

#socialmedia @thefilmindustry

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ABSTRACT

In the last 45 years, social media has developed from simple electronic messages, to the complex networks of today. Social media refers to the activities, practices and behaviors among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media. Currently top ranked social media websites include Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Businesses use social media to track what is being said about their companies, gather information, and do industry research. Social media is now also used as a news outlet. Another growing social media trend is its use as a promotional tool. Recently, the marketing of film has looked to social media to create marketing campaigns, build awareness, connect with fans, promote products, and reshape the industry. Specific examples from the film industry have been analyzed to see the impact that social media has had on the promotion of a film. This paper outlines how social media has been developed, provides information on top social media outlets, gives insight on creating effective social media marketing efforts, and looks further into how the film industry uses social media. The paper concludes with insights of the future of social media, in general and in application to the film industry.

INTRODUCTION

Within this paper, social media is explored as a marketing tool. A special focus is placed on the present day use of social media marketing tools, specifically Facebook and Twitter. This paper explores not only the history of social media, but also where the future lies in application to marketing. This paper also investigates the tricks and tools that are used to create the most effective social media and online marketing strategies. These tools can be translated to building a successful social media page for an industry, a company or in the case of this paper, a film, whether it is up and coming or a film of the past. Once the background on social media is developed, this paper then focuses on how social media is being used as a promotional tool in the film industry.

Specific examples of social media marketing are analyzed from the film industry. To further understand how this trend is shaping, a past and present comparison has been developed to explore the changes in how the promotion of a film has transformed with the growth of the internet. *Harry Potter* will be used to study an example of a movie franchise that began before the social media craze and developed promotions with the growth of social media, specifically with the final installment of the film series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*. *The Hunger Games* will be used as a present example of a franchise working with social media as a promotional tool. Twitter posts have been explored to discover the importance they hold to a film because as stated in the book *Socialnomics* “celebrities Twitter with Joe Sixpack because they need Joe Sixpack more than Joe Sixpack needs them” (Qualman, 2009).

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Online marketing encompasses many different subsets of marketing through the internet. Online marketing refers to the art and science of selling products and services over digital networks, including the internet and cell phone networks. Types of online marketing include e-commerce, online advertising, search engine marketing, e-mail marketing, article marketing, and social media marketing (Ward, n.d.). A growing trend within online marketing is the utilization of social media and social media marketing.

Social media refers to the activities, practices, and behaviors among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media. It is not to be confused with social networking, a subset of social media that allows for the sharing of personal information. For a business, it allows for engagement with customers, prospective customers, employees, and other stakeholders by encouraging communication, collaboration, education, and entertainment. The *Social Media Bible* establishes three rules that a business should use in the creation of social media strategies. These rules are: social media is all about enabling

conversations, you cannot control conversations, but you can influence them, and influence is the bedrock upon which all economically viable relationships are built (Safko, 2009). Together these concepts develop social media marketing, the process of gaining traffic or attention through social media sites.

The onset of social media marketing has caused a shift in thinking from mainstream marketing to the masses to marketing towards the large numbers of the online audience. Customer appreciation has grown from this new form of marketing that allows companies to communicate with them directly in the forms of blogs, podcasts, posts, tweets, pictures, and videos. This new marketing form is easy to monitor, allows for participation across the board, and encourages conversations about products (Scott, 2007).

SOCIAL MEDIA: A TIMELINE

The social media saga began on January 1st, 1966 when the first known message between two computers was sent. After many developments, these computer network messages have become known as e-mails. Various attempts have been made to create social media networks since 1966, but not all have been successful. The late 1960's through the 1980's brought the introduction of online services including CompuServe, America Online (AOL), and Prodigy. In 1978, Bulletin Board System, or BBS, allowed computer systems to run software that allowed users to connect and log in to a system that permitted them to upload and download software, read news and bulletins, exchange messages, and play games. Shortly after the introduction of BBS, Multi-User Dungeon, or MUD, hit the online scene as a popular computer adventure that allowed for multiple players. The late 1980's introduced the world to chat rooms, places online typically dedicated to a topic of interest where users can communicate in real time. The first dedicated chat room was CompuServe's CB Simulator, a chat room devoted to CB radios. By 1994 anyone could create a website through the use of Yahoo! Geocities (Cerulo, 2010).

The mid to late 1990's began the development of modern day social networks. In 1995, Classmates.com was created as a way to keep in contact with old high-school friends. AOL Instant Messenger (AIM) was introduced in 1997 and began to replace the chat rooms that were popular in the 1980's. By 1999, everyone could create a blog through the use of websites like Open Diary, LiveJournal, and Blogger.com. Also in 1999, Epinions.com, a general consumer review site, was launched. Epinions.com allowed visitors to post and read reviews on a variety of items to aid in the purchase process. Early 2002 brought Friendster, a social gaming site, into the social network scene with nearly 3 million users in the first few months. Second Life, a 3D virtual world that allows for users to socialize, connect, and create through voice and text chat was launched in mid-2003. Also in 2003, LinkedIn launched with little fanfare and MySpace was introduced as a customizable information filled personal webpage. Mark Zuckerberg introduced the world to Facebook in early 2004. Also in 2004, Flickr, a photo sharing website, launched. YouTube began in early 2005 as a place where users could upload, share, and view videos. By late 2005, YouTube had their first viral video with "Lazy Sunday" a music video from Saturday Night Live.

In 2006 the first 140-character tweets were sent through the use of Twitter, a social networking and micro-blogging service. Tumblr, "a blog for the lazy" was introduced in 2007 for Web users who do not want to maintain a blog. GetGlue, an entertainment-based website introduced in 2008, allows users to "check-in" to the entertainment they consume and in return receive a sticker. 2009 brought Foursquare, another location-based website for mobile devices where users "check-in" for points and badges. Instagram launched in 2010 as a mobile application for editing and sharing photos from iPhones. The most recent addition to the social network is Google+, making headway in popularity in early 2012. Since the 1960's, there has grown to be over 200 well-known and used social media websites (Cerulo, 2010). The following sections will provide further information on today's top dogs in the social media networking game.

