A NEW MEASURE OF READER ENGAGEMENT IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

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1. Introduction

Publishers have always been keen to understand how readers interact with their printed products and how to monetise engagement. But the publishing world is now in a state of transition as digital platforms provide new opportunities for growing audiences and for offering more engaging content and advertising.

In today's digital age, the rise of social networking also provides new avenues for gathering brand insight. With over two thirds of internet users having visited a social networking site and YouTube and Facebook users indicating that sharing ads and "liking" brands on Facebook increases affinity to those brands (Source: Ipsos MediaCT), understanding these brand conversations and relationships is becoming more and more important.

In this paper we describe a case study for the UK women's weekly magazine market in which we show how original analysis of social media activity can help to create a deeper and more involved relationship with audiences. As well as examining how the women's magazine sector is using social media to connect with its audiences, we will also be presenting new ways of analysing and presenting this insight. Specifically, we will look at:

- how both media brand engagement and behavioural engagement can help to develop a deeper understanding of overall engagement in the sector;
- how, in a sector that shows high substitutability, wide portfolio behaviour and low differentiation, social media can help to provide much needed competitive advantage;
- how to measure engagement on the two main social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter, including an evaluation of the level of engagement with brands on Facebook fan pages in the women's magazine sector;
- the relationship between the number of fans on Facebook and the level of engagement fans have with pages, to provide guidance on optimum frequency and types of contact on Facebook;
- how different audiences connect with the magazine brand on different social media platforms and how this can help to plan content and tone that media owners should adopt;
- the tone and themes of the conversations around the magazine and how this can help guide social media strategy; and
- the relationship between social media engagement and more traditional quality of reading measures.

We will reveal how this unique packaging of engagement metrics can benefit magazine publishers and also where it fits in sales and marketing strategies. We will also conclude on how data analytics is now finding its place firmly alongside survey research.

But first, let's take a step back and consider what we think we mean by engagement.

2. Defining and measuring engagement

Engagement has been a buzzword in the media world for many years, and although most agree that engagement is positive for media brands, there is little agreement about what it comprises. In 2006, the ARF endeavoured to come up with one all-encompassing definition that involved exposure, brand and context:

"*Turning on a prospect to a brand idea enhanced by the surrounding context*" ARF (2006)

It may be argued, however, that this does not translate very easily into something that can be measured in audience research. Typically, in readership surveys, engagement is measured through 'quality of reading' questions.

2.1. Quality of reading

Quality of reading measures on surveys provide media owners, advertising agencies and advertisers with information on the qualities of reading behaviour, which is a surrogate measure for advertising effectiveness. On the British National Readership Survey (NRS) there are currently three such measures: frequency of reading, time spent reading and source of copy (primary readers). But there are many more measures that are or have been used on readership surveys all over the world, for example number of pick-ups, whether the purchaser, proportion read, how disappointed to be without, etc. These types of questions, whether used individually or in combination, are considered as a proxy measure for reading intensity: the higher the intensity of exposure, the higher the quality of reader.

This has been a topic of interest at Readership Symposia all the way back to New Orleans in 1981. A quick look at the tremendously useful print and digital research forum website[1] and we know that there have been 67 papers for discussion on this subject before San Francisco 2011. One such paper from the UK on the Quality of Reading Survey (QRS)[2] describes a bespoke piece of research conducted in late 1997 to provide data on quality of reading for magazines and newspaper supplements, which was integrated into schedule planning systems. However, although there was second wave a couple of years later, such a detailed, dedicated face-to-face survey came with a relatively large price tag and there has been no apparent appetite and/or money to repeat the survey since.

This highlights some of the problems with measuring reader engagement. Industry currencies may not have the questionnaire space or the cross-industry consensus to ask the questions; and there may not be sufficient funds among publishers or agencies to pay for an additional survey.

Another issue to throw into the melting pot is one of defining engagement across platforms. Up to relatively recently, the focus has been on measuring engagement with the printed product. The arrival of digital platforms – PC, laptop, Smartphone, tablet – adds a layer of complexity when trying to define a uniform measure of engagement to the title, or shall we say the brand. This led Ipsos MediaCT in 2009 to develop a model to provide an overall score for media brand engagement that can be measured, compared and tracked over time, which we go on to look at below in section 2.2.

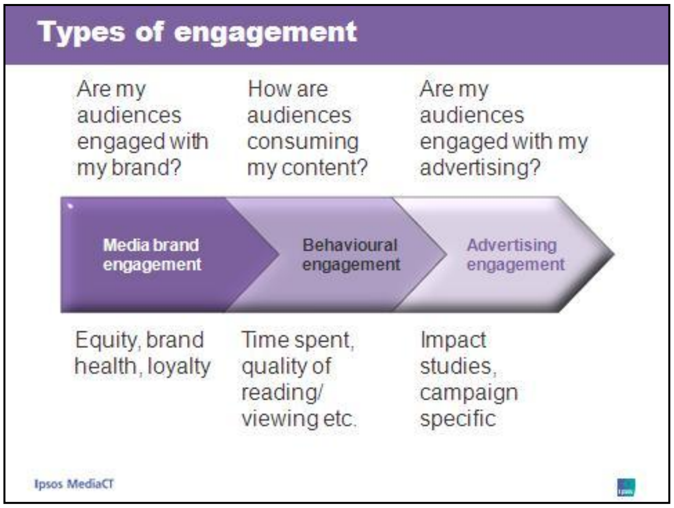
2.2. Different types of engagement

As discussed above, engagement has been defined in many different ways, with no real consensus reached as to how it should be measured. However, what there does seem to be agreement on is that there are different forms of engagement; brand engagement, behavioural engagement and advertising engagement, which have traditionally been measured in different ways (figure 1). Our research sought to examine the first two of these. Of course, demonstrating how brand and behavioural engagement lead to advertising engagement is the holy grail of engagement research. To do this requires a large research project evaluating a test campaign across test and control groups. While this is something we hope to address in the future, it is beyond the scope of this paper.

