

Social Media Monitoring in Small and Medium Sized Organizations in Finland

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| <p>Meltwater is a global Software as a Service (SaaS) company specializing in different kinds of media monitoring.</p> <p>The aim of this thesis is to ascertain how and for what purposes five different small and medium sized organizations operating in Finland use Meltwater's social media monitoring service Buzz, and what its most useful applications for them might be. The organizations that took part in this study were Fondia, Korkeasaari zoo, Kalevala Koru, Fenix Outdoor Finland, and Vivago.</p> <p>This study was conducted by using the qualitative research method. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in February 2013 with representatives from the above organizations, using a semi-structured questionnaire.</p> <p>The most explicit applications of social media monitoring that stood out in the interviews included determining how consumers perceive the organizations' brand, crisis management in its various forms, monitoring the competitors and the general field of business, as well as ascertaining consumers' perception about the companies' products and services. In addition, it was found out that the service has facilitated cooperation with various content creators, and helped to define the terminology used by the consumers.</p> <p>These organizations also shared ideas on how this service could be applied in situations where there is no discussion about the organization itself. In addition, specific areas for improvement, such as the service's visual appearance and certain technical details, were also discovered during the interviews.</p> | |
| Keywords Social media, social media monitoring, small and medium sized enterprises, SME | |

Table of contents

| | | |
|-------|--|----|
| 1 | Introduction..... | 1 |
| 1.1 | Meltwater..... | 1 |
| 1.2 | Objectives of the thesis | 3 |
| 1.3 | Outlining the research | 3 |
| 1.4 | Small and medium sized enterprises in Finland | 4 |
| 2 | Social media | 5 |
| 2.1 | What is social media?..... | 5 |
| 2.2 | Web 2.0..... | 6 |
| 2.3 | Social media services..... | 6 |
| 2.3.1 | Facebook | 6 |
| 2.3.2 | Twitter..... | 7 |
| 2.3.3 | LinkedIn | 8 |
| 2.3.4 | YouTube..... | 8 |
| 2.3.5 | Vimeo..... | 8 |
| 2.3.6 | Wikipedia..... | 9 |
| 2.3.7 | Flickr | 9 |
| 2.3.8 | Blogs..... | 10 |
| 2.3.9 | Internet forums..... | 10 |
| 2.4 | The internet is changing..... | 11 |
| 2.5 | The use of social media in Finland | 11 |
| 3 | Monitoring and measuring social media | 13 |
| 3.1 | Social media monitoring explained..... | 13 |
| 3.2 | Social media monitoring services | 14 |
| 3.3 | Meltwater Buzz..... | 16 |
| 3.4 | Applications of social media monitoring in organizations | 20 |
| 3.4.1 | Brand and reputation management..... | 20 |
| 3.4.2 | Monitoring the field of business and the competitors | 21 |
| 3.4.3 | Crisis management | 22 |
| 3.4.4 | Finding information for marketing..... | 22 |
| 3.4.5 | Product development..... | 23 |

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| 4 | Social technographics | 26 |
| 4.1 | What are social technographics? | 26 |
| 4.2 | An example on how to utilize social technographics | 28 |
| 5 | Listen, analyze, participate – how to take part in the conversation | 30 |
| 5.1 | Social media strategies | 30 |
| 5.2 | Activating the consumers | 32 |
| 5.3 | Crowdsourcing..... | 33 |
| 5.4 | The dangers of monitoring social media..... | 34 |
| 6 | Conducting the research..... | 36 |
| 6.1 | Qualitative research method | 36 |
| 6.2 | Data collection..... | 36 |
| 6.3 | The questionnaire..... | 37 |
| 6.4 | The organizations..... | 37 |
| 6.4.1 | Fondia | 38 |
| 6.4.2 | Korkeasaari zoo | 38 |
| 6.4.3 | Kalevala Koru | 38 |
| 6.4.4 | Fenix Outdoor Finland..... | 38 |
| 6.4.5 | Vivago | 39 |
| 7 | Results..... | 40 |
| 7.1 | Presence in social media..... | 40 |
| 7.2 | The initial social media strategies | 45 |
| 7.3 | The use of the Buzz service in the organizations | 47 |
| 7.4 | Participation in the discussion | 51 |
| 7.5 | Search of sales leads | 52 |
| 7.6 | Consumer activation and crowdsourcing..... | 53 |
| 7.7 | Mapping of social technographics | 54 |
| 7.8 | The risks related to monitoring and participating in social media..... | 54 |
| 7.9 | Feedback on the service | 56 |
| 8 | Discussion | 57 |
| 8.1 | Conclusions..... | 57 |
| 8.2 | Validity and reliability | 59 |
| 8.3 | Proceeding recommendations | 61 |

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| 8.4 Assessment..... | 61 |
| Bibliography..... | 63 |
| Attachments..... | 67 |

1 Introduction

The rapid increase of various social media services has significantly changed the world of marketing. Many businesses are facing challenges because of this but the phenomenon has also opened up considerable opportunities for organizations of all sizes. Several companies are investing into social media programs and increasingly also experimenting with technologies to monitor social media and develop strategies to harness the social paradigm.

The selection of right social media monitoring tools has become quite challenging as the technology business has branched out into a varied set of different technologies, data types and innumerable vendors. New tools and services are being created at a steady pace, while already established social media monitoring companies are constantly improving their products by introducing new features to meet their clients' needs. (Ideya Ltd 2012, 6.)

In this thesis the use and application of a social media monitoring service named "Meltwater Buzz" is going to be examined in different small and medium sized business environments in Finland.

1.1 Meltwater

The commissioning party of this thesis is a global Software as a Service (SaaS) company Meltwater which was founded in Norway in 2001. The company has, in total, 58 different offices in different continents and its services are used by over 20 000 customers all over the world.

The company's aim is to develop disruptive, no-nonsense software designed to meet the specific needs of various businesses around the world. Their SaaS solutions are designed to help drive efficiency, reduce costs and improve the clients' bottom line. At the moment, Meltwater offers solutions for managing reputation, targeting specific journalists, collaborating more effectively, streamlining hiring processes and managing online marketing campaigns.

According to Meltwater, the software industry is currently going through a thorough transformation where software and processing power is moving from personal computers to the cloud, creating a market for Software as a Service (SaaS) that will fundamentally change the industry. Meltwater has recognized these important changes early and strives to challenge existing business models with disruptive product offerings.

The products or “petals” include the following:

News: Meltwater News delivers the business critical information that executives in organizations worldwide require to gain, and maintain, their competitive edge.

Buzz: Meltwater Buzz is an innovative social media monitoring tool that enables comprehensive tracking and analysis of user-generated content on the web.

Press: Meltwater Press is a web-based media contact database and a distribution tool that enables users to identify the most appropriate journalists for them, build relevant media lists, and efficiently distribute media releases, advisories and pitches.

Reach: Meltwater Reach is democratizing the search engine marketing process for small and mid-sized businesses. The platform utilizes the same cutting-edge technology that only the largest companies could previously afford, eliminating the percentage-based fees and monthly charges. For a fraction of the cost, Meltwater Reach delivers a level of transparency that demystifies the process of pay-per-click analysis, enabling a better return on investment through hyper-local targeting of advertisements.

Drive: Meltwater Drive is an intelligent, online collaboration environment that enables individuals to work more efficiently with their colleagues, partners and clients.

Talent: Meltwater Talent is a talent management solution that streamlines the recruiting and hiring processes for organizations of all sizes.

(Meltwater Group 2013a.)

Meltwater News started its operations in Finland in January 2008 and in September 2009 Meltwater Buzz followed in their footsteps. At the moment, there are two offices in Finland which are located in Helsinki and Tampere. These offices employ roughly 40 people and have a customer base of over 1300 different organizations which include large and small companies, operators in public administration, and non-profit organizations. (Meltwater Group 2012.)

I completed my work placement in the Helsinki office's Buzz petal between August 2011 and January 2012 which sparked my interest in social media monitoring in business use. Since I had been an avid user of certain social media services for several years I felt that I had sufficient basic knowledge of the matter and that it would make an interesting research topic. Also, to my knowledge, similar studies have not yet been conducted in Finland which made the topic that much more interesting.

1.2 Objectives of the thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to find out how different small and medium sized enterprises operating in Finland make use of Meltwater's automated social media monitoring service Buzz. With the information obtained, Meltwater can hopefully better understand the way their clients apply the service and use the information when selling the service to new consumers.

The main research questions are as follows:

1. *What kind of social media monitoring do the interviewed enterprises practice and why?*
2. *What are the most important applications of social media monitoring for the interviewed enterprises and why?*

1.3 Outlining the research

This study was implemented by using traditional qualitative research method and the empirical data of the study was collected during February 2013 by conducting semi-structured interviews with five (5) of Meltwater's small and medium sized customers that operate in Finland.

This study focuses on Meltwater's existing clients who operate in Finland and are using their social media monitoring service Buzz. There are hundreds of similar services on the market which work on the same principle but they, or the companies that use them, will not be specifically addressed in this thesis. Moreover, detailed technical aspects of social media monitoring services will not be covered.

1.4 Small and medium sized enterprises in Finland

Small and medium sized enterprises, or SMEs, are defined in Finland as enterprises whose number of personnel is below 250 and whose annual revenue does not exceed 50 million euro or their balance sheet total is, at the most, 43 million euro, and which fulfill the criterion of independency stated below. (Statistics Finland 2013.)

Independent enterprises in Finland are enterprises that are not owned by major companies or corporations. Also, 25 per cent or more of the equity or the voting stock of the enterprise cannot be held by them. In order for an enterprise to be classified as an SME in Finland, all of the stated three criteria must be met simultaneously. (Statistics Finland 2013.)

2 Social media

This chapter discusses the basic principles of social media, some of the most popular social media services, and how social media changes the internet. It also gives an overview of social media's popularity in Finland.

2.1 What is social media?

Social media can be defined as public internet applications and sites that are easily accessible for individuals. The sites must also contain information that is useful to the readers and to which they can contribute by taking part in the conversation either by commenting on the content created by others or creating content of their own and allowing others to comment on it. (Korpi 2010, 7–8.) Social media can be seen as a tool for creating interaction by utilizing various networking and multimedia properties of the internet. (Juslén 2009, 116.)

The content of social media can be almost any kind of information that can be produced, shared, and saved by the users of the community, the main point being interactivity that allows everyone to take part in the creation of the content. The content can then be shared easily by using simple internet linkage. An interesting piece of information produced in a social media channel can be available for millions of users in next to no time. The publishing of this kind of communal content is quite frequent and, by nature, more short-lived compared to, for example, newspapers. The content can be produced quickly and there are practically no requirements regarding its quality or formatting. The content, meaning, and the way a message is delivered are the most important aspects of producing communal information. (Leponiemi, Soininen & Wasenius 2010, 99–101.)

In essence, social media is not a place, service or technique, but rather a constantly changing process where individuals and communities create content. The result comes from cooperation and is owned by the participants and can be altered, turned down or accepted by anyone. (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 155.)

2.2 Web 2.0

Social media is sometimes referred to as Web 2.0. The term Web 2.0 was made famous by Tim O'Reilly in 2004. Even though there is still disagreement about what the term actually means, it was initially meant to describe the change in the way that information is produced on the internet. Whereas the site owners used to be the only producers of the information, the readers could now participate in the process. Later on the public started calling this phenomenon social media. The term is also used to describe the technical changes with which different web applications have been developed. However, according to O'Reilly these changes are not the most essential factors of the phenomenon. (Korpi 2010, 10; O'Reilly 30.9.2005.)

2.3 Social media services

There are countless social media services, or channels, on the internet today and it is almost impossible to estimate their actual number because new services are constantly being created and the old ones are vanishing. (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 37.) Social media services include, for example, social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn), blogs (Blogger, Wordpress), microblogs (Twitter), video and image services (YouTube, Flickr, Vimeo) and wikis (Wikipedia). (Ideya Ltd 2012, 14.) Social media services can be divided into three categories based on their objectives. These include: networking services, content publishing services, and information classification and evaluation services. All of these services, however, share certain principles such as openness, participation, conversation, and creation of communities. (Juslén 2009, 117.)

2.3.1 Facebook

Facebook is currently the biggest social media networking channel with over a billion active users as of September 2012. The reason for its success is believed to be the low threshold of participation as most of its usage is based on digital confirmation of existing relationships. Analytics also suggest that Facebook offers a more private social media experience than many other channels. In addition, Facebook has integrated several characteristics for entertainment use and utilization including games, and possibilities

to inform the public about events, and form virtual groups. (Juslén 2009, 118; Leponiemi et al. 2010, 52; The Wall Street Journal 2012.)