TOP SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS

Discoverynews.com lists the top ten social networking sites. Facebook is listed as the number one social media website and Twitter is listed as number two. The remaining top ten include LinkedIn, YouTube, Hi5, Skyrock, Friendster, 51.com, Orkut, and MySpace (Strickland, 2012). While some of these may be relatively unknown to everyone, several have international renown and helped shape social networks as we know them to be today. To gain a better understanding of how social media is being used within the film industry, a deeper look into the background of social networks frequently used in the marketing of a film has been taken. These include Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. A look into Foursquare and GetGlue is presented to give insight into two growing networks that represent the "check-in" trend that is of use to the film industry.

Facebook

Facebook has over 800 million users that can create a profile, add friends, exchange messages, and get notifications. Facebook is the brainchild of Mark Zuckerberg, a Harvard University dropout. Zuckerberg's initial webpage concept was called Facemash, a ranking system for attractiveness of Harvard students. Facemash was an overnight success, but was shut down immediately because Zuckerberg had hacked into Harvard's student database and breached security. In 2004, Zuckerberg drew from the concept of Facemash and expanded it to thefacebook.com, a social network for Harvard students. Through word of mouth, thefacebook.com quickly spread through the Harvard student body and to other colleges and universities. One year later the "the" was dropped and Facebook was incorporated. Sean Parker, of Napster fame, joined the team as company president and relocated to Palo Alto, California.

Restricted access was the focal point of the initial Facebook concept. It began with Harvard and then spread through a few other Ivy League universities. Slowly it allowed for more universities and large companies, such as Microsoft, to have access. Just over a year since its launch Facebook had been noticed by major press outlets and had over 2.8 million users. In fall 2006 the average person could join Facebook. Since then, Facebook has taken over the internet and runs the social networking scene. It bested MySpace, the one time champion of social media, by 2009. Facebook is still gaining more and more users every day, while the numbers on MySpace dwindle. In 2010, Facebook traffic beat out Google as the most trafficked site on the internet (Wilson, n.d.).

Legality issues have always swarmed Facebook. The most famous lawsuit had to deal with the Winklevoss twins, Tyler and Cameron, accusing Zuckerberg of stealing the idea of Facebook from them. Concerns about privacy have also been a problem for Facebook. Slowly people are becoming more concerned about their personal privacy and are worried about glitches that may expose personal data. In their eight years of existence, Facebook has revamped their look several times which has not always been welcomed by users. The most current and mandated layout of Facebook is known as "Timeline." Timeline gives the user more control about how to share information posted to their pages. Though Facebook has had its issues, funding for Facebook has never been a concern. In the eight short years since its introduction Facebook has grown to be a multi-billion dollar company with over half a billion users and recently announced they would be offering an IPO. It has been speculated that Facebook could reach a valuation of \$100 billion.

Twitter

In just 140 characters Twitter has taken the social media and micro-blogging world by storm. Twitter originated from a daylong brainstorming session by the board members of podcasting company Odeo. Pressure from competition forced Odeo to "reinvent" themselves. Jack Dorsey, an Odeo employee, described a concept that used SMS text messaging to tell small groups of people what you are doing. It was further described as something so simple you do not even have to think about what you are saying before you send it. Biz Stone and Florian Weber, other Odeo employees, were assigned to work with Dorsey to build version 0.1. On March 21, 2006 the website was created at 9:50 PM PST when the first tweet, or SMS Twitter message, was sent.

Before Twitter was known as Twitter, it was just Twtr. The name was inspired by Flickr and the short codes of America SMS messages that are five characters in length. It was prototyped with SMS code 10958, but has since been changed to 40404 for ease and memorability. The word Twitter was used because of the definition. Twitter is defined as "a short burst of inconsequential information" and "chirp from birds." Initially, Twitter messages did not have a character limit. After a few bugs and one large SMS bill the team settled on placing a character limit. Since messages longer than 160 characters are spilt into multiple SMS messages, the team decided to go with 140 characters to allow for room for the user name and a colon in front of a message. Twitter also features hashtags. Hashtags are represented by the # symbol and is used to mark keywords or topics within a Tweet. The concept of hashtags was created by Twitter users as a way to categorize messages.

Shortly after the launch of Twitter, Obvious Corporation was created by Dorsey, Stone, Evan Williams, and a few other members of Odeo. Obvious then acquired Odeo and all of their assets including Odeo.com and Twtr.com from investors and shareholders. Dorsey then became the CEO of the "new" Twitter, Inc. Permalinks, RSS and IM integration were all created around this time. With each feature added there were increases in users and in usage per user. Currently Dorsey is Chairman, Dick Costolo is CEO and Stone is Creative Director of Twitter Inc.

Twitter saw its tipping point for popularity in 2007 with the South by Southwest (SXSW) festival. During SXSW Twitter usage increased to 60,000 tweets per day from 20,000. Twitter, Inc. now has over \$150 million in company worth and over 200 million monthly visitors. In February 2010, Twitter users were sending over 50 million tweets per day, which makes it one of the top ten most visited websites worldwide. Twitter has grown so large that even U.S. president Barack Obama uses it (Twitter, n.d.).

YouTube

YouTube is a video sharing website created by former employees of PayPal, Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim, on February 14, 2005. Over the next few months the website was developed into a place where users could upload, share, and view videos. YouTube received initial funding from Sequoia Capital and Artis Capital Management. In November 2005, YouTube was launched to the public. By summer of 2006 it was one of the fastest growing websites and was ranked fifth most popular by Alexa, a global leader in web analytics (Alexa, n.d.). In 2006, 100 million video clips were being viewed daily with 65,000 new clips being uploaded every 24 hours (Seabrook). By late 2006 it was announced that Google would purchase the company for \$1.65 billion in stock. The deal closed on November 13, 2006. After its acquisition by Google, YouTube announced that it had an advertisement-based business model, making \$15 million per month. It has been speculated that the cost of running YouTube is around \$6 million per month (Hardy, 2008).