[1] http://www.printanddigitalresearchforum.com/

[2] Birt, Consterdine & Robinson, The Quality of Reading Survey – An instrument for change, WRRS 1999

Figure 1: Types of engagement



2.2.1. Measuring media brand engagement

Historically, across the market research community, brand equity models have been developed to understand brands that deliver products or services. These models are based on incorporating price perceptions and thresholds of products and services, as well as consumption measures, such as inertia and distribution. At Ipsos we have spent considerable time analysing how consumers relate to brands; since the inception of our bespoke Brand Equity model (Equity*Builder) in 1999, we have completed over 300 equity studies in the UK alone.[3]

However, although brand equity models built around fmcg brands work well in their sectors, our experience working with magazine brands has taught us that audiences have a different connection with these brands compared to fmcg brands. For example, the relationship is much more emotional and brand structure can be very different, with content available across a whole host of different contexts, including online and mobile, meaning that the response to the brand can be very different depending on level of access.

This led Ipsos MediaCT to develop a media specific brand equity model, utilising the foundation of Equity*Builder, but focusing on the level of engagement that audiences have with media brands, their consumption profile and measures of loyalty. In the development of our model, we conducted two pilot studies[4] in the UK and US. The UK study featured television channels and their online players; the US study focussed on the magazine category, again with both online and offline platforms.

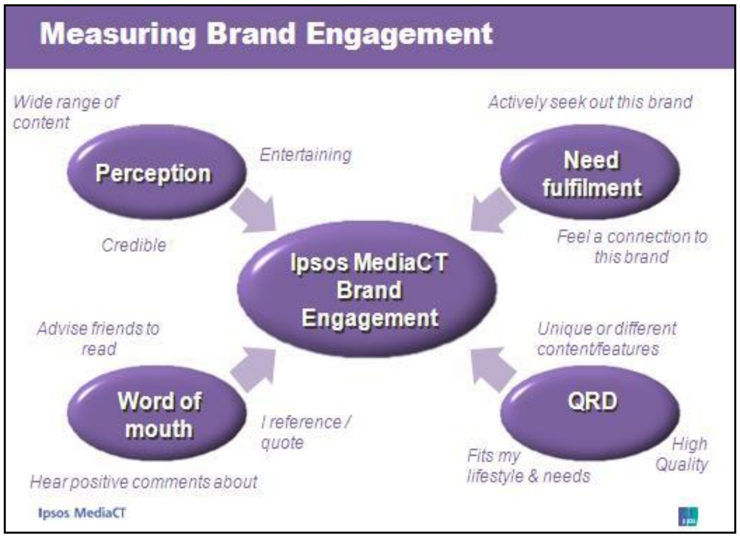
A driver analysis was then undertaken to identify which variables are most likely to contribute to success using the key measures we know determine these such as trust, satisfaction, recommendation and loyalty. The model was very clear in determining four key areas below that drive engagement with media brands, which are measured via 11 statements on a 10-point agree/disagree scale (see figure 2):

[3] The Equity*Builder model was developed from a very large piece of R&D work conducted by our Canadian office. McGill University in Montreal analysed this data, which included 400,000+ individual brand assessments across 350+ brands in 65+ categories. The R&D results were validated against Market Share and Profitability trends for the brands included in the study, and the model has since been re-benchmarked to ensure it remains in line with consumer behaviours and trends.

[4] The UK pilot interviews focused on Television Channels (BBC1, BBC2, ITV1, C4, Five, E4, Sky One) and Online Video (BBCPlayer, ITVPlayer, 4oD, DemandFive, SkyPlayer, YouTube and Daily Motion) . The US pilot interviews focussed on magazines and their online properties (Rolling Stone, Sports Illustrated, ESPN, Time, Better Homes, People and US). For each category, 500 interviews were conducted online in November 2009. Respondents were sampled and recruited from the Ipsos online access panels. Data was collected from November 2nd to 7th 2009. Results were weighted by Internet use and controlled for gender within age.

1. Word of Mouth
2. QRD (quality, relevance and differentiation)
3. Perception (credibility, entertainment, range)
4. Need fulfilment (emotional proximity, affinity)

Figure 2: Measuring brand engagement



These are then summarised into a single, composite index of engagement, by using a weighted average of the metrics based on importance.

Our model shows a strong correlation between our engagement score and important measures for today's media brands such as propensity to pay, trust and recommendation measures. The charts below show the relationship between the percentage of respondents that are highly engaged on the x axis and (a) the percentage highly satisfied with online video players (figure 3); (b) the percentage that would be likely to access content from online video brands at a reasonable price (figure 4) and (c) trust of magazines (figure 5). Data from the online video brands were collected in the UK and magazine brands in the US during November 2009.