If used correctly, Facebook offers companies numerous possibilities to take care of their marketing and to reach customers. Companies can create networks and nurture their cooperative and customer relationships on Facebook in the same way as individual persons can. The service users can also be profiled fairly accurately which makes targeting specific interest groups easier. This increases the interest towards Facebook and its popularity as a new kind of marketing channel. (Leponiemi et al. 2010, 53.)

Companies can advertise themselves on Facebook either by creating a page or a group. Pages are usually the more beneficial alternative for entrepreneurial use since they allow the use of various statistics and the linking of information to other applications. However, it is not advisable to use Facebook as the company's only advertising channel even though its reach is considerable. The advertising is most effective when the company succeeds to direct the page members to its other electronic systems, such as its internet pages. (Leponiemi et al. 2010, 53.)

Facebook is the most popular networking service in Finland and it is used by approximately 38 per cent of the Finnish population. (Pönkä 27.2.2013.)

2.3.2 Twitter

Twitter is a social networking and microblogging service which was founded in 2006. The users of the service can send their own messages and read the updates of other users in real time. The updates, more commonly known as "tweets", are text-based messages that can contain up to 140 characters. The contacts created on Twitter are divided into followers, the people that follow the user, and followings, the people that the user follows. The networking service is based on issues of interest and because of this, real-life contacts do not play a big role in the use of the service. Various theme networks consist of both active participants and passive followers. (Leponiemi et al. 2010, 53–54.)

The use of Twitter is still quite modest in Finland. However, worldwide it has reached considerable popularity as a tool for people and companies alike. (Leponiemi et al. 2010, 53–54.) As of 2012 the service is used by over 500 million people and in nearly every country in the world. (Twitter 2013; Wikipedia 2013.)

2.3.3 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world's largest online professional networking site with over 187 million users in over 200 countries as of 2012. It is a business-oriented social network designed to be mainly used for creating business connections. LinkedIn is currently the most important social media channel in the world used for professional networking. It also has a lot of special features that professionals find useful, including branding, prospecting and finding colleagues, prospects, and new employees. The users can also share their personal CV in the service. (Evans 2008, 74, 188; Forsgård & Frey 2010, 130; Korpi 2010, 15; Kuoppala 15.3.2012; LinkedIn Corporation 2013.)

2.3.4 YouTube

YouTube was formed in 2005 and is currently the most popular video sharing service on the internet. As of 2010, the service had over two billion views per day and several hundred million registered users in different parts of the world. It is believed to reach more viewers on a daily basis than all the TV networks in the United States put together during prime time. The service is currently owned by Google. (Leponiemi et al. 2010, 58; YouTube 2013.)

2.3.5 Vimeo

Vimeo is another significant online video sharing service. Its video quality is better compared to that of YouTube's and the user interface is, considering company use, a lot versatile and flexible. By paying a small additional cost the user gains access to additional features and can also upload larger video files. (Leponiemi et al. 2010, 58.)

2.3.6 Wikipedia

Wikipedia is a free online encyclopedia which is based on wiki technology. This means that its content can be edited by anyone without registration in the service. The content is edited collaboratively and it is free according to the GNU Free Documentation license. The service is maintained by the Wikimedia Foundation which, however, does not own the rights to the content. Wikipedia is currently a worldwide service and its content is produced in several different languages. (Leponiemi et al. 2010, 58–59.) Anyone can use the content free of charge and, with the exception of a few photographs, also commercially as long as the user grants the same rights to others and references the original source accordingly. (Leponiemi et al. 2010, 59.)

Wikipedia currently contains over 14 million articles, approximately 200 000 of which have been written in Finnish. There are 264 Wikipedias written in different languages and 32 of them contain more than 50 000 articles. The popularity of the service has been increasing steadily and several sister projects have been founded around it as well. In addition, a lot of Wikipedia's content is copied to other sites. (Leponiemi et al. 2010, 59.)

Wikipedia is not just an encyclopedia on the internet, however. It can also be used to structure and distribute information about a company's products, services, and internal communication in a simple but effective manner. (Leponiemi et al. 2010, 59.)

Other types of wiki solutions have also been used as companies' intranet applications and, for example, to facilitate the dialogue between the companies and their customers. (Leponiemi et al. 2010, 59.)

2.3.7 Flickr

Flickr is a combination of an image service and a network which was founded in February 2004. The service enables sharing and commenting of images, and searching and categorizing them based on keywords. It is currently possible to upload up to 100 megabytes worth of images per month to Flickr for free, but by paying a yearly fee the user

gets unlimited upload space. The images must, however, be smaller than 10 megabytes in size. (Leponiemi et al. 2010, 56–57.)

2.3.8 Blogs

Blogs are diary-like websites where a user produces content that can be text, video or images. The content is shown in chronological order meaning that the newest entry is shown first on the site. Blog posts are content that the writer has produced and saved at once. The posts can be modified afterwards, but it is typical that the factual content does not change when doing so. Typically, blogs contain the writer's personal points of view and can deal with, for example, the writer's private life or interests. It is also normal that blogs can be commented on but the writer may determine whether the commenting can be done anonymously or by using real names. The writer may also moderate the discussion and delete comments. Blogs may sometimes also be collaborative, meaning that there are several persons maintaining them. (The Finnish Terminology Centre TSK 2010, 31–32.) An interesting article in a blog can spread easily on the internet and cause a substantial amount of conversation, which is one of the reasons for the popularity of blogs. (Juslén 2009, 113.)

2.3.9 Internet forums

Internet forums, or message boards, are online discussion sites that contain various categories that consist of subforums, threads, and individual posts. They bring several users together to discuss their specific areas of interest usually in form of text but also occasionally through voice. The biggest difference between forums and online chat rooms is that whereas conversation in chat rooms happens in real time, the posts in forums are, at least temporarily, archived and can be viewed at a later date or time. There are countless forums online and their purposes vary from online auctioning to discussion about hobbies. Also, several companies also use forums to promote their products and services to potential customers. (Peterson 16.4.2012; vBulletin Solutions, Inc 2013.)

2.4 The internet is changing

According to long time media researcher Ismo Tenkanen, organizations often conceive social media as just Facebook and having a profile there and the fact that it should be a part of any business is not understood. Tenkanen also believes that social media is going to be a useless term soon, because it is going to be a part of everything. Internet is a two-way line now, which is difficult for many advertisers to embrace because marketing communication and advertising have always been considered one-way. (Leponiemi et al. 2010, 163.) This is also the reason why social media has become a threat to traditional institutions as it empowers the consumers more and more. Before, companies only needed to be in contact with experts, such as the critics in magazines, to control their reputation and brand. However, now consumers can share their opinions and write their own reviews on just about anything and get serious exposure at the same time. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 49.) Tenkanen also points out that several organizations are terrified of receiving negative feedback from their customers. (Leponiemi et al. 2010, 163.)

When the internet was born over ten years ago, many large companies, including the likes of Microsoft and Dell, hesitated to become a part of it. However, the change that occurred in the business field forced these companies to join in. A similar change is currently happening with social media as it is revolutionizing most fields of business and eventually will affect all of them. The conversations taking place on the web will become the primary environment for creating collective opinions. By disregarding these conversations companies will isolate themselves from where their markets are defined and their consumers seek information the most. (Leponiemi et al. 2010, 25.)

2.5 The use of social media in Finland

Registering in a social media service does not necessarily mean that the person uses it. A person might simply register in a service out of curiosity, because of the buzz around it, or because they have been invited to do so by a friend or an acquaintance. However, networking services are quite popular in Finland, especially among young people, and their popularity is still growing.

In the spring of 2012 approximately 49 per cent of Finnish people between ages 16 and 74 had followed at least one social networking service, such as Facebook or Twitter, in the past three months to which they were registered members. The services were especially popular among young people between ages 16 and 24 of which 86 per cent had followed them. This age group had also embraced social media on a very strong level and they valued it more than TV or newspapers. The same percentage among people between ages 25 and 34 was 80 per cent and among people between ages 35 and 44 it was 58 per cent. The percentage among people between ages 45 and 54 was 39 per cent. The interest was quite minor within older age groups and only 22 per cent of people between ages 55 and 64 had registered in a service and followed it. Correspondingly, the percentage among people between ages 65 and 74 was only 10 per cent. Thus, participation in networking services was closely tied to age. Women were also generally more interested in the services than men. This is demonstrated in Figure 1. (Elkelä 2012, 5; Statistics Finland 2012.)

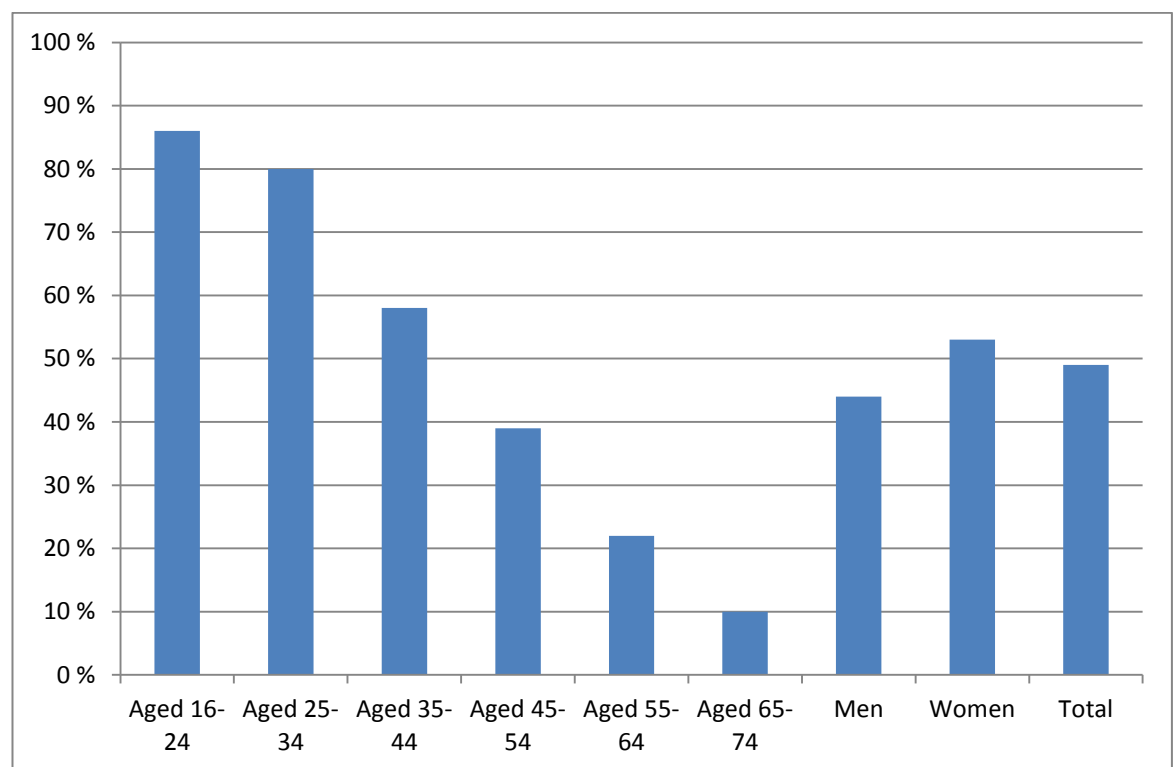


Figure 1. The following activity of networking services in Finland in the spring of 2012. (Statistics Finland 2012.)

3 Monitoring and measuring social media

In this chapter, social media monitoring services, particularly Meltwater Buzz, are explained and various examples of how they can be applied in organizational use are given.

3.1 Social media monitoring explained

Traditional media's greatest problem is that it is bound in schedules and physical materials. Social media is not restricted by either of these. The information in these networks is constantly flowing in real time. It is also not bound in formal rules or organizational thresholds. In addition, social media is the first media that can actually be measured. When a user watches a video on YouTube and shares it in their personal networks they leave traces and bits of information that can be measured in real time. The users also share much more than just their opinions. Information on who they are and how they think can be gathered through links, comments, time of participation, friends, favorite sites etc. which are all recorded on the internet. All of this creates immense possibilities for enterprises such as finding emerging trends, top influencers, and hidden potentials. Companies do not have to assume what the consumers want anymore but can rather map it out in real time if they use the right tools to do it. (Lepo-niemi et al. 2010, 30–31.)

The question whether an organization should join social media is not really relevant anymore since most of them are already there, whether or not they know it. It is more important to ask what the organization is doing there and what is it after. According to Forsgård & Frey (2010, 156) the answer should include creating and developing relationships that support the organization's business. The social media trend cannot be ignored or stopped anymore nor can organizations wait for it to pass. The customers are already there and sooner or later the organizations must follow them. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 107.) The simple presence of organizations in social media channels does not produce anything. However, every organization can find ways to participate and means to reach benefits that support their business and that can be measured. (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 148.)