GetGlue

GetGlue is an entertainment-based social networking website for mobile devices and computers. Users check-in to the entertainment they consume from a website, mobile website, or device specific application. This service was launched in October 2008 by AdaptiveBlue. By November 2010 GetGlue was called a leader in the emerging social entertainment market by Bloomberg. Partners of GetGlue include 20th Century Fox, The CW, AMC, ABC Family, Disney Theatrical, Discovery, ESPN, FOX, Food Network, Hachette, HBO, HGTV, MTV, MSNBC, Showtime, Penguin, PBS, Random House, Simon and Schuster, Syfy, Sony Pictures, Travel Channel, USA Network, Universal Pictures, and Warner Bros. theatrical. Funding for GetGlue comes from Union Square Ventures and RRE Ventures. Time Warner is also a major investor.

Features of this website include the user's ability to check-in to receive points and earn virtual stickers. They can also receive recommendations and earn discounts from entertainment companies. Once a month users can request to have real versions of the stickers mailed to them for no cost (GetGlue, n.d.). In March 2011, GetGlue incorporated Foursquare check-ins to allow users to add where they were watching. The premiere of the True Blood Season 4 in June 2011 broke the record for Most Check-Ins into a TV show with over 38,000 hits. The previous record was set during the 2011 Oscars with over 31,000 hits (Watters, 2011). In September 2011, GetGlue partnered with DirecTV to allow users to check-in and see on-screen what friends are doing on their television.

Foursquare

Foursquare is a world-wide location based social networking website by use of mobile devices, like smartphones. Foursquare allows users to "check-in" at venues through the use of websites, text message, or mobile applications. With each check-in users are awarded points and sometimes badges. This check-in service was created in 2009 by Dennis Crowley and Naveen Selvadurai. Foursquare was their second attempt at making a check-in network. The first attempt was called Dodgeball and was based on SMS technology. As of June 2011 the company reported 10 million registered users and expected to pass 750-million check-ins by the end of that month. The average daily number of check-ins is about 3 million. Currently Foursquare has iPhone, Symbian, Android, webOS, Windows Phone 7, Bada, and Blackerry applications.

Foursquare receives most of its funding from Union Square Ventures, Andressen Horowitz and O'Reilly AlphaTech Ventures. On June 24, 2011 the company was listed at a \$600 million valuation. Partnerships of Foursquare include Zagat, Bravo, Conde Nast, The New York Times, and several other firms to offer tips, specials, and badges. In early 2012 an announcement was made that Foursquare would no longer be using GoogleMaps, but rather OpenStreetMap as their location-based platform (About Foursquare, n.d.).

Features of the website include creating "To Do" lists for private use and adding "Tips" to venues for other users to use as suggestions. Users can also become "Mayors" of locations when they have checked-in to a venue more than anyone else in the past 60 days. Badges can also be earned by checking-in into various venues. Badges can be tied to milestones, brands, venues, tags, cities, events, tasks, or dates. In October 2010, astronaut Douglas H. Weeklock unlocked the NASA Explorer Badge when he checked into Foursquare from the International Space Station (NASA, 2010).

A score is also awarded to users. Scoring comes from checking-in to a new place, adding new venues, being the first of friends to check in, re-checking in, daily multipliers, and checking in with friends. Users can also obtain "Super-user Status" when the Foursquare staff selects them based of helpful contributions (About Foursquare, n.d.). In summer 2011, Foursquare added a new check-in feature that allowed for time-specific events such as concerts, sports games, and movies to be treated as a location. What this means is on top of selecting a venue, Foursquare users can choose the event they are attending.

TRICKS AND TOOLS OF THE TRADE

At any given moment, nobody could be reading that last tweet, update, e-mail, or post, but as long as at least one person sees it, it is considered to be effective. Fundamentals related to creating an effective social media and online marketing strategy stem from five key questions marketers must ask themselves. The first question asks “What are you doing?” The second asks “Where are you doing it?” Knowing the target audience will help in the selection of which online strategies and social media websites to use. From here marketers will be able to create an environment that is attractive and will encourage users to invite others, spend time, share experiences, download, and upload content (Weber, 2007). Then marketers must ask why they are doing it. Understanding from the beginning what they are trying to accomplish will help direct marketing efforts. From there they must establish what success will look like. There must be a united front on this level so all team members are working towards the same achievements. Finally, ask what potential pitfalls may be encountered. Companies need to be aware of all pit falls and attempt to lessen them (Qualman, 2009).

Currently, marketing is in an era where customers and potential customers are in control of what they read, hear, and watch and are looking more than ever to connect to other people and those marketing towards them (Weber, 2007). Many old marketing strategy components have shifted into new marketing ideology for online and social media marketing. Segmentation should be done based on social group interests and targets should be based off of customer’s social media behavior. Marketers should know what moves customers and adjust marketing efforts towards what they will find meaningful. The content of an online or social media strategy should be a mix of professional and user generated content, with a heavy emphasis on the visual components. Marketers should also strive for virality that will make people talk and forward on a message. A viral marketing campaign is a “word of mouth” campaign online. Content should be powerful enough to make someone want to share it and the function of sharing must be user friendly. Contests and promoting causes are also ways to boost social media marketing efforts. A marketer must understand that the reviews are now user reviewed and voted on. Also, know the key words that users are searching for and optimize efforts to match those findings. Finally, let the communication process be interactive by letting users search, add dialogue, add comments, add reviews, and list personal experiences on websites (Weber, 2007).

