INTEGRATING SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS IN A WEB PORTAL

Daniela Santos and Winnie Picoto

ISEG School of Economics and Management, Portugal

Abstract

Benefitting from Web 2.0 features, Social Media allows organisations to be where the users are, creating proximity, talking to them, and knowing what they want. Going viral and word-of-mouth become easier, as these platforms allow us to share, to like, and to use multimedia and convergence – as they can interact with each other, communicating on a large scale. Given that online portals provide for a highly competitive environment, players strive to get more visits, better search rankings, and even aspire to be the homepage for the Web universe.

We discuss the integration of Social Media tools in a Web Portal, and explore how using these together may improve the competitiveness of a Web Portal. A large Web Portal was selected to develop this case study. We found that, although for this particular Web Portal conditions were created to accommodate and integrate the chosen Social Media platforms, this was done in an organic and fluid way, with great focus on community construction and less focus on absorptive capacity. Based on the findings of this case study, we propose a dynamic cycle of benefits for integrating Social Media tools in a Web Portal.

Key Words: Web 2.0, Social Media, Web Portal, integration, benefits.

Introduction

The digital environment enables organisations to know their customers and to develop a relationship with them, whilst reducing the cost of customer interaction. Web users play an active role in communication and are eager to use these new tools to share different kinds of content, opinions and experiences. Leveraged by a culture of collaboration, it is believed that media companies are transforming themselves into Web 2.0 enterprises, by evolving towards an open, interactive, multidimensional and participatory communication model (Flew, 2008). The challenge is to understand how the different social media tools are managed together to enhance Web Portal value.

In order to understand how web portals make use of these new tools, this paper aims to answering the following research questions: (i) How is the integration of Social Media tools carried out on the Portal? (ii) How does the Portal benefit from using these tools?

Based on a case study of a major European web portal, we analyse how different Social Media tools are integrated on the Portal and which benefits arise from this integration.

This paper is organised as follows: the literature review is presented next, followed by the methodology section and the case study. Finally the findings are presented and discussed.

Integrating Social Media Tools on a Web Portal

Web portals aim to develop a loyal base of users who visit the site often, and spend some time on it. Achieving a repeated use of the service is also a critical goal, as it allows for a better understanding of users, improved software design, updated information and offers new services according to users' preferences (Telang and Mukhopadhyay, 2005). Today, we are experiencing the decentralisation of information generation, which is part of the collaborative communication symbol of Web 2.0, where knowledge can be generated (Minol et al., 2007). In fact, this offers a number of advantages for new journalism. Besides the fact that the whole process has become more efficient and fast, the integration of media expands the repertoire of the journalist, and adds value to the communication process, thus empowering ways of publishing, sharing and organising information (Oliveira and Glanzmann, 2010; Canavilhas and Ivars-Nicolás, 2012).

Social Media refers to the online resources that people use to share all kinds of content, such as, for example: videos, photos, pictures, ideas, opinions and news (Drury, 2008). Social Media tools are essentially the following: blogging (Twitter, Blogger and Google Buzz), social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace),

podcasting and media sharing (YouTube, Flickr, iTunes, Instagram), forums and wikis (Wikipedia, Wiki-Care) and also social bookmarking (Digg, Del.icio.us).

Social Media tools have five characteristics in common (Mayfield, 2006): (i) participation of different users so that the distinction between consumers and the media becomes blurred; (ii) openness in terms of comments, feedback, voting or information sharing, with few barriers to access and usage of content; (iii) two-way communication of many-to-many; (iv) establishment and maintenance of communities through the sharing of content and information, and; (v) interrelationship between different social media tools (interoperability) and the combination of different types of websites, resources or people.

These features allow organisations to interact in these platforms in several ways, including through the participation in public social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn and Second Life) for information sharing, advertising, market research, recruitment and other activities; internal social networks for the exclusive use of employees and/or the development of an own social network for consumer and business partners; improvement of existing applications, by adding blogs, wikis and discussion forums, or by developing new tools and services to support social networking applications. All these Web 2.0 features provide a large spectrum of new and inexpensive opportunities for Internet-based companies (Lee et al. 2010; Rawat and Divekar, forthcoming). However, in order to achieve value through a Social Media tool, companies need to develop implementation strategies, taking into account mindful adoption, the building of a community and the absorptive capacity to recognise and explore the unstructured information that is created by their customers (Culnan et al., 2010).

Value creation is not derived from a platform itself, but instead, the way that organisations use it and integrate these new tools into their overall strategy enables value creation (Culnan et al., 2010). Social Media tools have the potential to generate additional value, as they allow the creation of online communities, which became a point of interest for companies, due to its popularity, such as in the case of Twitter or Facebook. Companies can generate value from communities where consumers participate on a regular basis, co-producing and sharing content and sharing power. If these relationships are successful, then consumers will develop a sense of belonging to the organisation and will help disseminate information about it, becoming more loyal to its products and services (Culnan et al., 2010). Being present on these platforms does not guarantee that consumers will be attracted to the organisation page, neither that they will be committed to it. The community is built upon the relationships that are established between the organisation and its clients. Organisations need a strategy to implement Social Media tools if they want to create value from being part of these communities - specifically because their participation is voluntary and communities result from the interactions between their members over time (Culnan et al., 2010, Lee et al. 2010).