Despite the size or nature of the organization, the easiest way to take part in social media is starting with listening. Listening does not require a complete, or even a refined, social media strategy but actually often helps with creating a strategy or a plan of action. Costly market studies can be avoided by continuously listening to the buzz among consumers and in the organization's field. (Rauhanummi 28.11.2012) Many of the grass root discussions that happen in social media channels have given organizations valuable information regarding their field of business, competitors, and the interests and wants of the consumers. Furthermore, listening to the discussion has made it easier for organizations to better perceive and understand the services and influencers of social media. Continuous listening and participation in the right areas gives organizations a chance to develop their actions and work interactively with their relevant interest groups. (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 150.)

Monitoring social media is useful to any company that takes their reputation, brand and relationship with their customers seriously. There are several ways of how monitoring can be applied to benefit the company. Also, by automating the searches and creating functions that measure the amount and quality of the existing conversation it is possible to save a vast amount of time and effort that would be used should the monitoring be done manually.

3.2 Social media monitoring services

According Ismo Tenkanen "digital communication is the all time best form of communication to be measured." Several new tools for measuring the actions in social media have been released lately. (Leponiemi et al. 2010, 62.)

Social media monitoring services are software applications which make it possible for companies to gather, monitor, analyze, categorize, and even possibly engage in online conversations about various topics in different social media channels by using keyword-based searches. They help organizations to analyze data, identify business insights, understand their customers, prospects, key industry influencers and opinion leaders and discover in real time what they are discussing. These conversations often

include information about the organization's brand, products, reputation, and competitors and other intriguing issues. The services automatically analyze the results, or "hits", that they find and show them in their portal and also generate reports based on them. The services that offer the engagement function also allow organizations to participate in the conversations in real time. (Ideya Ltd 2012, 13; Lehtonen 15.6.2011.)

There are hundreds of social media monitoring services on the market today, the majority of which come from the United States. The branch is in a constant state of rapid fluctuation and new companies that offer the services are constantly born and the older ones are fusing together, which also affects the competitiveness of the services a lot. Several traditional media monitoring companies have also taken up social media monitoring and started offering similar services. Apart from the paid services, there are also several services that can be used free-of-charge on the market. (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 148–151; Ideya Ltd 2012, 8)

Monitoring the discussion in social media can sometimes feel like observing random talk as there is a vast amount of information available simultaneously. However, by using the right automated tools and content filters to follow the discussion, a company can quickly catch useful information and channel the discussion into a controllable stream of information. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 114; Leponiemi et al. 2010, 62.)

It is not necessarily easy for Finnish organizations to find a social media monitoring service that is suitable for their needs, because Finland and the Nordic countries are still somewhat a marginal market sector. However, when choosing the right service, attention should be paid to the sources used, the data content of the service, whether the service includes consultation, and to the service provider's status on the market. (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 148.) Each social media monitoring service tracks different platforms. When deciding which service to use, it is important to consider which channels are of most interest and then make sure that the service provides adequate coverage of those channels. (Ideya Ltd 2012, 17.)

3.3 Meltwater Buzz

This thesis focuses on Meltwater's social media monitoring service Buzz. It currently has a database of over 300 million sources, which include:

- Blogs
- Comments on blogs and news
- Forums
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Flickr
- YouTube
- Wikipedia
- LinkedIn

The service tracks down the most meaningful conversations by filtering keywords, channels, languages, and geography, thus eliminating unnecessary social media noise. It presents the data it finds in chronological order allowing easy surveying. The searches can also be saved in order to monitor ongoing conversations.

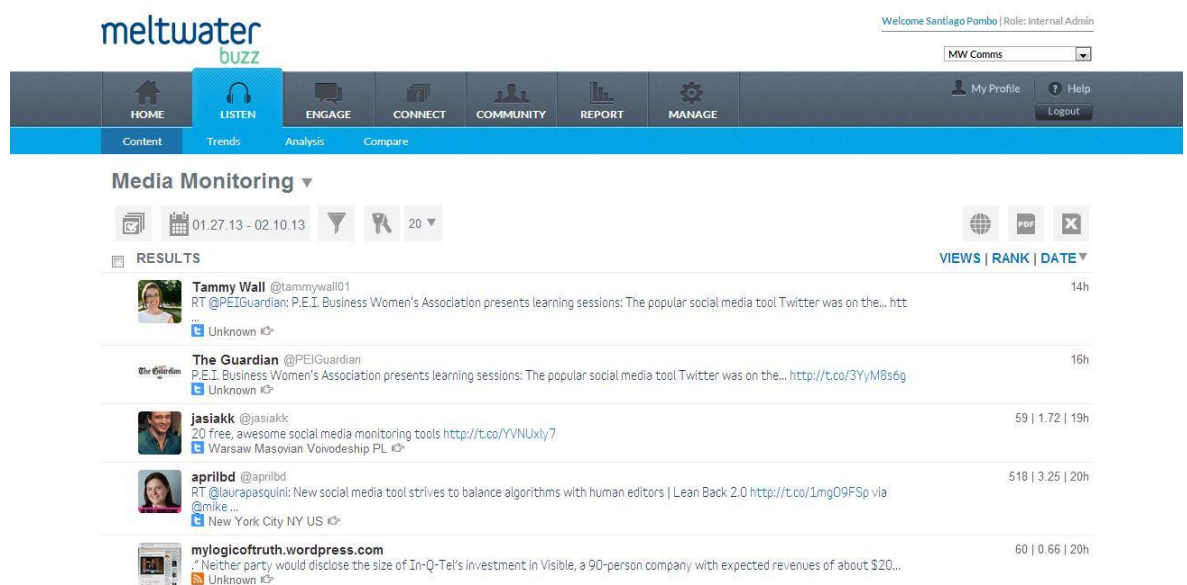


Figure 2. The service delivers the found data to the user in a chronological, easy-to-read order.

The service is also capable of creating illustrational analyses and charts of its own based on the volume, media spread, trends, and sentiment of the conversations.

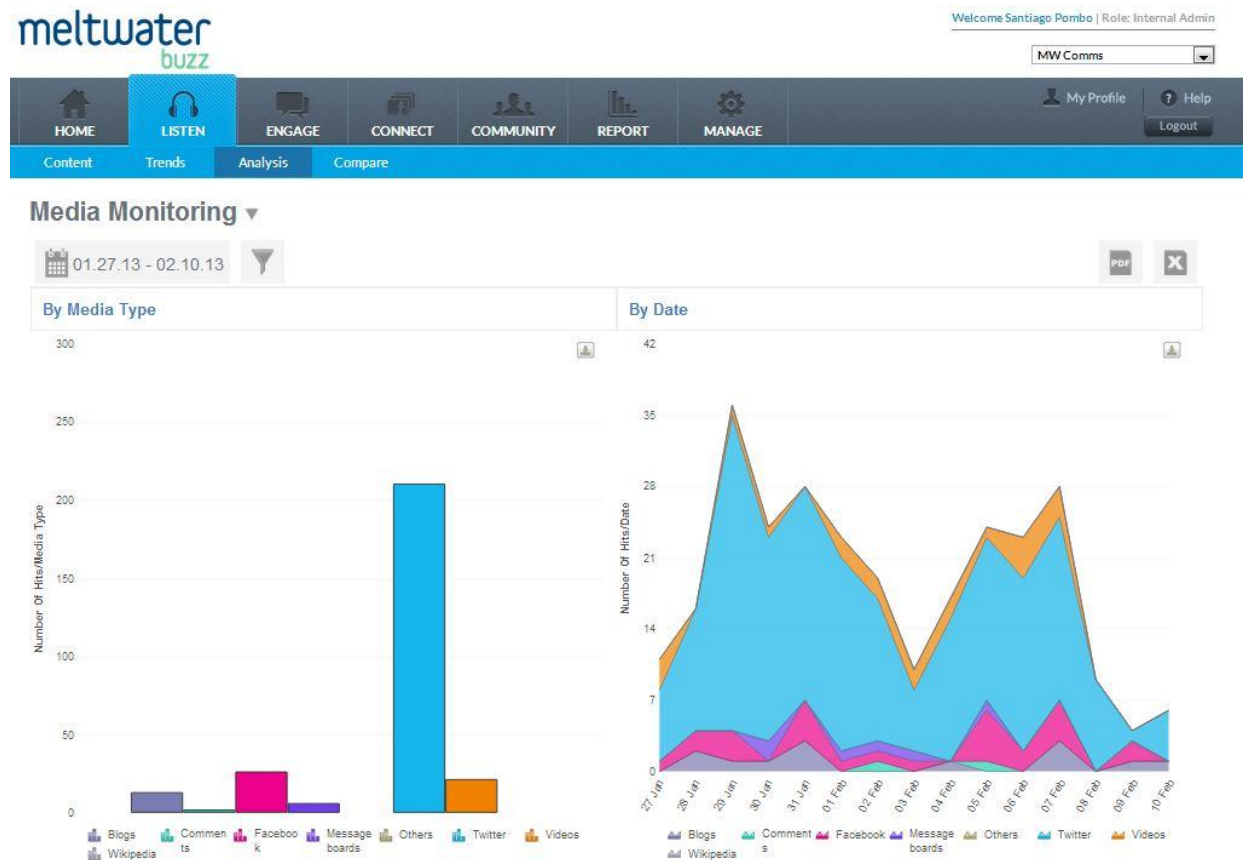


Figure 3. Examples of charts that the Buzz service creates based on the found data. In this case, the service has found a significant amount of hits on Twitter which is illustrated in light blue.

Buzz can be set to send the user daily, weekly or monthly email reports which include the latest found data and detailed analytics such as volume trend, sentiment analysis, spread by channel and geographical distribution. The service can also be set to give alerts and notify the user based on the volume and sentiment of hits. The themes cloud function also illustrates the most frequent topics of conversation.

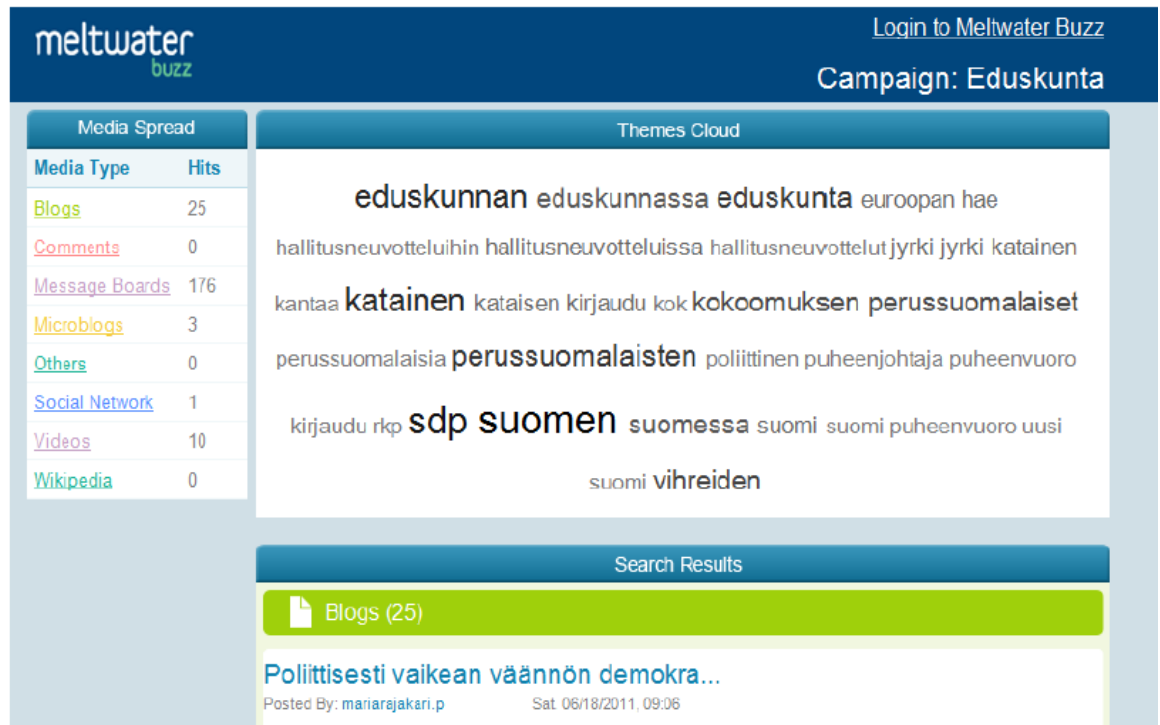


Figure 4. Example of a daily report and the themes cloud.

The Listen dashboard provides the user a quick social media monitoring overview of each social conversation and their volume by channel. The user can drill down into each chart with one click and reveal the detailed conversations that have taken place and the community members that have taken part in them.



Figure 5. The Listen dashboard.

