SQA

Tutor Guidance Notes to support delivery of Digital Marketing Communications: Content Development — HH6C 34

SCQF level 7

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Contents

About this pack

This guidance pack has been developed to support tutors in the delivery of the HN unit Digital Marketing Communications: Content Development. This is a mandatory unit in the HNC Marketing Communications, and an optional unit in a variety of other awards. It has been written to support tutors and give a very general understanding of this topic. The contents of this pack underpin the unit specification and SOLAR assessment for this unit, but also gives a range of background information to support tutors in discussing the topics more widely, if required.

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Description of the unit

This unit focuses on the relationship between social communication platforms and brand websites. With an emphasis on Social media marketing, Search Engine Optimisation and Content Management System (CMS) content, it explores the importance of creating researched, optimised and value-based creative, as well as the use of the digital analytics accessed through social platforms and content management systems.

Definitions

Content Management: The process of researching, creating and managing online communications in order to maximise results.

Search Engine Results Page (SERP): The pages of content that are shown after a user has searched via a search engine, for example Google, Bing.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO): The process of researching, creating and optimising digital content to improve its relevance and reach on a search engine/SERP.

Keywords: Specific words that search engines 'read' in order to filter content based on relevance.

Social Media Manager: A job title that refers to someone who plans and executes social media marketing campaigns/content. Could also refer to an online platform that helps us do the same thing.

Mock-ups: Initial designs that represent how an advert could look. Used to help cement an idea and sell content to clients before the production. Mock-ups do not have to be perfect/the final product.

Value-based Marketing: Pieces of marketing that aim to improve the lives of the audience. Users then recognise this value which leads to improved conversions.

Trends: Popular updates that users and marketers take part in. Could refer to user generated content (for example TikTok dances or Planking) or marketing updates (the birth of stories, reels or new social platforms).

Creative/Executions: The adverts themselves and is made up of copy and art direction. Refers to what the users experience (social posts, search ads, banners).

Analytics: The different pieces of information that monitor how the public interact with our social pages or content management systems.

Impressions: A generic metric that refers to every time your content crosses a user's screen. Not a great indicator of true engagement but useful to a point.

A/B Testing: Running two different adverts at the same time. We can then use analytics to see which advert was more successful in order to help form future marketing activity.

Pay-Per-Click (PPC): A method of costing online marketing activity. It means marketers only pay media platforms when their activity is engaged with by the user.

Outcome 1: The role of Social Media

Social media marketing is all about intercepting your audience in spaces where they are comfortable. It personalises our audience/customers in a way that most other mediums cannot. Social media makes us 'real' to consumers. We can share brand personality on a much more personal level.

Community management

At the core of social media's strength is dialogue between user and advertiser. Where most mediums operate on a single-direction communication model, social media allows a back-and-forth through reviews, commenting, sharing and liking, etc. As brands we can incorporate our identity and ethos into people's day-to-day lives through consistent social updates. This means we can stay front of mind and become integrated into our follower's social community. In short, users have the power to respond and consistently engage which can create stronger and more meaningful relationships between brands and audiences.

Business to Consumer (B2C) in Social Media

Social media is effective at reaching traditional campaign objectives — increasing sales, improving brand image, repositioning, etc. But, meeting digital specific objectives is the key strength of social — increasing web traffic, growing user engagement, increasing brand following, increasing organic reach, etc. It also aids SEO results as all social accounts are read by search engine algorithms.

Strong call-to-action options (for example Like buttons, Share Buttons, Find Out More buttons) are key in terms of lead generation as they are clear and intuitive paths for users to take.

Business to Business (B2B) in Social Media

This area is ever growing, especially through business specific platforms like LinkedIn. Social B2B platforms allow all the benefits of social; improved brand presence, cost-efficiency, versatility, community management. It also allows a different tone of voice in creative execution — we can be more explanatory and result driven, with less need for creativity (this is because businesses are more concerned about bottom lines than elaborate messaging).

Targeting

The ability to reach and communicate with specific audiences lies at the heart of social marketing. We can identify and target different audiences based on geographic, demographic and psychographic factors — this information is based on each individual's interaction with the given platform. This means we do not waste budget, time and effort communicating with the wrong audience which improves the cost-efficiency of any campaign. We can also target more than one audience at once, meaning we can reach different audience segments with different messages at the same time.

Analytics and content

With the analytics that come with social media, we can create content specifically designed to collect information. We can A/B test campaigns and posts to identify the best performers. This data can give brands valuable insights about their audience. This includes when users are active, topics they are interested in and what tones of voice they prefer. All of this can help form messaging moving forward.

Responsibility

Questions over social media's involvement in the data industry are important. With the marketing industry's connection to selling and purchasing of data and the resulting threats regarding privacy and manipulation, we have the responsibility to treat all user information with respect.

Platform by Platform

Facebook and Instagram

Often treated together as owned by same parent company but reach different audiences. It's crucial to follow image dimension specifications to ensure you work with their algorithm. The same goes for copy limits. These specifications can change so it's important to stay updated. We can use the Facebook Creative Hub to test creative, and we can plan campaigns for both platforms from the one centre. Instagram uses hashtags more prominently than Facebook, so remember that when separating content.

Facebook

♦ We can set up pages that leads to a dialogue with customers.
♦ Customers can ask questions, give ratings and make general comments publicly (this obviously can be a good and bad aspect).
♦ Facebook Insights give us information and analytics that helps us plan.
♦ We can identify specific target audiences — (arguably) the best platform for targeting due the available segmentation variables.
♦ Allows a wide range of execution — images, stories, videos, Graphics Interchange Formats (GIFs), 360° content.
♦ We can A/B test our campaigns.
♦ Pages can grow organically if clever content is used.
♦ Tries to put user content over advertisement — all activity should be non-invasive.
♦ To get real results — it costs. The PPC model is the only way to guarantee reach (through the promote function). Very useful for lead generation and conversion.
♦ If you are relevant and maintain engagement, Facebook can promote your page for you.

Strengths

♦ Largest social media platform
♦ Great for brand awareness
♦ Increases consumer engagement
♦ It drives website traffic
♦ It generates business leads
♦ You get customer service and feedback
♦ You can monitor and improve through analytics

Weaknesses

♦ Time and resources — execution requires a level of expertise and commitment.
♦ Skill — the platforms constantly update, meaning upskilling must be maintained.
♦ Budget — for consistent results and growth, media spend must be present.
♦ Negative feedback— like in any conversion, there's a chance of negative feedback reflecting on the brand.