Figure 3: Engagement and satisfaction

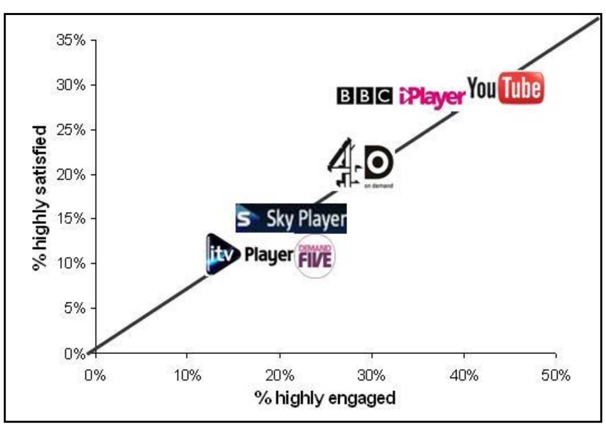


Figure 4: Engagement and propensity to pay for content

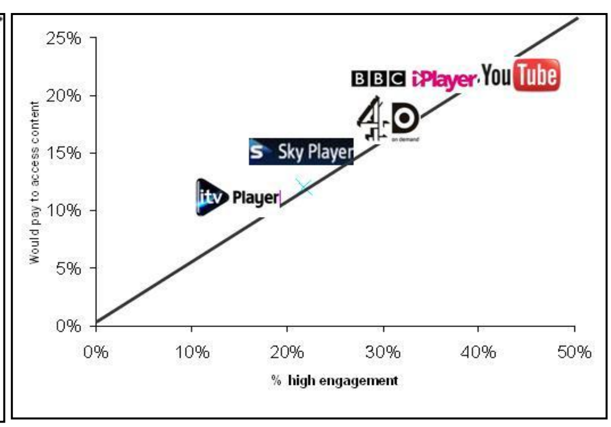
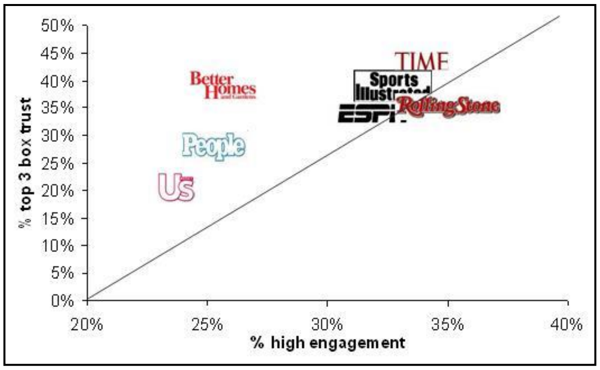


Figure 5: Relationship between engagement and trust



Our approach to understanding media brands has therefore been driven by primary data and was developed specifically for media brands. Our model takes into account the differences between media brands and those which have traditionally been used as the cornerstones of the brand equity model, whilst maintaining the tried and tested measures of equity, such as familiarity and relevance.

By understanding engagement with the magazine brands, we are able to provide an understanding of the overall equity of a brand before moving on to look at how audiences engage with the brand on a platform basis; that is through engagement with the physical, printed magazine and through social media engagement.

2.2.2. Measuring behavioural engagement

Our Media Brand Engagement model provides a solid understanding of the underlying equity or engagement with the overall media brand, however, behavioural engagement in terms of level of interaction with media brands is also important in understanding the relationship or engagement readers have with magazine brands. In today's digital world, we took the view that it is important to examine behavioural engagement with both the physical and digital product.

Starting with physical products, we analysed data from the NRS and adopted an aggregated approach. Specifically, we took a combination of audience size (average issue readership) and time spent reading.

As described earlier, the NRS reports on three quality of reading measures and publishers will typically select the measure that performs best for the publication concerned. We did consider creating a score that combined the data across time spent reading, percentage of primary readers and percentage of frequent readers, however, we felt that this may have added an unnecessary layer of complexity. Furthermore, there was also some overlap with our media brand engagement statements. Consequently, we opted for time spent reading as a suitable behavioural measure from the three available.

One criticism that is sometimes levelled at the time spent reading measure is that it may be skewed by pagination – in other words, the more pages a title has, then the longer the time spent reading; thereby becoming more a measure of effort than engagement! We have sought to temper any such effect by making an allowance for pagination and creating an average time per page score into our calculations. These results are described in more detail in section 3.2.

Moving on to digital engagement, given the natural 'fit' between social media and publisher brands with content and personality already defined and constantly refreshed, our analysis focuses on the two most popular social networking sites – Facebook and Twitter. We explored, but discounted, broader tools that examine buzz around the brand across the whole of the internet as it becomes difficult to gain a clean measure of engagement due to the amount of 'noise' that is generated through aggregation sites and other non-specific mentions of the brand.

Focussing on Facebook and Twitter, and working on the assumption that audience size in isolation would not necessarily provide the whole picture of engagement with the brand, we used a number of different social media analysis tools to explore a variety of metrics, covering fan base or follower number, level of interaction with the brand, amount of chat around the brand and reactions to different types of content. This resulted in large datasets for each brand that can easily be tracked over time. We came to the conclusion that, for our test magazine market, an aggregate measure of

a) audience size, that is number of fans of the official Facebook page and number of followers on Twitter, and
b) level of interaction, in the form of 'liking' or commenting on a post on Facebook or re-tweeting or referencing on Twitter

were the most appropriate measures that offered the best insight into level of engagement. The results from this new and previously unpublished work are provided in section 3.3.

3. Our test market: women's weekly magazines

Our test market is the women's weekly magazine sector in the UK. The decision to examine this sector rather than another was driven by a number of factors, including ensuring that we had a set of magazines that had:

a) sufficient sample to provide robust analysis from NRS quality of reading metrics, and
b) a social media presence big enough in terms of Facebook fan pages and Twitter follower bases to provide meaningful analysis.

On this basis, we selected 7 magazines that ranked highly across one or more of the metrics being used, i.e. NRS readers, Facebook fans or Twitter followers – Closer, Grazia, Heat, Hello, Look, More and OK! These magazines, which are priced between £1.40 and £2.00, have similar reader profiles and content albeit to varying levels on topics such as fashion, celebrity news, health & beauty and 'real life' features; example front covers can be found in the Appendix.

The research was undertaken in 3 distinct but parallel phases. First, we conducted primary research to administer our Media Brand Engagement model via an online survey. Secondly, NRS data were analysed to provide a physical engagement measure and, thirdly, data from Facebook and Twitter were analysed and processed to produce a 'Social Heat Index'.

3.1. Stage 1: Media Brand Engagement model

We carried out online interviews with 242 women across 2 weeks between 3rd and 17th August 2011 using a Facebook survey application. For each of our 7 magazines, respondents were asked a battery of 11 attitudinal statements as described earlier on a Likert scale between 1 and 10. Additionally, further diagnostic statements on magazine preference and attitudes to advertising were also asked.

The profile was matched as far as possible to that of the Facebook population. This resulted in a younger audience than a nationally representative population, although we felt that this was not necessarily an issue due to the younger profile of the audience of the magazines in the competitive set; therefore, we did not conduct any corrective demographic weighting. Data were analysed using our engagement model weights and a factor analysis approach to provide each respondent with an engagement score for each magazine.

The table below (figure 6) shows the Ipsos MediaCT Brand Engagement scores for all respondents who were aware of the titles and for respondents who claimed to have read the publication in the past year. The maximum score any brand can achieve is 100.