Meltwater also offers separate modules for Buzz that enable, for example, joining in conversations with various social communities seamlessly, and effective Facebook marketing. Once they are purchased, they appear as tabs in the same Buzz service, as illustrated in Figure 6, so that the user may manage them all at the same time. The “Engage” and “Community” tabs are used to access the modules. The “Report” tab allows the user to generate, handle, and export various types of reports based on the data, and the “Manage” tab is used to manage the user’s searches and settings. Furthermore, all of Meltwater’s services also include free consultation.



Figure 6. The tabs in the Buzz service. (Meltwater Group 2013b.)

3.4 Applications of social media monitoring in organizations

The following paragraphs discuss the various ways social media monitoring can be applied in organizations of different sizes and sectors.

3.4.1 Brand and reputation management

Even if a company uses hundreds of millions on its advertising, it does not mean that it owns its brand. The brand is the way the consumers say it to be. On the internet the consumers have discussions and it is in these discussions where the brand of the company is actually determined. Outside the company, the brand has a life of its own. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 111–112.)

Furthermore, the transparency created by social media brings out the true nature of organizations and their actions, to whose creation the whole personnel takes part in. Judging from the perspective of social media, and also traditional media, it is often hard to tell a person from their background organization. The more visible a person's position in an organization is, the more concisely their values are associated with the values of the organization. Openly stating one's values in social media inevitably also reflects on the organization. Not too many organizations can afford to be associated with negative attributes such as unreliability, impoliteness, racism, or chauvinism. If the organization's value practices are just a facade and not methods that are actually used, they are shot down quickly and without mercy in social media. The personnel and the interest groups that meet in open interaction have become the definers of organizations' brands. Social media writes its own definitions for organizations and they tend to be just and harsh. (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 124–125.)

By monitoring the buzz in social media companies can investigate the current meaning of their own, their products', or their personnel's brand to the public and how it differs from what they expect it to be. The development of customers' conceptions and satisfaction can be monitored by monitoring the sentiment and the amount of the conversations in relation to previous results or competitors. Satisfaction is seen as an increase in the amount of customer recommendations. Also, reacting correctly to the indirect

feedback received from the consumers in social media brings positive publicity to organizations. (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 147, 150; Li & Bernoff 2008, 111–112.)

3.4.2 Monitoring the field of business and the competitors

Organizations can apply social media monitoring to their field of business and competitors, as well. They can observe which are the current and relevant subjects in their industry and use the information obtained to create a general impression of it. Also, organizations can monitor what is being said about their competitors and compare themselves to it. (Lehtonen 31.1.2011; Li & Bernoff 2008, 95–96.)

When monitoring the competitors, organizations should, in principle, follow the same things about their competitors as they follow about themselves. These include issues such as:

- What are their strengths and weaknesses on business level and in individual products and services?
- How is their customer satisfaction?
- What have been the results from their marketing campaigns? How was the reception of their newest products and services?
- Do they have PR problems that could potentially lead to customers switching providers? (Pekka Kanerva, SAS Insitute Oy, 25.11.2010)

Organizations also typically pursue conspicuousness on their target market in order to facilitate their development. The development of conspicuousness can be measured in relation to competitors or the overall conspicuousness of the field of business. A typical target to measure is increasing the conspicuousness by a certain percentage in relation to competitors during a following year. In social media, one way of measuring the change is observing the increase of relative share of online conversations in relation to the competitors. An organization that is actively increasing its conspicuousness receives several mentions in social media conversations. (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 147.)

3.4.3 Crisis management

By taking part in social media an organization opens itself to its customers in a completely new way and puts itself into a position where it can even receive direct insults. However, this way it can also win the consumers' trust and prevent larger rumors from being created. (Paloheimo 2009, 30.)

Social media monitoring can also be used for handling and preventing crises that tend to spread very quickly in social networks. If a company is exposed to negative publicity on the internet, for example, a negative video or posts on a blog or a discussion forum, it receives the information quicker if it practices monitoring. It can act as an early alarm system and give the organization a chance to react to the content before a crisis is born. Similar situations can escalate in a matter of hours and it is crucial to act as quickly as possible. (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 151; Li & Bernoff 2008, 131.)

According to a survey conducted in 2012 by the insurance company If, Finnish listed companies have prepared themselves quite poorly for social media crises. Only 33 per cent of the companies have created a plan on which actions to take in case of a crisis. Furthermore, approximately the same amount of companies, 31 per cent, have encountered negative rumors regarding them at least once in different social media channels, and 55 per cent of business executives deem likely that rumors spread in social media will be harmful for the brand of their company at some point. In comparison to other Nordic countries, 80 per cent of Norwegian companies and 42 per cent of Swedish companies have prepared an action plan for a crisis. Social media monitoring is also neglected in many Finnish companies and only 32 per cent of the companies had adopted it as a part of general preparedness for crises. In Norway, the amount was 61 per cent and in Sweden 54 per cent. In total, 400 Nordic companies answered to the survey, 100 of which were Finnish. (ITNyt 23.8.2012)

3.4.4 Finding information for marketing

The ability to measure and find out the reasons for success and failure are some the key problems in marketing. It is never possible to predict what is going to work and what is not. Experimentation can be costly and often there is not enough capital to be

invested in it. It is also difficult to trace the exact reasons for an operation's success and it is even possible to end up in a situation where everything should be fine according to measurements but the practical results do not match the theoretical ones. However, on the internet, there are many ways of finding out why certain actions worked and others failed. (Juslén 2009, 343.)

By monitoring the buzz in social media organizations can find several new ideas for their marketing messages. Furthermore, it is also an extremely cost-efficient way of studying the unfiltered preferences of the consumers. As a whole, social media contains a significant potential buyer audience whose size, activity and correlation can be measured. Exploiting this advantage does not require much. Familiarizing with measuring tools and spending time analyzing the findings of the tools is well worth the effort because it makes constant learning and marketing development possible.

Valuable information regarding the effects of campaigns and marketing actions can also be obtained by analyzing social media. Organizations can research how their implemented campaigns and actions worked and through the information collected from social media they can improve their approach. The connection between media investments and sales, and the timing of marketing actions can be also improved by surveying social media and social media services typically assist organizations in optimizing their design based on customer insights. Collecting and analyzing the marketing information created on the internet is one the best opportunities to develop the targeting of marketing based on the behavior of the consumers, test new approaches, and optimize effectiveness. (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 150–151; Ideya Ltd 2012, 15; Juslén 2009, 343–345.)

3.4.5 Product development

It is important for companies to understand that the customers are going to talk about their pros and cons no matter what and on the internet the positive as well as the negative aspects are going to stand out in the conversation. This, however, is not necessarily a bad thing when considering product development. (Paloheimo 2009, 30.)

The discussion in social media often offers new ideas for product development. As customers are using the products manufactured by companies all the time they also constantly develop ideas on how to improve them. All this information is accessible on various social media channels, free of charge, if the company just makes an effort of listening to the buzz. Although it is often challenging, it is also possible for companies to make the consumers a part of their product development process by monitoring social media. If the company knows that it has a strong brand and that it has fans, social media monitoring can be used to find these consumers and encourage them to be active in their recommendations. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 99, 131.)

The customers are eager to give advice and in social media they both praise and complain about the products. They write blogs, make videos, and analyze every move of organizations. Whether an organization is ready or not, the customers are a part of its processes. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 235.)

By activating the customers an organization can proceed faster because of two reasons. Firstly, the customers constantly use the products and services and interact with organizations. They know what is wrong and how it can be fixed and they have ideas that product developers and the management have not thought about. When an organization is ready, it can immediately exploit these sources of innovation and time after time organizations become surprised of how much faster new ideas are born. This is because the product developers of the organization get a boost from an enormous amount of the ideas of others. Secondly, the participation of customers also hastens innovation because it is possible to make constant improvements. When an organization interacts with its customers, it gets feedback quickly. When the organization is then done analyzing the feedback, it can return to the customers and ask for more feedback on a different matter. Direct interaction with the customers is more efficient than asking questions in an interview, conducting feasibility studies, or asking the management's opinion on every suggestion. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 235–237.)

Seeking and testing new ideas or popularizing own ideas before launching products is possible by actively taking part in social media. The testers interested in the company's products are often glad to help product developers, who are seeking ideas and feed-

back, in exchange for information and possibilities for testing before others. These testers also tend to avoid traditional marketing that tries to sell them ready products that they cannot influence. This is the reason why, for example, in the field of information and communication technology, web services in the making are often opened for keen testers in the co-called closed “beta stage”. (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 144–145.)

It is important to balance expertise and humility in the product development process. Organizations should not completely transfer their product development to their customers but rather just take the suggestions that they make into consideration. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 249–250.)

4 Social technographics

This chapter gives insight to social technographics and their meaning in the world of social media.

4.1 What are social technographics?

To completely understand social media, various participants and their quantitative dividing should be analyzed, because a strategy that treats everyone the same is not effective. People are not the same and they do not react in the same way. Also, when creating a strategy, the differences between different groups must be taken into consideration. Social media is different for people in different countries and for different organizations' customers. By analyzing the social technographics of different groups, strategies that work just for them can be created. The basis of social technographics is categorizing people based on which social media functions they participate in. These groups can be seen as steps on a ladder in the Figure 7. The ladder shows how consumers can be categorized based on the ways they use social media and placed in one or several of six groups.

Social technographics include the following groups:

- On the top step of the ladder are the creators. They are internet users who, at least on a monthly basis, write blog posts or articles, maintain a web site or upload video or sound files to, for example, YouTube or similar services. Approximately 10 per cent of European internet-using adults are a part of this group.
- Critics react to the content created by others on the internet. They comment on blogs or forums, write reviews or edit wikis. There are more critics than creators on the internet because of the fact that reacting takes less effort than creating. Statistically speaking, every fifth European internet-using adult is a critic.
- Collectors save URL addresses and tags, vote for websites and use RSS feeds. Collectors are an elite group and about 10 per cent of European internet users are a part of them. However, the amount is bound to increase because the functions that are suitable for them are increasing on several websites.

- Joiners join services such as Facebook and maintain profiles in them. In Europe, the amount of joiners among internet users is currently approximately 13 per cent.
- Viewers are the consumers of the internet. They read blogs, forums and reviews, watch online videos etc. The viewers are the largest group because viewing takes the least effort of all social media functions. Approximately 37 per cent of European internet-using adults are a part of this group.
- Passive users are the last group. They do not take part in any of the said functions. In the year 2007, 53 per cent of Europeans were beyond social media.

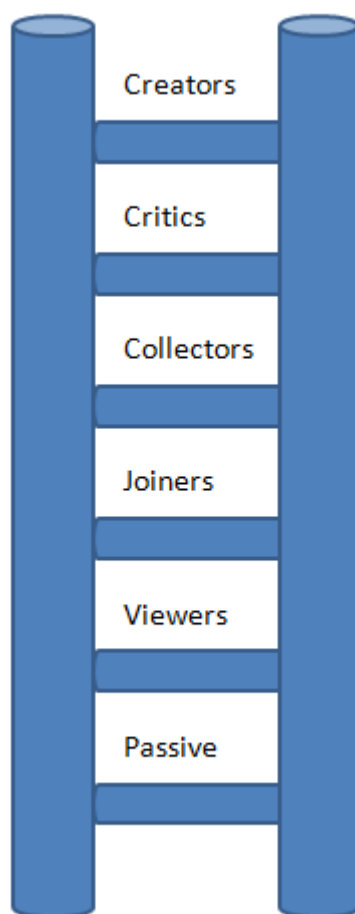


Figure 7. Social technographics ladder (Li & Bernoff 2008, 69.)

It should be noted that the groups are not mutually exclusive and most creators, for example, are also viewers.

The real power of social technographics is that they help understand how different groups of people adopt new social techniques. If an organization's customers belong to a certain group, a suitable social media strategy can be tailored based on the social technographics of this group. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 67–70.)

There are certain groups that do not participate in social media as actively as others. According to Forrester Research, as can be assumed, people of over 50 years of age are not present on the web as actively as younger users. Many of them are, however, and if an organization's target group consists mainly of these people it does not mean that social media should be wholly disregarded. However, this group does not nearly represent the whole market and if the organization's intent is to market towards these consumers, a lesser part of their budget should simply be reserved for this. The active users in these groups tend to gather in certain networks and they should be sought there. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 79–80.) Social media monitoring can also be used to effectively find these users and their networks.