Audiences
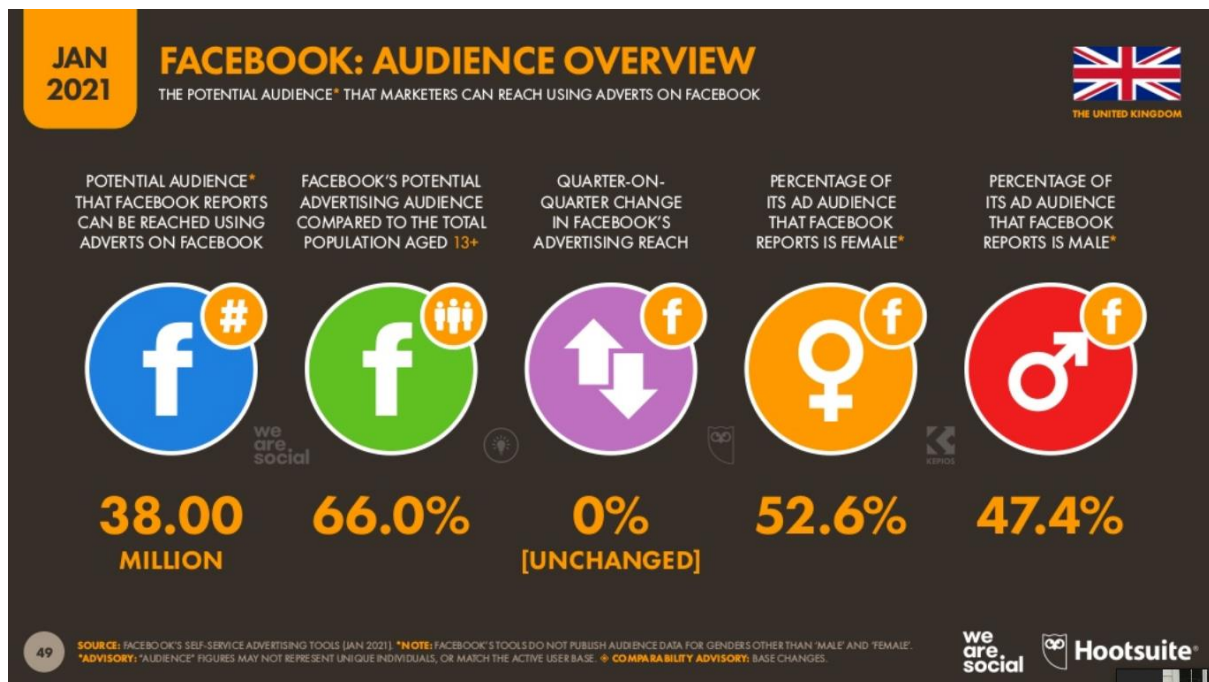
© Digital 2021: The United Kingdom - Facebook: Audience Overview — Simon Kemp,
We Are Social, Hootsuite; https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-united-kingdom:
Presentation Slide 49 Facebook for Business

Instagram

♦ Visually dominated — a push back against copy heavy content.

♦ Similar model as Facebook (due to being owned by the same people).

♦ Has all the engagement strengths of Facebook — but is better at holding user attention.

♦ Also comes with built in planning, targeting and analytic tools.

♦ Similar opportunities as Facebook in terms of execution but with different required image and copy specifications.

♦ Allows a wide range of execution — images, reels, stories, videos, GIFs, Boomerangs. Should always be visually pleasing/not reliant on copy.

Strengths

♦ Fastest growing social platform
♦ Visual prompts — polls, questions, tags, etc.
♦ High engagement due to the visual nature
♦ Hashtags are excellent at spreading campaigns
♦ Excellent for targeting younger demographics
♦ Location tagging improves SEO efforts

Weaknesses

♦ Can only be used on i-Phone and android app (not suitable for windows)
♦ Dominated by younger users
♦ Expensive for social advertising — PPC is higher than other platforms.
♦ Can be expensive to promote your brand solely through images and videos
♦ Cannot use clickable links — must direct users to Bio for external linking

Audiences
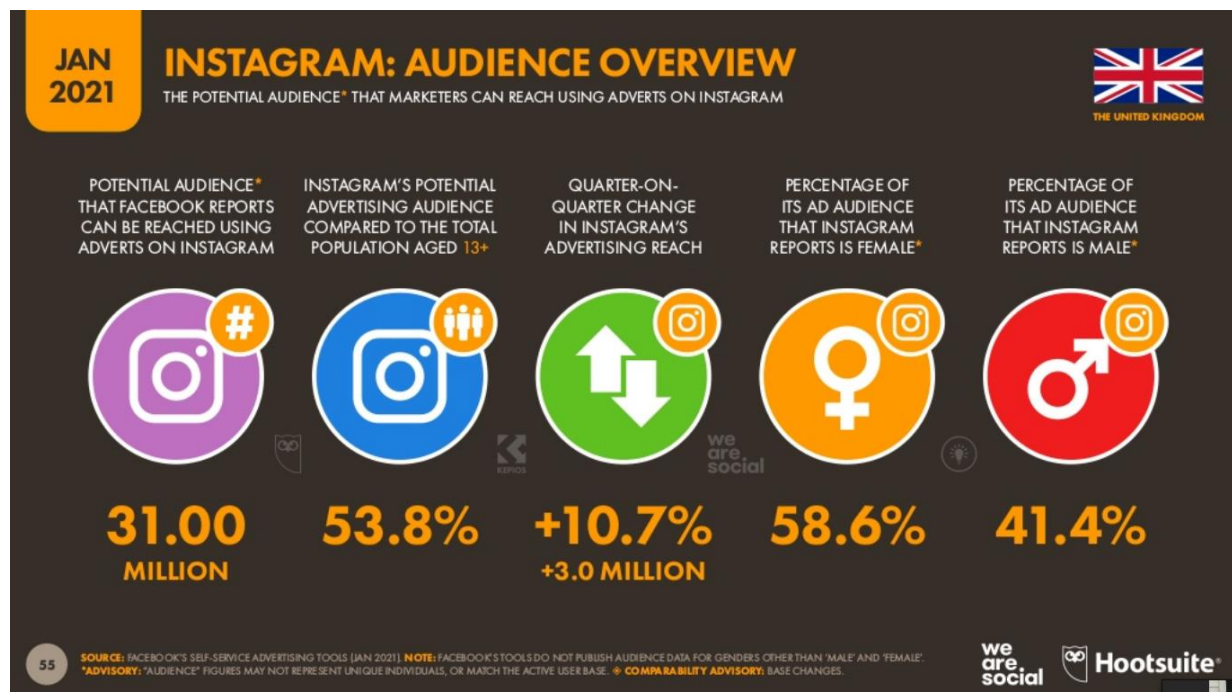
© Digital 2021: The United Kingdom - Instagram: Audience Overview — Simon Kemp,
We Are Social, Hootsuite; https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-united-kingdom:
Presentation Slide 55 Instagram for Business

Twitter

Has its own image dimensions and copy specifications to follow. Can be planned and executed through its own marketing hub. Has great linking capability; to other Twitter accounts and the wider web. We should always use researched hashtags; they work wonders in Twitter. Has a special customer relationship in terms of sharing content — retweeting in extremely common and popular and can help increase reach of content.

