

# Urban Lifestyle REPORT

NEW MEDIA

**March 2008**



Picture: [CarbonNYC](#)

**Twitter attack**

**Campaign of the month:**  
**Honda "Problem Playground"**

**Freedom of speech 2008**

**Theme:**  
**Creating identities  
online**

## EDITORIAL

The main theme in this issue of "Urban Lifestyle Report - New Media" is about **creating yourself an identity, or maybe rather several identities**, on the Internet. This is a subject that may seem a veritable goldmine for marketers, enabling them to get closer to the consumers and to customize campaigns with the precision of a sergeant's hand. But one must never forget that social media on the Internet above all is about human beings and social relationships and not just yet another marketing channel to blend in to the media mix. It isn't all that simple.

We have a new colleague in this issue, Andreas Defoi, who without hesitation agrees with the statement above. Andreas is so passionate about this subject that we couldn't stop him from digging deep into it, turning concepts and perspectives inside out and upside down, in order to create some kind of sense in this jungle. You will be seeing more changes and improvements both in this report and on UrbanLifestyleReport.com during the year and you will shortly receive more information about this. Talking about improvements and websites - [Urban-Lifestyle.se](http://Urban-Lifestyle.se) has also had itself a facelift, which you can read more about under the section News.

The other night, Urban Lifestyle paid a visit to an event arranged by Mobile Monday, to take the temperature on **mobile marketing**. Besides the subject itself, it is always interesting to study the composition of groups who attend these mobile-focused events. Both when it comes to events here in Sweden and down on the continent, the composition is the same - mainly **middle-aged men dressed in suit** or at least a jacket. There's no harm in these guys, but here is a gap between these people and the end-users who (up until today anyway) mainly are found among younger consumers, even if the usage is spreading. It would be great to see more young people and both sexes more highly and equally represented at these events, as well as in the business at large.

As we are mentioning in this month's theme, **homogenous groups are always a great risk**, regardless if it's about visitors on specific business get-togethers, digital meeting places, or if taken place in the global blogosphere. It's always good to get in on diverse standpoints from people with different backgrounds and lifestyles. But on the Swedish market-arena, for instance, there is a constant impending risk that the people who create the marketing-campaigns become **"blind in their own market"**. This can lead to that the measuring rod, used to measure contingent successes, is being set by business colleagues and "blog-buddies", rather than by those who actually should be judging the campaigns - the consumers.

Yet another negative consequence enveloping from this development is marketing-bloggers who create clubs where everyone calls each other by their first name, few have the courage to "stand out" and everyone agrees with everyone. This just contributes to the partially homogenous blogosphere and endangers the perspectives to be even more blurred and narrowed down.

We, behind this report that you are holding in your hand or reading on your screen, say - **dare to say no to groupthink**, and don't forget that there actually exists a world beyond Stureplan and Stockholm city. Open and widen your senses and critical thinking - in the long run, this is something that everyone profits from.



/Tomas Nihlén  
Chief Editor



## March 2008

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# *Participants in this issue...*

### LINDA PIERRE

Linda is one of the founders and part-owner of Urban Lifestyle AB who publishes "Urban Lifestyle Report - New Media". In addition to this report, her company tasks include helping other companies finding ways of listening to the consumers through "social media surveillance". In this product Linda's head role is to vouch the form, do research and present substantial facts for the articles and work with quality assurance. In her backpack she, among other things, carries experience from one of Sweden's most well-known design agencies, an education in project Management from Masters of Media and university studies in media- and communication science .



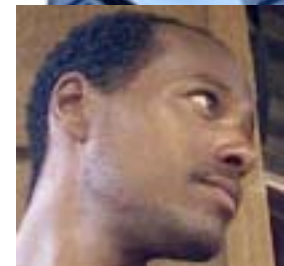
### TOMAS NIHLÉN

Tomas is the other founder and part-owner of Urban Lifestyle AB. His role in this digital production is chief editor and writer. One of his driving forces and source of inspiration is a burning interest for digital media and how they affect the marketing-arena at large. His background includes guest performances at a PR agency, web agency and as researcher at Sweden's perhaps most well-known company within strategic business intelligence. But just now he is, for the first time, experiencing what it's like to work at the absolute front edge.



### ANDREAS DEFOI

After an education in design at American College in London, Parsons School of Design in Paris and almost ten years abroad, among other things employed at a web agency in Bangkok, Andreas surely has experience reference beyond the ordinary. With focus on digital media his work title nowadays is more towards "planner". He thinks most concepts within advertising and media are the most fascinating and frustrating things you can work with for a living. Besides this, he can't wait till the mandatory surf-season at Bali begins. In this issue, Andreas writes a lot about creating identities on the Internet.



### JENNIFER BARK

Jennifer started writing for "Urban Lifestyle Report - New Media" this fall. When she's not writing about trends and new media she is studying at Medieinstitutet in Stockholm and also writing for other companies. She is an active and frequent user of social media such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter etc.



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# New!

In this section you will find updates on in-house workings at Urban Lifestyle.

Since our February issue we've been busy holding a seminar (at Berns) where we were invited by SSES (Stockholm School of Entrepreneurship) to talk about "Internet marketing". We choose to focus on how you can use and benefit from social media when starting up a new company, both when it comes to getting your message out and to gather information and keep track of your line of business.

We have finally managed to publish our [new website](#). There you can find every bit of information about us as well as where to find us elsewhere on the Internet - our digital identity. We are trying to not only talk about trends on the Internet but also live as we learn and use the new channels and tools that are out there.

Lately, we have also moved our office from Old Town in Stockholm, a few blocks away to Norrmalm. You will now find us on Västmannagatan 15, not far from Clarion Hotel, near Norra Bantorget in Stockholm.

We have also added another section to this report; book tips. We are constantly working on improving our products so if you have any requests or ideas, feel free to forward them to us (via [email](#) or the [blog](#)).

**HAPPY EASTER EVERYONE!**

**/Urban Lifestyle**

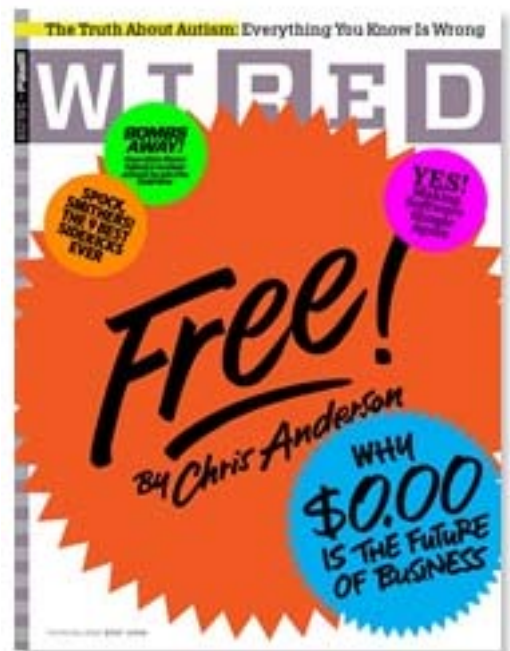


# *Announcements*

## *What is happening?*

**Free - Do things such “a free lunch” really exist?”**

On the cover of [Wired's](#) latest issue, [Chris Anderson](#) (chief editor of the magazine) is marketing his latest book “Free”. As the title hints, his book is about the new possibilities for earning money by giving things away for free. When the distribution- as well as production costs are close to zero it is, according to Anderson, also possible to let the price go down to nearly nothing. This doesn't mean though that companies can't benefit economically from the new trend, they just have to accommodate their business models to the new conditions. If you don't have the fortitude to read every single one of the book's 4703 words, there is a shorter version (100 words) available on the blog [Gawker](#) (written by Anderson himself).



The first 10 000 who signed up were able to get a free issue of the latest magazine, but as there were a lot of restrictions surrounding this.

**Obama keeps on dominating on the Internet**

Last week, on our blog [UrbanLifestyleReport.com](#), we wrote about how MoveOn.org is challenging regular people to record a 30 second long commercial for Barack Obama on the website [Obama30Seconds](#). Last year they challenged users to describe the years with Bush, but those films - on the contrary - didn't have as positive focuses...



Facebook wants to become the new MySpace, but are the users already fed up? Facebook is trying to broaden them and even more threaten and challenge MySpace's up until now untouchable status as the network service for music-lovers. Now FB is launching a group for both music- and movie-lovers:

<http://www.facebook.com/Music>

<http://www.facebook.com/Film>

This might be a way for Facebook to be perceived as less generic and, ironically enough, faceless. But will they manage to harvest this role? Will they be able to develop their product enough to keep "tired users" from leaving them? Here is a clip (video) that illustrates how a bunch of users are starting to feel about Facebook.



Our digital identity is growing while we sleep

A new survey shows that today, most of the data recorded about us on the Internet comes from atomized processes rather than from what we actually actively produce ourselves. For many consumers, this may be a scary thought, but to companies who sit on this type of information it is a veritable "smorgasbord".

## A NEW EARTH WEB EVENT

**Oprah goes live with Internet video**

On March 3rd the famous TV-profile Oprah Winfrey started up a ten week long discussion together with writer Eckhart and her viewers, live on her own web-based video channel. If you weren't there to view the clip live, you can check it out here (video). During the ten weeks to come they are going to discuss Eckhart's latest book [A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purposes](#).

Is this really something that people are interested in watching? Well, the answer to that question is yes, and when the first episode (about 90 minutes long) was broadcasted a few weeks ago, it had over 700 000 live viewers. One of the sponsors is Skype, which means that viewers from all around the world can phone in and video-chat with Oprah and Eckhart. It is interesting to see how one of the institutions from the traditional media world is adapting new technique.