4.2 An example on how to utilize social technographics

In 2006 a research was conducted where the social technographics profile of Mini owners was compared to the profiles of the owners of Mini's competitors Volkswagen and Honda. The research suggested that the Mini owners, who were fewer, were more active than average people as content creators and critics, which meant that they were definitely worth listening to. Whereas other car owners tended to speak about the horse powers and luxuriousness of their cars, the Mini owners considered themselves as insiders in a community of social cohesion and were proud to recognize themselves as an "alliance" of Mini owners. This brought the researchers into the conclusion that Mini was not just a fad and that it would make sense to target the marketing towards Mini owners and not potential Mini owners. Every car company in the world uses their marketing budget to convince the consumers to buy a new car. However, when a person buys a car they become an expense rather than profit because they use the warranty service. Mini marketed towards the owners in hopes that they would spread the word independently and convert other consumers to Mini's brand advocates. This is a concrete example of social media thinking and activating the consumers. It was coura-

geous but it worked. The buzz around the company increased exponentially, the sales numbers went up and a lot of positive feedback was received from the consumers. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 124–127.)

There is not yet proof that online buzz would automatically increase sales in every branch of business. However, more and more proof is found that online recommendations are the best indicators of sales when measured with the right meters. David Rabjohns, CEO of MotiveQuest market research company, stated that when he was working with cell phone manufacturers he had noticed that the increase of positive comments online correlated directly with the increase of market share after a few months. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 128.)

The visibility of references from satisfied customers in social media strengthens the belief of customer prospects and hastens the decision making process of buying. (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 147.) Social media monitoring services can be used to effectively collect these references from different sources so that organizations may then display them in a way they see appropriate.

5 Listen, analyze, participate – how to take part in the conversation

This chapter discusses social media strategies and the actions that organizations can take after social media monitoring has been practiced sufficiently. Furthermore, the dangers of social media monitoring are looked into.

5.1 Social media strategies

Just listening to the conversation in social media channels and collecting measurable data does not create results. The benefit comes when a plan has been made to take action based on the information received. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 116; Paloheimo 2009, 60.) After an organization has practiced social media monitoring they often want to participate in social media, if they already are not there, and at least in the conversations that they have found. However, according to Ismo Tenkanen, participation in social media is not as simple as it sounds. It is not enough that the organization just creates a profile on a channel and does not do anything with it. Organizations must create a social media strategy for themselves and define a schedule, resources, and personnel for it. (Leponiemi et al. 2010, 163.)

Unless there is a clear objective in taking part in social media, the participant is bound to fail. It often happens that companies start off by creating content, but quickly end up just listening to the consumers. The company's social media strategy should be planned so that, since the beginning, it has one main objective. The progress that the company makes in social media should also be measured based on this objective. This way the company can measure the profit that the funds that have been invested in social media functions are making. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 100–101.)

A strategy that Meltwater suggests for companies starting social media monitoring can be seen in the Figure 7. It consists of three phases which are:

1. Listening
2. Analyzing

3. Participation

A new phase should be started only after the previous one has been implemented.

However, the previous actions should also continue when moving on with the strategy.

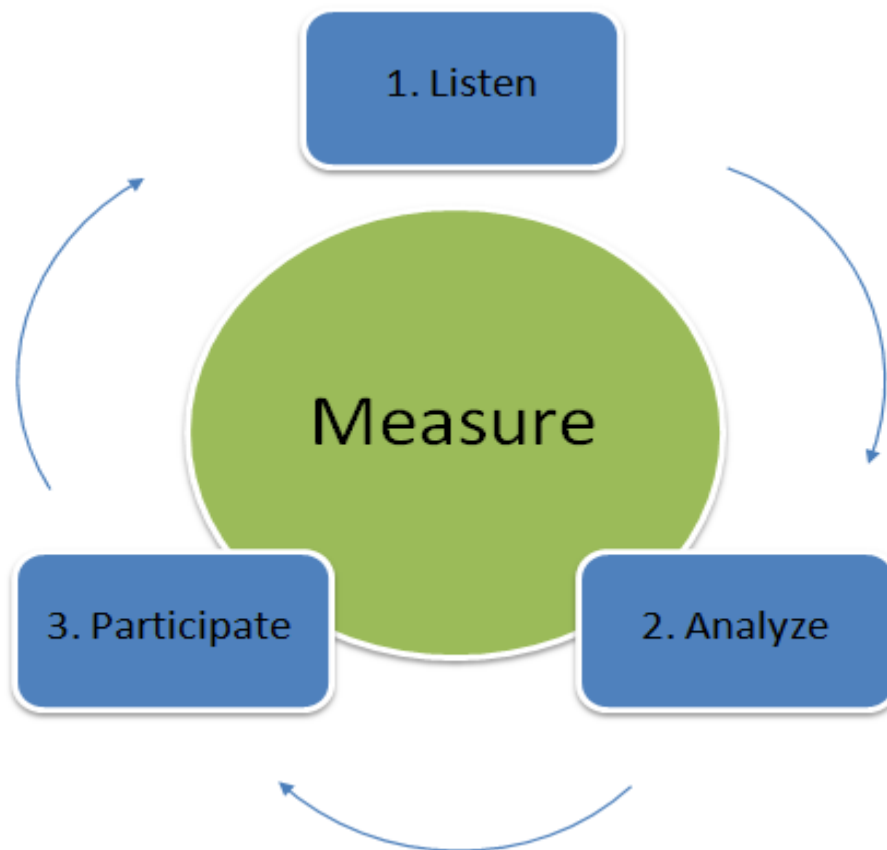


Figure 8. Social media utilization in practice. (Meltwater Group 2012.)

Taking part in social media is quite similar to launching a new product. Before the new product is developed, the company has to research the market and observe the consumers' behavior and listen to their opinions. The product is then tailored according to the received information and released. In the same way, it is not wise to blindly take part in the conversation in social media if there is no information about what the consumers are talking about. It is recommendable to start slowly and listen to the public for a while, analyze the discussion and understand at least the key issues, and only participate after this. The situation could be illustrated as a cocktail party where a small group of people are having a conversation. Their conversation should not be intervened by simply walking to them and immediately starting to talk. It is wiser to first

listen to them to find out whether the conversation can be participated or not. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 157.)

When starting the listening phase, it is advisable to first check the social technographics profile of the customers. Listening is at its most effective when the customers are already online. The amount of content creators and critics is key. If the numbers are large – at least 15 per cent of the customers – the market can be listened through brand monitoring. If the numbers are very large – 30 per cent or more – brand monitoring is a necessity. Numbers under 15 per cent indicate that only a fraction of the target group is being listened. It can be useful but the sample is not representative. This is common in cases where a large amount of the target group is old. Listening gives information, but often it is not obvious. The listening process should be carefully controlled and at least one person should reserve time for combining the information received. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 131–133.) Using an automatic monitoring service saves time in this, as well.

5.2 Activating the consumers

Listening to and interacting with the users of social media is effective but settling for that is not compulsory. The most committed users can also be activated by contacting them. Contacting the users can be done directly via, for example e-mail or phone if the information is available or participating in the online channels where the users tend to gather. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 175, 179.)

Not one consumer can reach as many people as mass media. However, recommendation is a good way of fortifying brand marketing and it can reach results that cannot be reached by any media campaign. According to Li & Bernoff (2008, 175) recommendation succeeds because of the following reasons:

- It is credible. Statements from customers are much more convincing than evaluation from any media source.
- It is self-fortifying. If one person says it, it is interesting. If ten unfamiliar people say it, it must be true.

- It spreads by itself. Recommendation increases recommendation, which grows exponentially.

Activating is a good procedure for organizations whose customers are excited or could potentially get excited about them and their products. However, it is not for every organization. Certain organizations sell common products and services that can be easily obtained from other organizations and that do not have strong ties in terms of brand or emotions. If an organization operates in a field like this, it should not be assumed that its customers want to talk about the products or services. Also, if the organization has several unsatisfied customers, activating them is only going to make things worse. This is the reason why listening to them first is crucial. It is important to get information about their attitudes towards the organization beforehand. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 196.)

5.3 Crowdsourcing

Crowdsourcing means the action of giving a problem to be solved or a task to be completed to an undetermined group. Usually, an open invitation is published on the internet in order to reach the desired group. The representatives of the group can practically all types of people including professionals, aficionados, and laymen sharing similar interests in the field. The representatives may or may not be compensated for their efforts. Typical examples of crowdsourcing include, for instance, asking consumers to take part in product or program development. If the participants are creating content, the process may also be called collaborative creating of content. (The Finnish Terminology Centre TSK 2010. 16.)

According to Richard Spiegel, at Social Media Examiner, social media has changed the way businesses engage with consumers. Fans and followers do not want to be told anymore, they want to discover. By involving and engaging the followers they can be turned into brand advocates. This is the benefit of crowdsourcing. (Spiegel 16.6.2011.)

Spiegel defines three principles of crowdsourcing that can be used on or in tandem with social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and blogs. They include:

1. Asking for feedback (then doing something with it)
2. Creating contests and giveaways
3. Polling or surveying the fans

By asking feedback the organization shows its followers that it listens to them and values their opinions. However, if no follow-up action is implemented based on the feedback, it will be a wasted learning opportunity and a disappointment for the followers. Contests and giveaways can be used in a campaign-like manner to capture contact information for participants in order to be able to contact them after the event. The contest and giveaways should be always organized in platforms that have sufficient sharing tools so that the participants can let their networks know about them. This way followers can be turned into promoters. Creating polls and surveys for the fans and followers makes them feel like their feedback and thoughts are appreciated. It is also the fastest way to structure a conversation on a topic that you encourage. Repeating the three principles on a regular basis conditions the followers to anticipate what is coming next which will in turn result in a steady increase in participation. (Spiegel 16.6.2011.)

5.4 The dangers of monitoring social media

Even though social media monitoring can rather be seen as a powerful means of mapping out potential dangers, there are still certain risks to it that companies have to acknowledge when practicing it.

As stated earlier, only those who are willing to speak are heard. This must be taken into consideration when listening to the conversations. Even if new information is obtained, it cannot be presumed that the ones that gave the information are the representative sample. (Li & Bernoff 2008, 114.) This is one of the reasons why it is beneficial for organizations to examine the social technographics of their followers. When the social profiles are clear, it is easier for the organizations to draw conclusions whether the users creating the data in social media are really a valid representative. It is

also worth pointing out that by automating the monitoring of social media, the widest possible sample of those who are willing to speak can be reached. Should the monitoring be done manually, many mentions could potentially go unnoticed.

The organization itself has to be active and participate in the monitoring in order for it to be beneficial for business. There are several monitoring systems on the market but in the end they are just tools and are not going to beat the information and feel of being actually present in the channels. When the organization itself takes part in the interaction it is continuously monitoring its quality. Active participation in the most crucial channels gives the organization the opportunity of reacting quickly based on the impulses received from the market, be it customer feedback, ideas for product development, finding new market segments or essential information about competitors.

(Forsgård & Frey 2010, 143–144.) It is also essential to realize that the conversations in social media can be affected during the monitoring period. Constant monitoring always gives a real-time impression on the effectiveness of the actions conducted, which means that the results are received instantly. This way the activity can be constantly made more targeted and effective. (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 146.) Automatic monitoring, however, hastens the acquisition of information and delivers the data to the reader in a logical order, after which analyzing it is significantly easier than going through various social media channels manually. It is also worth mentioning that there might be hidden information available on channels that the organization does not participate in. Automatic monitoring helps in receiving this information and mapping out the essential channels.

The utilization of social media will fall short without the following three measures:

- Sufficiently long time period for analysis
- Comparison to competitors and product and service category as a whole
- Sufficient participation in the analysis process and follow-up actions. (Forsgård & Frey 2010, 150–151.)

6 Conducting the research

In the following chapter, the research methods and the data collection methods used in this thesis are explained. Furthermore, background information is also given about the organizations that took part in the study.

6.1 Qualitative research method

Qualitative research aims to describe and explain a certain diverse phenomenon and give answers to questions such as why and how? Rather than giving numeric and quantitative information about the topic, a qualitative study aims to better understand the attitudes, values, images and expectations of the focus group. The strengths of qualitative research in marketing purposes include:

- Deeper understanding of the consumers' behavior
- Understanding the consumers' perspectives on the matter at hand
- Focus on the essential

Normal research methods to use in a qualitative research include, for example, informal interviews in business-to-business related topics and group interviews in business-to-consumer related topics. (Hautakoski 2013, 4–6.)

6.2 Data collection

The empirical data for this thesis was collected by conducting four (4) semi-structured face-to-face interviews and one (1) semi-structured phone interview with representatives from different small and medium sized organizations. The questionnaire contained, in total, 17 different questions most of which were open-ended, which gave a conversational element to the interviews. The interviews all took between 30 and 60 minutes.