Tracking performance of social media websites can also be beneficial. Websites that exist to aid in this function include Trendrr, TruCast, and Radian6 (Funk, 2011). Visits, leads, inquiries, requests, newsletter signups, orders, and revenues from social media are all key points to be checking. Google Alerts or Tweetmeme can be set to track mentions of brands or goods. Another beneficial tool that should be utilized is the function of a “badge.” A badge is a small icon that can be clicked on to take a website visitor to the linked social media website. Badges can be shared for websites ranging from Twitter to Flickr to LinkedIn.

There should be a focus on the focused (Weber, 2007). Pick a market that is of interest and pursue it. This is not restricted to just consumer markets. There is a growing demand for business to business marketing online and in social media. Examples of websites that represent this market include LinkedIn and Monster. A final piece of advice within the social media world is to live the social media life making mistakes, because making mistakes is better than doing nothing (Qualman, 2009). To learn from social media mistakes creates a way to find out about the users’ experience. Ask questions like: Did you like it? What would you change? Would you recommend it to a friend? What did you like most? Least? What would you like to see in the future?

SOCIAL MEDIA TODAY

Social media today now has various uses. Businesses are using social media websites to track what is being said about them, gather information on their company, and see what is going on within their industry. Social media has also grown to become a news outlet for real-time updates of news events. Special focus on news updates is frequently placed on natural disasters (Qualman, 2009). Social media has also grown to be both a promotional tool for individuals and companies and a place for advertising. This type of advertising has been proven to be effective. Advertising on social media tends to be considered unobtrusive. A 2008 survey by Razorfish found that 76 percent of 1,006 people surveyed said they did not mind seeing ads on their social media websites and that 40 percent of them acted on the advertisements (Qualman, 2009). Celebrities, athletes, and socialites use social media to stay in contact with fans and provide updates about their lives, careers, and personal businesses. Niche topics are also discussed over micro-blogging sites. Popular topics include upcoming sporting events, news, political debates, and other events of hype. Recently the film industry has turned to social media for the marketing of films.

FILM INDUSTRY'S USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The marketing of a film challenges marketers to create a brand and entice viewers into a theater in a relatively short amount of time. Richard Kahn, a marketing executive for MGM/UA called film marketing the “merchandising of emotion”, as word of mouth and fame will help go a long way (Avrich, 1994). Traditionally, effective tools have included advertising, publicity, promotion, and research. In addition to those having a good poster, trailer, and press kits, creativity will create a strong media mix. The promotion of a film has been referred to as “the art of exploitation (Avrich, 1994).” Two promotional roles have been developed: the use of clever campaign and the tying of other sources of social media traffic to a film. The second role of promotion represents the changes that the introduction of social media to the industry has brought.

From big blockbuster films to low budget independent projects the industry is embracing social media. In the past, Hollywood has depended on the star system, the method of creating, promoting, and exploiting young Hollywood hopefuls, and magazines for the promotion of films. Modern Hollywood has Facebook, Twitter, and mobile technology to work with. The film industry is using social media to create alternate reality campaigns, build awareness, connect with fans, promote products, and reshape the industry.

Crowd-sourced screenings have become a new marketing strategy for films. Not every film is going to come out at every theater and this is something that is often overlooked by the box office world. Some small budget films have started out in a few cities, with a few screenings and have gone on to make out quite well at the box office. Traditionally, the marketing strategy for these types of films would have depended on word of mouth, press, and publicity to expand the market. Now, film promoters can turn to the internet and social media pages to see where demand exists. One of the greatest examples of this strategy in use is Paramount's *Paranormal Activity*. The film, which was made for under \$15,000, eventually grossed over \$150 million at box offices. The film relied heavily on Facebook for promotions and partnered with Eventful to have fans request screenings. The goal was to get around 1 million fan requests and this goal was met quickly (Warren, 2010). Even more proof of the success of the social media surge came at the box office. Furthermore, using crowd-sourcing helps to give the fans a sense of ownership over a movie.

Viral alternate reality campaigns have also been a growing trend in the last ten years that have brought aspects of film into the real world. Such campaigns have grown to be extremely intricate and heavily involved through the use of social media. *Inception* used a lot of viral marketing, including a location based service called SCVNGR to promote the film release in 2010. *Toy Story 3* went as far as developing vintage toy commercials on YouTube for Lots-o'Huggin Bear, a new character added to the film's cast. *TRON: Legacy* started what has been said to be the most impressive and expansive campaign of alternate reality over a year before the release of the film (Warren, 2010).

Historically, film viewers had to go to the theater to see the trailers for upcoming films. Then television show commercial breaks were used to introduce trailers to the world. In the last decade, social media sites, like YouTube, have allowed those interested to watch trailers online. Studios still rely on traditional methods of promotion like press releases and websites dedicated to providing information to news outlets and bloggers, but more often than not studios are turning to Facebook and Twitter to release new trailers. Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* used Facebook to debut character posters and the movie trailer first. In an ironic twist of fate, the film *The Social Network*, was not allowed to use Facebook to promote the film, and instead turned to Twitter and MySpace (Warren, 2010). Large industry related companies have also taken to Twitter for promotional reasons. Such companies include Movieline (@movieline), WB Pictures (@wbpictures), Variety Film (@vareity_film), International Movie Database (@IMDb) and NextMovie (@nextmovie). These companies use Twitter to make announcements, plug an upcoming film, release box office numbers, and entice viewers into the theater.

An example of a recent film that embraced the shift towards social media is the 2011 summer blockbuster *Cowboys and Aliens*, directed by Jon Favreau. Favreau also had a large part in developing the social media and digital campaigns for this film. The film turned to Facebook to create a mini-homepage. Although the studio set up an official Twitter account for the film, @cowboysaliens, the primary Twitter driver of the film was Favreau, who has more than a million followers. Favreau would tweet links to articles, interviews, behind the scenes insights and more. The official Twitter account and Favreau would work together in re-tweeting and re-sharing bits from one another's accounts. *Cowboys and Aliens* became a trending topic on Twitter leading up to its release, suggesting that the film had a strong awareness (Warren, 2011a). Opening weekend box office for the film was \$36.4 million and opened at number 1 that weekend (Finke, 2012). The total box office of \$174,822,325 was useful in proving the success social media campaigns can have.