# *Video clips you should see!*



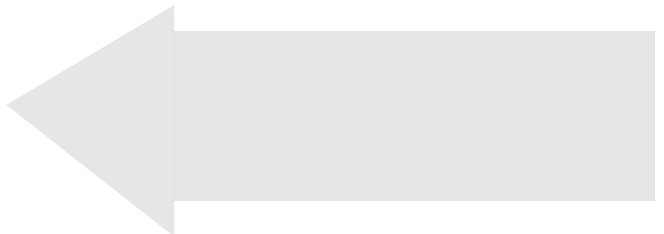
Here follows some of the most viewed and discussed video clips during February. Click on the image to see the video. To see more video clips, click on the link to the right, at the bottom of next page.

The Kings of Youtube - Youtube Rap w/Milo Ventimiglia



## **YouTube-rap**

The guys from [Pedro D Flores](#) were “[The Kings of MySpace](#)” in September 2006. Now they’ve released a new video which has made them “[The Kings of YouTube](#)”. They have a brilliant way of describing how the world of YouTube works.



## **A good laugh keeps you young**

Earlier, we’ve linked videos from the group [Improv Everywhere](#). Recall [Frozen Grand Central](#)? This time they’ve gathered a group who suddenly transforms part of a shopping centre into a musical. To the crowd’s big surprise, even the janitor isn’t who they think he is...

Food Court Musical

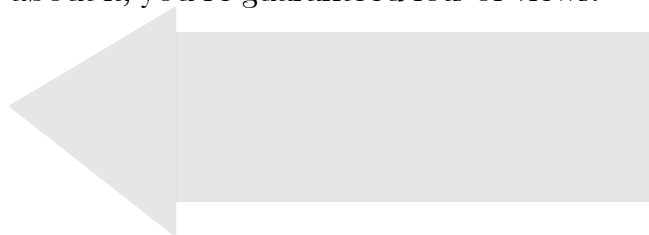


the internet



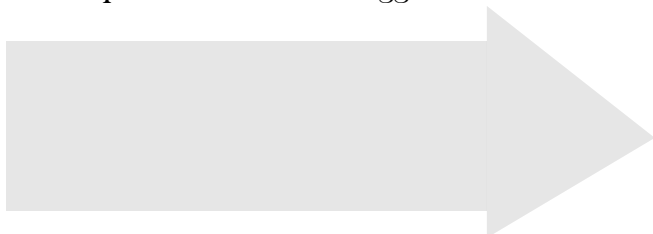
### Internet - a drug?

Are you feeling that you're spending too much time on websites like YouTube, Facebook and maybe your own blog? Well, you're not alone. But what happens when you try to detox? If you make a film about it, you're guaranteed lots of views.



### Net neutrality - clearly speaking

Right now, there's a lot of discussion going on about "[Net neutrality](#)". In this clip we are invited to follow the discussion from the very start until today. It has gotten a lot of attention and publicity and was honored with a place on one of Digg.com's lists.



Humanity Lobotomy - Second Draft



Twitter in Plain English



### Year of the micro blog?

If 2007 was the year when Internet video really had a break-through and 2006 meant the same thing for the blog, then maybe 2008 is the year of "the micro blog". Twitter was the service which first entered this flourishing market, closely followed by Finnish Jaiku. Are you skeptically wondering about what to do with yet another service that updates what you do, where you are, what you like etc, then check out this clip. Simple but demonstratively produced by [CommonCraft](#).

# ***Booktips of the month***

We read tons of blogs and scan the Internet for digital sources of information on a daily base. But this doesn't mean that we don't appreciate the greatness of a good old book. We, on the contrary, think that a book allows you to immerse and furthermore give yourself some valuable time to actually think about what you've just read. Here are some literature tips we think may interest our readers:

## ***The Stuff of Thought - Language as a Window into Human Nature***

**Author: Steven Pinker**

When you separately read the two following sentences, what do you picture in your head? Or maybe more interestingly, what do you feel?

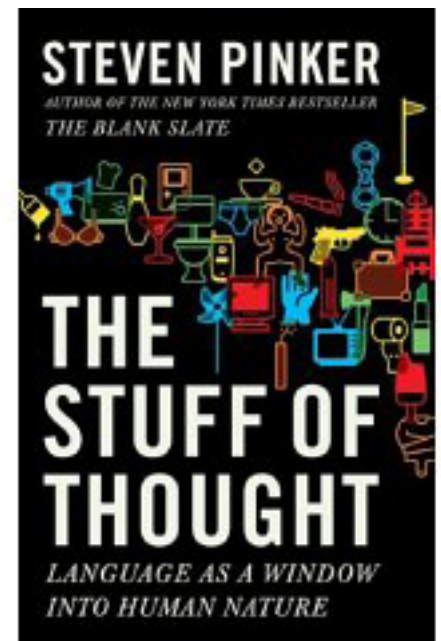
To drink juice out of a glass.

To have a glass of juice.

If you want to understand how our brain works, how it processes the dimensions of time and space, thoughts and feelings and even how it helps us function and interact in social contexts, then linguistics and the composition of words is an excessive source for knowledge and insight.

With "[Stuff of Thought](#)", Harvard professor [Steven Pinker](#) has managed to compose a truly entertaining and enlightening book about such a non-profitable subject as language. How are we affected and affecting others by how we express ourselves? And how aware are we of what the small but oh-so-important differences that words and their compositions can create?

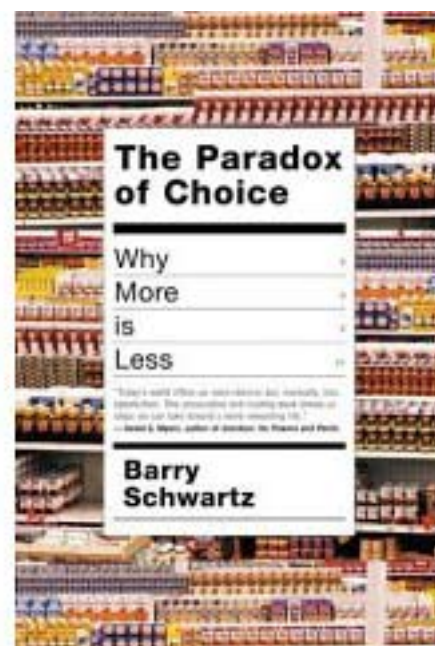
The Stuff of Thought is in many ways an enlacement of Steven Pinker's two earlier books; "[The Language Instinct](#)" and "[How The Mind Works](#)". In "The Stuff of Thought" Pinker just takes everything one step further while trying to make the reader conscious of how the littlest differences in use of language and selection of words can have the greatest impact on how a message is being interpreted by our brains. In his studies, Steven Pinker follows a lot in the footsteps of [Noam Chomsky](#) (yes, the Chomsky) and the book is piecemeal really dense and somewhat written for a "nerdy audience". But the chapter about curses and its connection to our feelings is reason enough for making one's way through the book. Highly recommended for people working with communication, and especially those titled "planner" or "copywriter". Enjoy a clip with Pinkers from TED Talks [here \(video\)](#).



## ***The Paradox of Choice - Why Less Is More***

**Author: Barry Schwartz**

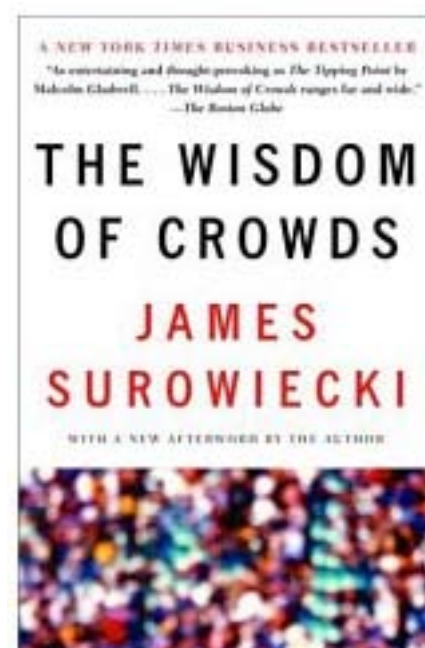
Do you have decision agony? Feel like your head is exploding of information in a time when you are expected to exploit every possibility that the market offers you and people around you introduce you to? Electric company, insurance company and telephone operator. Choose now, choose individually and make a smart choice. A simple Google search shows that there are no less than 43(!) different electric companies to choose from in Sweden. The choice is yours, and maybe this is where the problem lies; maybe we can't or don't even want to choose. Naturally, the multitude of options is an excellent instrument for individual progress. But when the process of making a choice more becomes a browbeat occupation, well then it has become a problem. This is exactly the problem thoughtfully discussed and highlighted in "[The Paradox of Choice](#)". Here, psychology professor [Barry Schwartz](#) presents a number of concepts on how we can make our choices a bit more simple and soothing. Above all, the book focuses on consumerism and the affections of comparison which we daily face. A brief and simple book, easily read in a day or two, but ever so important. A video with Schwartz from TED Talks can be viewed [here \(video\)](#).



## ***The Wisdom of Crowds***

**Author: James Surowiecki**

The book "[The Wisdom of Crowds](#)" is just one of many current works highlighting the subject mass-collaborationism and collective intelligence, which have been published in the last few years. Author and New Yorker columnist [James Surowiecki](#), demonstrates the tremendous strength and advantage that can be found in today's media scenery where services like YouTube, Wikipedia and Google daily reaches higher grounds at the expense of traditional intermediates such as TV and radio. In a world filled with terms like viral- and mouth-to-mouth marketing, these may appear simple and self-evident facts. But Surowiecki analysis goes deeper than that. He submits several interesting examples of how independent communes can handle information and problem-solving better than single experts. But Surowiecki also carefully emphasizes the fact that a collective behavior itself isn't ingredient enough to reach success - what really matters is the constellation of people involved. Decentralization, diversity of approach and liberty of thought are some of the fundamental kingpins being urged in this book. We recommend "The Wisdom of Crowds" as an excellent starting-point for further investigation on the subject. If you are interested in these things you might also want to read Yochai Benkler's "[The Wealth of Networks](#)" and "[Group Genius](#)" by Keith Sawyer.