Figure 6: Brand Engagement scores

Magazines	All respondents aware of title	Read publication in the past 12 months
Closer	58	64
Grazia	59	68
Heat	55	63
Hello	57	66
Look	54	57
More	59	65
OK!	55	55

Bases: All respondents aware of title who answered all engagement statements: Closer n=168; Grazia n=126; Heat n=185; Hello n=180; Look n=157; More n=141; OK! n=196. Read publication in the past 12 months and answered all engagement statements: Closer n=140; Grazia n=90; Heat n=149; Hello n=141; Look n=136; More n=116; OK! n=159

As expected, engagement increases as the relationship with the magazine becomes more involved – readers generally score higher in terms of engagement with the magazine than those aware and, although data are not shown here due to small sample sizes, indicative results show that those who say that a magazine is their favourite score higher again, with an average engagement score of 80.

The highest scores for engagement amongst all of those aware are for More and Grazia, both with 59. Of our competitive set, these are the two titles that are less focussed on celebrity gossip and instead lean towards the lifestyle and fashion end of the women's weekly magazine spectrum, which may go some way to explaining the slightly higher level of brand engagement.

Although the structure of the engagement scores offers reassurance that the model provides an intuitive and reliable picture of relationships with magazine brands, the spread of scores is narrow with the lowest engagement score being 55 and the highest 59. This indicates that there is very little differentiation in terms of the level of engagement with the competitive set selected. This lack of differentiation and level of substitution is evident when we examine individual statements in the model; on average only 18.9% provide a score of 9 or 10 for the statement 'Has unique or different content or features that other magazines don't have' for each of the magazines and on average only 19.0% provide a score of 9 or 10 for the statement 'I actively seek out or subscribe to this magazine' for each of the titles.

Additionally, of all women surveyed, two thirds (67%) scored at least one of the magazines in our survey as 7 or more out of 10 for being 'one of my favourites', indicating a level of loyalty to one or more of the titles in our competitive set. However, the average number of magazines that are rated between 7 and 10 for being 'one of my favourites' was 2.3 amongst all respondents and amongst those that rated any magazine as a favourite, this number rose to 3.4. Again, this would suggest that although there is loyalty towards the women's weekly magazines category as a whole, individual brands within this are easily substituted.

This lack of differentiation we found within the category from our engagement model is supported by data from the NRS on the women's weekly sector for the period April 2010 – March 2011. Of those that have read at least one woman's weekly magazine during the period, the average number of titles read within the sector is 2.6.

Both analyses of our engagement model and the NRS data therefore lead us to the conclusion that although there is high loyalty to the sector with a relatively high proportion of regular readers, the market is one where brands are easily substituted for one another. However, publishers will still strive to be the brand of choice for the sector and part of this will be driven by behavioural engagement and how readers are engaging with content. We now move on to look at behavioural measures for women's weekly magazines, both in terms of the physical product and with social networking properties.

3.2. Stage 2: Physical media engagement

In order to understand how engagement takes place beyond the relationship with the brands within the sector, we took the latest available NRS dataset (April 2010 – March 2011) and derived a physical media engagement score from the magazines' women average issue readers (AIR) and their corresponding average time spent reading (TSR) data. For readership, we indexed the AIR figures on the highest AIR figure; for time spent reading, we divided the average number of minutes by the number of pages taken from the latest issue to give a factored TSR score, or 'time spent per page', and then indexed these on the highest score. We then took an average of the two to produce a final physical engagement score (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Physical media engagement scores

	Women AIR (000s)	**AIR (Indexed)**	**Women TSR (Mins)**	**No. Of Pages**	**TSR (Factored)**	**TSR (Indexed)**	**Physical Media Engagement Score**
Closer	1,555	83.4	41.3	106	0.390	99.2	**91%**
Grazia	428	22.9	44.8	114	0.393	100	**61%**
Heat	1,441	77.3	38.7	122	0.317	80.7	**79%**
Hello	1,352	72.5	39.0	130	0.300	76.3	**74%**
Look	633	33.9	40.8	114	0.358	91.1	**63%**
More	380	20.4	38.5	106	0.363	92.4	**56%**
OK!	1,865	100	42.8	146	0.293	74.6	**87%**

Source: NRS April 2010 – March 2011 (Base: 20,368 women)
Paginations taken from 15th August 2011 (or equivalent) issue of the magazines

As may be seen above, Closer, the magazine with the second highest female readership and third highest time spent reading average (but second highest average when we account for pagination), achieves the highest engagement score. This is followed by OK! whose score is driven up by having the highest readership figure, despite having the lowest factored time spent reading average of all seven magazines. Grazia achieves the sixth highest engagement score out of the seven, yet it achieved the highest factored time spent reading average.

We did think again about whether including readership levels in our calculations were valid, as niche publications that achieve relatively high reader intensity figures were being penalised on our metric. We decided to stick with this method, albeit for now, to be consistent with our approach with the social media engagement calculations, which we will see later. Furthermore, we recalled a quote from the Head of Insight & Trade Marketing at News International on how he linked volume to engagement:

"Although we don't trade on engagement on a day-to-day basis, we do have 3 million people who actively go out and purchase the Sun everyday and that's engaging."

Stuart McDonald, News International (2010)

Although physical engagement offers more discrimination between titles than brand engagement alone, it only tells part of the story – digital engagement also needs to be evaluated to provide a fuller picture of engagement for magazine brands.

3.3. Stage 3: Social media engagement

In today's fast-moving, interactive digital world, brands have the opportunity to engage with readers on a one to one basis through social media sites. Arguably, this transactional relationship offers more opportunity for engagement than has ever been available before. We therefore considered a new approach and examined Facebook fan pages and Twitter magazine accounts in order to understand the level of engagement with the titles under examination and also looked at what encourages engagement with these sites. Both Facebook fans and Twitter followers represent key audiences for brands; they are the people that have pledged an allegiance to a brand, they are interested in what a brand has to say and, as such, it is vital that brands listen and respond to what their audiences are saying on these platforms.