Another way studios have begun to connect with consumers is through Facebook applications. Such applications offer a new way to engage audiences and even sell tickets. Disney created an application for *TRON: Legacy* called the TRONiVerse and which is still active today. This application pulls posts, videos, and pictures

from various social networks and posts them on “the grid”, a theme pulled directly from the film. Fox created applications for *Avatar* and Disney even tied in movie ticket offerings on their page for *Toy Story 3*. Sony created an integrated ticketing application for many of their films and included a feature to invite friends to go to the movies (Warren, 2010). Other applications that exist include ones for watching movies online. Examples of these applications include Watch Movies from Warner Brothers, Watch Movies from Lionsgate, and Watch Movies Online.

As previously mentioned, the film industry is also making a move towards utilizing check-in technology. GetGlue is a top social network, with over 1.2 million users, that is encouraging movie fans to share what it is that they are watching (Myers, 2011). Foursquare is another example of a top social networking site that is designed for fans to check-in where they are and share with friends and followers. Foursquare focuses more on where the user is, while GetGlue allows for the sharing of what the user is watching. GetGlue also has a feature where users can connect with fellow fans and use past ratings to make personalized suggestions. At GetGlue, they go beyond just allowing people to express themselves, as it allows for the marketers of a film to market towards the “socially savvy” and reward viewers with stickers, discounts, and more (Myers, 2011).

Many studios have turned to social media as a distribution strategy to counter sagging DVD sales and to compete with distributors like Netflix. The article *Startups Blend Social Media, Movies* by Jake Coyle looks into the company flickme, which marries movies with the social element of the internet. The article recognizes that studios have long been using Facebook as a promotional tool, and are now looking into it as a distribution tool. Thomas Gewecke, of flickme, is very interested in the potential of Facebook and feels that there is a lot of room for experimentation. He recognizes the many strengths of social media and its economic interest to studios. For studios, social media offers an appealing way to crowd-source the marketing efforts of their catalog. John Calkins, executive vice president of global digital and commercial innovations at Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, says that social networks are great opportunities for the film industry (Coyle, 2012).

As stated before, social media and the film industry are becoming more and more interrelated. Movies have gone from a social experience to a social media experience. Social media has changed the film industry in three revolutionary ways. These changes are affecting movies, how they are made, and how they are seen.

Film making is and always will be a collaborative art form. Social media has shifted this from a collaboration between the production crew to a collaboration between storytellers, filmmakers, and the audience. This will re-create the traditions of film making into something new. The article *What Social Media Really Means To The Film Industry* by Elliot Grove cites three traditions that will forever be changed by social media. The first tradition that will change is the distinction between art and commerce. Hollywood money moguls will no longer be able to define the process; the process will have greater influence from audiences. Future filmmakers and decision makers will fall into two new categories, those who are with social media and those against it. The next tradition to be broken is the barrier between audiences and the marketing teams. Social media is crumbling this wall by lowering the cost of contact with audiences. The final filmmaking tradition that Grove suggests will fall is the structure surrounding script and story development. Using direct engagement with the audience, the audience can become an important part of the development process from the very beginning. Filmmakers of the future may depend on applications, websites, and online experiences to create their next project. New filmmakers and marketers must embrace and utilize what social media has to offer as we move into the future (Grove, 2012).

PAST AND PRESENT COMPARISON OF HARRY POTTER AND THE HUNGER GAMES

In 2001, the wizarding world of *Harry Potter* was brought to life when *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* was released to the world. Over the next ten years seven more films would be released amounting to a box office of over \$7.7 billion. The film series is based on the *Harry Potter* novels by British author J.K. Rowling and the series was distributed by Warner Bros. The book series consisted of seven books, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, which resulted in 8 top grossing films as *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* was split into two films. The books and films followed the life of Harry Potter and his friends Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, and life at the wizarding school, Hogwarts. The trio was constantly fighting off the Dark Lord, Voldemort, who was out to kill Harry. The books and films also chronicles Harry learning more about his past life and a world he never knew existed. The films were directed by various directors including Chris Columbus, Alfonso Cuarón, Mike Newell, and David Yates. Six of the eight films went on to be nominated for Academy Awards and the series

has received numerous other accolades. The film franchise has also become the highest grossing film franchise of all time, beating out all 22 *James Bond* films and the six *Star Wars* films.

Early marketing for the series followed the typical publisher model. Book sellers told customers about the new series and word started to spread. Arthur Levine, of Scholastic, bought out the U.S. rights to the film and buzz grew. Word of mouth about the books grew organically and they became in high demand. Mid-way through the chronological release of the books, the first movie was released. The dependency on the consumer is what made the success of *Harry Potter* possible, and this allowed for a great transition to the social web. A vast amount of fan pages dedicated to the film exist including fan pages and official pages on Twitter and Facebook, dedicated websites such as Mugglespace.com, Pottermore.com, and The-Leaky-Cauldron.org, and chat rooms around the world, in addition to the official website, HarryPotter.com. A web-based fan game called *Harry Potter: The Quest*, has also been developed in association with the brand. For the release of the final film, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*, there was a noticeable increase in social media marketing efforts.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2 was released on July 15, 2011 and went on to gross \$169,189,427 opening weekend and has a total domestic box office of \$381,011,219. Although the film series has always maintained a Facebook presence, there were increased efforts in engagement and development of application features. Just before the release of the film in 2011, the page had nearly 29 million “likes.” On the days leading up to the premiere of the last film the page gained nearly 100,000 fans per day (Warren, 2011b.) Currently, the page has 44.6 million likes with steady increases from week to week. On average the page gains about 360,000 new likes per week (See Table 1). Growth is supported by frequently posted images, behind the scenes information, interviews, and links to other media outlets. To supplement Facebook efforts, fan pages were created in various languages for various countries. Warner Bros. also allowed Facebook users to rent and watch *Harry Potter* films to watch on specific application. Warner Bros. also integrated a ticketing application right on the fan page. This not only allowed users to find show times and buy tickets, but to also invite friends and share ticket purchases.