The organizations were selected together with Meltwater from their existing customer base by evaluating their suitability for the thesis and the estimated value of the answers

that they would give. The interviewees were all people who were actively using the Buzz service which was the reason why the interviews were conducted with them. The interviewees and their organizations were as follows:

- Marja Näsi, Head of Communications, Fondia
- Taru Vuori, Zoo Lector, Korkeasaari
- Mikko Koskenoja, Digital Marketing Specialist, Kalevala Koru
- Jouni Rajala, Country Manager, Fenix Outdoor Finland
- Sami Oittinen, Marketing Director, Vivago

The questions used in the interviews were sent to the interviewees by e-mail several days prior to the interviews in order to make sure they would have time to prepare and that they could give thorough answers. However, all of the participants did not read the questions beforehand and gave spontaneous answers in the interviews. When conducting the interviews, all of them were recorded; face-to-face interviews with a video camera and the phone interview with the cell phone's own audio recording function. The answers were then transcribed to written form based on the recorded data using mild summarizing.

6.3 The questionnaire

The questions used in the interviews were designed based on the bibliography used in this thesis, consultation with the thesis advisor, and experience gained during the internship in Meltwater. Every interviewee was sent an identical copy of the questionnaire in order to make sure that everyone would answer the same questions and to avoid potential confusion. The questionnaire can be found as an attachment at the end of this thesis.

6.4 The organizations

In total, five different small and medium sized organizations took part in this research. They were carefully selected from different segments in order to ensure a comprehensive sample. The organizations were as follows:

6.4.1 Fondia

Fondia is a Finnish limited liability company offering legal service. In addition to taking care of their client's daily legal affairs, they also offer guidance and advice in various projects, such as demanding transactions and conflict situations, legal training and tools for more efficient management of legal issues. The company employs circa 100 people and has several offices around Finland. The company also operates in Stockholm, Sweden, and Tallinn, Estonia. The organization's representative, Marja Näsi, with whom the interview was conducted, is in charge of the organization's communication operations.

6.4.2 Korkeasaari zoo

Korkeasaari is the biggest zoo in Finland and is located in Helsinki. The zoo is also one of the most popular places to visit in Helsinki. Korkeasaari is owned by the city of Helsinki and the organization itself does not have direct revenue, per se; half of the organization's funding comes from the city and the other half is covered by the organization with ticket and souvenir sales, restaurants etc. The interviewee Taru Vuori is in charge of communications and environmental education in the organization. She also participates in customer service and, to some degree, marketing.

6.4.3 Kalevala Koru

Kalevala Koru is a Finnish limited liability company that specializes in making various kinds of jewelry. Together with Lapponia Jewelry Oy they form a combined corporation, Koru. The organization has roughly 180 employees. As of 2012, the company has, according to the interviewee Mikko Koskenoja, Finland's 15th most well-known brand. Koskenoja is responsible for Kalevala Koru's digital and social media operations and, partly, for communication.

6.4.4 Fenix Outdoor Finland

Fenix Outdoor Finland is the Finnish branch of the Swedish-owned limited liability company Fenix Outdoor Ab that manufactures products for outdoor activities such as

camping and hiking. The Finnish office, which is based in Helsinki, has 5 employees and they sell five different brands. The interviewee, Jouni Rajala, is in charge of the company's operations in Finland.

6.4.5 Vivago

Vivago is a Finnish limited liability company based in Espoo. The company manufactures personal health technology solutions such as alarms and watches that continuously monitor the user's well-being. The company employs, in total, circa 20 people. Sami Oittinen, with whom the interview was conducted, is in charge of the company's marketing operations.

7 Results

The following chapter presents the results obtained from the interviews that were conducted during February 2013.

7.1 Presence in social media

The purpose of this section was to find out how familiar the organizations were with operating in social media and how active they were.

The most popular social media services among the organizations taking part in the research were Facebook and YouTube. All of the organizations stated that they used the services at least to some degree.

Fondia uses Facebook especially in communicating the company's culture and "feel" in, for example, recruiting purposes. Fondia wishes to highlight its reputation as a good employer and Facebook is seen as a convenient channel through which the message can be conveyed because it's easy to mingle with consumers there. Furthermore, Facebook is used to share news and updates about the company, its blog and other current matters, and also to invite people to various events. Fondia has also activated its followers on Facebook by asking about opinions and experiences on certain matters that are of interest to the company. This has not been done often, however.

Korkeasaari uses Facebook for sharing news, for promotional purposes, and for asking about peoples' experiences and stories about the organization and animals. Korkeasaari is also currently planning on creating a Facebook survey where they would ask consumers about which animals they would like to see in the zoo. Facebook is seen as the most convenient channel to use for the implementation of the survey.

Kalevala Koru perceives Facebook as a convenient tool for customer relationship management, sharing news, and implementing marketing activities because it offers a direct channel to customers through which they can contact the company and give feedback. The social media followers of Kalevala Koru are, according to the interview-

ee, generally quite active and they share a lot of the company's updates and give "likes" quite often. Kalevala Koru also engages in public conversation on its Facebook pages whenever it is deemed necessary.

Facebook is used in **Fenix Outdoor Finland** mostly for promotional purposes. Furthermore, the company has also activated its audience by creating various kinds of competitions and polls. The data obtained has then been used in the company's product development.

Vivago uses Facebook for various marketing and promotional purposes. In addition, Facebook is also seen as the most convenient channel that the consumers can easily use when they want to approach the company.

Fondia uses YouTube mainly to share videos of trainings that they organize six times a year.

Korkeasaari actively publishes videos on YouTube. The subjects vary from animals to the personnel's everyday activities at the zoo.

Kalevala Koru has an account on YouTube, but it is not used very actively. The few videos that are published are mainly for promotional purposes. The reason for the scarce use of the channel is that the company has a very high standard for the video material that they publish and at the moment they do not have enough resources to invest in it.

Fenix Outdoor Finland uses YouTube for promotional and informational purposes. The company publishes videos of its products that explain how they work and how they can be used. The company has published videos on, for example, how to pitch a tent and how to optimally pack a backpack.

Vivago's use of YouTube focuses on sharing informative videos about their products and their applications. In the future, the creation of promotional videos that appeal to the viewer's emotions is also deemed possible.

Twitter was used by four out of the five organizations; Fondia, Korkeasaari, Fenix Outdoor Finland, and Vivago.

In **Fondia**, Twitter is used in a similar way that Facebook is. The use is focused on promotional purposes and usually the Facebook status updates that the organization creates are simply copied and pasted on Twitter. People are also invited to various events using the service. Twitter is also seen as a convenient channel to use for networking with companies.

Korkeasaari does have a profile on Twitter but it is used very modestly at the moment. The precise and useful way of using the service is not yet clear because Korkeasaari wishes to maintain high standards in its posts in social media and not publish anything trivial. The organization is also currently lacking resources to invest in the use of the service.

Fenix Outdoor Finland itself does not control the organization's Twitter account. The interviewee stated that the Swedish headquarters of the company are in charge of the use and that it is purely focused on promotional purposes.

Vivago does not currently use Twitter apart from having a profile reserved there with their name. The service is not regarded as useful at this point because of the scarce amount of Finnish users. However, Vivago is planning to, for example, share their LinkedIn updates on Twitter in the future.

LinkedIn was also used by four out of the five interviewed organizations. The organizations that used LinkedIn were Fondia, Kalevala Koru, Fenix Outdoor Finland, and Vivago.

LinkedIn is the most used social media service in **Fondia** and the company has a profile there with information about its services and products. LinkedIn offers an outstanding possibility to bring out the company's expertise by, for example, sharing Fondia's blog posts or news about the company. LinkedIn is also often used for re-

cruiting purposes and Fondia also sometimes uses paid advertising there. LinkedIn is seen as the most important channel in building Fondia's sales and profile as a company of expertise. In addition to this, LinkedIn is currently seen as an especially interesting channel to Fondia and they both monitor it and participate in the discussions there actively. There are a lot of relevant groups with much discussion about the company's field of business. LinkedIn has also been used to invite people to events.

Kalevala Koru invests in their basic visibility on LinkedIn quite a lot and the service is used to support their brand. In addition, the company has also discovered the service to be a great channel for recruiting purposes and, for example, the interviewee had been originally recruited through LinkedIn.

Fenix Outdoor Finland uses LinkedIn mainly for recruiting purposes. Once a year, the company recruits two to four new people to their trainee program and LinkedIn has proven to be a good platform to be used in this.

Vivago sees LinkedIn as an outstanding recruiting channel and actively uses it for this purpose. In addition, the service is also used to support the company's brand.

The organizations that were somehow associated with blogs included Fondia, Kalevala Koru , Fenix Outdoor Finland, and Vivago. Korkeasaari does not currently have their own blog nor do they cooperate with bloggers. However, the organization does have interest in creating their own blog but at present they do not have the necessary resources to implement it and are using a monthly newsletter as a partial substitute.

Fondia is an active blogger and creates posts in Finnish, Swedish and English. The posts that the company writes are shared in the various social media channels where the company is active. It is difficult to estimate how many users actively read the blog because, according to the interviewee, it depends on the subject. Earlier the blog posts dealt with a myriad of subjects and all of the company's employees, including the café personnel, took part in writing them. However, as of late the posts have been mostly about law and jurisprudence and the focus has been on highlighting the company's expertise.

Kalevala Koru does not have a blog of its own but the company does cooperate with certain bloggers and some of its employees are also blogging. Blogs are currently of great interest to Kalevala Koru and in the future more emphasis will be put on cooperation with different bloggers.

Fenix Outdoor Finland is currently very interested in blogs although the company does not have one of their own. According to the interviewee, the company's presence in various blogs has increased significantly during the last two years and they are doing a lot of cooperation with different bloggers by, for example, giving products to them to write about.

Vivago has cooperated with various bloggers by using them as testers and promoters for their products. According to the interviewee, the company has emphasized transparency in these processes and always participated in them by using its own name. At the moment, there are not too many active blogs that Vivago is commercially interested in but in the future, should active ones be found, they will most likely be contacted.

Wikipedia was used in Fondia and Kalevala Koru. Both of the companies stated the main reason to be conveying basic information about them and receiving visibility. Fondia also uses Wikipedia for search engine optimization. Fondia also has other wiki-based applications that the company's employees use to share information among each other.

Flickr was used for image sharing in Fondia and Korkeasaari. However, only Korkeasaari uses the service publicly. Fondia uses Flickr internally to share photos of, for example, parties and other events that the company hosts.

Internet forums were not popular among the companies and only Fenix Outdoor Finland stated that they participated in forums to some degree. The interviewee, however, did not have a clear reason to give for this.

Other social media services that were somewhat in use included: Google+ (Fondia), Instagram (Fondia) and Pinterest (Kalevala Koru).

7.2 The initial social media strategies

The purpose of this section was to survey how well the organizations were prepared when they first entered social media and whether they had specific goals when doing so.

Fondia's social media strategy depends on the channel. For example, the purpose of creating an account on Google+ was solely to increase the company's visibility on search engines. On other channels the approach has been a lot more strategic and Fondia has thought out what it is that the company wishes to achieve on them. In most cases, the aim has been to increase knowledge about the company, direct traffic to the company's web page and, especially on Facebook, building an image as an employer. When Fondia started using social media services they did not have specified short or long term goals. However, over the years the company's actions in social media have become a lot more structured and goal-directed. The interviewee has, for example, set a goal for themselves regarding the amount of traffic on Fondia's web page that comes through social media during a certain period of time. Getting more traffic on the web page and encouraging consumers to look for information regarding Fondia were also some of the organization's initial goals in social media. The company did not apply the model of listening, analyzing, and participating when it was first participating in social media.

For **Korkeasaari**, participating in social media has mostly been an experiment and the organization did not have a specific strategy when they first started using social media services nor did they apply the model of listening, analyzing, and participating. They had certain minor ideas and outlines that they wished to carry out but the overall plan was to use the services for a year and then draw conclusions. Based on this experience, the organization now has a clearer sense of how to utilize the different channels and they are tailoring their operation based on it.

The interviewee in **Kalevala Koru** could not answer the question regarding initial strategies as they had only been working in the company for approximately six months. However, they could tell that Kalevala Koru has established that the current social media services that are used are enough for them at the moment and that new services are not going to be put to use in the near future mostly due to lack of resources. This works as the basis of social media strategy in the company. The basic applications of social media use in Kalevala Koru include promotion, supporting of campaigns, brand fortification, and increasing of regular customers. The interviewee doubted that Kalevala Koru used the model of listening, analyzing, and participating when it was first participating in social media.

Fenix Outdoor Finland did not have a premeditated strategy when they first entered social media. According to the interviewee, the company's aim was rather to explore it and see what happens. Due to this, the model of listening, analyzing, and participating was also not used. The company's strategy has, however, become clearer along the way and currently much emphasis is put on it. The short term goals in social media are emphasized on sales seasons which are the summer and winter seasons. Every time the season changes, new goals are set. The long term goals, instead, change in five-year periods. The goals in both terms are related to acquiring followers in social media and building the company's brand and they are measured using various methods.

