

"Ignoring this book is akin to ignoring your market."

—Philip Sheldrake, founding partner, Meanwhile, and author of *The Business of Influence*

# SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS

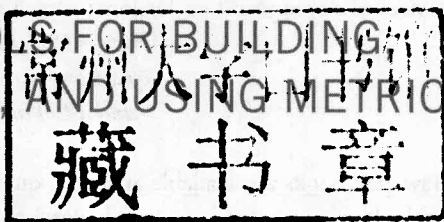
EFFECTIVE TOOLS FOR BUILDING,  
INTERPRETING, AND USING METRICS

**MARSHALL SPONDER**

FOREWORD BY **AVINASH KAUSHIK**, AUTHOR OF *WEB  
ANALYTICS 2.0* AND COFOUNDER OF MARKET MOTIVE INC.

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EFFECTIVE TOOLS FOR BUILDING  
INTERPRETING, AND USING METRICS



**MARSHALL SPONDER**



New York    Chicago    San Francisco    Lisbon    London  
Madrid    Mexico City    Milan    New Delhi    San Juan  
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## Praise for *Social Media Analytics*

Marshall has long been my “go-to” guy for the most vexing questions in social media measurement. Social media analytics is one of the most important areas of our industry, with a growing number of vendors and tools. Marshall's knowledge of the players and the landscape is second to none.

—Stephanie Agresta, EVP, Managing Director of Social Media, Weber Shandwick

Marshall has a naturally curious mind that often unearths innovative solutions. He also has a way with words that explains how he did what he just did. It's a fascinating combination

—Luke Brynley-Jones, Our Social Times

*You can't manage what you can't measure.* Social media is a loosely defined category of interactive Web sites within the boundaries of netspace. Its numbers are legion, and the experts who say they can tell you what they are about are equally legion. Marshall Sponder stands apart from the crowd with this work. Marshall has managed to cut through the hype and provide a common-sense roadmap to understanding the potential of this genre. His case study approach, borne of real-world experience, provides the expert and the amateur alike with bibliography, tools, links, and examples to shortcut the path to bedrock successes. This is a reference work for anyone who wants to explore the potential of social networks. With the help of this book, you can measure what you need to manage.

—W. Reid Cornwell, Ph.D., Chief Scientist, The Center for Internet Research

It's not enough just to listen to or monitor online voices anymore. The challenge of separating the influential signals from noise in the cacophony of voices across social and online communities is too hard to do manually or with traditional monitoring tools. Sponder's book makes compelling arguments for why listening intelligence matters and why marketing forevermore is becoming a blur of science and art, with measurement, analytics, and marketing intelligence having an increasingly critical role within the CMO's suite and boardroom.

—Gary Lee, CEO, mBLAST

The gap between data and usable information in social media measurement is still quite wide. Many listening platforms and tools attempt to cover that distance, yet come up short. In *Social Media Analytics*, industry veteran analyst Marshall Sponder effectively bridges that gap and provides useful material to build the skills and understanding you need to extract value and measure the results of your programs.

—Valeria Maltoni, *Author*, Conversation Agent

Marshall is one of the world's top social media practitioners and thinkers. In this book he accomplishes the rare task of delivering practical advice on social media analytics without getting bogged down in theory. A tour de force!

—Sebastian Wenzel, *Webanalyticsbook.com*

Social media led to a real earthquake in my business, public relations. It also made millions of people start dealing with public communications without even knowing how to do it or what the rules are. And last, but not least, in social media now, when there are more questions than answers. And none of them has provided any answers except for Marshall Sponder. Read this book and keep it next to your desk or on the front page of your Kindle, and you will know the answers too.

—Maxim Behar, *CEO, M3 Communications Group, Inc.,  
a Hill & Knowlton Associate*

Social media has mushroomed to encompass more than a billion people worldwide which leads to a very difficult and interesting question—how to measure market effectiveness (analytics) of this medium? Marshall has done an excellent job in describing the tools and metrics used by various real world companies to measure the analytics of social media. This book is a must read for a digital marketing professional who plans to maximize marketing ROI in social media space.

—Dr. Ash Pahwa, *CEO, A+ Web Services*

*Social Media Analytics* is a thoughtful exploration into the evolving landscape of multi-channel social marketing and how to gauge campaign effectiveness and ROI. As social media technologies become more of a pervasive part of consumer's lives, techniques presented in this book become invaluable in allowing electronic marketers to master this new medium.