Table 1. Likes on Facebook for *Harry Potter*

Date	Facebook: <i>Harry Potter</i>	Increase from Previous Week	Increase
1/30/2012	40,115,069		
2/6/2012	40,892,541	102%	777,472
2/13/2012	41,302,895	101%	410,354
2/20/2012	41,817,417	101%	514,522
2/27/2012	42,244,762	101%	427,345
3/5/2012	42,640,219	101%	395,457
3/12/2012	42,939,728	101%	299,509
3/19/2012	43,231,844	101%	292,116
3/26/2012	43,499,967	101%	268,123
4/2/2012	43,670,154	100%	170,187
4/9/2012	43,827,967	100%	157,813
4/16/2012	44,106,090	101%	278,123
4/23/2012	44,687,528	101%	581,438
Average		101%	381,038

The official Twitter account for the film, @HarryPotterFilm, is not nearly as active as the Facebook page. Before the premiere the account had approximately 340,000 followers and currently only has around 547,000. Although not as popular, those managing the account still engage users with links to various news articles, photos, and interviews. During the New York premiere of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*, live-tweeting was used to share photos. The *Harry Potter* brand, however, remains quite popular and frequently finds itself as a trending topic (Warren, 2011b).

YouTube was also utilized as a large tool during promotions for *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*. YouTube was used for trailer uploads, fan made spoofs, and a place for official clips, TV spots and interviews. Live-streaming of the London premiere was also shown via YouTube. The YouTube page was designed in a way that embraced the fans and allowed for real-time updates from Twitter and Facebook.

This social media surge proved successful as *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2* ruled the box office. Opening weekend box office numbers for the *Harry Potter* films ranged from \$81 to \$169 million when adjusting for the ticket price inflation rates (Harry Potter Franchise, 2011). *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*

opened at number one and broke the record for best opening weekend, a record formerly held by the *Batman* film, *The Dark Knight*.

This record was, although not broken, rivaled by fantasy fiction up and comer, *The Hunger Games*. *The Hunger Games* is based on the trilogy of books written by Suzanne Collins: *The Hunger Games*, *Catching Fire*, and *Mockingjay*. The first book of the trilogy has sold 23.5 million copies in the United States alone (BusinessWire, 2012). *The Hunger Games* is set in future America, a place now known as Panem, where war has wiped out most of the population leaving only a Capitol and 12 Districts. To be reminded of their past the Capitol set up the annual competition known as “The Hunger Games.” One boy and girl, or Tributes, from each district are sent to compete in a televised fight to the death between all 24 Tributes where only one may come out victorious. *The Hunger Games* follows the girl Tribute from District 12, Katniss Everdeen, the boy Tribute, Peeta Mellark, and their friends and family, as the world watches the Games. The film was made by Lionsgate, directed by Gary Ross, and stars new comers Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson, and Liam Hemsworth and acclaimed adult actors including Woody Harrelson, Elizabeth Banks, Lenny Kravitz, Stanley Tucci, Donald Sutherland, Wes Bentley and Toby Jones. The film was premiered on March 12, 2012 in Los Angeles, California and was released worldwide on March 23, 2012. Alan Gould and Tracy Zhang, media analysts with Evercore Partners, placed a valuation on *The Hunger Games* franchise of between \$1.2 billion and \$1.4 billion (Vlessing, 2012). It has been planned that the trilogy will follow suit of series like *Harry Potter* and *The Twilight Saga* and the final installment will be split into two films.

Social media was used strongly in the promotion of *The Hunger Games* and it has been said that they have raised the bar in terms of a film using social media as a promotional tool (Slash Media, 2012). The film took to Facebook, Twitter, Google+, YouTube and Tumblr to reach their fans. The first social media surge began when the very first teaser trailer, which encouraged Twitter users to tweet the hashtag #whatsmydistrict to lead to the hidden Capitol website, was developed for the film. At the website, thecapitol.pn, users could register as a citizen and run for Mayor of Districts. The official Twitter account for the movie, @TheHungerGames would tweet movie quotes and information for the news, while the official Twitter account for the government of Panem, @TheCapitolPN, would tweet about *The Hunger Games* events as well as merchandise for the film while staying in character. In January 2012 *The Hunger Games* Twitter had just over 131,000 followers. On average each week the feed attracted about 30,000 new followers. Just a month after the release of the film, the account had close to 500,000 followers (See Table 2).

Table 2. Followers of the official Twitter Account for *The Hunger Games*, @TheHungerGames

Date	Twitter: @thehungergames	Increase from Previous Week	Increase
1/30/2012	131,054		
2/6/2012	148,331	113%	17,277
2/13/2012	159,362	107%	11,031
2/20/2012	181,024	114%	21,662
2/27/2012	203,863	113%	22,839
3/5/2012	225,753	111%	21,890
3/12/2012	294,848	131%	69,095
3/19/2012	284,107	96%	(10,741)
3/26/2012	381,109	134%	97,002
4/2/2012	419,322	110%	38,213
4/9/2012	447,457	107%	28,135
4/16/2012	477,434	107%	29,977
4/23/2012	496,469	104%	19,035
Average		112%	30,451

Many Tweets sent by @TheHungerGames and @TheCapitolPn would link back to the official Facebook Page. Along with the main Facebook page, pages for each of the 12 Districts of *The Hunger Games* were created. To encourage activity on these pages, influentials of each District could run for mayor. Like the Twitter page, many fans were attracted to the Facebook page. In January 2012 *The Hunger Games* fan page had just over 1,622,000 “likes.” On average each week the page attracted about 236,000 “likes.” Just a month after the release of the film, the page had close to 4,460,000 “likes” (See Table 3). The page posted trailers, posters, and behind the scenes content to help build anticipation. *The Hunger Games* has also released an adventure based social media game on Facebook. The game is created by Funtactix because of their reputation of bringing authenticity and quality to

movie-based social games. The game allows for players to “live” in the world of Panem, complete missions, and interact with characters from the book (Hindustantimes, 2012). The game will also be the release of the first ever official map of Panem (BusinessWire, 2012). The Google+ account was used in a very similar fashion to the Facebook page.

