Shedding Light on Ireland’s online content sharing habits
October 2017
Vicky Shekleton, Insights Manager
01 SOCIAL USAGE
02 SHARING CONTENT
03 CONTENT TYPES
04 HOW WORD OF MOUTH TRAVELS
05 INSIGHTS & RECOMMENDATIONS
‘Dark Social’ is a term coined by Alexis C. Madrigal, senior editor at The Atlantic, to describe the sharing of content that occurs outside of what can be measured by web analytics programmes. This mostly occurs when a link is sent via online chat or email, rather than shared over a social media platform, from which referrals can be measured.

Source: Techopedia
This study consisted of a quantitative online survey, with fieldwork carried out in summer 2017 via research partner iReach.

We spoke to a nationally representative sample (based on demographics and region) of 1,281 Irish adults aged 16+.

We partnered with RadiumOne, the sharing analytics specialists, on this research.
Social Habits
87% of Irish people use social media, with 77% using it daily

Social media usage continues to skew younger, with 88% of 16-34s use social media daily, compared to 71% of 35-54s and 66% of 55+.

Social media is female skewed with 8% more females (80%) than males (72%) using social media daily.

Q: How often do you use social media? (Single Select  n=1,281)

Source: MediaCom & RadiumOne, Dark Social study, Summer 2017
Email, Facebook and Texts are the top communication platforms

Facebook is used more frequently by younger respondents - 40% of 16-34s used it 5+ times per day, compared to 22% of those aged 55+.

Email is most frequently used by 35-54s, with 38% using 5+ times per day compared to 23% of 16-34s and 28% of 55+. Of course, some of this can be accounted for by work emails.

WhatsApp and Instagram are most heavily used by younger consumers. 34% of 16-34s use Whatsapp 5+ times per day, compared to 18% of 35-54s and just 9% of 55+. WhatsApp is used more frequently than Facebook Messenger.

Q: How often have you used the following in the last 12 months? (Single Select n=1,281)

Source: MediaCom & RadiumOne, Dark Social study, Summer 2017
Sharing Content
Four out of the top 5 platforms for sharing online content are private channels

Young people (16-34s) are most likely to share things they’ve seen online on every platform, with the exception of email and text/iMessage.

On these longer-established platforms, those aged 55+ are more likely than other age cohorts to share online content. 75% share via email and 57% via text. The indication here is that older consumers place greater trust in these platforms.

Q: How often do you share or send things you’ve seen online, such as articles or images, via the following platforms?

Source: MediaCom & RadiumOne, Dark Social study, Summer 2017
Privacy concerns are highest for 55+ at 74% compared to 53% for 16-34s.

29% of social-media users share content privately because it’s for entertainment/a laugh. This rises to 42% of 16-34s compared to just 10% of 55+ and 35% of 35-54s. This shows how important humorous content is for engaging young people.

While a small percentage, young people (11%) are also twice as likely at 35-54s (5%) to make fun of someone or something privately and 4x more likely than 55+ (3%).

Q: Why have you shared articles or images via private messaging? N=1,063

Source: MediaCom & RadiumOne, Dark Social study, Summer 2017
The smaller the circle, the more people will reveal

Q: What type of content do you share publicly (via social media) and privately (via instant messenger)? N=1,086

Source: MediaCom & RadiumOne, Dark Social study, Summer 2017
Different verticals are aligned more with certain channels
This tracked, actual data from RadiumOne shows us how people are engaging and sharing content based on category.

**SHARING CHANNELS BY CONTENT CATEGORY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Dark Social</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Google Plus</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Pinterest</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Finance</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Drink</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies &amp; Interests</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Fitness</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pets</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology &amp; Computing</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family &amp; Parenting</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Entertainment</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home &amp; Garden</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RadiumOne, internal data, 2017
Note: The data comes from an analysis of the aggregate actions of a predefined universe of users who share content using RadiumOne’s sharing software. In Ireland this equates to just over 200k unique users.

77% of Irish consumers’ sharing of websites happens privately.
How word of mouth travels
Irish adults are 8% more likely to share content privately before purchasing (22% v 14% publicly). They are also more likely (+7%) to share content privately with their social circle after making a purchase (25% v 18% publicly).

Private sharing has more potential to generate peer to peer WOM, both before and after purchases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHARING CONTENT ON PURCHASES</th>
<th>Likely (Quite or Very)</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Unlikely (Quite or Very)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Privately - Before a purchase</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicly - Before a purchase</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privately - After a purchase</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicly - After a purchase</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: How likely are you to share content (e.g. information, article, image or review) about a product or service privately or publicly before or after a purchase?

Source: MediaCom & RadiumOne, Dark Social study, Summer 2017
Young people are more likely to share content publicly on social media, such as Facebook, after making a purchase. 23% of 16-34s do so compared to an average of 18%.

Young people are most likely to share content privately after making a purchase. 34% of 16-34s do so compared to an average of 25%.

Source: MediaCom & RadiumOne, Dark Social study, Summer 2017
SOCIAL MEDIA’S PURPOSE IN OUR LIVES HAS CHANGED AND WE MUST ADAPT TO THE NEW WORLD ORDER

A look back through old posts via Facebook’s ‘On this Day’ feature is a powerful reminder of how Facebook’s purpose in our lives has changed. While it is still a public sharing channel, it has primarily become a channel of mass reach and a one-stop-shop for new and video content.

Not all sharing happens on Facebook because not all posts need to be broadcast.

Increasing numbers of Irish people have adopted the likes of WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Snapchat etc to communicate and also share privately with friends.
So, what does this mean?

SOCIAL LISTENING CAN ONLY TELL US ONE PART OF THE STORY
Social listening and measurement tools allow us to analyse the online content that gained traction (sharing, engagement) on public social media sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

However, we must be mindful that up to 77% of Irish consumers’ sharing of website content happens privately, via Dark Social channels.

Social listening gives us one piece of the puzzle but doesn’t allow us to see what types of content drove conversation and engagement privately.
DIFFERENT CONTENT TYPES ARE SHARED IN DIFFERENT WAYS

Sounds obvious, but these differences can be used as a guide to show the relative importance of dark social sharing for different categories.

Personal finance online content is, according to RadiumOne’s own tracked data, exclusively shared via Dark Social and therefore the content available to be shared should be tailored to reflect this.

Similarly, some brands may wish to create content for both light (public) and dark channels. For example, the content a soft drinks brand may share on broadcast social media, like Facebook, is different to how the product might position itself on Snapchat or a dating app like Tinder, for example.

So, what does this mean?
Some easy places to start

- Test & learn
- Include referral tags (UTM codes or parameters) in all your own posting when using private sharing channels – typically copied and pasted links do not automatically include tracking tags in these channels (unless the shared link was copied with a tag included).
- Review the direct traffic to your website for links without UTM parameters
- Use shortened URLs for outbound links of your content.
- Prioritise social share buttons on your website.
- Link blog post titles to external content and webpages.
- Use ‘dark social’ tools or partners to track traffic origins and their outcomes.
Most sharing online is done in private channels (77%), and this is often misattributed.

The top communication platforms for sharing are e-mail, Facebook and texting so you need a strategy that extends beyond just Facebook.

Different audiences prefer the use of different platforms for sharing online content.

Context (time, group size, etc) shapes the content that is shared and what platform is used to share it. And understanding this from an Irish consumer perspective is important.
Thank You.

For further information, contact: Vicky.Shekleton@mediacom.com or Ian.mcgrath@mediacom.com