♦ A microblogging service — operates within the 'news space' and has close connection to current affairs.

♦ A blend of news outlet and social media.

♦ It is more about sharing ideas and information than purely socialising.

♦ Webcards — are larger and more engaging that a standard tweet. They feature a large image attached to your tweet, but unlike normal image attachments that open up a larger version of the image, clicking on the image in a Website Card will send users to your landing page.

♦ You can target influencers specifically — this then trickles down to their audience.

Strengths

♦ Highly influential — hashtags spread easily through Twitter and are useful in paid and organic content.

♦ News and a Loyal Customer Base — Twitter users consistently return to the platform over social alternatives due to its connection to current affairs and the news.

♦ B2B — 67% of businesses (worldwide) rely on Twitter for business-to-business marketing.

Weaknesses

♦ Algorithm — Twitter's search and content algorithms have come under scrutiny in regard to relevancy and trustworthiness.

♦ US centric — Twitter has much larger impact on US markets than the rest of the world which is a definite limitation.

♦ Fake accounts — on Twitter, fake profiles are common (around 5% of daily users are operating on fake accounts).

Audiences
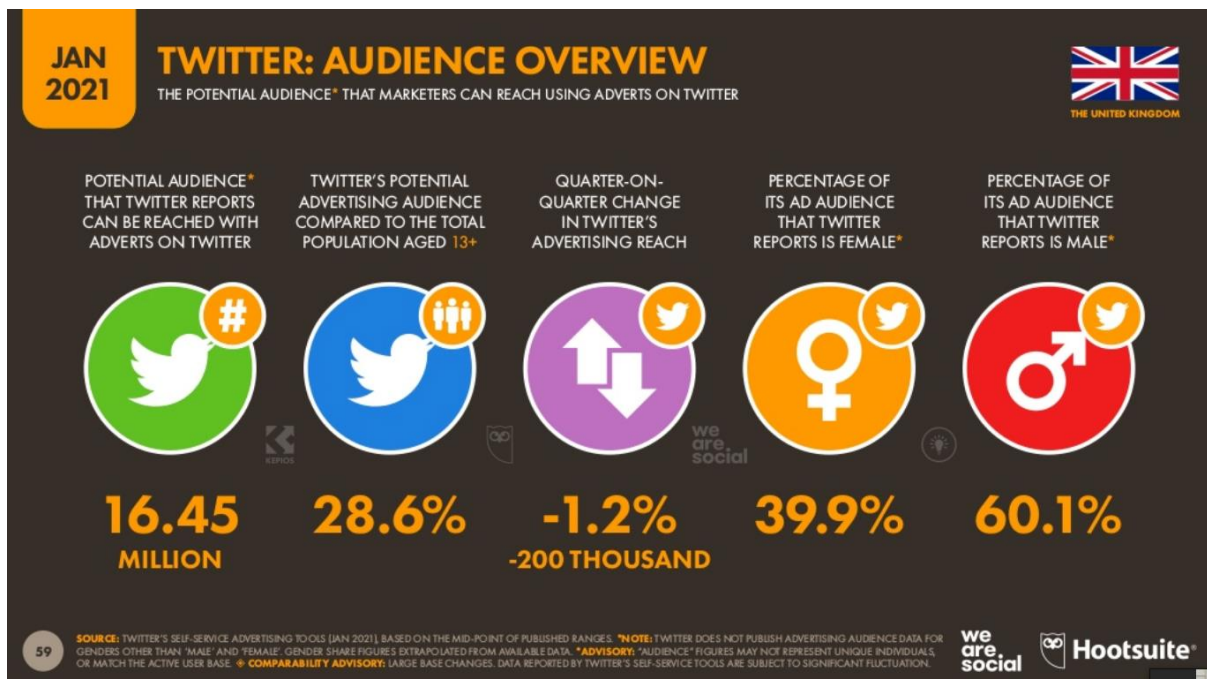
© Digital 2021: The United Kingdom - Twitter: Audience Overview — Simon Kemp,
We Are Social, Hootsuite; https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-united-kingdom:
Presentation Slide 59 Twitter Marketing

LinkedIn

The social media for professionals. It's centred around its users' occupational lives
and taps into a more corporate segment of the social media market. Because of this
slant, it can be extremely useful at reaching B2B objectives. Claims to be the #1
platform in lead generation. Also lets us target specific audiences with a range of
content.

Strengths

♦ LinkedIn Pulse — alerts followers when you release a piece of marketing content.
♦ Tone of Voice — can be less personal in execution; more business minded.
♦ Offers free research on its marketing hub.

Weaknesses

♦ Takes time and effort to plan, create and maintain campaigns.
♦ Has some hidden expenses on the marketing hub.
♦ Less creative options for content — offers copy, image and video uploads.