Table 3. Likes on Facebook for *The Hunger Games*

Date	Facebook: <i>The Hunger Games</i>	Increase from Previous Week	Increase
1/30/2012	1,622,872		
2/6/2012	1,773,741	109%	150,869
2/13/2012	1,910,556	108%	136,815
2/20/2012	2,013,237	105%	102,681
2/27/2012	2,278,221	113%	264,984
3/5/2012	2,500,206	110%	221,985
3/12/2012	2,681,599	107%	181,393
3/19/2012	2,978,613	111%	297,014
3/26/2012	3,491,090	117%	512,477
4/2/2012	3,710,705	106%	219,615
4/9/2012	3,870,146	104%	159,441
4/16/2012	4,089,575	106%	219,429
4/23/2012	4,453,354	109%	363,779
Average		109%	235,874

The Tumblr account was used for fans to keep up on the changing and popular fashion and culture of the Capitol. The account can be found under the name Capitol Couture. The layout of this page is set up like a magazine with cover stories on style, citizen activity and other fun information. A YouTube channel was set up as a place to share movie trailers, clips and interviews.

As mentioned, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube were used quite frequently in the building of anticipation leading to the day tickets went on sale, the world premiere, and the world release of *The Hunger Games*. February 22, 2012 marked the official date of presale for *The Hunger Games* tickets. On this day the “Twitter-sphere” was all a-buzz to those following the correct feeds. *The Hunger Games* Official Page tweeted “*THE HUNGER GAMES* MOVIE TICKETS ARE NOW ON SALE! For 2/22 ONLY: Buy Tickets Now and get a FREE download from *The Hunger Games* Soundtrack on iTunes!” (@TheHungerGames). A fan page, called The Hunger Gamers tweeted “#TheHungerGames opens in theaters and IMAX #March23. Get tickets now: bit.ly/HGFandango bit.ly/HGMovieTickets” Also on this day, The Hunger Gamers fan page was tweeting other *The Hunger Games* news. This included a tweet about the then upcoming mall tour which read “NEWS: *The Hunger Games* Cast’s National Mall Tour includes cities as Atlanta, Phoenix, Chicago, Miami, Dallas, Minneapolis and Seattle.” and a tweet directing followers to check out YouTube that day because “NEWS: *The Hunger Games* is all over @YouTube’s Homepage. Check it out youtube.com/#TheHungerGames #HungerGames.” (@TheHungerGamers). Popular movie ticket retailers, including Movieline and Fandango, tweeted links throughout the day where fans could purchase tickets.

In the days leading up to February 29, 2012, buzz began to build on twitter about “*The Hunger Games 24*”, or as it appeared on twitter, #hungergames24. February 29, 2012 would mark 24 days before the long awaited premiere of the film. Thousands of fans waited to find out what the big announcement would be. Twitter feeds such as @TheHob, @thecapitolpn, @TheHungerGamers, and the official account @TheHungerGames all posted any news and speculation. People flocked to the social media site as Twitter would be the exclusive location for the announcement. What #hungergames24 brought was 24 advanced screenings across the United States. An official release was posted on TheHob.org on February 29, 2012 providing the details of the social media campaign. Lionsgate announced that there would be 24 advanced screenings of *The Hunger Games* sponsored by Nook. Screenings were set to take place on March 21, 2012, just two days before the official release. A map of where screenings would take place was released on the website <http://screenings.thehungergamesmovie.com/#>. By visiting the website Twitter users were able to locate the closest advanced screening location and find the unique hashtag for that city. Users could then tweet that hashtag to unlock cities. On March 1, 2012 the first four cities unlocked would be announced. Fans would then be able to enter to win tickets to screenings. Sponsors, a theme taken from the book

itself, partnered with Lionsgate to host screenings. 12 District Sponsors would host two screenings and offer 24 fans the chance to win two tickets to screenings. Sponsors of this event included EW.com, iVillage.com, Machinima, Moviefone, Celebuzz, Yahoo!Movies, Movietickets.com, Hitfix, MTV, IGN, VEVO, and Fandango (TheHob.org, 2012).

March 12, 2012 marked the worldwide premiere of *The Hunger Games* in Los Angeles, California and another day of *The Hunger Games* buzz on Twitter. Many tweets directed fans at home on where to watch the live streams of the red carpet coverage. Tweets included: "E! Online already livestreaming! <http://eonline.com>" (@TheHobOrg), "Watch the 'Hunger Games' Premiere at 8:30 p.m. ET <http://ow.ly/9CaWs>" (@NextMovie), and "Join the official @YahooMovies Live Stream of the Red Carpet at 5:30PM PST on our #HungerGames12 tab: <http://on.fb.me/HungerGames12>" (@TheHungerGames). Other tweets sent by *The Hunger Games* official feed include "Perfect way to get psyched for the #HungerGames Premiere? The trailer on repeat on the jumbotron. #HungerGamesLIVE <http://pic.twitter.com/R0COC1jH>" and "@Fandango is celebrating #HungerGames12 by kicking off 12 Days of Gifting. Check it out: <http://on.fb.me/HungerGames12>" (@TheHungerGames). Also on the day of the premiere many of the tweets pertaining to *The Hunger Games* were promoted. A promoted tweet means that is a tweet from advertising partners that is pulled to the top of search results. They are clearly labeled as promoted and still retain the function of a normal tweet.