In the context of Social Media, each time a person uses an application from the organisation, the organisation gains more exposure to the public. Being more exposed improves and strengthens brand associations in consumers' minds and it is in this context, that "awareness" is a key factor in the objectives of Social Media (Hoffman and Fodor, 2010). In fact, Social Media Marketing is mainly about building a relationship and a dialogue with an audience, where the message is changed by the exchange of insights and ideas among participants - engagement (Eikelmann et al., 2008).

Social Media in the concept of word-of-mouth (WOM) circumvents traditional marketing, by allowing individuals to talk directly with each other about their interests and purchasing preferences and companies, should try to join these conversations (Eikelmann et al. 2008). The interaction with the user triggers new needs and changes the purchasing attitudes amplifying the brand message and serving as positive indicators of their presence.

Benefits of integrating Social Media tools in a Web Portal

Benefits are the advantages achieved by different individuals or groups as a result of reaching their goals or objectives. When benefits are identified, two more sources of information are needed in order to achieve them: how to measure them and know who "benefits" from them (Daniel et al. 2008).

Social Media have expanded the potential for spreading information to audiences, reaching them through different platforms (Castillo et al., forthcoming), thus allowing businesses to pass the message directly on to their target markets, or a specific segment. Moreover, these platforms have been also facilitating the access to the means of production and the dissemination of content (Drury, 2008), with a much lower cost when compared to traditional media (Constantinides and Fountain, 2008). In fact, they are a way of facilitating the dissemination of viral videos and messages (Constantinides and Fountain, 2008) which increases brand exposure and the "awareness" and thoughtfulness about the company's products by consumers (Bughin et al., 2009). This exposure allows a much faster time to market, providing instant responses and dialogue, during which it is the participant who defines the immediacy of participation (Carrera, 2011).

The use of Social Media tools enables closer ties with consumers, by creating engagement through dialogue, sharing of experiences, interaction and one-to-one contact (Bughin et al., 2009; Culnan et al., 2010). This approach enables companies to collect information about their consumers (Wang et al., 2012): to know what they think about their products and their brand (Mayfield, 2006; Eikelmann et al., 2008; Constantinides and Fountain, 2008), and thus attract as greater audience (Wang et al., 2012; Castillo et al., forthcoming); and to facilitate consumer participation in the creation or improvement of products and services (Constantinides and Fountain, 2008), thus shortening the development cycle of products (Eikelmann et al., 2008).

Through the use of Social Media, companies can also reach the new online leaders of opinion formation (bloggers, podcasters, etc...), informing them about their products, services and new market offerings (Constantinides and Fountain, 2008). These benefits can be measured through visits to the website, content views, subscribers, more references to the company in Social Media platforms, top rankings in search engines, and more genuine interactions with consumers (Barefoot and Szabo, 2010; Castillo et al., forthcoming). The potential benefits achieved by companies using Social Media tools are summarised in Table 1.

Potential Benefits	*References*
Enhances the potential for reaching an audience	Dury (2008), Wang et al. (2012), Castillo et al. (forthcoming)
Facilitates the access to content means of production and dissemination	Dury (2008)
Facilitates the dissemination of videos and viral messages (WOM)	Constantinides and Fountain (2008)
Increases awareness and customer care	Bughin et al. (2009)
Allows a faster access to consumers - creating instantaneous dialogue	Carrera (2011)
Allows the strengthening of ties with consumers – engagement creation	Buhin et al. (2009), Culnan et al. (2010), Barefoot and Szabo (2010)
Enhances the creation of communities	Culnan et al. (2010)
Allows the company to know what users think about their brand	Constantinides and Fountain (2008), Eikelmann et al. (2008), Wang et al., (2012)
Facilitates the participation of consumers in product development	Constantinides and Fountain (2008)
Allows the company to shorten the product development cycle	Eikelmann et al. (2008)
Enables the reduction of marketing and communication costs	Constantinides and Fountain (2008)

Table 1 - Potential benefits of Social Media tools

The benefits listed above can explain why marketing through Social Media tools can be powerful, quick and effective (Castillo et al., forthcoming).

Methodology

This paper conducts a case study research. A case study is appropriate in this case, as this paper proposes "how" or "why" research questions, where researchers have little control over events and the temporal focus is on a contemporary phenomenon (Yin, 2003). This research is exploratory, as it aims to identify or discover important variables in contexts that have only recently been more intensively studied (Yin,

2003). The purpose of this paper is to understand how social media tools are integrated in a Web Portal, and how companies benefit from using such tools.

We conducted a single case study of a contemporary Web Portal called "Portal S", which is a large European online Portal. As there is no physical point of contact with customers, customers only interact with the company virtually. The following unique characteristics make Portal S an important case to be studied: (i) its size; (ii) the fact that it is composed of several channels and differentiated services, and; (iii) as it is an aggregator of content and links, without exploiting the potential of Web 2.0 and Social Media, there is not much interaction between the user and the service provider.

Data was collected through direct observation from the Facebook account of Portal S, company documents, and three face-to-face interviews which were conducted between July and August of 2012, based on a script. Each interview lasted an average of one hour and fifteen minutes, and they were recorded and later fully transcribed, coded and validated. For the validity of the data collection triangulation was used of the listed sources: interviews, documents from the organization, and direct observation.