# *Acquisition of the month:*

## *AOL buys Bebo*

**T**here have been quite a few writings about the social network service Bebo during the first quarter of 2008. Bebo is commonly seen as a relatively small actor compared to the giants Facebook and MySpace. But on this arena, even a small service can have millions of engaged users. The name Bebo is an acronym for “Blog early, blog often” and the website was launched in January 2005 by the married couple Michael and Xochi Birch.

### *Own content*

Bebo is also creating its own content such as the popular web series [Kate Modern](#) which attracts 35 million viewers. It starts where [lonelygirl15](#) ended and takes place in the same fantasy world, produced by the same people. The two web series are in many ways resembling each other; a young, female, video-blogging title role is carrying a dark secret, but Kate Modern has its home in eastern London. Parallel with the web series an ARG (alternative reality game) also took place - a popular way of trying to engage viewers in a wider aspect.



### *What's so special about Bebo?*

The video podcast Wallstrip was discussing Bebo in [an episode \(video\)](#) in mid February, from stock market perspectives. Up until today, the service has about 40 million registered users and is the second largest service in its genre in England, Ireland and on New Zealand. In the US and Canada it comes third after MySpace and Facebook. They are also on [Open Social](#) (which Facebook is not), and now have a business model based on external content-providers like CBS, who can build their own applications for Bebo while still keeping all the money to themselves.

Bebo's profit in this business model comes from net traffic that they can capitalize through their advertising platform. This advertising platform has shown itself to be relatively lucrative and the ads generate around 90 % of their incomes today. An important success factor is that they let the users totally control which kind of advertisement they are exposed to. Bebo themselves call this strategy “engagement advertisement”. This is probably not a bad strategy since an important aspect for social

network services right now is being able to keep their users committed and to create loyalty. And Bebo are doing a pretty good job at this, managing to keep their users on their website for, on an average, 40 whole minutes at a time.

There have been many [rumors](#) flourishing around the fact that Bebo might be up for sale, the first to talk about this was probably [TechCrunch](#) and [Michael Arrington](#). Later he wrote on [his Twitter](#) that he was disappointed about not getting any credit for being the first in the blogosphere to write about this. In mid February it was still [unclear \(video\)](#) whether Bebo was for sale or not, after turning several offers down. But on March 13 AOL went out with a [pressrelease](#) where they announced that they had bought Bebo for \$ 850 million.

### Was Bebo worth buying?

[Kara Swisher](#) from the blog BoomTown writes that the contract price of \$ 850 million was way too expensive and that it seems like AOL will produce many multi millionaires in Silicon Valley in the coming years as a result of their offensive strategy with many purchases. She is criticizing the purchase for many reasons, among which the following are:

1. Bebo is big mainly among teenagers in England, it is too small for the United States.
2. Important people in AOL's management were held out in this sale and didn't even know what was going on.
3. AOL was more or less first comers with social applications such as [ICQ](#) and [AIM](#), which they should be able to take better advantage of, instead of making costly purchases.

Despite certain skepticism, Bebo still has 28 million users in the US and this may

work positively for AOL (who today has a relatively old client base) in terms of finding younger users, according to [MoBuzz](#). [GigaOM](#) is also hesitant about the buy, but still speculates that AOL will try to match up Bebo with AIM and ICQ (is that still alive, we wonder??). Shortly, Bebo will also be launched in Spain, Holland, France and Germany, which could give it a hearty boost in terms of registered users.

As both Facebook and MySpace have had some trouble capitalizing on their services, GigaOm says that this is a brave or perhaps reckless draw by AOL. Further on they think that, considering AOL's tendency of messing things up, Bebo will soon be transformed into Bebo-oh...

Jeff Bewkes at Time Warner has earlier touched thought about selling AOL and focusing more on traditional Hollywood activity. Even Yahoo has been a potential candidate for buying AOL. Considering this, it was kind of unexpected that AOL made this aggressive move, but maybe they thought they had to do something in this expanding market.

### The future

Moreover it seems as though AOL seems interested in buying even more companies and the [next buy](#) is said to possibly be [KickApps](#). This is a service for creating social networks, widgets and other resembling Internet tools. The source to this information is Kara Swisher, who according to TechCrunch seldom is wrong about these kinds of predictions. Swisher believes that a presumable price tag on this buy would be around \$90 million. Except potential purchases, it shall be interesting to follow AOL in how they will manage to develop Bebo and integrate this service with its already existing services in the future.

# Obama vs. Clinton

There are many different ways of expressing yourself on the Internet today. Writing about what you feel, like, don't like on your blog is a way of expression that's been around for a while now. In this part of our report we look at how people express themselves and their opinions in a different way, by making images and pictures. Since the election in the US is something that engages not only US citizens we wanted to see how people over at Flickr took a stand as in what candidate, Obama or Clinton, they preferred, or whether they preferred neither.



Picture: [jetheriot](#)



Picture: [petit hiboux](#)



Picture: [Eddie-S](#)

# HILLARY IS OVER!

IF YOU WANT IT

Happy New Year from John & Barack

Picture: [Zach Alexander](#)

# *Brand in focus:*

## *Telia*



**T**he Swedish telephone companies Tre, Tele 2, Telenor and Telia are now all present in several campaigns with focus on mobile broadband. This is why we in this report have decided to take a closer look at how the discussion around these trademarks is being held on the Internet.

We have chosen to focus on Telia since Telia Sonera claims to have best mobile broadband coverage in Sweden and is one of the largest actors in Sweden in this market. According to statistics from Sifo, the publicity investments for the five largest phone operators, accounts for SEK 236 million in the latest 12 months, and the market for mobile broadband is growing with rocket speed.

Even though Telia (through the advertising

agency Storåkers McCann) over the last few years has created a series of interesting and much talked about TV-commercials starring "the Telia family", they are the ones who've been most criticized in daily press and traditional media. But what's it like in the "online-ether"? How does commonage discuss Telia? And what are Telia themselves doing to face the new era where active customer-feedback is becoming a more and more important factor when making a buying decision?

Unfortunately, the comments that are given are pretty harsh. Many seem to think it is remarkable strange how the company can drive such active campaigns for a service that doesn't live up to its promises:

"The hassel turn out in such a way that the connection breaks down at short intervals and a new connection doesn't

always connect with a working one. For those who don't pay a preset monthly fee, you can presume that expensive minutes will tick away without being pennyworth". On the website [Fairshopping.se](http://Fairshopping.se) several costumers have shown that the problem isn't just questions concerning invoices and subscription changes, but the displeas with Telia's costumers contact is also big. [Telia's website](#) is also considered complicated, impersonal and difficult to navigate on.

Telia are overall extremely bad at costumers service. Who wants to talk to their web assistant EVA when things aren't working? You want to speak to a real person. I wonder why they seem to have another policy when newspapers write about them or when people are complaining on Plus? This is the tone of [one of the inlays on Fairshopping.se](#) (in Swedish).

Lately, the problems for Telia seem to pile up, and the latest incidence happened just a few weeks ago when hundreds of thousands of email-accounts stopped working, something that of course damages the trademark's trustworthiness.

It is almost paradoxical that a trademark with one of the most noted and creative Swedish campaigns in the last years has the most discontent line of customers. But this seems to be the truth, at least if you view the complaints at "Post and Telestyrelsen", concerning coverage disturbances. So, the upshot is that even if a trademark in theory seem to fulfill the role it has taken



upon itself, it is more important in our new media landscape to per factum live up to the expectations created towards the company's products and services.

It is also somewhat surprising how little help Telia and their advertising agency have taken in from web services, in order to create a buzz around the popular "Telia Family". For instance, they could easily upload their TV-commercials on YouTube. In comparison, it can be mentioned that another popular "long-timer", dealing with the lives of a couple of employees at one of Sweden's largest grocery stores, easily can be find on YouTube. And even if this isn't an active strategic grip by the workgroup behind the commercial, this says something about the problems that Telia is facing. In these days, when consumers aren't afraid of speaking up, a greater presence and more personal approach might just be their solution. In other words, to more actively react on users reactions.

# Campaign of the month:

## Honda - “Problem Playground”



**T**he car industry is without a doubt one of the most competitive markets there is and which makes it even harder to present a clear and genuine product catalogue and brand image.

A company that seems to have succeeded with doing just that is Honda which has become famous for strong advertising campaigns and has received awards for best commercial for many years now.

The tv-spots “[Cog](#)” (Honda Accord) and “[Choir](#)” (Honda Civic), both created by Wieden + Kennedy London, have in many ways considerably raised the bar comparing to other mediocre productions that have been created for the car industry before; a deserted country road when the car is in absolute focus - details are shining and there’s relatively loose references of identity.

The campaign sites are usually rather anonymously passed by to a corner of the web where there’s few possibilities of interaction. Lately though the web has gotten a more significant role in reaching out to consumer groups which it also deserves. Through the years the expectations on Honda’s campaigns to be creative has gotten higher. We took a closer look at their latest campaign “[Problem Playground](#)”, they released before the premiere of the hydro driven car model [FCX Clarity](#) and it though has been well received. This is for example how Naresh Ramchandani writes about it for England’s “[The Guardian](#)”:

“The new campaign for the Honda FCX Clarity is possibly its cleverest ad yet. The telly ad features a bunch of designers running around playing with Rubik’s cubes, cantilevering sugar lumps into mugs of tea and assembling a giant jigsaw to form a gleaming red hydrogen-powered Honda.”