Audiences
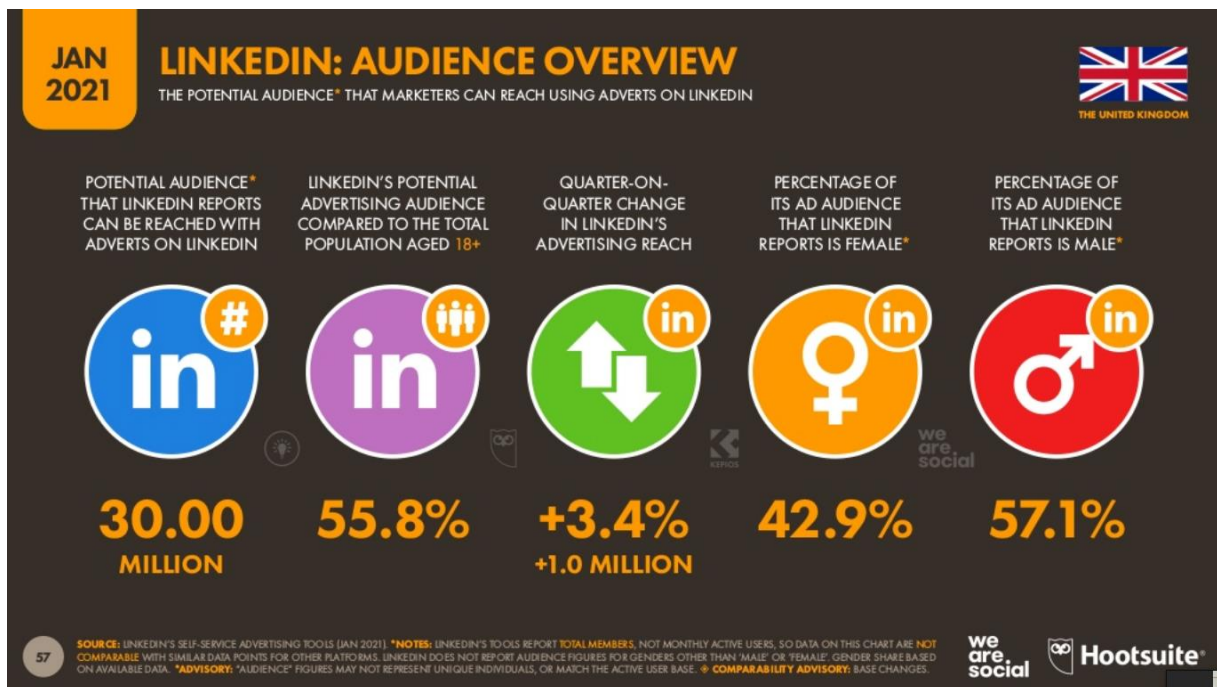
© Digital 2021: The United Kingdom - LinkedIn: Audience Overview — Simon Kemp,
We Are Social, Hootsuite; https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-united-kingdom:
Presentation Slide 57 *Business LinkedIn Marketing Solutions*

Social media and linking to website

All social activity needs a clear reason for being — and a primary objective is to drive traffic to your brand domain. This means that when we are creating content, it's vital that a clear path to website is incorporated into the content to improve click through rates and conversion. Buttons and external links must be used effectively.

Social content generation

We should always use high quality, presentable images. These images should be cropped to follow recommended specs. Keep copy brief, and again, follow platform character specifications.

Keep your activity fresh by updating content regularly, and use a range of engagement mechanisms to maintain engagement, for example 'Tag a friend who...', 'What's your favourite...,' 'Screenshot and share...,' 'Tell us in the comments...'

It is worth noting that we need to follow legal requirements in terms content, meaning we cannot use imagery that we do not own and cannot write copy that offends/breaks the law.

Thematic execution

Creating social content on a post-by-post basis can be inefficient. Instead, creating themes that include multiple posts can save time and budget while aiding consistency.

For example, British Airways could create a social theme called 'Guess the Country' that asks users to guess what country a picture was taken in. Under this theme, British Airways could create 10+ social posts and cover a month instead of creating 10 individual posts with 10 individual ideas.

Multiple themes can work at once, as long as they all match the brand ethos and any overarching campaigns.

Repetition

For cost efficiency, we can put similar posts across multiple platforms. The key is to tweak the execution to suit the different audiences. For example we could post the same picture across Instagram, Facebook and Twitter and change the copy to match each character specification and audience, **or** we could keep similar copy and use different images that best communicate on each platform.

Creative tools

Ideation tool — Deck of Brilliance

A very useful tool that can help with digital creative. It offers 52 ways to answer a creative brief — something that helps generate angles into creative execution. Can be very useful for when learners need to come up with ideas.

Online Mock-up tools

Admocks.adparlor.com: A website that allows us to create social post mock-ups for several platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest). Within each platform, learners can choose different executions (video, static, link, etc). Excellent for presenting creative.

Facebook Creative Hub: A Facebook run website. Here learners can create and test Facebook and Instagram posts before they upload them.

Pixlr: An online Photoshop alternative. Pixlr is an image editor and lets learners edit social images for free. Works in pixels so ideal for JPEG editing.

Vectr: An online Illustrator alternative. Vectr lets learners create and edit graphics and content for free. Works in vectors so is ideal for SVG and graphics editing.

Management tools

Well known social management tools include Hootsuite, HubSpot and Sprout Social. They act as a social media schedule and allow our content to be easily organised, planned and executed from a single place instead of across multiple websites. They are visual and let us see the big picture of how our campaigns are running.

Staggering

Excellent for spacing social content (making sure the work is spread out over an appropriate amount of time). We can also make sure we capitalise on key dates throughout the year, tapping into topical execution.

Timing

When we are using these management tools, we should be wary of specific time windows where we should be posting our content. Different platforms have different ideal posting times, as do different audiences. We should track which posts are the most successful through analytics and plan our campaigns accordingly via our management tools.

Example — Hootsuite

Hootsuite offers a free, basic social media planner. It offers the fundamental functions needed to plan and manage a social campaign. Naturally, the paid version is more industry aligned, but their free option can demonstrate fundamental teaching.
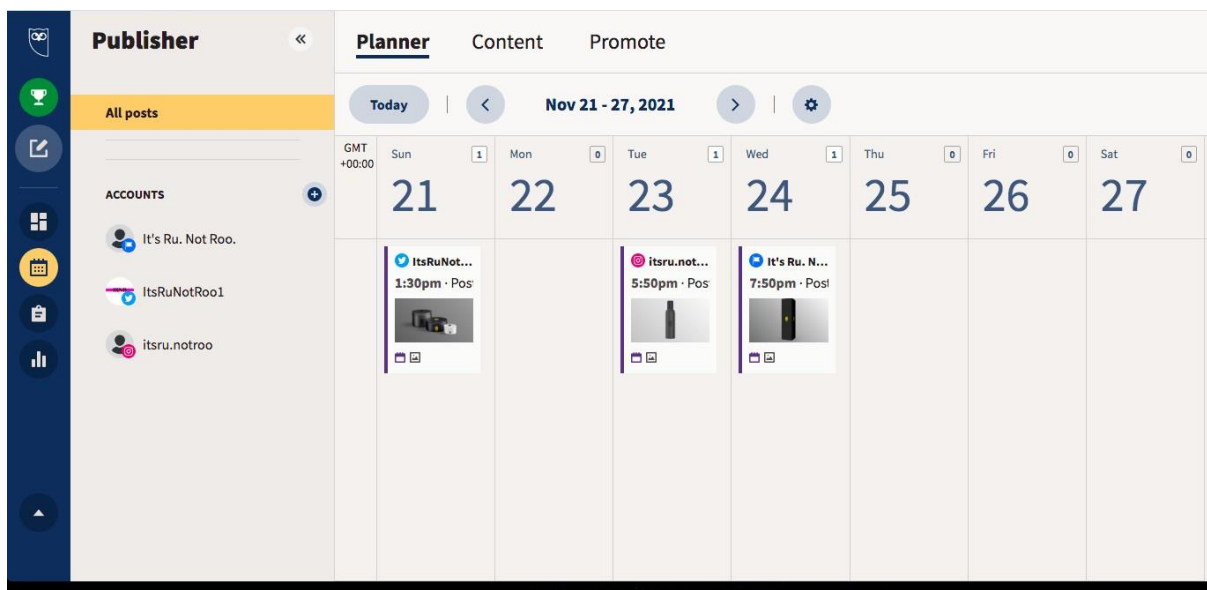
Hootsuite — Dashboard - https://www.hootsuite.com/
It lets us connect our different social platforms and plan our campaigns. Once we have scheduled our activity, it acts as a visual, presentable media schedule that can be shown to clients or as part of assessments.
How to use Hootsuite in 13 Minutes YouTube Video
Note: If this platform is an issue, you can create a basic equivalent on Excel/Word/PowerPoint (if it presents the same information).