The purpose of the interviews was to understand how the integration of Social Media tools in the Portal is carried out, obtaining an overview of the entire process of the Social Media adoption in terms of the choice of tools, the goals set, their management, expected benefits and measurement, and the monitoring and control of these benefits. The interviewees were organisational key informants who are responsible for each of the main Social Media platforms used by Portal S. We therefore conducted interviews with the following: the person responsible for Community Services (ASC), as she is directly related to the management of one of the Portal S accounts on Twitter (Radar); the head of Social Media (SM), who is responsible for the Facebook and Google+ Portal S accounts, and; the head of the Blogs Platform (PB) of Portal S, which manages the Portal S blogs' platform and its official blog. Among Portal S personnel, these key informants were the ones with a high level of knowledge about the integration of each Social Media tool on the Portal.

The Case Study

"Portal S" is a large Web Portal and is a supplier of products and services for the internet. In addition to Portugal, the Portal is also present in other countries, namely: Cape Verde, Angola, Mozambique and Timor. There is no physical point of contact with customers, who only interact with the company virtually. This Portal was selected given its size, the fact that it is composed of several channels and differentiated services, and that it is overall an aggregator of content and links. Without exploiting the potential of Web 2.0 and Social Media, there is only a limited interaction between the user and the service provider.

Portal S was founded as a directory and a portal service, containing hyperlinks to companies' webpages. Right at the start, due to the sudden growth of the amount of

information available on the Internet, it started using its own software. Today, Portal S includes a Homepage, horizontal and vertical channels, and a set of functionalities which reflect the overall organisation. Portal S has about 300 employees, and has a very strong technological base which is well rooted in its employees. Portal S presents itself to the world as a Homepage that brings together content from diverse sources, has several internal channels (e.g. cinema, fame, kids, woman, healthcare, music, sports, news, among others) and offers a large array of services (e.g. blogs, email, photos, maps, videos and vouchers).

As there is a wide range of Social Media tools that are being used within the Portal, the present study examines the Blog Platform and its official blog, the official account of Portal S on Facebook, the Portal S account on Twitter, and the account of Radar on Twitter (this account selects the tweets to be highlighted in the Homepage). In Figure 1, the diagram of Portal S Social Media shows how different channels integrate the several Social Media tools together, and how these tools are linked.
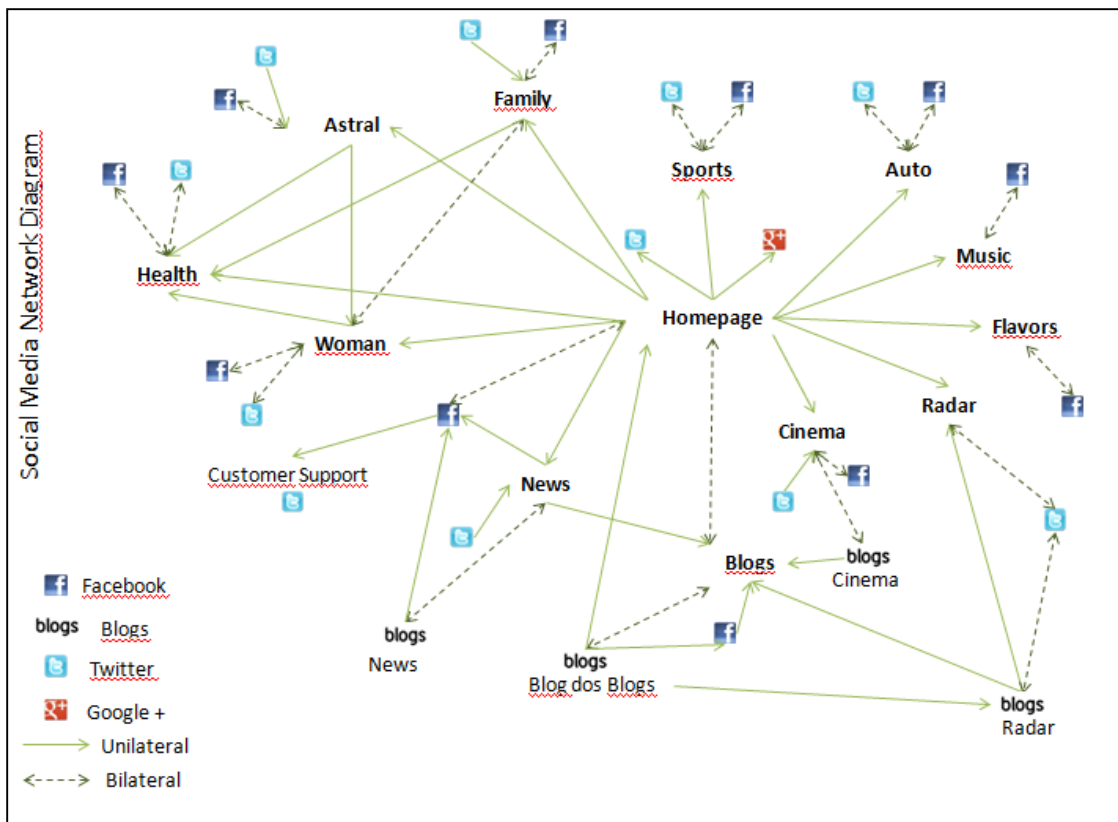

Figure 1 - Portal S' Social Media network diagram

How Social Media is managed in Portal S

Portal S's technological component is very strong and well rooted. However, the adoption of Social Media tools and their inclusion in day-to-day employee life are not being systematically planned. The organisation has strategic guidelines to empower its employees, allowing them to decide and to manage each service or channel and to adopt Social Media tools autonomously. The portal's presence in Social Media has three main objectives: 1) it is a means for publicising the portal; 2) it delivers content and services generated by the portal, and; 3) it creates engagement.