Following the collection of data through a variety of different online tools, including Brandwatch and Twitalyzer, a formula was derived to provide one overall 'Social Heat Index' that takes into account both the size of the audience for each brand and the level of interaction that was achieved. Both audience size and interaction data were indexed against the largest brand follower/fan count or the largest brand interaction total. The formula for calculating our Social Heat Index takes account of the brands on these sites:

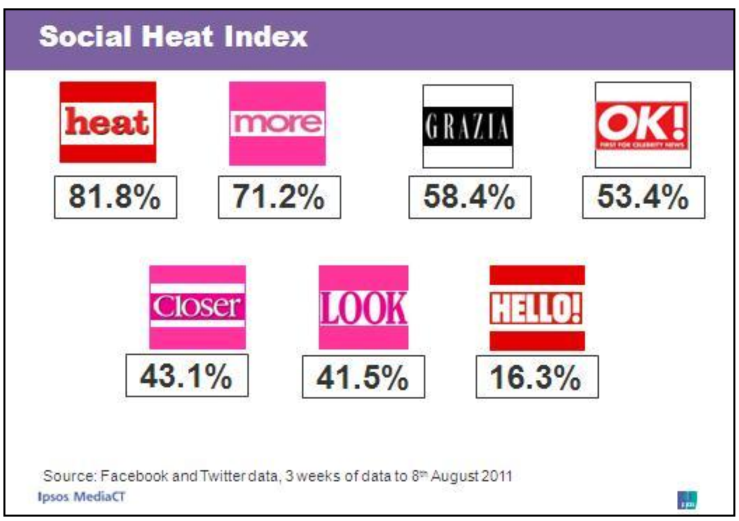
- Number of posts or tweets
- Level of interaction with posts or tweets (in the form of 'likes' or comments on Facebook or re-tweets or references on Twitter)
- Size of audience

Data were collected over a three week period from the 18th July to 8th August 2011.

Currently, we have assumed equal importance between audience size and interaction on both Facebook and Twitter giving them an equal weight in our overall analysis. However, we have weighted the corresponding Facebook and Twitter scores to reflect the differing importance of each of these platforms to each of the brands. For example, if the number of followers and the amount of interaction on Twitter was double the equivalent figure on Facebook for a given brand, we upweighted the Twitter score accordingly. This allows a view of engagement that takes into account potentially different social media strategies of each of the brands. However, we will keep this adjustment under review and may revise in subsequent models.

Figure 8 below shows the Social Heat indices for each of the 7 brands measured - the higher the score, the higher the level of engagement across Facebook and Twitter, up to a maximum of 100%.

Figure 8: Ipsos MediaCT Social Heat Index for magazine titles



Overall, these figures offer far more discrimination than was seen in the Ipsos MediaCT brand engagement model and physical engagement measures, indicating that audiences engage to different levels with women's magazines through social media. As we can see, Heat magazine (and its online property heatworld.com) is the most engaging social media brand, scoring 82% in our Social Heat Index. Hello scores least well with a much lower 16% index.

Additionally, we can also examine the scores on the individual social networking platforms to provide an understanding of how levels of engagement differ across Facebook and Twitter (figure 9).

Figure 9: Social Heat by social networking platform

	Facebook			Twitter			Overall
	Audience size (Indexed)	**Interaction (Indexed)**	**Social Heat Index**	**Audience size (Indexed)**	**Interaction (Indexed)**	**Social Heat Index**	**Social Heat Index**
Closer	7%	47%	27%	5%	98%	52%	**43%**
Grazia	14%	33%	23%	40%	100%	70%	**58%**
Heat	71%	100%	85%	100%	56%	78%	**82%**
Hello	10%	29%	19%	11%	12%	12%	**16%**
Look	65%	35%	50%	14%	36%	25%	**42%**
More	100%	67%	84%	17%	26%	21%	**71%**
OK!	23%	59%	41%	88%	35%	61%	**53%**

Source: Facebook and Twitter data, 3 weeks to 8th August 2011

As stated above, Heat (and its online property heatworld.com) receives the highest overall Social Heat score. With its large audience on both platforms (75,791 fans on Facebook and 175,540 followers on Twitter as of the 8th August 2011) and high levels of interaction (an average of 49 likes or comments on every Facebook post and 13 retweets or @ mentions per tweet on Twitter[5]), it receives equally high scores on both platforms.

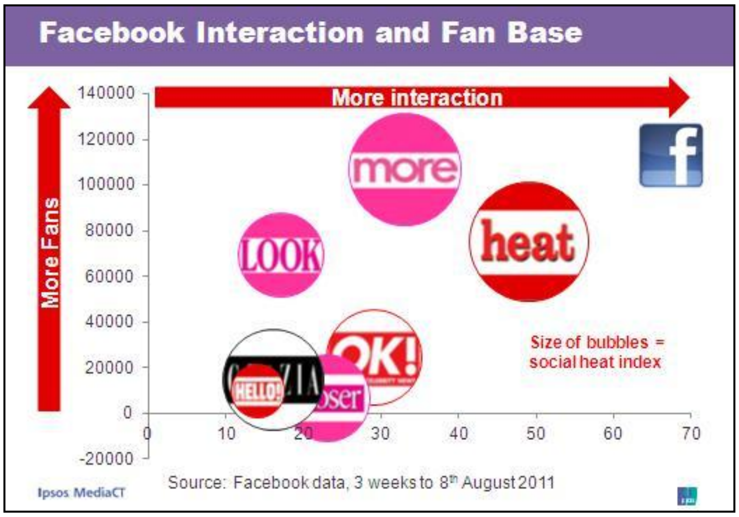
Another high performer on this metric is More, which has the largest fan page of our 7 brands on Facebook and therefore with an index of 100 (107,100 fans as of 8th August 2011) and high interaction, with an average of 33 comments per post on Facebook. However, its performance on Twitter is relatively less strong, with 29,645 followers and an average of 6 interactions per tweet. This may reflect a part of Bauer's strategy for the magazine and to compensate for this, as described above, we have weighted the overall Social Heat Index to reflect the apparent differences in strategy for each of the magazines.