A glass aimed to be used by Honda retailers, also reflects their “probleme solving”-theme.

There are also several positive comments on Wieden + Kennedys [corporate blog](#):

“Excellent work! Wish this could’ve run during the Super Bowl to show everyone over here what great advertising looks like. Nicely done.”

“Nice, one. Honda is back!”

“You cheeky monkeys, I’ve wanted to use that music in an ad’ since the life aquatic. I thought it was amazing though. nice one! J”

On YouTube users diligently discuss the research & development capacity of Honda and you can also watch a shorter [“behind the scenes”](#) documentary about the production of “Problem Playground”

there. [The campaign site](#) has an easy-going element that reflects the idea that people like to solve problems. I even suggest that problem solving is something a lot of people find both inspiring and amusing. The large attention the campaign has gotten must by other words be seen as a very well conducted project that will keep helping Honda to create a even more powerful position in an extremely difficult market to play on.

What we find especially interesting in this case with Honda is that they have managed to create discussions not only about the commercial in it self but about the product it’s goal is to sell more of, namely their new car modell FCX Clarity.

# ***This month's webpicks***

## ***There's much to learn...***

### Sustainable design...

... demand sustainable material and in this area [ecolect](#) can help out. [Ecolect](#) is a website that helps guide designers in the jungle of material choices. Here, for example, a company can find out how to use different materials and read reviews of what other users think. In addition, the site also has a blog well worth checking out.



### Where does all the trash go?

[Annie Leonard](#) has studied this question for ten years and has now produced a documentary called [“The story of stuff”](#) that explains it all to the world. The movie is about 20 minutes long and makes its point through easily understood sketches and a pedagogical tone. It isn't hard to get why this film/website won first prize in the category “Educational Resource” at [SXSW](#).



### Learn from other's mistakes

[Only Human](#) is the place you should visit if you want to know things like how to best raise your dog, develop in your career, connect your computer with your TV or get advice on how to work a relationship, based on own experiences. This site (like so much else on the web right now) is all about sharing your experience and knowledge with others while at the same time gathering a few usable tips of your own. Another resembling example is [MindBites](#).



### Play and learn simultaneously

Last year in May, the ARG-game (alternate reality game) [World Without Oil](#) was released. The plot was to make people around the world get a sense of what it would be like if the world supply of oil would disappear for good. Through simulating this and materializing such a scenario, people started to harvest their own food and change their way of transportation. The game takes place during the 32 first weeks after an oil crisis. This site has also won an award at SXSW, but in the category “Activism”.



# *Freedom of speech 2008*

*Are you free to write what you want?*

***T***he Internet population of 2008, who are we? Have we created ourselves a society where we live by democracy and public laws? We have in earlier reports taken a closer look at file-sharing and come to the conclusion that our attitude towards stealing and ownership are somewhat blurry and weak. But what about one of democracy's main cores; the right to freedom of speech?

One wouldn't think that the blog phenomena should add much oddity to the freedom of speech-debate. The right of saying and writing what you want has long before Internet been a widely known idea. But small differences make up for big issues. While newspapers have chief editors in power of and responsible for every word that they publish, blogs aren't even close to having such a thing.



The discussion about freedom of speech (and copyright) on the Internet has been going on for a long time now. In the larger perspective, an activist within this field is [Global Voices Online](#), an organization which “aggregates, curates, and amplifies the global conversation online - shining light on places and people other media often ignore!”.

## [Blog sacking and censorship](#)

A few weeks ago, discussions were running hot here in Sweden concerning Procter & Gamble's newly employed assistant brand manager Axel Bringéus, (who earlier worked for the Swedish advertisement agency Åkestam Holst). His [blog](#) contained some overly provocative inlays for some people, which resulted in him [being sacked](#) (read more on how [others have blogged](#) about this). Oscar Swartz, writer and one of the founders of QX's web community Qruiser, [blogged](#) about how Svenska Dagbladet

(Swedish newspaper) had removed certain Twingly-links in assumable attempts to censor “inappropriate ideas”. Svenska Dagbladet’s chief editor Bo Hedin [answered this](#) and eventually replaced the links.

Being fired for blogging has nowadays become such a common thing that the phenomena has been given a name of its own: “blog sacking” or “dooce”. The latter one arose when American Heather B Armstrong’s blog [dooce.com](#) both resulted in her getting fired, and ironically enough, was elected “blog of the year” at [Bloggies.com’s Weblog Awards](#). You will find some cool examples of how to use the expression “dooce” [here](#).

### Blow the secrets away

Globally speaking, the debate stretches deeper down and doesn’t just concern blogging individuals. One hot subject is [Wikileaks](#), a “whistle blower site” that under the mantra: “We protect your identity while maximizing political impact” publishes anonymously leaked documents about companies and organizations guilty of crimes and unethical actions. The domain has faced court procedures several times but has gotten off each time, for example after being [sued by Swiss Bank](#). The website’s publications have also gotten lots of attention in other media, so it’s not hard to understand that big companies are somewhat shaky about the possible threat that Wikileaks provide.

On the blog Mashable they are writing about exactly [this](#). Right now there’s a dispute going on between Wikileaks and [eNom](#) (Wikileaks has urged a boycott of enom, Inc. and eNom’s owner Demand Media for earlier shutting down wikileaks.info, this after a prior Wiki-publication about eNom).

### Did Wikileaks have it coming, or are they deserving of special protection?

They are a valuable resource – they should be preserved.

130

They are compromising national security – they should be taken down.

5

They are providing a valuable service – but it was only a matter of time.

32

Total Votes: 167

Started: February 18, 2008

This has also created turbulent but [interesting debates](#). On Mobuzz, it was recently reported that Church of Scientology is the last in line to have its [fair “windy” share](#) (video).

### Blogs in different languages

In countries where freedom of speech in the physical world is limited, the virtual world offer new possibilities via services such as blogs. On [Blogger.com](#) they have now [created special templates](#) for languages written from right to left, such as Hebrew, Arabic and Persian to ease the right of freedom of speech.

Many countries are doing their uttermost to stay in control over their citizens, and the Internet calls for no exception. In China, a man started filming a violent protest on his cell phone and was thereafter [beaten to death by the police](#). The first one to blog about this has now been blocked in China. In Pakistan and Armenia the authorities, in similar ways, have tried blocking citizens out from YouTube, which has already happened in places like [Brazil, Turkey, Morocco and Thailand](#). And now, most [recently](#), citizens of China have also been blocked out from the video site. Considering these “big brother

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methods”, the blog’s opportunities might fill an even larger and more important function in these countries, which [many point out](#).

## Censor solvent tools

There are more examples of websites that have adopted Wikileaks idea of total openness but in an anonymous way, in order to enshrine integrity. [Freenet](#) is an example of a project where they have strived to create a total uncensored and anonymous network for commonage. It is based on that the communication between all nodes (the computers in a network) is encrypted so that no individual can be identified.

In the US the website [freedomSpeaks.org](#) has urged citizens to directly deliver their opinions to upper instances. The organization describes itself as a politically impartial social network for political questions. Members can “with the click of



a mouse” send an email or fax direct to political leaders. The American politicians are vice versa staying à jour with their web citizens through i.e. the microblog service [Twitter](#), where you can follow both [Hillary](#)



## BarackObama

Stats	
Following	15,700
Followers	16,258
Favorites	0
Updates	84

and [Obama](#) on their campaign journeys through America.



Another website where the focus also lies on anonymity, but the purpose not as serious (and pretty controversial) is [JuicyCampus](#), where students are welcome to discuss everything, from teachers to other stuff going on at campus. RateMyCop is also a website hot in debate. The discussions here are about the site having [been shut down](#), without warning, by domain supplier GoDaddy, which has arisen quite some [debate](#). At the moment, the domain is replaced by a website for doll houses. Yet another example of a group with strong ideas but who perhaps aren’t always in position of letting them out in their own names, are journalists. The website [AngryJournalist.com](#) solves the dilemma. The site is described as a place where underpaid, overworked, frustrated, angry and ignored journalists can let their anger out and through this feel better. As they claim, anyway.

## So...

In general, it seems that Internet and freedom of speech walk hand in hand. Certainly, as it is in the physical world, there exists strong forces who want to silent “disturbing voices”. But with around 120 000 freshly created blogs a day, you can almost count on the fact that someone, somewhere will have something to say about those silencing, and the ones who’ve been silenced...

# *A stiffened fight for freedom on the Internet*

*Opponents are using ugly tricks*



**I**n the last article we wrote about what you may and may not say online. Here we talk about what you may or may not do.

There is an antagonism going on between consumers and Internet suppliers regarding which online actions are considered ok and what rights the suppliers have to decide over how the Internet is being used. The discussions involve topics such as net neutrality and file-sharing. Net neutrality is a concept which means that all online-traffic should have the same priority, regardless of if the "road user" happens to be a private individual or a big company. There is a good video [clip \(video\)](#) that describes the concept "net neutrality" and where we are heading within this field.

According to well-reputed [ars technica](#) this issue becomes even more complicated if you involve the large film- and music corporations. Their standpoint is that

Internet providers must aggravate file-sharing and provide assistance in finding individuals who violates copyright. Recently, Dan Glickman at MPAA came out and said that the film industry gainsays the thought of net neutrality. One would think that Comcast should have realized that it isn't safe to play with fire after PR catastrophes such as [this \(video\)](#).