—Jared Freedman *President, Code4Software & Code4Mobile*

Marshall's book helps you cut through the hype of social media to develop a step-by-step plan for identifying the right targets, the right tactics, and then collecting and interpreting the right data. He goes just beyond the normal monitoring recommendations into detail on collecting, understanding, and measuring the illusive ROI that has been missing from most social media books. Marshall uses his industry knowledge and practitioner experience to provide thought-provoking insights, vendor examples, case studies, and actionable advice for chasing the elusive social ROI.

—Bill Hunt, CEO, BackAzimuth Consulting;  
Coauthor, Search Engine Marketing Inc.

Bouncing off boardroom walls across America is the mostly vacuous question, "What's the ROI of social media?" Marshall Sponder adds a necessary context to the question, mixes in a healthy dose of streetwise practicality, and delivers a thorough work to help executives answer the question they really meant to ask: How will we uncover, recognize, and utilize the value of emerging media? Though the ROI question seems intelligent, it hides a consuming fear of impending insignificance. Sponder's *Social Media Analytics* will help address the public question of return and give decision makers the peace of mind they seek before plunging into social media. I especially appreciate Marshall's focus on the value of real-life, human analysts and his unique exploration of the intersection of point-of-sale and social media (there's hidden treasure in those pages!).

—Trey Pennington, International Speaker

In *Social Media Analytics*, Marshall Sponder brilliantly describes the challenges, benefits, and thrill associated with understanding true customer behavior. By melding client case studies with actual data-driven tactics, Mr. Sponder provides the aspiring analytics expert with the tools necessary to be successful. He reviews successful activities at real companies, he interviews thought leaders who are truly in the trenches, and he provides a comprehensive outline of available resources and the analytical approaches they require. This book goes so far beyond the "I have 20,000 followers, I am successful" mind-set that is so common in social media today. Buy this book, and be prepared to leverage social media in a profitable, actionable, and credible manner.

—Kevin Hillstrom, President of MineThatData



Social analytics in 2011 remains a nascent capability, and this is reflected in my wholehearted endorsement of this book despite our different approaches to influence and ROI. Let's get this straight—there is no better independent authority on the tools and techniques of social analytics than Marshall Sponder, and ignoring this book is akin to ignoring your market.

—Philip Sheldrake. *Founding Partner, Meanwhile; Author, The Business of Influence: Reframing Marketing and PR for the Digital Age, April 2011*

Those working in social media, executives, agencies, consultants, take notice! Marshall Sponder has his finger on the pulse of the future of social media ... measurement and ROI. *Social Media Analytics* uses case studies, interviews, and multicultural campaigns to answer these questions: What's the value of a fan? What tools are needed to invest? How should influence and ROI be measured? A must read!

—Dr. Ira Kaufman, *Visiting Professor of Marketing, Lynchburg College and President of Entwine Digital*

Marshall Sponder's book, *Social Media Analytics*, is a must read for anyone who is tasked to make or support corporate decisions on product development, placement, marketing campaigns, public relations initiatives, or investor relation communication decisions, just to mention a few. This book gives meaningful insights, hands-on examples, well-researched information, and sources to the reader in a way that is easily understood and can be imminently and effectively applied. Marshall Sponder provides valuable insights and clearly communicates the meaning, value, and importance of social media analytics in today's corporate global environment and covers existing challenges such as commercializing/reacting to public opinion. This book is a must-have and an invaluable resource to anyone who needs to know!

—Henri-Pierre Hirts, *Interim Sr. Manager CEO, COO, and Consultant for Various International Companies*

Marshall takes the reader through the elusive question of how you can measure your social media marketing efforts. For those who are results-driven and -oriented, this is the book that will answer your questions on the ROI of social media.

—Tamar Weinberg, *social media strategist for [www.techipedia.com](http://www.techipedia.com) and author of The New Community Rules*

*I dedicate this book to the emerging field of  
Social Media Analytics and Social Media Metrics*



## FOREWORD

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I'm astonished at how much marketing has evolved in just the last 25 years.

We've lived in the era of "shout marketing," where effective marketing meant shouting ever louder on television or radio, in magazines and their ilk. Then the Web came along and brought with it "hyper relevant marketing." Now we could use delightful behavior signals (a search query, content on the page, and more) to show a highly relevant ad. Right under our feet, which are slowly giving way to "conversational marketing," where the ability to influence people is being powered by a brand's ability to participate in, and initiate, meaningful conversations with current and prospective customers.

It is tremendously exciting, and scary.

Partly because we live in a world of "and" and not in a world of "or." At least for now, you can't kill your entire TV budget, or your Bing budget, or your AOL display ads. It has to be TV and Bing and display ads, and now, Facebook and Twitter, and the next cool thing on the horizon. Partly because it is exceedingly hard to know what success looks like in the world of conversational marketing and how to measure it.