Outcome 2: CMS, SEO and Digital Content

SEO

Use search engine algorithms to our advantage. Through research we identify how and what our target audience is searching, more specifically, the keywords they use. If we know what they search, we know what words to incorporate into our Content Management System (CMS) and social content. Search engines will then match the keywords of our content to the audience's search and rank our pages as more relevant. This relevance is key — the more relevant a SERP is, the more value the audience takes away from their search.

Consumer motivation

Consumers turn to search engines for one reason; to solve problems. They may need information, a product or a service and they expect their searches to provide the answer to whatever question they are trying to answer. We expect all search results to be relevant to a specific search, therefore, all our content must be optimised to avoid giving unhelpful matches which ultimately leads to consumer frustration and low engagement. If appropriate, or desired search results do not appear in the first SERP, users rarely click into the second. It boils down to a single word, value. If our SEO activity quickly helps our users find what they are looking for, it is worth more to users and is more likely to drive conversions.

Tools

Google Ads — Keyword planner

Provides a useful keyword search tool. Through its keyword planner, we can research the results of certain keywords to test their potential reach. The higher the reach the better, and the lower the competition the better. It lets us filter our findings based on geography and time.

It also lets us reverse search competitor websites. We can enter a URL and it will tell us keywords that have been prominent for that web address — this is invaluable when carrying out SEO and market leader/competitor research. *Note: To use Google Ads, you need to set up an account.*
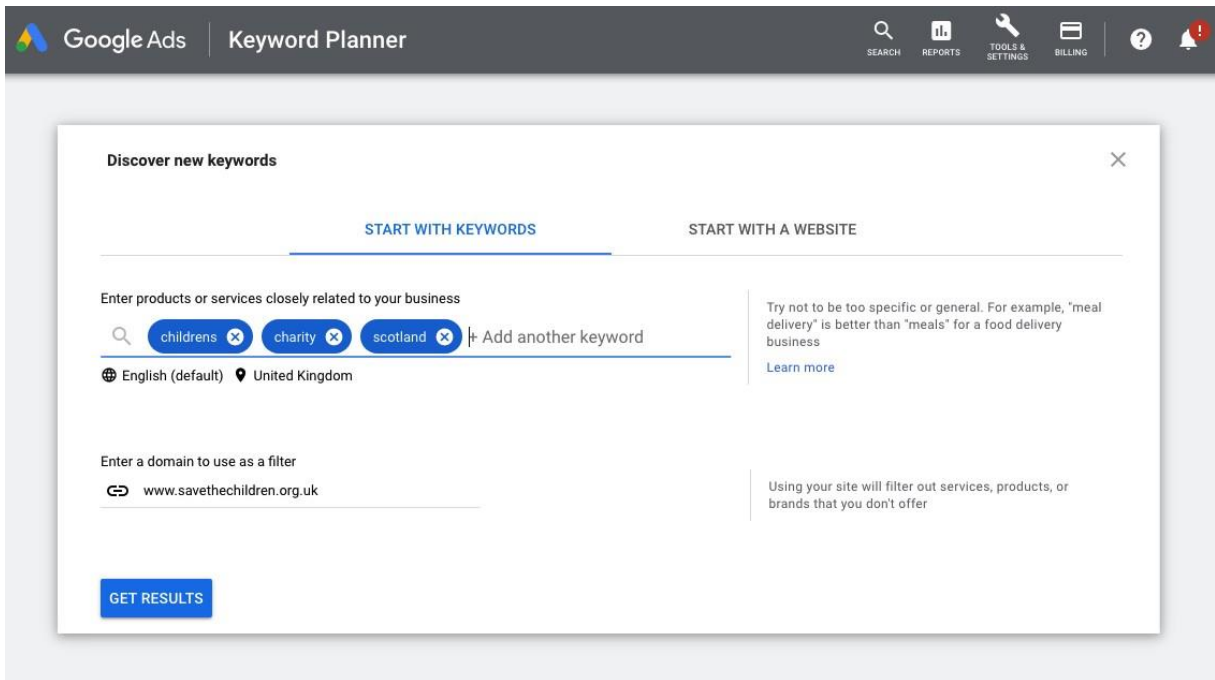
Google Ads — Keyword Planner — 'Start with Keywords'. We type in potential keywords, select the parameters and the results tell us how often those keywords were searched. (Results below)

Alongside the results of our keyword search, we can see other relevant keywords that Google has flagged as potentially beneficial our campaign.
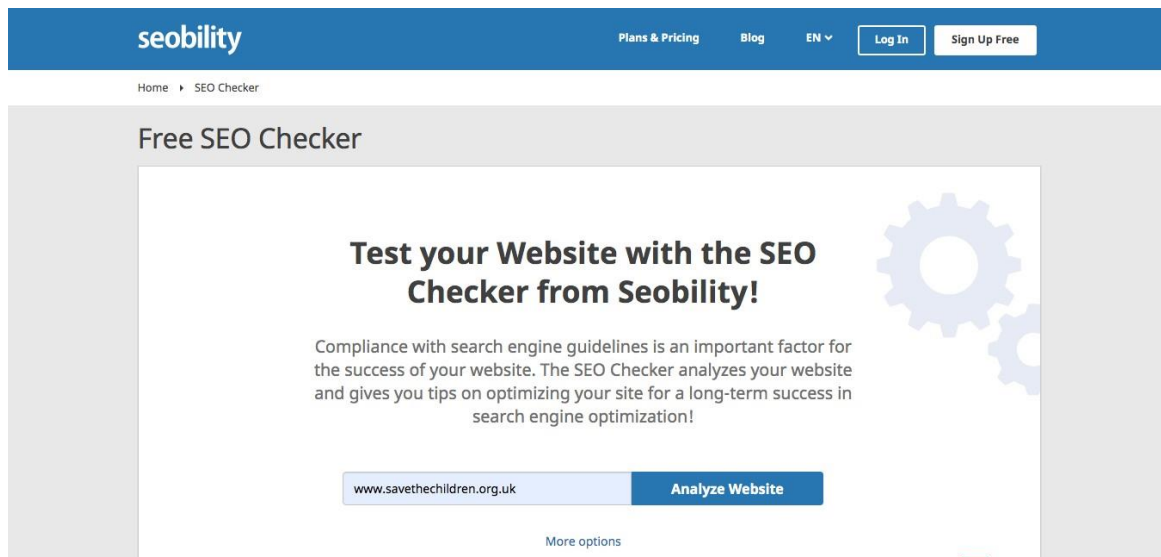
Google Ads — Keyword Planner — 'Start with a Website.' We enter a URL, select the parameters and the results identify prominent keywords that feature in that URL.