As we have seen, Hello magazine performs least well in terms of our Social Heat Index. In comparison to other women's weekly magazines, Hello has a relatively small Facebook fan page (10,221 fans as of 8th August 2011) and interaction is lowest of all the magazine brands, with an average of 14 interactions per post. There is a similar picture on Twitter, with a follower count of just over 20,000 at 8th August 2011 and an average of only 3 interactions per tweet.

[5] Retweets are defined as posts which are 'rebroadcast' with the letters RT at the start of the tweet and @ mentions are tweets that include the account username but are not retweets.

Although this is useful information in its own right, media owners also need to understand why they are perceived as less engaging than competitors. To this end, we have mapped out for both platforms the size of the audience alongside the average number of interactions ('likes' or a comment on Facebook or a retweet or @mention on Twitter) for each post from the site owner (figure 10). This allows us to understand if brands need to focus on acquisition or retention strategies to increase their Social Heat scores.

Figure 10: Facebook interaction and fan base for magazine brands

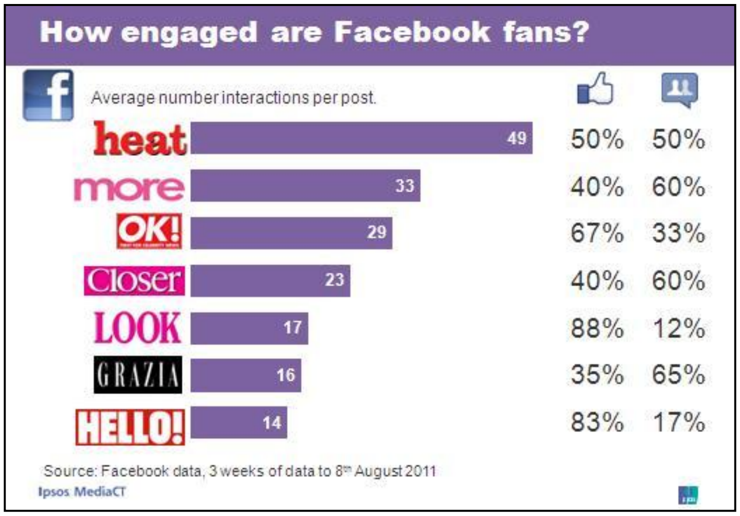


In figure 10, we can see that Heat and More are the clear leaders in the Facebook space for our competitive set. Look follows in third place but the level of interaction – which stands at an average of 17 interactions per post – is relatively low. It is worth noting, however, that there is still some way to go to match some of the biggest media based sites on Facebook. For example, the Eastenders fan page has over 2 million fans and received an average of 692 interactions per post during the same three weeks to 8th August 2011.

Grazia, Hello, Closer and OK! are all fairly similar in terms of the level of interaction and fan base size, all with fewer than 25,000 fans and an average interaction rate below 30 likes or comments per post. In order to compete effectively in the social media world, these brands should consider how to increase their follower numbers and increase interaction with each of their posts.

It is also true that there are different ways of interacting with content on Facebook. Although we have grouped these into one metric of 'interaction' in our calculations, it is worth examining the different levels of 'likes' and comments per brand. To 'like' a post means that a fan has clicked the thumbs up 'like' button after reading a post from the page owner, where as a comment means that they have written a response to a post from the page owner. Arguably, a comment equates to higher engagement with that particular piece of content than a 'like'. We looked at the levels of both likes and comments for our brands and Figure 11 below shows the results.

Figure 11: Engagement of Facebook fans



As we can see, there are large variations in the number of likes and comments a brand receives for its posts. Notably, although Grazia and Closer have lower interaction levels than the front-runners, over 6 in 10 of the interactions they received during the 3 week period were 'comments'. In comparison, over 8 in 10 of the interactions for Hello and Look are 'likes'.

Although we have attempted to negate the effects of frequency of post by presenting the average number of interactions per post, we also looked at the absolute number of posts to understand if more activity from page owners equates to more fans or interaction for individual brands. However, we found no relationship between the volume of posts by site owners and either the level of interaction or audience size; in fact the correlation between volume of posts and level of interaction is a negative one. Therefore, in this sector, more activity on Facebook does not necessarily lead to bigger audiences or more interaction.

We also examined format of post to understand if particular content led to more interaction. We divided posts into:

- Links
- Photos
- Status updates
- Video

Figure 12: Types of post and level of interaction

	Avg interaction per post	Link	Photo	Status update	Video
Closer	23	67%	0%	33%	0%
Grazia	16	41%	46%	10%	3%
Heat	49	54%	10%	36%	0%
Hello	14	93%	5%	2%	0%
Look	17	20%	20%	61%	0%
More	33	35%	0%	65%	0%
OK!	29	4%	81%	14%	1%

Source: Facebook data, 3 weeks to 8th August 2011

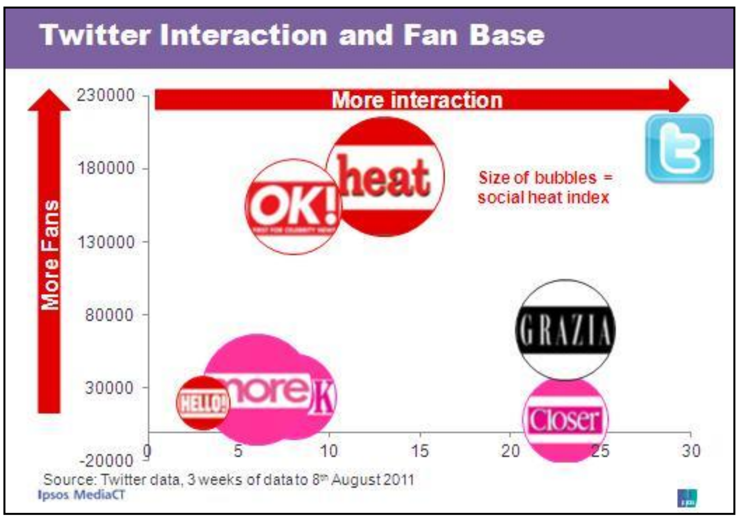
As seen with the volume of posts, there seems to be no real correlation between types of post and levels of interaction. Therefore, it would appear that, amongst our competitive set, it is quality and content of posts that encourages interaction rather than sheer volume or posting particular formats of post.