Weekly reports are made with a qualitative assessment of the type of users' comments about Portal S's Social Media tools, with a hyperlink to that content. Each employee is responsible for answering comments about the company. If an employee finds a comment mentioning the organisation (there are online alerts for whenever a reference is made about the brand), they forward the comment to the appropriate product or service manager. Furthermore, the person responsible for the Community Services explained that if an employee notices a "post that referred to Portal S, then they should read the comments. If it makes sense, the employee should leave a comment identifying themselves as a Portal S employee, and then offer help if required, leaving a public e-mail address". This interaction with users aims at ensuring users' satisfaction, as they are reassured that someone is there to answer them, and to take care of their requests.

Although there is a "Guide to Social Media activity" which intends to provide employees with some guidelines about how they should behave in terms of Social Media when representing the organisation, this document does not standardise their management, neither does it ensure a proper use of several social media accounts which are being created in an independent and unplanned manner within the Portal.

The unstructured or unplanned way by which Portal S adopted these platforms also raises some issues, i.e. because there isn't a clear and well defined strategy for Portal S about Social Media tools, examples being: there is no common way of acting and, furthermore, some link buttons are missing in four channels to its Social Media tool; even though it is still active, the Portal S News account on Twitter has not been updated; some Facebook accounts are not updated on a daily basis, as one would expect. The overall lack of guidance leads to major faults for example, too many people manage these Social Media tools (more than one are allocated for each channel), leading to an incoherent presence of the brand in Social Media.

Portal S has adopted blogs, Google+, Facebook and Twitter. Similar to the blogging platform developed internally, there are also platforms for videos and photo sharing. However, as these platforms are not intensively used by individuals, but rather by

their business partners, given the strong competition from similar products (such as YouTube or even Facebook), these are not covered in this study.

Table 2 presents the key performance indicators from the Facebook and Twitter accounts represented in the diagram of Figure 1. The left hand side of the table shows the Facebook data regarding the number of people who talk about the channel (an indicator of users interest about published contents), the number of likes (an indicator of the channel's popularity), and the most representative age group. The right hand side of the table shows the Twitter data about the number of tweets (interactivity indicator), of followers (an indicator of the channel's popularity), and of followed (which may reveal interest in monitoring users in order to select content to highlight or resolve service problems).

	FACEBOOK			*TWITTER*		
	People talking about	Likes	Age	Tweets	Followers	Followed
Radar				9,474	2,514	590
Portal S	1,326	61,337	18-24	2,559	6.637	32
Astral	211	26,849	18-34	9,519	513	24
Auto	119	9,678	18-24	2,358	283	20
Blogs	9	1,668	25-34			
Cinema	71	4,906	18-34	3,441	1.944	23
Sports	1,267	18,040	18-34	11,099	829	4
Family	40	2,252	25-34	4,901	580	24
Woman	109	9,135	25-34	5,587	1.871	28
Music	126	6,216	25-34			
News				13,535	1,195	2
Flavors	501	12,935	25-34			
Health	143	2,893	25-44	2,740	4.120	25
Customer Support				758	660	340

Source: Facebook and Twitter – Data collected in 2012 September 8th, 2012

Table 2 - Facebook and Twitter data

According to the data presented in Table 2, the Portal S account at Facebook is the most popular among the Portal domain, in term of likes and in terms of people talking about it. Among the channels, News, Sports, Astral and Radar channels are the ones with more tweets. Regarding the number of followers, the account of Portal S, Health and Radar are the ones with a better performance.

Achieving benefits through Social Media

We used a managerial approach of Social Media tools used by Portal S in order to understand how integration in the Portal is carried out and the benefits achieved. The Portal provides a service to users in the online medium, primarily with news aggregation, and it also presents a wide range of other services. The Homepage is the only means of contact with users. Figure 2 shows the dynamics of benefits achieved by Portal S's Social Media presence:
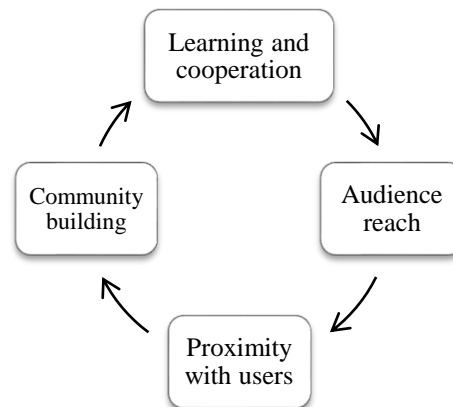

Figure 2 – Conceptualisation of the main benefits achieved by Portal S's presence on Social Media

Social Media tools allow companies to be present where users are, to increase exposure and to facilitate communication with the audience. In addition, they allow the company to reach different targets (in Portal S's case, the target is a younger people – from 18 to 35 years old, which is a major objective of the company). The awareness created by being where people are, eases two-way communication. On the company side, Portal S is aware of that which users are saying about the brand, as it can have immediate feedback on posts response rate, or can instantly know what the "hot topics" of the day are. On the user side, users have an easy contact with the brand (as Portal S has many "contact points", e.g. the main Homepage and channels pages, Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, etc.), and it can receive a fast response rate to questions, doubts or suggestions.