SEObility

This is a digital research website that has a number of useful SEO research applications. The SEO Checker function allows us to enter a URL and it will rank the prominence of keywords for that web address.

SEObility — SEO Checker — we enter a URL, and the results tell us which keywords have been prominent for that website (See below).

Digital research

Market Leader/Competitor Research

Using market leaders as a benchmark can help us establish a campaign's direction — we can apply what works for them and avoid what doesn't. When researching market leaders, we should ask the following questions:

SEO Decisions

- What keywords have our competitors implemented?
- What keywords can we apply to our own marketing efforts?
- What is the specific reach of those keywords within our markets?

Content and specific executions

- What executions do they use? Images? Videos? GIFs?
- What digital branding is present? Logos? Lockups? Colours? Influencers? Slogans?
- What call to action did they implement?
- What tone of voice/language do they implement?
- Do our competitors link clearly to their website?
- Is their website layout and content easy to follow?

Engagement and sentiment

- How often do people like, comment or share our competitors' content?
- How often do our competitors publicly reply to customers?
- What is the sentiment within our competitors comment section?

Social/Topical trends

Using topical events to improve content is vital. We can tap into events, news or social trends to create responsive content that can ride the wave of public interest. Things to be aware of:

- News — connecting and responding to current events is a strong method of creating relevant content.
- Events — tapping into the calendar is useful, using events such as Christmas, Valentine's Day and Halloween to generate content that is relevant to wider discussion.
- Social trends — referencing viral challenges, popular influencers and organic content, such as memes, can help us link our brands to what is currently taking place digital.

Value-based content marketing

We shouldn't aim to give our audience a piece of marketing, whether that activity be on social media or our website. We should strive to give them pieces of content that provide genuine utility or value. Our digital marketing should give our audience something useful that relates back to our client's offering and fosters trust. When we consistently give value to our audience, we can become a valuable part of their lives, which ultimately leads to a stronger relationship which can convert into results. Building that brand personality reinforces our brand positioning.

Consumer-centric content

This value can take many forms:

♦ Useful information
♦ A Life Hack
♦ A piece of advice
♦ Directions/instructions
♦ An emotional connection
♦ Entertainment (for example, a joke or a shock)

Process

1 Find and quantify customer wants and needs.
2 Commit to the most important things that will impact your customers.
3 Create customer value that is meaningful and understandable.
4 Assess the results.
5 Improve your value to keep your customers coming back.

How it connects with SEO practice

SEO is all about making your content relevant to customer searches — this relevance is a crucial form of value. Through SEO tools we can identify what our audiences are searching for. We can then use that information to tailor our marketing to those needs to add value.

Tools

Answerthepublic.com

Lets us research questions that people are asking Google. Once we know these questions, our content can aim to answer them. This leads to relevant and useful content that gives our audience real value.

For Display Purposes Only

A hashtag treatment hub. Tells us what hashtags could be useful in our campaigns. It can help us select the best hashtags to increase reach and generate more traffic.

Website Link Building

Websites that your site can link with improves SEO and increase web traffic. Search Engines read links and factor that connection between brands into their results. Think of it like an online connection that helps both of you. It all rests on your content; when you are creating quality content that adds real value to your audiences' lives, other platforms will eventually share your content which leads to links back to your site. Online public relations and paid, value-based advertising is the best method of improving linking.

Effective links

When you are looking at what platforms to link with, you must consider a few things:

♦ Popularity — How popular is the link in question?
  — This applies to reach, unique users, repeat users and time spent on site — this takes research.

♦ Relevancy/Authority — How relevant is the site in question? Does it make sense to link your two brands and/or campaigns?

♦ Negative Association — Would the site in question want to link with you? If it could lead to conflict — do not affiliate. Make sure you check the history of any potential links.

Website content

All website content should be based around digital research. This means keyword research should be implemented into copy, and content should be based on broader social and digital trends. Web content should also respond to any analytics coming out of CMS content.

Creative options

Blogs

Use search research to determine content; add value; solve a problem; be current and consider topical references. Blog titles are key — give your audience a good reason to click and read.

Listicles

Great way to cover a lot of content. Also, a great way to segue into branded content (often used by Buzzfeed and similar content hubs).

Static content

Static images partnered with copy. Simple to execute — doesn't involve much production and therefore cost effective. Could be a website's splash page or incorporated into a blog or listicle.

Rich media

Includes vlogs, videos, GIFs, animations or any moving content. Eye catching and improves user engagement.

Tools

Unsplash

A free stock imagery service, where you can download and publish high quality images that can help with website content creation. High quality images help with SEO ranking and generally lead to more engaging content.

Canva

A free content creation platform. Has pre-set layouts and image dimensions that we can edit quickly and easily.

Outcome 3: Analytics of Social and Web content

Digital analytics and SEO

Analytics teach us lessons about our site/content and identify what is working and what needs changing. We should apply these lessons to our new SEO content, which will lead to new analytics which will in turn feed into the next round of optimisation. This cycle keeps our content fresh, relevant and engaging.

Social analytics

What available social analytics are out there?

Nearly all social media platforms offer a form of analytical tools. These tools monitor the way users interact with our social pages and record the information. Marketers can then apply that information to their future campaigns. These analytics commonly consist of follower counts, impression counters and engagement trackers and help us determine when users interact with our pages, and how.

With this information you can determine which activity is successful and which is not. It also helps justify media spend and supports future decision making. Through the available analytics, we should be able to identify trends in user activity that will lead to better content and more effective digital marketing.