The Hunger Games has been wildly successful at the box office and has been breaking records since February 22, 2012 when tickets first went on sale. On the first day of pre-sale Fandango reported that *The Hunger Games* accounted for 83% of the day's total sales and broke the record previously held by *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse* for first day advance ticket sales set on May 14, 2010. Fandango also reported that hundreds of show times were sold out across the country (Semigran, 2012). Although the film could not quite rival sequel films such as *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2* and *Batman: The Dark Knight* opening days, the film broke numerous records. The midnight premiere grossed \$19.75 million, a new record for mid-night release of a non-sequel, and set a record for highest IMAX opening ever for a 2d, non-summer, non-holiday film. By the end of March 23rd, *The Hunger Games* grossed \$68.25 million and \$155 million for opening weekend, setting yet another record for the opening of a non-sequel film (Yahoo!Movies, 2012b). This opening weekend is ranked third in best opening weekends of all-time passing films like *Spider-Man 3*, *The Twilight Saga: New Moon*, and *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1* (Randall, 2012). *The Hunger Games* held strong into the second weekend of release and remained at number one with \$61.1 million, meaning that in just 10 days the film grossed over \$250 million, which is the fastest ever for a non-sequel film (Yahoo!Movies, 2012a). In the third weekend of release, *The Hunger Games* remained at number one at the box office and grossed \$33.5 million, pushing it over the \$300 million mark domestically and had a global intake of \$460 million (Weinstein, 2012). *The Hunger Games* dropped from number one after the fourth weekend at the box office.

Even though there was wild success in the promotion of the film through social media, *The Hunger Games* also suffered racist backlash on Twitter. Some fans of *The Hunger Games* were very upset that Tributes Thresh and Rue, and stylist Cinna were Black. These roles were portrayed by Amandla Stenberg, Dayo Okeniyi, and Lenny Kravitz. People often develop characters in their heads while reading, and for a number of people their mental characters did not include Black people and some have lashed out at producers and Suzanne Collins for adding color (Eskridge, 2012). @LexieBrowning tweeted "I'm still pissed that Rue is black. Like you think she might have mentioned that...?" and another offensive tweet read "Awkward moment when Rue is some black girl and not the innocent blonde girl you picture" (Eskridge, 2012). Collins did in fact mention in the books that Rue has "dark brown skin and eyes" and Thresh is described as having the same colored skin. Cinna's race was never stated in the book. Offensive backlash in regard to the film was also found on Tumblr. Like with many other things, social media can be a successful tool, but can also present flaws.

FUTURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Where the future of social media lies is anyone's guess. Ayelet Noff, a social media blogger, provided her top ten insights into what the future of social media may hold. Noff's first prediction is that the physical and digital worlds will become more connected than before. Already in this day and age we can go to the store for ice cream and alert everyone online where we are. The second insight is that Facebook, Twitter, and other networks will become "Social Dashboards." What this means is that such social websites will allow for companies to grow and develop their own technologies and businesses. Huge profits have been already earned off this method of "piggybacking" on other networks. Noff also predicts that Facebook and other social websites will become locations for online shopping. We have already begun to see this transition within the film industry with applications that allow for the purchase of movie tickets. The fourth and eighth insights predict that we will no longer search for information, but information will search for us as the web gathers more and more of our personal information.

Through this, information overload will no longer be an issue. The fifth insight suggests that we will grow to be more dependent on mobile technology as people feel the need to check-in to a location or update their status.

Noff further predicts that relationships will be developed more online, rather than in the real world. The befriending processes will take place in virtual worlds and will no longer be contained so much by geographic location. The next insight further ties into that idea, as she predicts that we will start to meld into the virtual world and live as avatars in the “game of life.” Almost forty-five years ago Marshal McLuhan said of the future “Time has ceased, space has vanished. We now live in a global village... a simultaneous happening... Electronic circuitry profoundly involves men with one another. Information pours upon us, instantaneously and continuously. As soon as information is acquired, it is quickly replaced by still newer information (Swartz, 1997).” The ninth prediction is that companies will shift the definition of return on investment of social media from the number of people to the amount of engagement. The final prediction is that services will become crowd-sourced and follow the trends of the consumer (Noff, 2011).

It is expected that as the film industry moves into the future, social media changes will be embraced even more. Looking back at the recent films such as *The Hunger Games*, *Harry Potter*, *Avatar*, *Inception*, and *Cowboys and Aliens*, there is evidence that supports the success of social media campaigns. These films represent some of the largest box offices ever and each of them had a strong social media campaigns.

It is not just the big-name films that will be able to embrace social media trends in the future. Joshua J. Mills, the founder of Filmlazer stated that in the future people will be able to make a movie for \$100,000 and be able to compete with Hollywood produced films (Sutton, 2009). Wayne Sutton, of Social Wayne, tweeted Mills opinion and got many responses. Responses included statements addressing how technology may get cheaper, but talent will not and it takes a lot of talent to make a movie. Napoleon Wright, a filmmaker and founder of Becauseus, filmed a Hip-Hop documentary called “One Day, Introducing Kooley High.” The film was 40-minutes long and chronicled a day in the life of a Kooley High rap group. Wright released trailers on YouTube and Yimeo and when the film premiered it was sold out. Although other factors may have attributed to the film’s success, quite a bit of the credit does fall to social media (Sutton, 2009). Napoleon is a prime example of what it is that Mills was addressing.

As stated before, if promoters of the film industry refuse to accept the shifts in promotional outlets, they risk losing their stake in the industry. As it stands, Hollywood is embracing the changes and so are its stars. Even Hollywood legends and industry classics like Jane Fonda, Steve Martin, Kelsey Grammar, and Goldie Hawn all have blogs and Twitters. As we see stars of the past embrace the changes, it is hoped that film producers will also move into the future of social media, as success has been demonstrated by some of the biggest box offices of all time.

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