The portal characteristics are levered in Social Media, as it allows the dissemination of all types of multimedia contents, instantly, and with a great level of interactivity, as it allows comments, sharing and recommendations, and it can also use hyperlinks to the original contents. This is an environment that appeals to participation, two-way communication, the creation of communities and to connectivity between different sites and tools. In this environment, Portal S exploits the concept of "prosumers", i.e. users that have something to say and who are taken into account,

both for the development of new applications, and also for services improvement, and also for the choice of posts and tweets to be highlighted on the Homepage or to be used to identify the type of content users most appreciate on Portal S's Facebook account.

Portal S Social Media tools are essentially used for content sharing, which is why the development of support tools is extremely important – making available "share" and "like" buttons in every channel page for both Facebook and Twitter. These characteristics favour the concepts of viral effect and word-of-mouth (Kozinets et al., 2010). Besides its presence on Social Media tools, Portal S also benefits from good quality non-professional content (Oliveira and Glanzmann, 2010; Canavilhas and Ivars-Nicolás, 2012). For example, journalists no longer work in only one direction, as they are also aware of the community and its published contents, and they read posts and tweets and often highlight some of them on the Homepage, or when they have to pay attention to the news posted on Facebook or Google+ (two very distinct social networks).

Audience Reach

With the use of the Social Media tools, Portal S achieved a major goal, as it is present where users are - creating awareness, being closer to them and knowing them better. Their presence humanises the brand, because a team representing it is always available for them. This presence allows access to instant feedback and creates engagement.

Still today, it is one of the Portal S's co-founders who manages the brand's official Twitter account. This tool is as an interesting and strategic communication platform, which currently has more than 6,000 followers (see Table 2). Besides this institutional Twitter account, at the Portal S's Homepage, the tweets of users (for the Radar area) are also published and highlighted. Although initially the portal did not have an area for the tweets' highlights, it was decided to give this some visibility, after recognising the potential of this tool for the community. This was a big step in the integration of this tool in the portal, as Portal S has an enormous power in terms of disclosure, but has limited space in the face of competition from different partners and services. Additionally, a team in charge of monitoring this community selects the more relevant tweets. In this area, the criteria for the content selection ranges from just common sense (e.g. not posting tweets with offensive attacks, or those that have misspellings), through to more specific ones that have been refined over time (e.g. it no longer highlights tweets about football clubs, for example). The highlights are changed every two or three hours, depending on the community dynamics.

The adoption of an official blog from Portal S's Blogs was spontaneous. When the platform was created, this naturally arose as a form of privileged communication with users. The official blog is not just a way of providing information to users, as,

more importantly, it is a meeting point and a place to share information, such as news about the platform, scheduled maintenance activities and highlighted new blogs, amongst others. There are also challenges posed to the community and, in order to explore and stimulate this dynamic, the team behind the platform also asks users to help improve it.

Facebook is changing the communication paradigm. As such, people are increasingly using social networks to be informed, by subscribing different media in order to get news from different sources. Thus, Facebook, just like Portal S, works as a content aggregator. The main objective of Portal S's presence on Facebook is to complement the contents disclosure of the Portal by reaching different targets. According to the head of Social Media, Facebook's growth has been steady. Portal S has never carried out advertising campaigns, and its audience peaks are related to the popularity of events. According to the head of Social Media, on Facebook, reach is one of the most important measures. Another important measure is engagement with users, which the head of Social Media qualifies as being "clearly good".

Proximity

Engagement creation is one of the most important drivers for the use of these tools by Portal S. Establishing a dialogue and a relationship with users is very important for the brand, and this represents a competitive advantage which allows the organisation to be aware of what users are saying about the brand. Major objectives of Portal S include: response rate to user requests, availability to provide them what they want, and to be able to reward them.

According to the person responsible for Community Services, the team that manages Radar is not governed by measures. Twitter provides a set of indicators which are not considered to be representative. The major objective of this team is to continue to be available, to answer requests from users, and to select relevant entertainment contents.

Portal S's Blog Platform is one of the leading blog platforms in this European country. Although those features that Portal S's Blog Platform provides for its users are somewhat standard, the services provided differentiate it from its competitors. Users know that there a team is always available to answer them directly, making highlights of posts and even reading their blogs. That's why Portal S's Blogs chose a blog, "O Blog dos Blogs", as a privileged means of communicating with their users.

The highlights of user's blogs on the Homepage is carried out based on the relevance of the topic for that day - however contents are never entirely transcribed, and only a link is placed for the blog. The person responsible for Community Services explains that highlighting the posts on the Homepage serves to enrich and complement the news area. Posts do not replace news, but give a "human frame" to contents. Through all of this process of reading, selecting and highlighting, the blog

value should increase. The Homepage leads a lot of traffic for the highlighted blog, and readers appreciate the content written by someone who can is their peer.

Community Building

With regards to the Social Media tools used by Portal S, the main issue is "to be present", and "to know how to be present". This means that it is very important to be aware about users' movements and to be committed to answer their needs. The person responsible for the Community Services does not consider that there is, per se, a community of Portal S on Twitter, stating that "communities are not a sprint, but rather a marathon". Radar has a good number of followers, but this does not mean that there is a community, as there is no sense of belonging to something. Twitter is a large community, which is built on organic communities which join together around a common issue, but ultimately they dissipate. Those who follow do not have to be followed back.