With Citizen journalists shattered around the world, armed with cell-phones and each day more simple and powerful tools for reporting contingent mistakes made by authorities and leading brands, it is becoming more and more risky to act in questionable ways. As mentioned, this is something you would think Comcast would have understood by now, but evidently not since they once and again have gotten themselves in some deep trouble...

Just until recently Comcast denied that they are slowing down the speed for users

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of BitTorrent or that they disfavor this type of data traffic. But now they have admitted that they are in fact slowing down traffic, although they don't want to call it "disfavor" but rather a "planning action they must take to avoid bottlenecks in the data traffic".

One must not forget though that BitTorrent isn't exclusively used for illegal downloads but is a technique primarily developed to effectively transport large data files over the Internet.

During an official hearing in Boston, where these issues were to be discussed, the security guards were forced to exclude a large number of people who wanted in and have their voices heard. This itself might not sound too strange, but later it was revealed that Comcast had [hired people](#) just to "fill out the room" and take no action what so ever. By doing so they figured there wouldn't be very many seats left for opponents... The criticism however was quick to come - take a look at this [clip](#) (video) from [Save The Internet](#).



Prior to the hearing, the "recruits" were carefully instructed and each given a yellow marker. This was the scenery: Several of them fell asleep and weren't at all interested in the current issue. One of them revealed that his only mission there was to fill out a seat, you can listen to the [clip here \(sound\)](#). Comcast's spokeswoman Jennifer Khoury told the [media](#) that they had hired people to save seats for Comcast employees who contingently would show up. But the truth was that the only ones kept out of the room were the critics. Furthermore, some individuals brought their characters to life to the extent that they started applauding vigorously when Comcast's Chief Executive held his presentation.

In Washington it is common that people are hired to fetch good seats for politicians and lobbyists, but in Comcast's case many felt that it was wrong to take this kind of action at an open hearing held in a University. This incident has driven both Comcast antagonists and net neutrality fighters to strive on in their battle.



# Twitter attack

## Journalist is being heckled at a fair in Austin



**A** journalist named [Sarah Lacy](#) from [Business Week](#) interviews the founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, during the fair [South by Southwest \(SXSW\)](#) earlier in March. An interview she now probably bitterly regrets.

Zuckerberg is infamous for his “difficult personality” in terms of interviewing him, and in this case it didn’t make the whole thing any easier considering the fact that the interview took place in a room filled with a fretful, tech freak audience. To complicate things even more, this fretful audience was also remarkable loud and frequently connected to Twitter, where they didn’t hesitate to express their discontent.

### What was the interview like?

During the first half of the interview, Zuckerberg mostly talk about how Facebook makes a big contribution in positively changing the world. Zuckerberg makes a few far fetched statements where he more

or less says that Facebook reduces terrorism and generally makes the world a better place. Every now and then he also manages to break in with the Facebook-mantra “We are helping people communicate more efficiently”.

Lacy is talking about the first time she interviewed Zuckerberg and how nervous he was back then, and during her story some people in the audience are starting to ask themselves what her question really was and where this interview is heading. Critics think that Lacy is being far too private and even “flirty” in her use of body language. Furthermore the critics say that Zuckerberg is avoiding straight answers to questions concerning what went wrong with the Facebook service [Beacon](#) (which we have written about earlier).

At one point, he replies to a vague question with “You have to ask questions”, which results in frenetic applause and howls of joy in the audience. A few minutes later, when Lacy



[Scobleizer](#) : Zuckerberg is giving lots of PR answers. Lacy is asking too many business questions. << (2008-03-09 15:43:57)



[Scobleizer](#) : Twitterer's hate Lacy. << (2008-03-09 15:53:12)



[Scobleizer](#) : Sarah Lacy lost control of the interview because she just isn't very good. Twitter is going crazy with critiques. << (2008-03-09 15:58:59)



[Scobleizer](#) : @[markwallace](#) Lacy didn't do her homework on the audience. This is a geek/designer/creative audience. Not one focused on business. << (2008-03-09 16:00:15)



[Scobleizer](#) : The audience as getting outright hostile toward Lacy and she basically asked audience to send her a message about why she sucked. << (2008-03-09 16:02:21)

is stuck in a discussion about Zuckerbergs notepad, a guy in the audience shouts out: “Talk about something interesting!”

Lacy replies: “Try doing what I do for a living, it’s not as easy as it looks”, and then she hands over power to the audience by letting them break through questioning Zuckerberg directly.

There is a clip from the interview [here at Viddler \(video\)](#) but it is hard to get a sense of the atmosphere here. Apparently the most negative critics were seated in the very back, heckling both Lacy and Zuckerberg. Some of the people there wrote comments like “ask something interesting” or “let us ask the questions” on their Twitter pages. To get a sense of what the twittering was like, take a look at Internet profile Roberts Scobles Twitter-stream here at the top of the page.

### Why did it all go so wrong?

According to an analysis by [Brian Solis](#) one of the reasons for this hostile atmosphere was that the audience was made up of several radical Facebook-supporters whom were there to defense Zuckerberg by “attacking” Lacy. Solis goes on by saying that when Lacy realized the audience’s hostility, she was hurt and turned defensive. By this point the discussion on Twitter was no longer about Zuckerberg or Facebook but only about how bad Lacy was handling the interview. Other critics like Robert Scoble say that Lacy didn’t quite understand the target group or what she had gotten her self into. Regardless of the reason, Lacy without doubt felt persecuted and will probably take careful considerations before accepting an interview offer like this next time...

# ***Blog diaries - a little bit closer to the truth***

## **GUEST WRITER:**

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***I***n 2008, there are not a lot of people who haven't heard of blogs. There are millions of them out there and all kinds of people seem to be writing blogs. People have definitely realized the benefit of using blogs as a way of reporting on their lives, but lately companies have also realized the media value in blogs and bloggers have turned into media outlets. But there is one area where blogs haven't been explored enough and that's using them as a research tool.

Asking respondents to write diaries is a qualitative research technique that's often used in ethnographical studies or when the researcher tries to explore complex subjects. The way the method is performed is by giving paper diaries to the respondents, which they fill in for example once a day. The technique is especially good when you want to explore the development of consumer behaviour over time or to go deep into a subject. It's also a good method to use if you want to

explore how new products are received and perceived on a market.

This article will shed some light on how this technique can be improved by making diaries digital. The book (diary) is replaced with a private blog (electronic diary), which is only accessible and open for the respondent and the researcher. In the blog both the respondent and the researcher can post and comment everyday, upload images or films, reflect over subjects, refer with links, etc.

I've been using this technique for two different studies, and here are four benefits that I found to be especially useful when using blogs instead of paper diaries:

## **1. Closer to the truth**

The format of diaries is in itself private, which contributes to the fact that you probably don't have to worry about any group influences affecting the result negatively. By making the diaries digital and put them online you add an extra layer of truth on the technique. The

anonymous nature of the Internet makes it easier for people to tell the truth. The Internet is in a way the truth medium. There's no other medium than the Internet where people tend to complain and rant so much for example. The tonality of the Internet is more relaxed. People make contact with complete strangers, upload pictures of themselves on their social media profiles etc. Given all this blogs will provide you with insights closer to the truth than paper diaries as people automatically feel free to express themselves without the self-censorship associated with classical research.

### 2. Reach

Since this technique works with any kind of devices that can hook up to an Internet connection makes it very accessible. This increases your chances of getting more global insights since you can easily recruit people from all around the world. And also the respondent doesn't need to be in the same place when reporting. For example if you're studying travel - instead of having people discussing their latest trip, you can have the respondents blog directly while they're travelling, giving the researcher instant live consumer experiences and reactions. While paper diaries are dependent on the good memory of the respondent (or be in the mood) blogs are more instant and direct. Since blogs are accessible from mobile devices people can upload images of hotels, restaurants, or make blog posts on the street straight from their mobile phone in the exact moment he/she experience something interesting - no risk of forgetting important reactions.

### 3. Better references

Mood boards are great but they're still a bit limited - there's no motion or sound. With

blogs the respondents can film themselves using your product or they can refer to a clip on YouTube or simply upload an image from Google Images or blog pictures straight from their digital cameras given that most online audiences have already done something like this already. And because the references are digital they're easy to use later on in briefings or in presentations to the client.

### 4. Better probing possibilities

Since the blog contains a commentary function, this opens up great possibilities for you as a researcher to give instant feedback to the respondents.

If you notice that the respondent starts to tell you something extra interesting you can immediately make a question in the commentary field. Either a discussion starts in the commentary field between you and the respondent or he/she can give you an explanation to your question in the next post. The probing effect or the interactive feature of blogs is almost impossible in traditional diaries since the researcher often reads the diary several weeks after the respondent is experiencing what he/she writes about. This makes paper diaries dependent on the memory of the respondents.

The above benefits highlight some of the ways that digital can improve marketing research. By making diaries interactive and not a one-way communication the study gets richer in terms of better probing possibilities and references. The fact that the Internet is in its nature both anonymous and accessible makes this technique appropriate for exploring subtle behaviours that you could have missed with traditional paper diaries because people tend to forget or are not willing to tell the truth. In short blog diaries bring you a little bit closer to the truth.

# *Creating identities online*

## *Tools and services*

**I** dentity is a troublesome chapter to most of us. At first sight, identity can be thought of as an outermost individual phenomenon. But it seems more accurate to believe that we are actually reflections of our surroundings. On the Internet, the issue becomes even more complicated; here we are also offered the possibility of presenting ourselves with multiple identities, which brings up several questions: Are we really the person we say we are? And, even more embroiling, are we really aware of whom we are?

