

Why be creative on social media?

April 27 2015, by David Bradley

There are five motivators for creating novel content online, whether blog posts, shared news stories, images, photos, songs, videos or any of the other digital artifacts users of social media and social networking sites share endlessly. Research just published in the International Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising suggests that these five factors are: entertainment, self-expression, social-belonging, communication, and social-cognition.

Media and journalism experts Chang-Dae Ham of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Joonghwa Lee of the Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, USA, and advertising and public relations expert Hyung-Seok Lee of Hanyang University in Gyeonggi-do, Korea, have used the theory of uses and gratifications together with the theory of reasoned action to help them understand why members of the public, everyday consumers, create [social media](#) content and how motivational beliefs and subjective norms influence attitudes towards such creativity.

Social media and networks are defined as the collection of interactive technologies, including LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and many more or less familiar outlets, that allow internet users, both at the desktop or on mobile devices, to create, share and communicate content with other people, whether friends, family, work colleagues, acquaintances or members of the wider social networks as a whole. This concept arose from what is often referred to as the second generation of websites, the web 2.0, where interactivity, rather than passive viewing and reading, are critical to the success of the sites. Millions, if not billions, of people now

express themselves through their creative output on social media with wildly varying degrees of success and "reach".

Live internet statistics reveal that the number of [internet users](#) continues to rise, it is currently estimated at well over 3 billion, almost half the global population; with almost half of those being active members of Facebook. Those users are sending tens of billions of emails each day, viewing or working on more than a billion websites, doing billions of online searches, writing hundreds of thousands and sometimes millions of blog posts each day, sending hundreds of millions of tweets, creating and viewing millions of YouTube and Vine video clips, Instagram photos and Tumblr posts.

The team suggests that the five significant motivations they found among creative users are similar to those seen previously among those using the Internet more passively, but with social-cognition being a particular motivator of interest. Within this online incentive, users share information, share their point of view, voice their opinions, provide information, present their special interests and participate in topical discussions.

"The findings of this study would help future studies to build a more comprehensive theoretical model, which will allow scholars to understand the factors influencing consumers' creating behavior of social media content," the team concludes.

More information: 'Understanding consumers' creating behavior in social media: an application of uses and gratifications and the theory of reasoned action', *Int. J. Internet Marketing and Advertising*, Vol. 8, No. 4, pp.241–263. www.inderscience.com/info/inarticle.php?articid=67652

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