Specific platform analytics — Facebook/Instagram, Twitter

Facebook — Insights
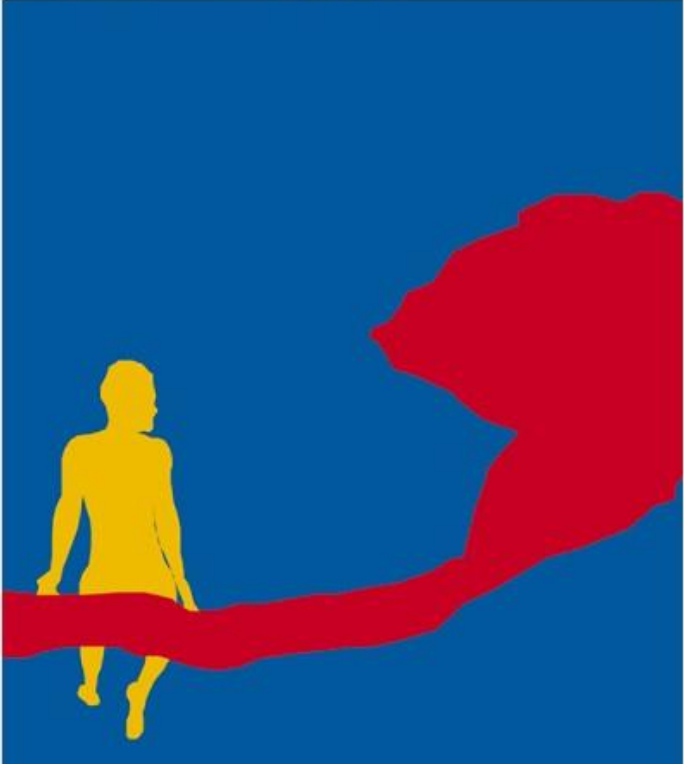
Facebook — Post Analytics
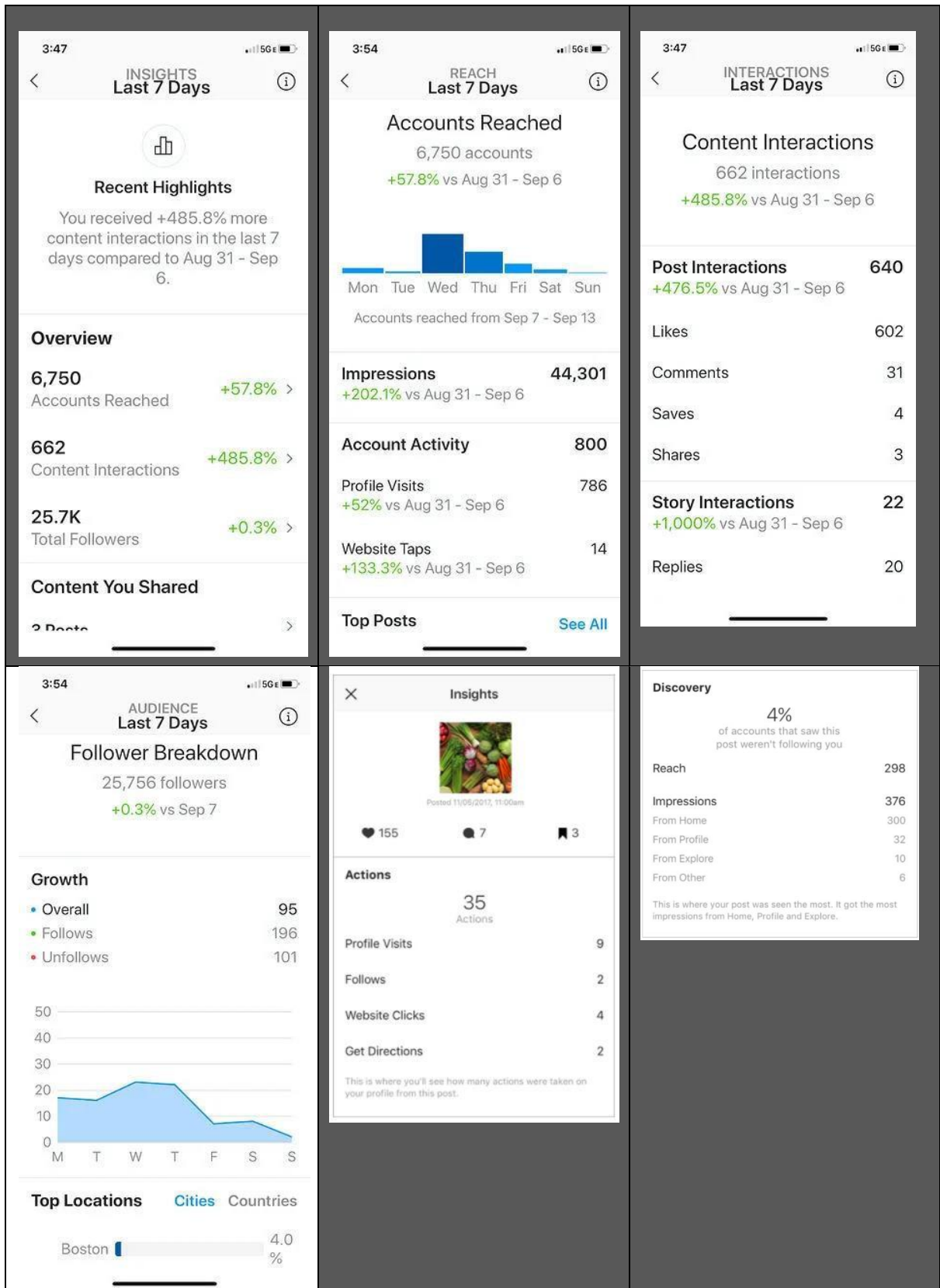
Instagram Insights — HubSpot *How to use Instagram Insights (in 9 Easy Steps)*

Twitter — Analytics

LinkedIn — Campaign Manager

Website analytics

What available CMS analytics are out there?

Different Content Management Systems collect a varying number of analytic options. They are similar to those available on social platforms as they can track when our sites are visited, how often users visit, how long they stay on the site and varying levels of demographic and geographic user information.