Portal S's Blogs customer support is very direct. This support is evident in the highlights of some of the posts on the Homepage, as well as in the management tool "Inspira-me". Here, management tool questions are made to users, in order to encourage their creativity. Other relevant cooperation initiatives are also made over time. For example, the Blogs' team suggests that users should use specific tags in their contents. This allows the team to read all the tagged posts about a relevant topic and to highlight the most interesting. The head of the Blog Platform says that "blogs are not meant to be private diaries to be kept locked", and adds that "if users know that we have that option, and that there is a possibility of someone reading their blogs, then they will be grateful for it". The Blog's community is different from Twitter's, in the sense that there is a homogeneous group of people who participate and share the same interests about this specific platform. This community includes Portal S's Blogs visitors, the official blog visitors, and people interacting, discussing and participating. This is a community which, according to the head of Blog Platform, "was gradually built, encouraged and nurtured slowly, but very consistently". And this is the main advantage that arises from Portal S's Blogs, i.e. the chance to engage users in a way that big players cannot - the Blog's team uses the daily reading of blogs to highlight the best from the community and becomes familiar with each of them, and also answers all the comments left by users. The head of the Blog Platform acknowledges that this "is a very dynamic and participative community", and adds that "this is how we see that there is a community, because it criticises, asks more from us, suggests and participates". This dynamic has been stimulated since the beginning. Very often posts started with an "ask for help" by the team to users, as the development plan of features included the result of this collaboration.

Portal S's account on Facebook is very interactive. Sustainability is the watchword used to involve users. Once again, the head of Social Media acknowledges that consistency, reach and engagement are more important than the number of fans. On the Portal S's Facebook page, users are aware, feedback is clear, and people place

questions about specific articles or news. The team also must be aware, must post relevant content and must answer whenever questions are raised. The head of Social Media adds that "this is a real community and not just a figure".

Learning and cooperation

Social Media tools enhance cooperation for the development of new services and features (the perpetual beta) and, as in the case of the Blog Platform, for example, it gives an opportunity for renewing a custom blog (if users request this kind of help to the team). It also allows users to choose posts or tweets to be highlighted on the Homepage, and to be able to determine the content posted on Facebook. Depending on the whole dynamic of "share", "like" and comments left by users, corroborating Rosales (2006) and Hartley's (2007) study, Portal S learns its users' tastes – the prosumers – and goes towards their interests. Once again, this strong dynamic of two-way interaction strengthens the engagement between the brand and users, and promotes the creation of communities (Culnan et al., 2010).

Another important advantage is to access the user contents - their posts and tweets. Portal S has at its disposal, almost instantaneously, several fresh, interesting, and intelligent contents which, along with news, enrich the Homepage. From the users' perspective, the space that the Homepage offers to these contents is the recognition of the value of these communities for its organisation and the users. Furthermore, it provides great exposure and visibility.

Besides posting news, the use of applications on Facebook is also very positive. In the case of the Blog Platform, the sharing on Facebook (connectivity) allows it to reach a larger audience and to benefit from viral effects. The viral effect of this platform is a great benefit to Portal S, as it leverages the reach of the audience and forwards traffic to the different channels, as shown in Figure 3.

Source: Netscope

Figure 3 – Traffic sent to the Portal S channels from Facebook during the 1ˢᵗ Semesters of 2011 and 2012

To illustrate the importance of each different Social Media tool, the person responsible for the Community Services says, "I know through Twitter that an earthquake is happening right now, and on blogs I can read more technical information, such as, for example, about the epicentre, its impact, and the affected area. Later, on Facebook, I can see photos of the catastrophe". "Twitter gives me very fresh information, which is not yet available on the media".

The head of the Blog Platform stated that "Currently Facebook is where people spend most of their time, that is why we have to find a way to make Facebook users go and see Portal S's blogs, and our users' posts". This presence, through an official Facebook's account, is not intended to stand out from the presence in the official blog. On Facebook, the level of interaction is lower than on the official blog, as there are fewer subscribers, as shown in Table 2. The platform's presence on Facebook is intended to be able to take advantage of those applications and tools that leverage sharing and multimediality. Therefore, any user can increase the visibility of their blog by sharing it with their Facebook friends. Being on Facebook and using its apps has doubled the traffic coming from Facebook to the site of the Blog Platform - from 1,043,840 visits in the first half of 2011, to 2,099,593 visits in the same period of 2012.

In the Radar's account on Twitter, there are high levels of interaction, as it has about 9,500 tweets and 2,500 followers (see Table 2). There is a strong relationship amongst users, as they are "rewarded", with their tweets being displayed on the Portal. Tweets' selection, which has a large component of communication. Every time a highlight is made, a re-tweet is done (the original tweet is shared, keeping the credit for authorship) and the author is informed on Radar.

The Blog's team is aware about what is said about the Blog's platform and about how the team could improve it. The head of Blog Platform argues that they "do not expect people to come and tell us things. We encourage them to come to us and top give us suggestions", and "even at content level, such as with the 'Inspira-me' tool, we know that one of the major obstacles to publishing posts is the lack of inspiration". According to the head of the Blog Platform, "our approach is more proactive, and we try to let our users know that our official blog is a meeting point for the Blog's team and other users (…) we cannot change opinions by just reading them, we must be proactive".

On Facebook, answers to users are made as comments, asking them to send their data in a private message, if appropriate, so that the problem can be taken care of. With regards to news, the head of Social Media states that in many situations, users warned Portal S about what was happening in a particular place, in order that Portal S could get the news first. However, Portal S does not allow the posting of photos or videos by its users on its mural. When appropriate, Portal S asks users to send a

private message with the detailed information. The head of Social Media believes that is very important to know what the brand represents, in order to avoid standard answers.

