

# TWEENAGE CLICKS

## THE SOCIAL MEDIA LIVES OF TWEENS AND EARLY TEENS

### **Insight #2: Content which informs or entertains offers social currency to Tweens**

As stated in Insight #1, Tweens have a voracious appetite for viewing and sharing online content. We delved deeper to understand why this is and how it works.

#### **The sharer – why pass content on?**

A significant motivation for sharing content is receiving feedback from peers – an important source of validation for this young age group – so only content deemed to be ‘good’ will be passed on. Sharing the right content boosts a Tweens’ online social standing – arguably to an even greater degree than liking/joining Pages/Groups. It positions a Tween as cool and in the know, or even as helpful – some report altruistically sharing particular content with specific friends whom they know will benefit from it. But more than all of this, sharing good content is fun: it stimulates endless funny chat, both on- and offline; it amuses and fills the time.

“I do this a lot but usually with statuses, quiz results and application notifications and not as much with photos. I like doing this as people can know all about what I've been doing and how I am feeling.” (Female, 11 years old)

“Yes, I do look for funny stuff. I always look on YouTube and I have my own YouTube account where I upload my own videos and send the videos to friends. I normally add a funny video on to my Facebook profile so that all my friends can see it” (Male, 14 years old)

#### **The receiver – what impact does this have?**

Consistent with findings from other studies, we found peer influence to be hugely significant among 11-16 year olds. This applies to online content – friends were our Tweens’ most trusted sources for quality, likeable content and information – they have faith that if a friend thinks a piece of content is worth sharing, then it will be good.

“If a friend sends me a link I always look at it, as if they think it’s good I will too.” (Male, 14 years old)

“I would always click on a link that a friend had sent me.” (Male, 12 years old)

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This creates clear potential for brands to increase awareness and, importantly, credibility through the provision of shareable branded content. However, all this will only work if the content is right.

#### **The content – what makes content shareable?**

For Tweens, content must either inform or entertain; content which fails to meet these needs will simply be lost in the ether.

Informative content can inform the Tween about the brand – this could be details of special offers, sales or competitions, opinions or reviews of products, music etc.

But the brand or product doesn't have to be the subject matter. Tweens are generally accepting of news and information being delivered by brands rather than via conventional media channels like the BBC – provided it is a brand they trust. So for Tweens, brands needn't just provide news on themselves, they can increase their utility to Tweens by bringing news from other areas of interest. This creates a clear point of difference between Tweens and adults, who are suspicious and sceptical of 'branded' news.

“Red Bull do so much stuff that is right. There's always loads of stuff coming from them whereas some brands seem really slow and lazy. Friends will send me Red Bull snowboarding videos and if my friends like them I probably will too. I also joined the Red Bull Music Academy fan Page, because I love music and I'm really interested in their academy idea.” (Male, 15 years old)

Creating content that will entertain a Tween audience is a trickier task, as what is considered fun/humorous is highly subjective. However, our research has helped us identify some good starting points.

Tweens are avid consumers of videos on YouTube and other video sharing sites like break.com, so video content, particularly with music, works well. Our Tweens listed an array of entertaining content – from funny to cute to gross.



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“I like funny pop covers videos and those funny animal pictures you get, I always pass those on to my friends.” (Female, 13 years old)

“Funny videos on YouTube – things like Jackass, funny animals and funny music videos” (Female, 14 years old)

#### Taking content further

Providing content which either informs or entertains Tweens or, better still, does both, is the first and essential step to producing shareable content. However, in order to achieve standout, more can and should be done.

This age group is generally resistant to more traditional methods of advertising: it takes more effort to impress the typical Tween. They are at a highly exploratory stage in their life and love to experience new things, so brands that can facilitate this are likely to make more impact. The four Es of the new marketing model – emotions, experiences, engagement and exclusivity – work exceptionally well for a Tween audience and content that taps into some or all of these has a far higher chance of being passed on.

#### How much, how often?

Tweens spend a lot of time online. Most report spending from around half an hour to an incredible five hours a day on social networking sites alone, with girls spending slightly longer than boys. While much of this time is spent socialising, chatting etc, a significant proportion is spent consuming different forms of content. The Tweens we spoke to are expert multi-taskers, adept at quickly viewing and filtering the vast quantities of information they face as a result of having huge numbers of online friends, and joining a multitude of Pages and Groups. Thus, they are accustomed to consuming a great deal of content – an expectation that brands would do well to meet.

#### TOP TIPS FOR BRANDS:

- Make content easy to pass on – add the ‘Share’ button to branded content



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- Ensure content informs or entertains - explore what 'news' they're most interested in, make sure it is also relevant to the brand and invest in an ongoing programme of informative and entertaining content in this area
- Become a destination for finding out about a specific topic/theme; have an 'angle' to create a reason to be that destination
- Improve content further by following some or all of the four Es: emotions, experiences, engagement, exclusivity
- Always keep in mind the benefits that the Tween will reap from sharing your content – is it sufficiently funny / useful / cool to improve their social standing, OR simply be fun to share?
- Supply sufficient content – less is rarely more with Tween audiences