Vivago's goals in social media have been categorized in long term and short term goals. The short term goals include creating customer contacts and dialogue between them. The long term goals include collecting enough customer contacts to work as basis of the company's marketing operations and being an active operator in various social media networks. The company did originally use the model of listening, analyzing, and participating but, according to the interviewee, the choice of doing so was rather based on the organization's own common sense than on a specific theory. Vivago uses Snoobi, Google Analytics, and YouTube's own tools to measure their various social media endeavors.

7.3 The use of the Buzz service in the organizations

This section was aimed to examine the way that the interviewed organizations used the Buzz service in practice and which they considered to be its most important applications.

Fondia has been using the Buzz service for about two years and it was taken into use at the same time when Fondia bought Meltwater's other monitoring service News. The main reason behind acquiring a social media monitoring service was crisis management and the ability to quickly react on discussion regarding the organization. In addition, Fondia also wanted to follow the discussion on its field of business and have the chance to participate in it. However, according to the interviewee, there is quite little discussion about jurisprudence on a corporate level and most of the conversations are between private people and about asking for advice on legal matters concerning, for example, family or inheritance. Due to the lack of significant discussion, the use of Buzz is not very goal-directed or measurable and is emphasized on crisis management. Because of this, the monitoring is also constant.

Fondia monitors its own name, products and services, field of business, competitors, and the names of its CEO and a few other executives. A certain amount of hits has been found but, according to the interviewee, the discussion has not been especially relevant to Fondia. Most of the hits have thus far been related to the overall field of business and, for example, to larger phenomena such as layoffs in companies. Highly positive comments that are found are usually shared internally in the company to lift the spirit. False information has not been found but the interviewee stated that having a service that constantly monitors this gives a sense of security, because it would also allow for quick reaction to it. Based on this, the interviewee stated the most useful applications of Buzz to be the ability to monitor the field of business and crisis management. The interviewee also stated that Buzz is an added bonus that supports the News service.

Korkeasaari purchased the Buzz service approximately a year ago with the purpose of following discussions regarding animals and their protection and welfare. Buzz was

also initially supposed to supplement the organization's other media monitoring. Korkeasaari is currently following its own name and field of business in Finnish, and animal rights and welfare on an international level in several different languages. One of the more important reasons for international monitoring is, according to the interviewee, the increasing resistance towards zoos especially in Central Europe. If the organization happens to recognize clear signals in this area, they can modify their communication according to them. Korkeasaari does not follow zoos globally because there is a lot of irrelevant discussion about them and the organization does not have enough resources to go through all of it.

There are no direct measurable goals to the use of Buzz in Korkeasaari. However, the interviewee stated that they have a personal objective of closely monitoring the signals related to animal rights and, based on them, mapping out the general view. Because of this, the monitoring is practiced constantly. Special attention is paid to blogs and forums. According to the interviewee, a lot of hits have been found but a surprisingly small amount of them have been related to relevant discussion. The organization has, however, found false information about itself and corrected it personally. The found discussion has also clarified the people's way of thinking to Korkeasaari and how much more they ought to communicate their own operation and expertise to the general public.

Various positive comments that have been found with the service have been used as references for different events that Korkeasaari has organized. All sorts of feedback are also shared within the organization unofficially. Sometimes Korkeasaari also approaches users that share images and asks for permission to share them.

The interviewee stated that the most useful applications of Buzz, for them, have been crisis management and the ability to react quickly to relevant discussion. The service also supports the organization's other media monitoring services conveniently.

Kalevala Koru started using Buzz approximately three months ago. The initial reason for acquiring a service for social media monitoring was following the organization's and its products' visibility, how the different products are received in different social

media channels, and enabling fast reaction to discussions and possible contacting of potential bloggers and other creators of content. Kalevala Koru ended up purchasing Buzz after bidding several different services because of its comprehensive possibilities to monitor discussion on a global level. The interviewee stated that most of the competitors were mainly focused on Finland.

Kalevala Koru monitors its own name and competitors. In addition, Lapponia Jewelry also monitors the names of its designers. According to the interviewee, business field monitoring could be seen as an option in the future as well but it is not relevant at the moment. The company practices constant monitoring and boosts it, for example, whenever a new product is launched. However, they do not specifically measure how they meet their goals with the use of Buzz. At the moment, channels that are especially interesting for the company are different blogs and Facebook. According to the interviewee, however, the relevant discussion on Facebook happens mostly on Kalevala Koru's own page and the monitoring can mainly be done manually there.

The company has found a lot of hits for Kalevala Koru, most of which have been extremely positive. These comments are also often shared internally within the company when they are about, for example, new collections. Many hits regarding Lapponia Jewelry have not been found and the interviewee stated that they believe the reason to be the lack of the brand's focus group's activity in social media because of the higher average age. Most of the discussion has been useful for Kalevala Koru because it has given the organization a good overall image of which products are popular and cause interest among the consumers. False information has not been found but the interviewee stated that it is useful to have social media monitoring regarding this because there is a certain amount of mendacity in the jewelry industry.

The interviewee stated that the fundamental benefit of having a social media monitoring service is "having eyes everywhere and that the company knows how it is doing and what is thought of them in comparison to the competitors."

Fenix Outdoor Finland started using Buzz roughly three years ago. The initial purpose for the service was to especially monitor different blogs and the overall discussion

about the company in Finnish social media. The company monitors its own name, products, field of business, and, occasionally, its competitors. Most emphasis is put on the products and the overall brand.

The company does not have specific measurable goals for the use of Buzz. The monitoring is rather meant to map out the general view. Because of this, the monitoring is constant regarding everything else besides the competitors.

Buzz has helped Fenix Outdoor Finland find a lot of discussion, especially during high seasons, ranging from positive to negative. The interviewee stated that the found hits have been useful in finding out how people perceive the company's products in a wider perspective. The hits are also often shared internally within the organization. False information has not been found.

According to the interviewee, blogs are especially interesting targets for monitoring. However, not too much emphasis is put on them and they, along with everything else, support the building of the big picture.

The interviewee stated that the most useful applications of the Buzz service have been the possibility to monitor the company's own products and comparing them to the products of the competitors. Also, an essential benefit has been the cooperation with bloggers and other content creators, which the service has facilitated.

Vivago has been using Buzz for approximately a year and the company originally purchased it to be able to map out the overall discussion in social media and especially the terminology that the consumers are using so that the company could better understand them and be able to communicate in the same terms.

The company practices constant monitoring of its own name, products, field of business, competitors, terminology, various activities that the company sponsors or is a part of, and different marketing actions. The interviewee stated that the service offers good protection for the brand and that it supports the company's news monitoring conveniently. Vivago does not have specific measurable goals for the use of the service

and the hits are rather just manually gone over. The relevant hits are also often shared internally within the company but not used as references as B2B references are considered better and more assertive. The company does not put emphasis on any specific channels either, but rather aims to create an overview of all of them.

Vivago has found a lot of discussion, including false information about itself, and the majority of it has been useful to the company. Vivago has, for example, received new information about their industry and their competitors' operations.

The interviewee stated that the biggest benefits from the service have thus far been the ability to monitor the terminology that the consumers are using, and brand protection.

All of the interviewed organizations agreed that the service could be used even if there was no discussion about the organizations themselves. The applications that the interviewees suggested included:

- Crisis management
- Monitoring of the business field
- Monitoring of the competitors
- Monitoring of the overall discussion and thus analyzing which actions stimulate and create it
- Monitoring of the terminology that the consumers use

7.4 Participation in the discussion

Fondia has participated quite little in the discussions that they have found, firstly, due to the small amount of relevant discussion, and secondly, due to lack of time. The interviewee predicated that more discussion could be found on a global level should they define the search terms more accurately in different languages. The participation that Fondia has done has been occasional, and the interviewee stated that it could be systemized by, for example, designating it as an area of responsibility for an employee who could then direct the matter to the right people based on the subject.

Korkeasaari aims to take part in appropriate discussions that are based on facts and especially if there is false information being spread about the organization. Korkeasaari does not, however, participate in discussions about opinions because it is seen as a waste of time, and they usually tend to escalate to inappropriateness quite quickly. The organization's participation has been rather occasional mainly due to lack of resources, and, according to the interviewee, it could be systemized by recruiting a person that would be responsible for social media operations in the organization. At the moment Korkeasaari can only systematically maintain the channels that they are active in, and the participation in other channels is limited.

Kalevala Koru has participated in open discussion only on its own Facebook page. The interviewee stated that this is because they do not have enough resources to discuss on various channels, and that they do not see the added value that it would bring to the company. They rather contact people privately if need be. According to the interviewee, the company's participation is systematic in the sense that it is done whenever it is deemed necessary.

Fenix Outdoor Finland rarely takes part in the discussions online, because, according to the interview, so far the consumers have personally approached the company whenever there has been need for it. The interviewee did not see a specific need to systemize their participation.

Vivago's interviewee perceived the company's participation in online discussions as systematic because it is done whenever the company sees the need for it. Vivago has, for example, always reacted in the false information that it has found about itself. The interviewee also stressed the importance of participating transparently, as an organization, and not from behind fake identities, because it usually does not end well.

7.5 Search of sales leads

Buzz was not used to actively search sales leads in any of the interviewed organizations. The interviewees at Korkeasaari, Kalevala Koru, and Fenix Outdoor Finland

stated the possibility of doing so sometime in the future. Vivago's representative did, however, state that they use the service "to search hubs that may generate into sales leads in the future", which can be seen as an indirect way of searching and mapping out sales leads.

7.6 Consumer activation and crowdsourcing

Fondia has rarely used crowdsourcing. Facebook has been used a few times to ask about the audience's experiences on certain matters. The company has used consumers to develop their services but it has not been done through social media but rather direct contacting. The interviewee did, however, see the possibility of utilizing social media to conduct similar operations in the future.

Korkeasaari activates its consumers and creates discussion often by asking about people's experiences and stories. The organization is also currently planning on implementing a survey on Facebook based on which the zoo's array of animals will be modified.

Kalevala Koru has not yet significantly activated consumers or used crowdsourcing but the organization does already have plans in doing so. The interviewee stated that especially bloggers will be extensively contacted in the future.

Fenix Outdoor Finland has created various polls and competitions on Facebook, and the received data has been used in the company's product development. The company has also contacted various bloggers that have been found with the help of the Buzz service.

Vivago's interviewee stated that they use consumers as an essential part in their product development, and the company has contacted and used various bloggers when they have piloted new products. The company is also planning on putting more emphasis on crowdsourcing and allowing the participation of other social media users in the future once they establish a sufficient client pool.

7.7 Mapping of social technographics

None of the interviewed organizations had mapped out nor closely surveyed the social technographics of their followers in social media. The organizations did not show much interest in doing so either and were just making estimates of their followers' social technographics based on their own observations and experience. The interviewee at Kalevala Koru was also the only one to state that they saw any benefit in mapping out their followers' social technographics in the future and that it could be considered as a concrete operation. They also stated that, in their experience, their followers tend to generally be quite active.

7.8 The risks related to monitoring and participating in social media

The interviewee at **Fondia** stated that they do not believe that there are risks related to monitoring social media. The only risk that they stated in participating in social media was the possible spreading of rumors that would, according to them, spread even if the company was not present in social media. However, the interviewee stated that there are possible risks related to Fondia's own employees' activity in social media that could falsely be regarded as the company's official view or action. The interviewee also recognized that should Fondia state something imprudent, it would spread very quickly in social media.

Korkeasaari's representative stated that the risks of participating in social media are mostly related to uncontrollability. Korkeasaari has experienced various press crises over the years and they could potentially rise to new spheres in social media, because contributing to them with, for example, negative feedback is very easy. The interviewee also stated that even bigger a risk is the social media activity of those employees who are not sufficiently informed of Korkeasaari's communication policy. There is a risk that they could slip out unauthorized information or blurt out something ill-advised that people could associate with Korkeasaari as an organization. Even though Korkeasaari gives instructions to their employees regarding this, it is impossible to attain total control over it. Regarding the risks related to monitoring social media, the interviewee also recognized a threat of neglecting the company's own presence in so-

cial media by using the automated service especially at the moment as they are experiencing a shortage of resources.

Kalevala Koru's interviewee did not think that there are risks related to monitoring social media and rather saw it as a means of minimizing risks. In participation they recognized the risk of harming the organization's brand should they somehow intervene with the consumers' opinions and preferences as there are vast differences in them in the jewelry industry. They also stated that asking for feedback publicly in social media might bring out certain issues that the company would not want to be published, and that social media is a very unforgiving channel in the sense that if one errs there once, it will not be easily forgotten and remedying it will be extremely difficult.