Discussion

We used a managerial approach to the Social Media tools used by Portal S, in order to understand how integration in Portal is carried out and to examine the benefits achieved. Firstly, we found out that the Portal fits with the characteristics presented by Flores-Vivar & Aguado (2005) and Rodríguez-Martínez et al. (2010). The Portal provides a service to users in online medium, primarily with news aggregation and it also presents a wide range of services (Telang and Mukhopadhyay, 2005). The Homepage was the only means of contact with users.

The Portal characteristics are levered in Social Media, as this allows for the instant dissemination of all types of multimedia contents, with a large degree of interactivity, as it allows comments, sharing, and recommendations, and in can also use hyperlinks to the original contents. This is an environment which encourages participation, two-way communication, the creation of communities and connectivity between different sites and tools. In this environment, Portal S exploits the concept of "prosumers". Users have something to say and are they are taken into account both for the development of new applications, and also for the improvement of services, and also for the choice of posts and tweets to be highlighted on the Homepage, or to identify the type of content users most appreciated on Portal S's Facebook account.

As stated by Turban et al. (2011), when they explain how organisations interact with Social Media tools, it is evident that Portal S uses them essentially for content sharing, and for the development of support tools – making available "share" and "like" buttons for both Facebook and Twitter. These characteristics favour the concepts of viral effect and word-of-mouth that are referred to by Kozinets et al. (2010). Besides its presence on Social Media tools, Portal S also benefits from amateur contents with a good standard of quality (Oliveira and Glanzmann, 2010; Canavilhas and Ivars-Nicolás, 2012).

For example, journalists no longer works only in one direction, but are now also aware of the community and its published contents. This becomes evident when journalists read posts and tweets and very often highlight some of them on the Homepage, or when they pay attention to the news posted on Facebook or Google+ (two very distinct social networks).

Although the use of these platforms has arisen spontaneously, Portal S's presence on the studied channels has gradually improved. It appears that Portal S followed implementation strategies (in an unplanned and organic way) based on thoughtful

adoption, community building and absorptive capacity, as defined by Culnan et al. (2010) - which are summarised in Table 3.

At the other hand, the unstructured or unplanned way by which Portal S adopted these platforms has also had some faults, e.g.: there is no clear and well-defined strategy for Portal S on Social Media tools, there is no common way of acting, and; as can be seen in Table 3, there is no link button in four channels of its Social Media tool. Furthermore, even though it is still active, Portal S's News account on Twitter has not been updated.

Portal S's Social Media	
Platforms	Twitter (7), Facebook (11), Blog (4), Google+ (1) – special pages and pages from Portal S's teams are excluded
Primary applications	To share contents and services, and to be another place to meet users
Governance approach	Decentralised and organised by product
Accessibility	In each channel there is a button linking to the used tool. However, Twitter's access is not present in four channels: Astral, Cinema, Family and News
Risk management	There is a "Guide to Social Media activity", which guides how employees should behave in terms of Social Media, but there is no specific policy to guide the strategic presence of Portal S's channels on Social Media
Community Building	
Critical mass	Twitter: from 282 followers (Auto) to 6,637 followers (Portal S account); Facebook: from 1,668 fans (Blogs) to 61,337 fans (Portal S account)
Content creation	Updated by the manager in charge. Only comments are allowed for users
Absorptive Capacity	
Evidence from is monitoring sites	All comments are answered; any clarification requested is forwarded to the appropriate service
Rules for message processing	All the answers are left publicly near the comments. For matters which require sensitive user data, uses are asked to write a private message. There is a central monitoring which controls what is said about the brand

Table 3 – Portal S's Social Media

Concluding Remarks

This paper aims to answer two research questions: "How is the integration of Social Media platforms in a Portal carried out?", and, "How does the Portal benefit from the use of these platforms?"

To answer the first question, technical adjustments were made to incorporate these Social Media tools in the websites of the different channels. Some applications have been developed and hyperlinks to the Social Media tools accounts were added to the

Portal. Teams were created in order to enhance customer service, and are fully available to users, encouraging and exploring the dynamics of cooperation and community.

These platforms are already part of the routine of managers and journalists. On the Radar's Twitter account, the triage of tweets is done several times a day, and there is a great interactivity between users and the team; in the case of the Blog Platform, there a team is also available to users, which continually improves the platform (either with new templates, or with new features), and it always answers users' comments and it often publishes on the official blog; in Portal S's account on Facebook, a dedicated team is attentive to its community - sharing contents, depending on their relevance to users. The integration of these platforms also includes the allocation of featured spaces on the Homepage.

With regards to the second research question, most of the benefits described above were achieved by Portal S as a result of the effort, resources and dedication paid to users, and also by meeting their needs. This interaction was not based on the amount of information or content left on these platforms, but rather it was made based on the quality and relevance of this interaction. In the case of Twitter, the dynamics inherent to the choice of tweets and the acknowledgement to the correspondent author of the highlight on the Homepage allow users to be aware and willing to follow, and be followed, by the account of Radar, thus creating awareness of the existence of the brand on Twitter. On the Blog Platform, all the attention is devoted to the community, improvements are made and new applications are developed to meet users' requests, with timely answers a dynamic process for choosing a tweet, which also contributes to the achievement of these benefits. This also happens in the case of Facebook. Great attention is given to the community – and to measures – in order to understand users' tastes and to offer them a selection of the most appropriate content. Besides paying attention to users, replying to comments posted on the wall of Portal S's account is also one of the factors that leads to achieving benefits on these social networks.