In this report, our theme subject will be “creating identities on the Internet”, and we will look upon the issue from various angles. Hopefully enabling us to present thoughts and ideas which may help us answer questions we should ask ourselves; who are we on the Internet? Does this image match who we want to be? And is it really safe to “be oneself” on the web?



The Internet offers a wide and humongous range of tools and services that people use to present themselves to others. Community-services such as [Facebook](#), [MySpace](#) and [LinkedIn](#) are probably the most famous ones, but since the entry of web 2.0 the Internet has no less than exploded with websites and tools for expressing and sharing one’s personal identity references with others. This is just what the definition for web 2.0 is all about; that Internet users collectively shall form an online-reality and a global forum for all the manifestations that form the human race.

This is also exactly what identity is all about. Our identity is often built in social contexts, in groups of people where we together form an underframe of expressions that we later, as individuals outside our daily

community, comfortably can present to other people whom we meet in our daily life. So, identity is a personal filter through which we communicate with our surroundings. The question of who we are without these numberless filters is not one easily answered, and it is the search itself that makes the Internet so powerful. Finally we have invented an effective tool enabling us to find and present our "real selves" to both the social structures we trust ourselves in relating to, and the people who stand outside our world of relationships. Even more interesting might be that the Internet also works as an excellent tool for discovering who we really are, or who we think we are. All the information and tools that the web produces and provides us with helps us create more and more diverse and interesting identities.

The most famous out of these tools is of course the blog; a concept and a term which really only describes a simple serialization tool. In its simplest form it may be a kind of online diary where we easily can elaborate our views, upload pictures and let the world outside our small private world come a little closer.

The fascinating thing about blogs is the interactive possibility they offer people in every corner of the world, who now have the opportunity to get to know each others habits a little better. We are becoming more and more active when it comes to making comments on all the cultural and personal traits that are represented on our blogs. The old diaries are therefore not only reserved for owner and author, but are now being consumed by a larger audience.

[Blogger](#), [LiveJournal](#), [Typepad](#) and [Wordpress](#) are the most used blog platforms on the Internet and daily attracts millions of people to sit in front of their computers and express their ideas on everything from simple, meaningless things to subjects such as political theory, economics and religion. The blog platforms have in the latest two or three years opened up for outside developers to join in and contribute with applications and it is now possible to complement your blog with things like streaming music players and map services like [Google Maps](#).



Another interesting phenomenon that recently has invaded the Internet is "micro-blogs" and this is surely something that will call for more attention during the year of 2008. Micro-blogging is all about writing short, concise messages via either Internet, cell phone or an IM-service (Instant Message) such as [AIM](#). [Twitter](#) is an example of a micro-blog service which is growing strong and another one is [Jaiku](#) who was bought by Google only two years after it was launched. [Pownce](#) is yet another service.

The common thing that binds these services together is the possibility to quickly and easily send short messages, files and links to friends and acquaintances. The focus here is to enable users to easily stay in touch with people who they hang with, have things in common with and want to share their daily lives with. This is the blogworld's deep core and therefore very interesting to study from an outside perspective. Point blank - you are your social network. For a good explanation of how it all works, take a look at [this clip \(video\)](#).

But blogging is in many ways a feature and not an overall solution for building ones "personself" on the Internet. Consumption habits and general interests tell us just as much (if not more) about whom we are.

[Flickr](#), the extremely popular photo community where users can store their pictures, is a great example of a service that fulfills our need to express ourselves through what we see and experience. Both professionals and amateurs use Flickr to present whatever they have caught on camera. As the camera also is a personal extension of what our eyes register, it is naturally also a representation of how we both consciously and unconsciously look upon our relationship to our surrounding world.



There are numberless examples of websites and Internet forums that concentrate on how we express our personalities. When it comes to clothing habits, the phenomena "WAYWT" or "What Are You Wearing Today" a term that can be [found](#) both on Flickr and several other websites. Here it is all about uploading pictures of yourself and the choice of clothes you have made for the day. It may almost seem narcissistic, but at the same time it is a good example of

how the Internet expands the possibility of expressing yourself.

Music is another way of expressing your personality and i.e. the application and website [iLike.com](#) is built upon what kind of music you are playing in your iTunes or music library and lets people with the same taste of music introduce themselves to each other. [Librarything.com](#) is focusing on what kind of books you keep on your bookshelf and match you up with like-minded book lovers all around the world.

Services that describes your consumption habits and identity are especially growing fast on the web and the variety of Identity-creating services online are almost as countless as the number of users. Websites such as [Digg](#) and [Delicio.us](#) help us share the news, sites and links we find interesting, and these are also excessively useful when building your own personal library of information. As we collectively build all these communication platforms, it will be outmost interesting to see which new expressions will come along. And as we are the complex human beings that we are, the tools of today and the future, which the Internet can provide us with, are one of the most fundamental mainstays in the development and search of our "true selves".



# *Identities in diverse situations*

## *The importance of “being oneself” in the right moment*

**I**n most situations and interactions we have the need to present ourselves as slightly different characters in order to mesh with our surroundings.

When I am composing this text, for instance, I am only a writer with the assignment to highlight this subject in a moderately penetrating but still easily understood way. At other times, I adjust my person and my choice of words so that my closest friends, while meeting together over a beer a Friday night, can understand that I’m still in touch with my personality type and the language usage which they have learned to associate with me. In that kind of environment, my role as “media writer” doesn’t play such a great part anymore, and when my use of language and choice of words change, so does my identity to some extent. A classic example of how tricky the intervention between our different roles on the Internet

can become is when your boss wants to add you on Facebook, amidst all groups, applications and odd individuals which you have chosen to ally yourself with. These are moments when our beloved Internet shows its foremost weakness, but at the same time, its strength with all its niched services which has arisen in the latest couple of years. The only problem is, as in real life, to be able to keep our different worlds and the roles we play in them apart.

For example, [LinkedIn](#) is more about building networks within career. Here we attach our professional CV’s and we seek our future path among people who we only relate to in terms of work positions. Here, we present our “formal self” above all, while



on Facebook, we have the opportunity of being somewhat more “our selves”. “Being ourselves” is of course an incredibly vague term, but in comparison with MySpace you find that members on Facebook choose a more “tidy approach”.

MySpace has become a venue for several alternative personalities with fictitious alter egos and forms to present where you stand in relation to your surroundings. Here, avatars and nick-names are also more commonly used. The difference between those who, for example, use MySpace and those who use Facebook will probably become more and more obvious as time passes by, depending on the demands on content that we as individuals have to be able to call upon a

more and more precise image of ourselves. You can read more about the difference between Facebook- vs. Myspace-users in [this article](#) written by Danah Boyd last year. It shows (not surprisingly) that Facebook-users tend to be more “academic” than MySpace-users.

It is probably in this respect that communities and the Internet in greater means will create more and more advanced and creative tools to help us users call upon our plural “unique selves”. So, the Internet doesn’t only give us the opportunity of presenting ourselves, but helps us create new identities. Identities that probably in some means also will affect us as individuals when logged off the computer’s social platforms and logged in to reality.

# *The commercial aspect*

## *About the importance of cultural understanding*

**W**hich commercial motives are actually to be found behind all these web services, where people now so voluntary and unsealed present themselves and their many interests?

As member or user of these kinds of services, one often only sees the self-interest, but not the commercial ulterior motive behind the origin of them. So who are the originators and owners behind the most popular websites, and what does their goal look like, seen from a market perspective? This is also an interesting question in times when consumer groups speak up louder than ever before and companies are succeeding in creating a more frictionless relationship between the market and its users.

The creating of identities and the provision of several free and/or subscription-based social tools is nowadays a popular business model on the Internet.

The largest media conglomerates in this business field have all (or almost all, anyway) been involved in several rumored buys or have encroached important market shares through actual take-over of social communities and corporations within “new media”, in the latest years. In July 2005, News Corp. went through with the much noted purchase of MySpace for \$ 580 million and ever since there has been a veritable “net-war” going on where those involved fought over who can call themselves master of the never petering profit fountain that social media assumably is.

Nowadays, Microsoft has a share in Facebook and Flickr is owned by Yahoo, that as recently as this February was exposed to an aggressive purchase-offer by no one less than Microsoft. YouTube was, as earlier mentioned, bought by Google and in our era of high-tech it is apparently the information asset and user content that are the most attractive products.



Many companies are specifically interested in finding the most precise information on consumer habits as possible, as well as analysis on why and how these habits are emerged. Therefore, social networks and appertaining web services are a power-device to relatively easy enable studies and strategic mountings of selected target groups.

The procedures for reaching an optimal market vein within these networks are constantly spelling each other. Some in more creative ways than others. Banners, animations, viral marketing, campaign sites, search engine optimization and sponsorship of individual bloggers are some of the strategic tools used in what seems to be an increasing position hunt. So far though, no model has proved itself of being blanket enough when it comes to capturing potential consumers optimally.

Companies though, seem to think that an increasing collaboration between the owner corporations of community services makes the marketing process more stabilized. It gives them an underframe to rely on and can quickly purchase analysis material or in other ways acknowledge tendencies

and trend divisions on the market.

The downside though, is that most social media users on the Internet today are well aware of this situation and the kickback created is a tail hunt where users are doing their best in avoiding advertisement, while the market indefatigable are chasing on in attempts to catch up with the prey before they manage to escape and click on and away.

Most advertisement that is being presented and produced for the web and through community services today, is as a rule relatively relation free and lacks context in the environments that users use. The connection with the individual or the environment and net behavior that the individual has accepted as his or her own, is in many cases too vague or weak, or worst case scenario - totally irrelevant. The fact that a banner offering to switch broadband provider is presented to a person paying a visit to her own Facebook-account is in many ways very strange. It becomes a difficulty for the supposable costumer to see the connection between his Facebook visit and the ad presented, and the possibility of creating an effectual relationship is consequently lost.

