- Keyword Research step:

Have you ever used any search and social tools in keyword research? If so, can you list most common ones?

- Content strategy step:

What are the most important characteristics in SEO Copywriting (Or just Copywriting) which you think are necessary for your content?

- Developing publishing and conversational platforms:

Can you explain briefly what kinds of distribution channels you usually use for your content publishing?

Have you ever used any niche networks (forums, blogs, answer sites) to find relevant materials for your content creation?

Your opinions on the essential of niche networks to your real-time content marketing?

Do you have any model for real-time publishing?

9. How do you measure the impact of your real-time content publishing?

10. Is there any chance your real-time content marketing plan being failed?

End of the questionnaire.

The interview data will be kept confidentially and only be used for the thesis purpose.