The limitations of this article are those inherent to a single case study, as defined by Lee (1989), i.e.: (i) to make controlled observations, (ii) to make controlled deductions, (iii) to be replicable, and (iv) to allow generalisation.

For future research, and in parallel with this study, it would be important to examine the management of these platforms by the various Portal S channels, and also to compare this with other companies, both in the same sector of activity, and also with companies that belong to the same group as Portal S. Knowing the perception of users about the presence of Portal S on Social Media platforms (what has changed about the perceived value of the brand, what was improved, or what adds value to the brand), would also enrich and complement this paper.

References

Barefoot, D. & Szabo, J. (2010). *Friends with Benefits*: A Social Media Marketing Handbook. 1.ª edition. William Pollock.

Bughin, J., Chui, M., & Miller, A. (2009). How companies are benefiting from Web 2.0. *The McKinsey Quarterly*, 1-9.

Canavilhas, J., & Ivars-Nicolás, B. (2012). Uso y credibilidad de fuentes periodísticas 2.0 en Portugl y España. *El Profesional de la Informacion*, 21 (1), 63-69.

Carrera, F. (2011). Networking – *Guia de sobrevivência profissional*. 2.ª edição. Lisboa: Edições Sílabo, 2011. ISBN: 978-972-618-639-7

Castillo, C., El-Haddad, M., Pfeffer, J., & Stempeck, M. (Forthcoming). Characterizing the Life Cycle of Online News Stories Using Social Media Reactions. CSCW 2014 edition, *Filter Bubbles & News*, 211-223

Constantinides, E., & Fountain, S. J. (2008). Web 2.0: Conceptual foundations and marketing issues. *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice*, 9(3), 231-244. doi:10.1057/palgrave.dddmp.4350098

Culnan, M. J., Mchugh, P. J., & Zubillaga, J. I. (2010). How Large U.S. Companies Can Use Twitter and Other Social Media to Gain Business Value. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, 9(4), 243-260.

Daniel, E., Peppard, J., & Ward, J. (2008). Building Better Business Cases for IT Investments. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, 7(1), 67-78.

Drury, G. (2008). Opinion piece: Social media: Should marketers engage and how can it be done effectively? *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice*, 9(3), 274-277. doi:10.1057/palgrave.dddmp.4350096

Eikelmann, S., Hajj, J., & Peterson, M. (2008). Opinion piece: Web 2.0: Profiting from the threat. *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice*, 9(3), 293-295. doi:10.1057/palgrave.dddmp.4350094

Flew, T. (2008). Communication for the 21st century: or, how to have your blog and read it too! First Monday.

Hartley, J. (2007). Journalism as a Human Right: The Cultural approach to journalism. *Global Journalism Research*: Theories, Methods, Findings, Future (pp. 39-51). Brisbane: New York: Peter Lang Publishers.

Hoffman, D. L., & Fodor, M. (2010). Can You Measure the ROI of Your Social Media Marketing ? *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 52(1).

Kozinets, R. V., Valck, K. D., Wojnicki, A. C., & Wilner, S. J. S. (2010). Networked Narratives: Understanding Word-of-Mouth. *Journal of Marketing*, 74(March), 71-89.

Lariscy, R. W., Avery, E. J., Sweetser, K. D., & Howes, P. (2009). An examination of the role of online social media in journalists' source mix. *Public Relations Review*, 35(3), 314-316. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2009.05.008

Lee, A. S. (1989). A Scientific Methodology for MIS Case Studies. *MIS Quarterly*, 13(1), 33-50. doi:10.2307/248698

Lee, S. M., Kim, T., Noh, Y. & Lee, B. (2010). Success factors of platforms leadership in web 2.0 service business. *Service Business* (4), 89-103

Mayfield, A. (2006). *What is Social Media*? An e-book from Spannerworks.

Minol, K., Spelsberg, G., Schulte, E., & Morris, N. (2007). Portals, blogs and co.: the role of the Internet as a medium of science communication. *Biotchnol*. J. 2007, 2, 1129-1140.

Oliveira, C. F., & Glanzmann, J. H. (2010). Jornalismo na era da Web 2.0. *CES Revista*, 24, 97-114.

Rawat, S., & Divekar, R., (Forthcoming). Developing a Social Media Presence Strategy for an E-Commerce Business. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 11 (2014 edition), 626-634.

Rodríguez-Martínez, R., Codina, L., & Pedraza-Jiménez, R. (2010). Cibermedios y web 2.0: modelo de análisis y resultados de aplicación. *El Profesional de la Informacion*, 19 (1), 35-44. doi:10.3145/epi.2010.ene.05

Telang, R., & Mukhopadhyay, T. (2005). Drivers of Web portal use. Electronic Commerce Research and Applications, 4(1), 49-65. doi:10.1016/j.elerap.2004.10.004

Turban, E., Bolloju, N., & Liang, T.-P. (2011). Enterprise Social Networking: Opportunities, Adoption, and Risk Mitigation. *Journal of Organisational Computing and Electronic Commerce*, 21(3), 202-220. doi:10.1080/10919392.2011.590109

Wang, Y., Zeng, D., Zhu, B., Zheng, X., & Wang, F. (2012). Patterns of news dissemination through online news media: a case study in China. *Information System Frontiers*, 16(4), 557-570.

Yin, R. K. (2003). Case Study Research: Design and Methods (3rd edition). Sage Publications.