The value in the information provided by the social web services is perhaps more about understanding and somewhat adopting the user's perspectives; to interpret

Internet as a relationship forum for millions of individuals; a network, loosely put together by innumerable manifestations and identity alignments that gather activists, users and individual to effectually enable the appraisals which represent their culture and makes them visible. A more organic perspective. Therefore, one of the keys to successful marketing on the Internet, could be how to counter and combine these worlds without seeming offensive or create negative irritation.

Within the innovative companies that develop and nowadays represent the cream of the Internet's expression basis, a more cultural accented attitude is being held where focus lies in developing models which relies on these identities under frames and cultural drifts. They honestly want to create an environment that helps users to nurse their individual identity frameworks.

The company world at large has a lot to learn from these relatively young companies and its leaders; such as communicating through different social structures with a more relaxed and honest attitude. This doesn't mean that results and goals necessarily have to be less successful. If you look at the originators of the most successful business models and community websites today, you pretty quickly understand that they reflect their own most faithful users; personalities like [Mark Zuckerberg](#) behind Facebook, [Kevin Rose](#) at Digg or [Biz Stone](#), co-creator of Twitter, are all just as much icons for an entire generation as they are leaders and advocates for a whole new series of company- and business models.



The dialogue between users and product developers here is so open that there exists relative elbowroom for quick modifications in the product catalog. In this way, the products supply a more comprehensive relationship to their users and have a stronger and faster appeal than even the most punchy product campaign.

The commercial accentuation and the companies that want to visualize themselves more on the Internet should, in other words, pursue a bit more cultural enlightenment in this area.

# Group dynamics

## *A part even in the digital world*



**T**he fact that group dynamics play an important part in digital life isn't all that strange considering the shape that the Internet has been given and taken upon. This is an aspect which constantly reminds us of that fact.

The open dialogue which among other things, can be held through comment opportunities on blogs and forums, creates new possibilities, as well as challenges, when speaking of the Internet as an effective arena for discussion. Who are these people who write comments and how well to they represent the readership surrounding a specific blog?

A problem may occur when only the most active and frequent users and readers are those who let their voices be heard. This can create a false image of the general public opinion - perspectives are put at risk of being narrowed down. Another tendency is that blog authors with similar views and ideas bring on an effect of "group think". In other words, some questions and standpoints have greater possibility of gaining penetrating power. The Internet as a new media is therefore at risk of adopting the same shape as "traditional media", where only a few big

actors emphasize the things that lie in their own interest.

The majority of Internet users are still somewhat stuck in the passive behavior which television has taught us. So we are consequently waiting to be served instead of taking an active and participating role. Hopefully though, the interaction between different actors on the Internet will be more well-balanced as time goes by. If this happens, what will the difference between large established Internet services look like, if at all. Will any difference be acknowledgeable? For instance, an average YouTube-user probably consumes many more video clips than he or she both uploads and actively comments on. However, on Digg, where several subject areas and news articles are easily attached, there may be a greater number of active users. The same goes for del.icio.us. In other words, there lies a humongous difference in how we can consider our participation, depending on how the different services are constructed. There is hardly any point in denying the fact that the Internet withholds a large portion of group dynamics. But surely, we will continue to adopt and play different roles to different extents of activation.

# *The future of “identity breeding” on the Internet*

*Are we finally about to create our personal paradise?*

**T**hese days, when more and more people are affecting and being globally affected by the digital world and its constantly populated platforms for expressing oneself, we will surely experience several contemporary paradigm shifts.

The constant increase of information flow and its technology offers people the possibility to actively question and challenge established norms. The increasing demand on individually being able to create and present a more summarizing wholeness - free, or at least less tied down to historically inherited ways of acting and thinking - is a stock worth notice.

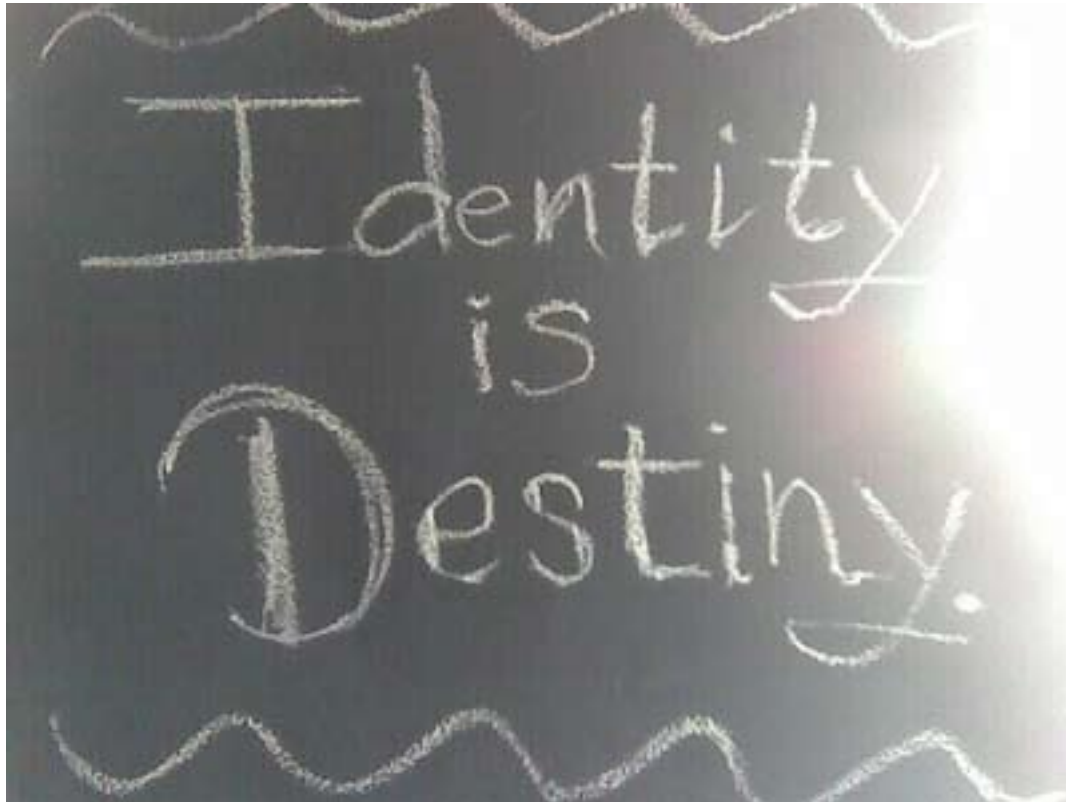
Something that also will be interesting and necessary for creating an identity on the Internet in the future, is greater access to trustworthy guidelines; personified guides enabling us to face and communicate with all the worlds and expressions that now quickly are enveloping around us.



“Recommendation-services” and the “conceptual development” are also well worth watching. The so called “tags”, or meta data, signal that something is about to happen. Amazon, Ebay and Flickr have been among the first to implement this semantic system in their services.

Several blog platforms are now also offering users the possibility to easily categorize posts and inlays with short, describing keywords. It’s hard to say in what way this will continue to develop in the future, but we will definitely have reasons to keep ourselves updated on this matter.

**40** Further on, there are factors indicating that



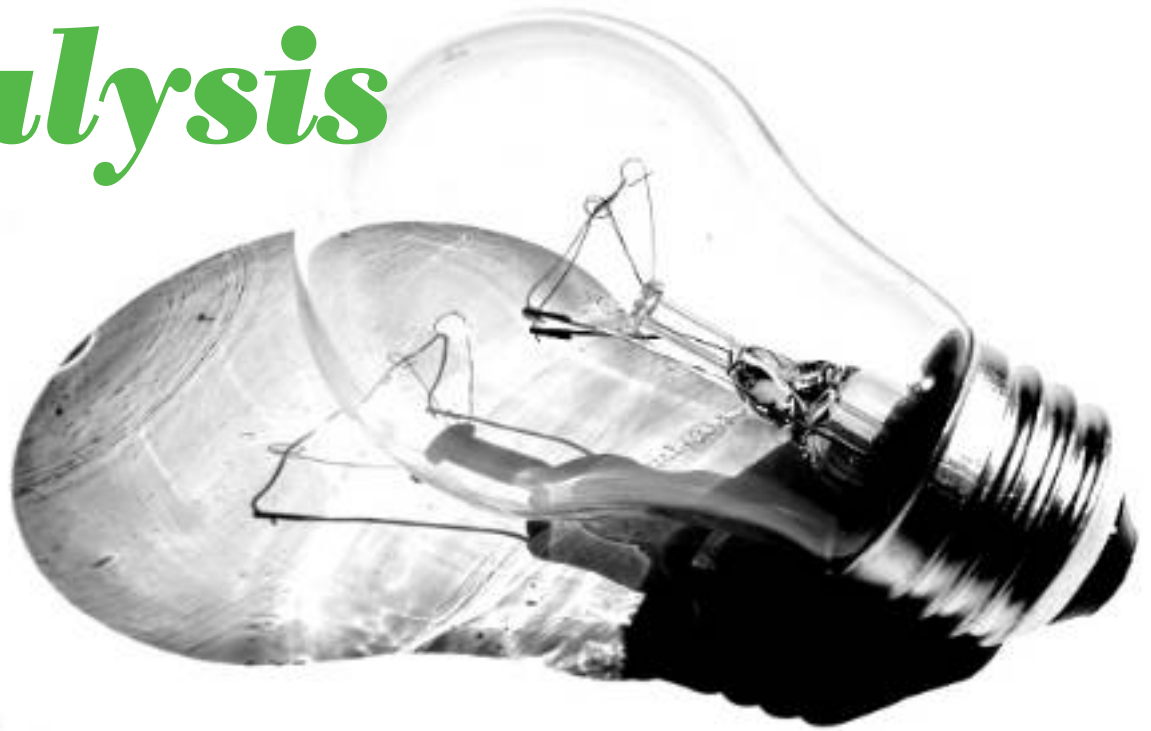
The Internet creates a more “self-consuming behavior”. Perhaps our options for following and analyzing ourselves out of the inlays we have made on our own blog or Flickr-account will become more explicit. These manifestations make ones own identity more visible to others and to ourselves.