The interviewee at **Fenix Outdoor Finland** stated that the risks of monitoring social media include excessive generalization based on the data obtained from the service, as described in chapter 6, and spending too much time on the service at the expense of other business operations. As for the risks of participating in social media, the interviewee mentioned publishing something recklessly. It could potentially earn the company the ire of the consumers if they, for example, published images or video material of prototypes of products that would not, for some reason, eventually end up on the market. Furthermore, the interviewee stated that one has to be very careful when publishing material in social media because it cannot be removed or remedied afterwards. The interviewee also recognized the risk of the company's employees publishing something privately that the general public might regard as the company's official line. This risk is also larger in Finland than in most countries, because the outdoor sport industry is quite close-knit and the operators receive the information regarding others' publishing quickly.

Vivago's representative did not state any risks regarding social media monitoring. They stated that the risks are more related to the participation in the discussions based on the information received from the monitoring. If, for example, the company started mocking the users that have published something negative, it would end up in a catastrophe. The interviewee stated that when a company participates in social media, it has to be ready to tolerate negative feedback. The interviewee recognized the risks of dis-

regarding personal presence in social media when using the service and excessive generalization based on the received data but stated that “One has to always find the happy medium in these.”

7.9 Feedback on the service

The interviewees were, for the most part, satisfied with the Buzz service. However, they did share some of their ideas for improvement that varied from the service’s visual appearance to technical details. The received comments were as follows:

- “The reports in the News service are better. They are easier to interpret.”
- “The monthly analysis could be clearer.”
- “The themes cloud is not very illustrative when there are not a lot of hits.”
- “The automated analyzing and reporting could be better. At the moment, too much time has to be spent on analyzing them.”
- “The Finnish sentiment analysis does not work very well.”
- “The database is something that can be widened endlessly.”
- “The fact that the service’s technical development takes place in America is problematic, because when something needs to be done quickly, the reaction is usually quite slow.”
- “The control is a bit engineer-like and sometimes slow.”

8 Discussion

This final chapter presents conclusions based on the findings of the research after which the reliability and validity of this thesis are scrutinized. The final two paragraphs are reserved for proceeding recommendations for Meltwater and assessment of the thesis process.

8.1 Conclusions

The first research question of this thesis was *what kind of social media monitoring do the interviewed enterprises practice and why?*

Even though social media monitoring in the interviewed organizations varied to some degree, all of them were essentially on the same path in certain issues. Supporting Forsgård & Frey and Li & Bernoff's theories, all of the organizations wanted to know what the consumers were talking about them in order to draw conclusions about their actions, create an overview of how they are perceived, and be ready to react on alarming or otherwise significant discussion. All of the organizations were also interested in the discussion regarding their overall field of business, as described by Lehtonen and Li & Bernoff, in order to create a general view of it, and were monitoring it, apart from Kalevala Koru who saw it as an option in the future. Correspondingly, the interviewed organizations, apart from Korkeasaari who were lacking resources, were also interested in receiving information about the actions of their competitors so that they could compare their own actions to them. Fondia, Fenix Outdoor Finland, and Vivago were also monitoring the discussion regarding their products and services in order to be aware of what the consumers think about them as discussed by Forsgård & Frey and Li & Bernoff. Kalevala Koru did not actively monitor their products, even though they stated one of the initial reasons for acquiring social media monitoring to be following their products' visibility reception in different social media channels. Korkeasaari did not monitor their products or services either. Other subjects for monitoring included names of the executives in Fondia, which supports Forsgård & Frey's theory of telling people from their background organizations, animal rights and welfare in Korkeasaari, names of Lapponia Jewelry designers in Kalevala Koru, and the terminology used by

consumers in Vivago. All of the organizations practiced constant social media monitoring which is reasonable given that, according to Forsgård & Frey, campaign-like monitoring can give a flawed idea of the overall discussion.

Korkeasaari was the only one to state that they used the comments found with the service as official references. The other organizations merely shared the comments internally. Social media is perhaps not perceived to be a reliable source for official references as users do not necessarily use their own names and the threshold of giving false information is lower. If this is the case, it can be argued that Li & Bernoff and Forsgård & Frey's theories on the positives of online recommendations are not fully agreed on. However, as the sample of this thesis is not quantitatively large, such generalization should not be made without further investigation.

Searching for sales leads through social media monitoring was not of much interest to the organizations at the moment. In the future this could be something that Meltwater should consider in developing the service so that it could be applied better to support this function.

All of the organizations were quite active operators in social media. However, many of them were lacking the necessary resources to heavily invest in various social media channels and monitoring. It can be assumed that in the future, as the significance of social media increases, the companies will start recruiting personnel to mainly, or solely, take care of their social media operations. This way the importance of social media monitoring services, such as Buzz, will also most likely increase, whereas now they are rather supporting other media monitoring. Social technographics may also start playing a bigger role in the future as more resources can be allocated for them.

The second research question was *what are the most important applications of social media monitoring for the interviewed enterprises and why?*

Based on the results received from the interviews, it could be stated that the most useful applications of social media monitoring for the organizations have been the ability to manage and prevent various social media crises by being able to quickly react on the

comments online, mapping out the overall field of business, and thus staying up-to-date, and comparing the organizations' own products and services to those of their competitors, the facilitation of cooperation with bloggers and other content creators, and following the terminology used by the consumers to be able to communicate in the same terms. The priorities in different organizations were naturally somewhat different but the overall impression received from the interviews as well as the theories presented in chapter 3.4 support the said applications. Fondia, Korkeasaari, and Vivago also stated that social media monitoring conveniently supports other media monitoring. When social media monitoring is combined with traditional media monitoring, the problems of traditional media, such as its bindings in schedules, physical materials, formal rules, and organizational thresholds described by Leponiemi et al., can be tackled and thus a comprehensive overview of mediums can be created.

Other interesting piece of information that was received from the interviews was that all of the interviewed organizations agreed that there were several applications of how social media monitoring could be used even if there was no discussion about the organizations themselves including crisis management, monitoring of the business field, monitoring of the competitors, monitoring of the overall discussion and thus analyzing which actions stimulate and create it, and monitoring of the terminology that the consumers use.

Because of the qualitative nature of the study and the radical differences that occur between different small and medium sized enterprises in Finland, it should be stated that, apart from the suggestions on how to use the service when there is no discussion about organizations themselves, these results only apply to the organizations that took part in the research and are not to be generalized lavishly.

8.2 Validity and reliability

Validity expresses how well the measuring or research method used in the study measures the exact feature of the phenomenon that is supposed to be measured and how well the results correspond to reality. In a valid research the correct issue has been measured by using the correct method and the target group and the questions of the

study are correct. An essential part of the validity of a qualitative research is that the reader is able to follow the reasoning of the researcher. Inadequate validity means that the empirical observations and the study are focused on different matters than they originally were meant to which makes the study worthless. (Hiltunen 2009, 3; Uusitalo 1991, 81.)

The research questions, as well as the questionnaire used in this thesis, were planned together with my thesis advisor and commissioning party and gone through several times before conducting the interviews. The findings from the interviews also respond well to the initial research questions. The interviewed organizations were also carefully picked together with the commissioning party and they represent different fields of business. Therefore I claim that this research is valid.

However, one issue that may have compromised the validity of this study is that the interviewees may have understood the questions in a different way than I did. However, due to the conversational nature of the interviews, there is no particular reason to assume this as I was able to correct the misunderstandings right away.

Reliability expresses how reliably and repeatedly the used research method measures the phenomenon in question, in other words, whether the research can be repeated without the results changing. In a qualitative research reliability can be seen as unambiguous interpretation and classification. The questions presented must also be unambiguous and understandable, and the interviews must be conducted with care. (Hiltunen 2009, 9; Uusitalo 1991, 81.)

The fact that this research was conducted by one person may have affected the overall reliability as the interpretations of the data may be subjective. I aimed to minimize this by recording the interviews and analyzing them closely afterwards. All of the interviewees were asked the same questions in the same order and they were also further explained whenever there was need for it. There is also a risk that the interviewees may have given false or inaccurate information in the interviews. There is, however, no particular reason to assume that they did. As a conclusion, I believe that this study reliable.

8.3 Proceeding recommendations

In order to concretely improve the Buzz service and its usability, Meltwater should closely survey the ideas for improvement presented in paragraph 8.9 and consider if they could be implemented in the future when the service is being upgraded. Furthermore, the channels that came up in the interviews and were not already in Buzz's database (Google+, Instagram, and Pinterest) should also be added so that they could be monitored in the future.

None of the interviewed organizations had mapped out nor closely surveyed the social technographics of their followers in social media. However, in the future as the use of social media increases, Buzz could perhaps be upgraded in a way that social technographics would be somehow noted in the use of the service. Searching for sales leads through social media monitoring was not of much interest to the organizations at the moment either. In the future this could also be something to consider in developing the service so that it could be applied better to support this function.

None of the interviewed organizations were familiar with the model of listening, analyzing, and participating presented in chapter 5.1. This was perhaps due to the fact that the organizations were already active operators in social media when purchasing Buzz. However, Meltwater could potentially emphasize this theory more in the future when selling the service because if the interviewed organizations had not heard of it, there are surely other organizations that have not heard of it either and could make use of it.

The ideas on how to use the service if there is no discussion presented in paragraph 8.3 are also something that Meltwater can emphasize when selling Buzz to new prospects in the future.

8.4 Assessment

I started familiarizing with the bibliography of the thesis in July 2012 as I wanted to reserve enough time for the actual writing process. All in all, the thesis project took approximately ten months and I feel that, overall, the presented results give good and thorough answers to the original research questions.

The thesis subject was of personal interest to me, which I feel made the workload significantly lighter as I was rarely losing interest with the research. The commissioning party and the thesis advisor also helped me whenever I expressed my need for it, which was also a notable factor in the fluency of the process.

I feel that writing this thesis has been an enormous learning experience and that I have acquired comprehensive knowledge regarding the use of social media in different kinds of business applications. The commissioning party has also received in-depth knowledge of their customers which they can hopefully utilize in their future operations.

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Attachments

Attachment 1: The questions used in the interviews

1. Organisaation ja haastateltavan oman aseman kuvaus lyhyesti.
2. Missä sosiaalisen median kanavissa olette mukana? Miksi juuri näissä kanavissa?
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - YouTube
 - LinkedIn
 - Foorumit
 - Flickr
 - Blogit
 - Wikit
 - Muut? (Google+, Instagram, Vimeo jne.)
3. Oliko teillä strategia mietittynä lähtiessänne mukaan näihin kanaviin? Millainen?
 - Millaisia lyhyen tähtäimen tavoitteita teillä oli?
 - Entä pitkän tähtäimen tavoitteita?
4. Kauanko palvelu on ollut käytössänne ja miksi otitte sen käyttöönnne?
 - Miten mittaatte onnistumista tavoitteissanne?
5. Oletteko harjoittaneet jatkuvaa seuranta palvelun avulla vai onko seuranta kausiluontoista tai kampanjanomaista?
6. Mitä näistä seuraatte palvelun avulla?
 - Oma nimi
 - Tuotteet
 - Toimiala
 - Kilpailijat
 - Jotain muuta?
7. Mikäli olette löytäneet keskustelua yllämainittuihin liittyen, miten kuvailisitte keskustelun laatua ja sen hyödynnettävyyttä teille?
 - Onko keskustelua löytynyt paljon?

- Onko teistä tai jostain muusta seuraamastanne asiasta liikkunut mahdollisesti väärää/valheellista tietoa?
8. Oletteko itse osallistuneet keskusteluihin ja onko osallistumisenne systemaattista vai satunnaista?
 - Mikäli satunnaista, oletteko ajatelleet kuinka osallistumista voisi systematisoida?
 9. Oletteko erityisen kiinnostuneita seuraamaan tiettyjä sosiaalisen median kanavia? Mitä ja miksi?
 10. Etsittekö myynti-/jotain muita liidejä palvelun avulla? Miten?
 11. Oletteko osallistaneet kuluttajia?
 12. Oletteko käyttäneet palvelun avulla löytämiänne kommentteja referensseinä? Miten?
 13. Nettisosiaalisuusprofiililla tarkoitetaan käyttäjien käyttäytymistä eri kanavissa. Käyttäjät voidaan luokitella esim. sisällön tuottajiksi, kriitikoiksi, seuraajiksi tai passiivisiksi. Oletteko kartoittaneet kohderyhmänne nettisosiaalisuusprofiilia ja koetteko sen vaikuttavan seurantaan? Miten?
 14. Koetteko, että sosiaalisen median seurantaan ja osallistumiseen liittyy riskejä? Millaisia?
 15. Koetteko, että palvelua voisi hyödyntää vaikka omasta organisaatiosta ei olisi keskustelua? Miten?
 - Oletteko käyttäneet palvelua/onko teillä ideoita miten palvelua voisi käyttää ”luovasti”?
 16. Millaista hyötyä koette saaneenne palvelusta ja mitkä ovat tärkeimmät hyödyt?
 17. Kaipaisitteko palveluun jotain muuta tai onko siinä mielestänne jotain oleellista parannettavaa?