From qualitative analysis of fan pages, there are a number of different content areas or types of post that encourage a larger volume of comments and these can be summarised as follows:

- Explicitly asking a question that will resonate with the target market encourages a larger number of comments, for example More magazine asked which footballers were most fanciable at the beginning of the football season and received over 75 comments.
- Posting about specific topical events also encourages a larger number of comments. During our fieldwork period, Amy Winehouse died and Heat set up a memorial post which received 145 comments.
- Links to the physical magazine also receive lots of interaction. This is sometimes as general as asking for feedback or may be having links to specific articles to encourage purchase. For example, Heat magazine simply asked who had read the magazine on 2nd August and received 49 comments and 80 likes. Similarly, More magazine asked fans to click on the like button if they intended to buy the magazine and received 260 likes.
- Competitions can also lead to higher levels of interaction. Many fan pages ask for either a like or a comment for a chance to win and this encourages interaction. For example, Look magazine posted a voucher competition in August asking people to click the like button and received 230 likes.

We then went on to examine Twitter audience size and interaction, to establish whether retention or engagement strategies should be undertaken.

Figure 13: Twitter interaction and fan base

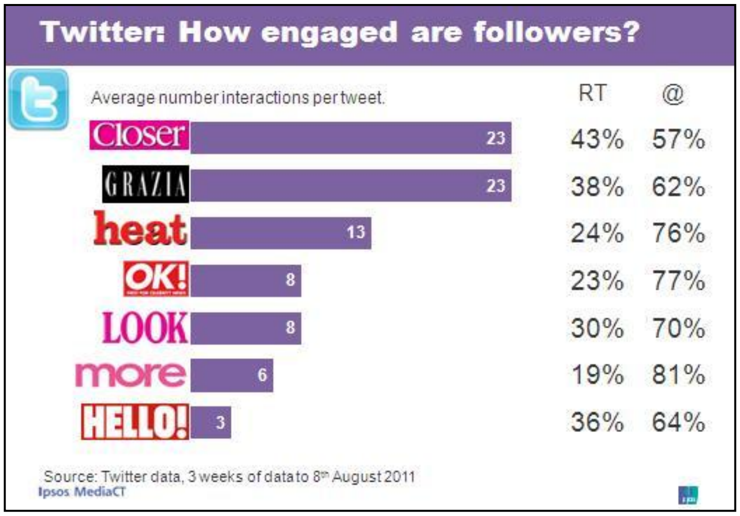


We can see a distinct picture on Twitter, indicating that audiences are engaging differently across different social media platforms. Overall, the level of interaction on Twitter tends to be lower than on Facebook. This, in all probability, reflects the different one to one (Twitter) and one to many (Facebook) functionality of the sites. A comment on Facebook can be easily seen by all members of a fan page and so provides a more interactive experience, with much more opportunity for conversation between members, whereas @ mentions or retweets on Twitter will only be seen by the account owner and followers in common between the brand and the 'retweeter'.

As with Facebook, Heat performs well on Twitter, with the largest fan base and a relatively high interaction rate. We can, however, see a different picture for some of the other brands. For example, Grazia and Closer both fare well in terms of the level of interaction on Twitter but have relatively small fan bases. For Grazia, with its smaller AIR figure, this may be entirely appropriate but Closer, with the second largest readership in our magazine set, should be looking to increase their fan base. OK! also scores much more strongly on Twitter in comparison to Facebook, driven by its large number of followers. However, interaction levels could be higher and a focus on ensuring dialogue could help to increase social media engagement.

Again, we also looked at the different types of interaction for each brand. Figure 14, below, shows the split of retweets and @ mentions on Twitter.

Figure 14: Engagement on Twitter



For all brands, @ mentions are more prevalent than retweets, indicating that there is more conversational interaction than rebroadcasting interesting findings. Interestingly, there seems to be an inverse relationship between the number of tweets from a user and the amount of interaction, with a correlation of -0.7. It seems that quality not quantity of tweets is important and too much chatter may cause the audience to switch off from its tweets.

In terms of the most engaging tweets, these tend to be much more 'breaking news' tweets. Events such as the death of Amy Winehouse, feedback from live events such as festivals and celebrity news stories tend to receive the highest number of retweets. It is also important to ensure that there is a two-way conversation on Twitter – replying to @ mentions and posts is incredibly important in this context and will ensure a stronger relationship with a brand.

Our analysis of social media activity within our competitive set has shown large variation in both audience size and levels of interaction. In a market with relatively low brand differentiation but much higher differentiation between social media interaction with the brands, with women's weekly magazine audiences connecting to their favourite magazines in large numbers through both Facebook and Twitter, it is vital that brands within this sector ensure that they encourage engagement and interaction and that this interaction reflects the brand personality and has a dialogue with audiences that have made an effort to connect with them.

3.4. Creating a composite engagement score

Our three phases of analysis have produced three different sets of engagement scores for our seven magazines and three or four different magazines can claim a stake for having the highest reader engagement. For media brand engagement, Grazia and More are the most engaging titles; for social media engagement the leading title is Heat, and; for physical media engagement we have Closer.

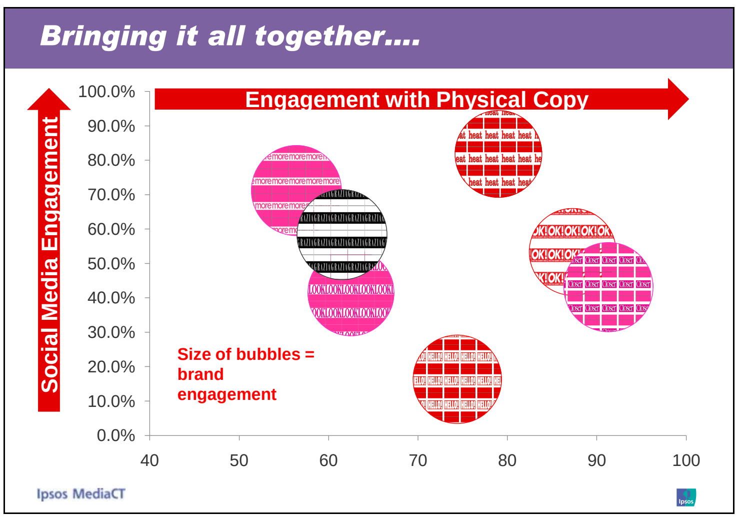
Whilst this is valuable insight for individual publishers and can help to guide marketing efforts, if our goal were to work towards having one universal measure for engagement, we have perhaps not helped matters by adding three more into the mix! Whilst we have highlighted that each set of scores may be able to stand alone on their own merits (particularly if data users will pick and choose which set of metrics works best for their needs), we have taken the above analyses a stage further by endeavouring to combine the results to see if we could create one composite set of engagement scores. A crudely simple approach to this would be to assume the three methods have equal weights and therefore take an average of the three for each magazine (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Composite engagement scores