Example — WordPress analytics
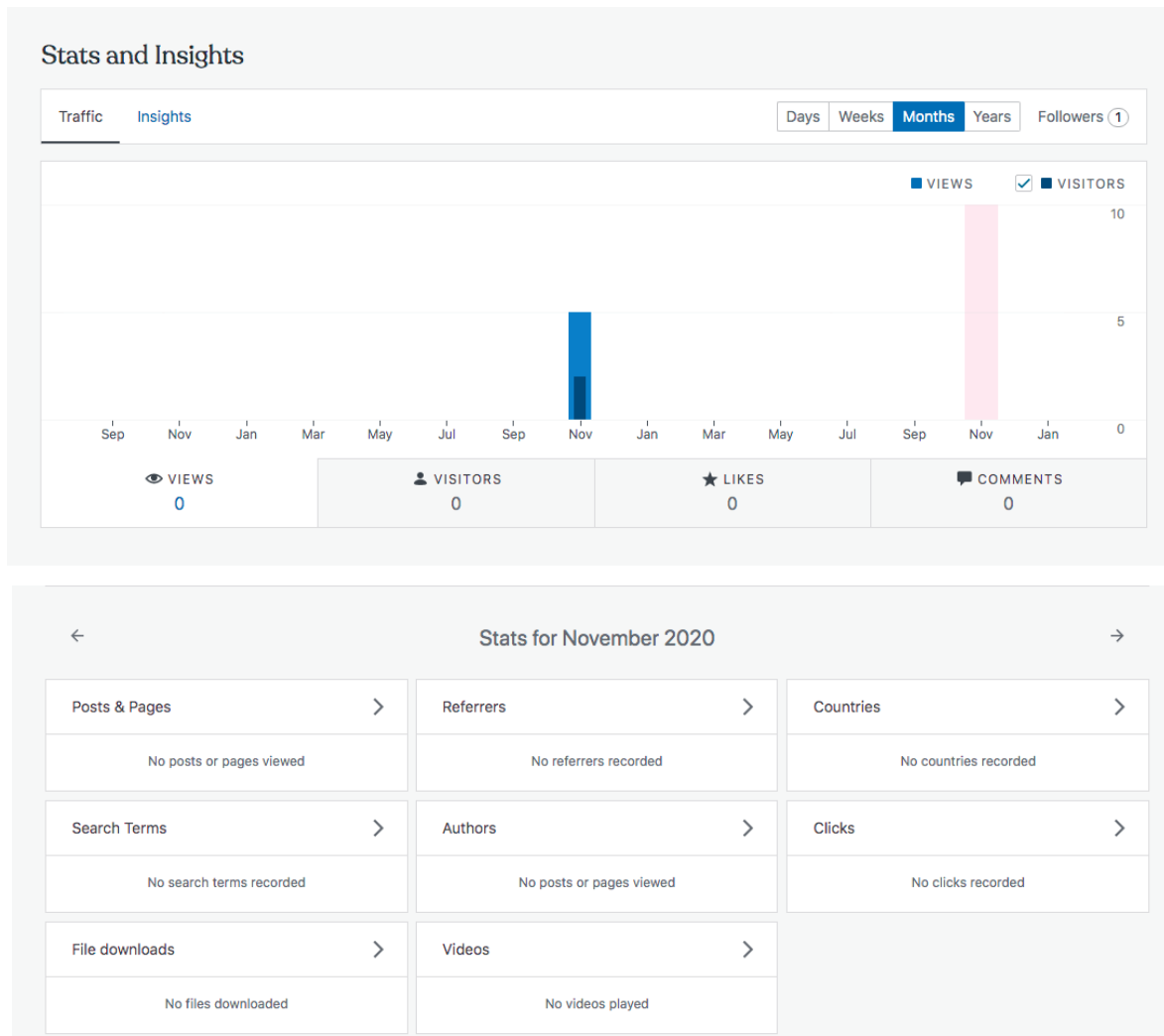
WordPress — Traffic Analytics

Stats and Insights

Traffic   Insights

Followers (1)

Posting Activity

FEB   MAR   APR   MAY   JUN   JUL   AUG   SEP   OCT   NOV   DEC   JAN

FEWER POSTS ▪▪▪▪▪ MORE POSTS

All-time views

Months and years   Average per day

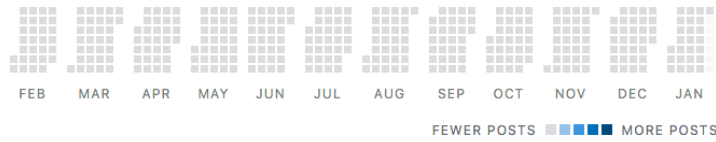|	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2019											4	0

FEWER VIEWS ▪▪▪▪▪ MORE VIEWS

Latest Post Summary

You haven't published any posts yet.

Start a Post

Most popular day and hour

⚠ No popular day and time recorded

Tags & Categories

No tagged posts or pages viewed

Annual site stats >

No annual stats recorded for this year

All-time posts, views, and visitors

≣ Posts		0
👁 Views		5
👤 Visitors		2

🏆 **Best Views Ever**
6 November 2019

Comments

Comments by Authors ⌄

Author   Comments

Publicise

No publicize followers recorded

Follower totals

Ⓦ WordPress.com		1
✉ Email		0
< Social		0

Followers >

Total WordPress.com followers: 1

Follower   Since

👤 ruraira1   a year

❓

WordPress — Insights

Improving Content through Digital Analysis

When we dissect and summarise the results of our marketing, we should be aware that different analytics can tell different stories. It is important to measure our data against our specific business objectives and update our content accordingly.

Reacting to analytics:

♦ Low engagement and impressions

Content is the issue. There is a need to focus on the creative, for example change imagery and copy; use a different tone of voice; change creative insight and idea or review all site content (blogs, vlogs, etc); give your audience more value; timing and placement could also be an issue — review the social planner and CMS layout. Revisit your SEO decisions and keyword use. Could you add a hashtag? Could also be a matter of reaching the wrong target audience — update your targeting.

♦ Social Following Stagnation

Need to improve reach and consistency could be an issue. We need to give utility on a more consistent basis. Content should be reviewed. Call to actions could be less centred around web traffic, and more focused on social interaction. Could also be because of a lack of paid promotion.

♦ High bounce rate/low site duration

Splash page content may need changing. Could be because of content of cover page — review image size, quality, placement and layout. Also, headlines may not be working — review messaging and word selection. Give users a clear reason to stay on your site.

Website structure may need changing — is the user's path to purchase clear? Also, check links — they may not be optimal.

♦ Low Site Traffic

Linking could be an issue. Make sure social content has a clear call to action that takes users to your site. SEO could be lacking, meaning less movement from SERPs to the website. To improve, more keyword research could help. More (or better) online advertising and public relations material can help improve reach.

♦ Low Conversion

People may be getting lost on your page (in the funnel). It is important that web layouts are easy to follow so that customers arrive on the website, receive the correct order of information and find themselves at the checkout/conversion point. If conversion is low, try a clearer, shorter site plan and layout.