It may be presumed that online products and space, enabling heedful storage of ones documents, movies, music, pictures, articles, links etc (also in order to express ourselves), will be more and more personalized, both in form and function. The things consumed in your network and the type of data archived, thus help the user to, with time, form him or herself an idea of his or her personal

consumption habits and the social network structures he or she may take part in. For example, what music you were listening to in 2008, what movies you saw or which web articles you found most interesting. In other words, a well-filled archive describing our consumption and way of living today, is being built for the future.

Whatever the solutions for our future presence on the Internet will look like, they will surely circle around identity and communication between old and innovative structures, which is the most fundamental field for continued development.

# Analysis



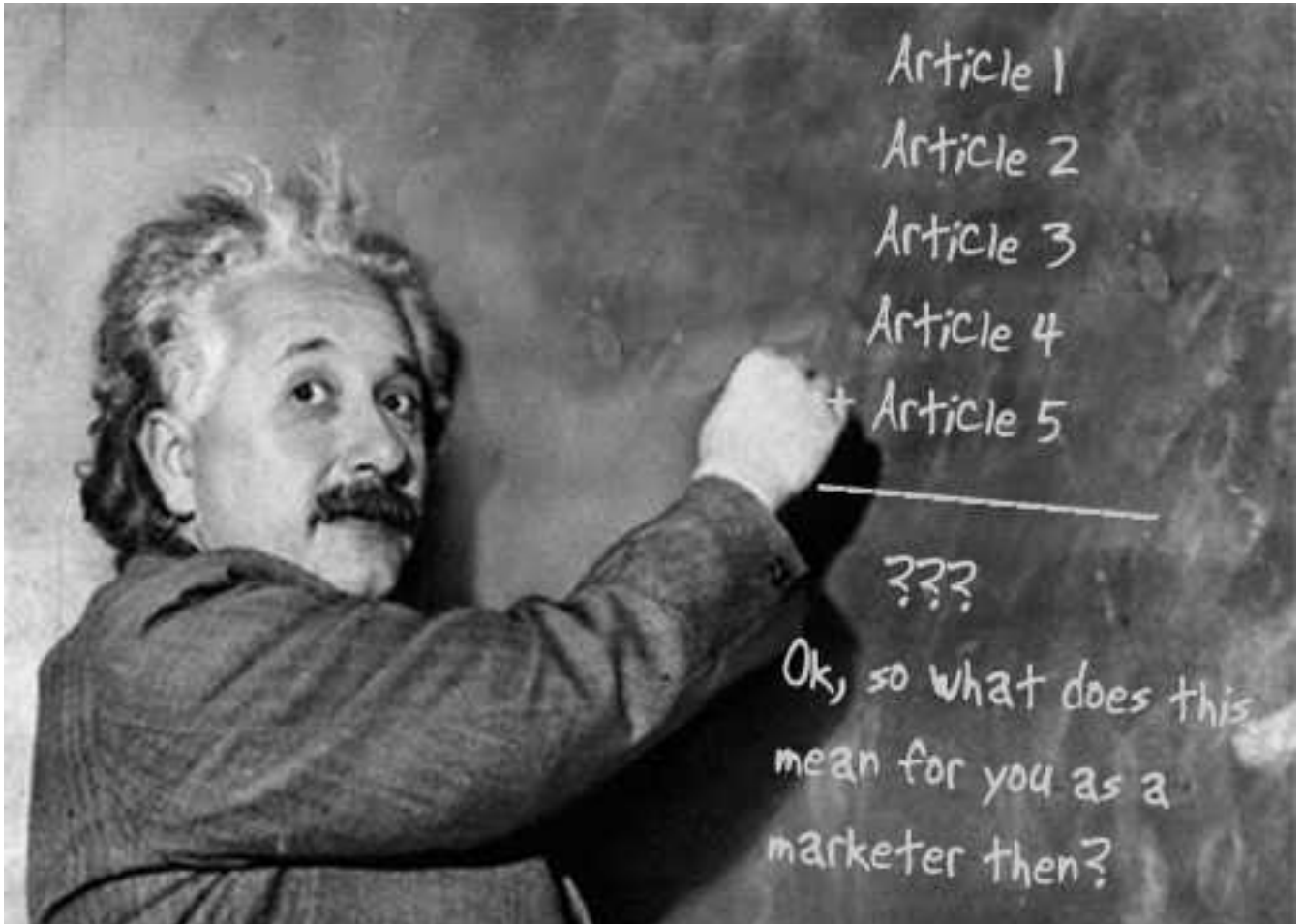
**A** continuously hot topic on the Internet is freedom of speech and how we should handle it. We think that the Internet is a positive and democratizing force which will aggravate dictatorships around the world to control their citizens. But this is not only an interesting issue for citizens and freedom fighters; it is equally a great concern for globally thinking marketers. In our December issue we got an update of the status in China, when Miami Advertising wrote about the climate of publicity in Shanghai. In that article it became even clearer that every industry is facing globalization and that the marketing business poses no exception. Even marketers in Sweden have to start using a more “global mind”.

But even here in the Western world, freedom of speech can be threatened and some actors are becoming more and more creative in finding ways to silence their opponents.

For example, Comcast has its own special method for hushing antagonists – following politicians and PR-consultants in Washington and bringing in “seat warmers” to make sure that there won’t be any seats left for their opponents when being charged with questionable methods.

For those who, for various reasons, must be careful with every word they share on the Internet, more and more tools for protection are being offered. This might be something some bloggers, who’ve lately had to face “stormy weather” due to certain inlays, should think about next time. What you write may have consequences that you never could imagine while writing it. And it isn’t always a question of “who is right and who is wrong?”, but more of how the text is being interpreted by readers and, in some cases, employers.

The incident with the Zuckerberg interview at SXSW in Austin shows that it’s never



pleasant to encounter a “lynchmob”, regardless of whether it’s digital or physical. Some people simply seem to check in their empathy when attending seminars and they don’t hesitate to spread their discontent on social Internet forums like Twitter. This even more stresses the importance of knowing your target audience in advance. If wanting to face a chance of “controlling the room”, that is. The stake of standing up on a podium, without knowing your target group to 150 %, is just too high today.

Another interesting aspect of our digital life is how we to greater and greater extents are describing our identity in different ways on the Internet. Never before have we been offered so many identity-creating tools and users don’t seem to hold back one bit when it comes to sharing their lives and thoughts. So far, discussions concerning integrity and the downsides of social databases have been fairly discrete. But if companies and marketers don’t treat this information with

caution and respect, there lies a humongous risk in customer’s probability to revolt. If users feel that a certain service is too commercialized or if they don’t feel that they can trust the people behind it, they can, easy as ever, and in a split second, turn to a rival and start using their service instead.

Furthermore, it is important to give some thought to the fact that we all play different roles and consequently have different language usage on different websites. You are one person on LinkedIn, one on Facebook, one on your microblog and maybe yet another and another one on all the other blogs, forums etc that you may take part in. This is why it is so kittle to try generalizing within these roles, and the information received from single services never covers even close to enough. The reality is much too complicated to be fitted into a simple marketing equation, or too stiff analyzing models.

# *About Urban Lifestyle Report - New media*

**U**rban Lifestyle Report - New Media is a subscription-based **trend analysis report** which is published once a month. Based on current trends surrounding trademarks, media and consumers with focus on new media, some of the most exciting and important events, products and services that have been discussed on the Internet lately, are being marshaled and analyzed.

The purpose of our report is to **develop and concretize important trends and phenomena** that can be used in different ways within marketing and trademark-envelopment. Our reason for having a subscription-based report is that we want to enable our recipients to go back and look at old reports and along the way learn more and more about the essential trends that are about to drastically change the whole arena of marketing.

The main topic in our gathering of information is **consumer-generated sources** such as blogs, discussion forums, social networks and news services on the Internet, as well as sound- and video-podcasts. The places on Internet where consumers can make themselves **heard and seen**. These sources **are blended with traditional sources and surveys**, to achieve a balanced mix of opinions and more fact based knowledge.

**Feel free to contact us** if you have any questions concerning this report, want to know more about our other services or are curious about something else where we might be able to help you!



**A**t the company Urban Lifestyle we strive to help our clients **to listen to the consumers**. This means that we help our clients to handle the trends and discussions of today, which effect their own and their costumers marketing as well as product- and service development. We focus on **finding threats and opportunities within current trends and help our client concretize them**.

Our goal is to produce concrete and usable trend analysis at a reasonable cost - not general, sweeping and expensive. This is why we work on products like Urban Lifestyle, where the production cost can be shared between many recipients and thereby keep the price low for everyone.

We also work with **“trend surveillance”, seminars, workshops and projects** in areas and around trends that interest many of our clients. For example, we can model trend coverage (on monthly or quarterly basis), workshops, seminars and projects around most of the subjects that we write about in Urban Lifestyle Report.

Don't hesitate to contact us if you are interested in knowing more! You can reach us either via [email](mailto:info@urban-lifestyle.se) (info@urban-lifestyle.se) or phone, +46-8-501 643 77.

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