Magazines	Media Brand Engagement Score	Social Media Engagement Score	Physical Media Engagement Score	Composite Engagement Score
Closer	58%	43%	91%	**64%**
Grazia	59%	58%	61%	**59%**
Heat	55%	82%	79%	**72%**
Hello	57%	16%	74%	**49%**
Look	54%	42%	63%	**53%**
More	59%	71%	56%	**62%**
OK!	55%	53%	87%	**65%**

And the magazine with the highest composite engagement score from our three metrics is....Heat. But what does this new set of scores actually mean? All we are really doing is taking an average of an average of an average, which heavily dilutes any discriminatory power from the original analyses and is therefore, at best, unhelpful and, at worst, potentially damaging. Another approach would be to try and retain the 3 individual measures and communicate the results differently (see figure 16).

Figure 16



As may be seen above, this three-way graphic helps to pull apart the 7 brands across the 3 engagement measures. Heat, OK! And Closer may perform well overall, but More and Grazia also hold their own for social media engagement. Of course, such a graphic may be compelling for ad sales presentations, but does not really get us any closer to the perhaps unattainable prize of a single multi-platform measure of engagement.

4. Conclusions

In this paper, we have taken a journey through different types of engagement and corresponding metrics. With print and digital worlds colliding, identifying multi-platform measures of engagement is increasingly challenging, as indeed are corresponding measures of multi-platform audience! Our journey has led us to a new measure of reader engagement for today's digital world – specifically, one that encapsulates social media engagement. It is no longer enough to look at just brand metrics or behavioural measures of engagement with printed publications. We believe that our Social Heat Index is an important factor in the overall measurement of engagement. And in markets with low switching costs and relatively low differentiation such as the women's weekly sector in the UK, engaging with those that have publically acknowledged that they 'like you' can also stand on its own and provide a valid brand differentiation in the market, albeit acknowledging that social media still provides a relatively small contribution to the overall media consumption and revenue mix.

Much has been reported and blogged over the last 12 months or so on the value of a Facebook 'like', or perhaps the lack of its value in monetary terms, but the figures quoted are wide-ranging and therefore not helpful. According to Facebook[6] themselves, the average "liker" has over twice (2.4) the amount of friends than a typical Facebook user and that they click on five times more external links, which can be beneficial to brands and their social engagement strategies. The issue of commercialisation is however still to be resolved. One thing that is clear to us, however, is that we need to ensure that brands are compared within their competitive context, in order to understand how a brand is performing relative to those with which it competes. Taking Facebook or Twitter as a whole, although a useful benchmarking tool, does not provide a clear evaluation of a brand's engagement. As we have seen, engagement across different sectors is very different, for example, television programmes often have much higher levels of engagement compared to magazines and a comparison that does not take this into account will not provide a reliable picture of engagement.

There are also some key, and very pragmatic, findings from this research that can help women's weekly brands to refine their social media strategy. Firstly, a bigger fan base is not necessarily always better; we have seen that very large sites can also have lower engagement potentially leading to decay in effectiveness or engagement. Secondly and linked to this, in the women's weekly sector, too much chatter can harm interaction levels. We have seen that, on both Facebook and Twitter, interaction levels decline when posts are too frequent. Brands need to ensure that what they are saying is interesting, relevant and provides good stimulus for discussion. There could be much to be learnt from different sectors, for example television, in providing exclusive content, relevant sign-posts to the physical product and content that is finely honed and provides value and entertainment to the audience. Thirdly, it is important to distinguish between Facebook and Twitter and refine content and the brand 'voice' accordingly. Facebook content should be designed to reflect the more conversational nature of the platform and Twitter should focus on breaking news and links to new stories. Wherever discussion takes place, however, it is vital to treat audiences with respect and the process as a dialogue. Brands should develop their own voice that reflects their brand personality and listen and respond to their valued social media followers.

Finally, our tour of defining and measuring engagement has taken in online research via social networking applications, employment of statistical techniques and modelling, integrating industry audience measurement data and analysis of social media web-usage metrics. It may be sobering for us, as readership research practitioners, to accept that measuring readership and engagement may no longer solely be the domain of traditional survey research.

"*Survey research will decline dramatically in importance by 2020, with social media listening replacing much of it and adding new dimensions*"

Joan Lewis, Consumer and Market Knowledge Officer, Procter & Gamble (2011)

[6] http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=150630338305797

APPENDIX


heat
SHOCK NEW PHOTOS
IS KATIE HOLMES GONE TOO FAR?
OK!
KIM KARDASHIAN WORLD EXCLUSIVE
MY EX MARK CAN DROWN HIMSELF IN THE BIG BROTHER POOL
KERRY CRACKS UP!
STAR-STUDDED WEDDING PARTY
What men think of THOSE shocking Rihanna pics
161 hot summer party buys
HELLO!
SOPHIE WINKLEMAN
WIN A CAR!
LOOK
Celebs' Secret New Labels
JEN & JUSTIN Their Shock Baby News!
They've Even Picked A Name
SAVVY SHOPPERS ALERT!
Autumn's Best-Ever Capsule Wardrobe
10 Key Items
30 Amazing Outfits
ANGE'S AGONY The Nanny Tells All Her Secrets!
JEN & JUSTIN fly to wedding island!
closer
ON THE EDGE