That is where Marshall's delightful book comes in.

In 12 breezy chapters, Marshall takes you from zero to ninety m.p.h. and covers every aspect of the social media space. Starting with identifying the watering holes your customers visit, taking action based on valuable content, the ins and outs of identifying the relevant data, and lovingly dissecting it all to separate the wheat from the chaff and to find the real gold. OK, I might be stretching the metaphor a bit, but I am sure you catch my drift.

You'll be a lot less scared of all the "social stuff" by the end of this book, and on behalf of your company, you'll craft an amazing social media strategy that will exponentially improve the value of your brand.

Allow me to close with a rule that I'd first postulated almost seven years ago. It's called the 10/90 rule. It states, simply, that if you would like to invest \$100 in making smart decisions, then invest \$10 in tools and invest \$90 in smart brains.

We live in a world that is evolving and changing at an alarming rate (hurray!). We are surrounded by a raft of fantastic free tools and a number of very good paid tools. In the end, unlike in ancient times, having the most expensive tool will not determine your success, but having the right people in charge of your social analytics strategy will. People matter because they'll understand your business, they'll understand the ecosystem, they'll understand other people, and they'll think smart and move fast to ensure that the glory you deserve is delivered to you. So invest your budgets appropriately.

Good luck, and happy analytics!

Avinash Kaushik

Author: *Web Analytics 2.0* and

*Web Analytics: An Hour a Day*

Blog: <http://www.kaushik.net/avinash>

## PREFACE

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We are entering a world where technology and marketing converge. How our ideas are executed has become more important than what they are, and the medium has become the message. Perhaps nowhere is the latter more true than in the realm of social media analytics.

The technologies and methods put in place to communicate directly shape results, in terms of both cost and marketing effectiveness. In Chapter 8, Gary Angel, CTO of Semphonic, shared his view that the tools used drive the data we get from social media analytics and shape the results we are able to achieve. Make the wrong choice and the costs dramatically multiply, leading to failure or, at best, to partial success. Choose the right technologies and the work of sifting through social media is made much easier, more economical, useful, and enjoyable.

Despite all the information on what social media analytics is capable of, there is so much misinformation, fragmentation, and confusion within the marketplace today that it is very difficult to know how to choose the right platforms and how to set up the right processes to achieve our goals.

Another book needed to be written in order to make sense of it all.

*Social Media Analytics* is for anyone who seeks the right technologies to implement social listening and measurement programs. As a larger part of our lives have become ruled by social media, we need to know what these platforms are capable of and how to use them effectively to achieve our goals.

I wrote this book to share with my readers choices they should be aware of, but I stayed away from advising which

platforms to pick (just as, during the first Gulf War, the coalition forces marched right up to Baghdad, and then stopped).

Technology shapes meaning, the medium becoming the message, and it reminds me of what Marshall McLuhan wrote 47 years ago in his famous book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. As a matter of fact, the first edition of McLuhan's *Understanding Media* was published by McGraw Hill, as is this book.

So many unpredictable things are happening in the world right now (what futurists would call "wild cards") that I think it's extremely hard to anticipate what is going to happen next, and this applies to the subject of the book.

As we grapple with communicating the effectiveness of social media, *Social Media Analytics* has become the medium through which relevant data and insights are being conveyed to decision makers and stakeholders. As with any medium, according to Marshall McLuhan, the message has changed, and the implications of that change are profound. The way we successfully communicate information about social media and business is through the artful use of the tools and platforms needed to monitor and measure the information, and the nature of the people who run those applications.

Information culled from online social listening data is crucial for many businesses and organizations both large and small, profit and nonprofit. As marketing and communications professionals use social media for outreach, customer relations, branding, and crisis management, the success of these efforts is being shaped by analysts who (hopefully) possess an understanding of the businesses they are monitoring.

I believe that analysts are the best suited of all to conceive, implement, and deliver this information to clients, stakeholders, and management. As you read this book, the reasons

will become clear. This change in the messaging and deliverables is having a radical impact on the future of many fields, including public relations and marketing, which were hitherto dominated by content messaging, business development, ideas people, and spin. Social media analytics is now beginning to reach the boardroom. Agencies are increasingly refraining from reporting that which they too often do not understand, or from which they feel unable to get anything useful.

In February 2011, Paul Holmes, the originator of the Holmes Report and SABRE Awards, and I debated at the keynote presentation for the On the Top Conference in Davos, Switzerland. At this conference, Holmes said PR was going to take over marketing, and I was supposed to argue the reverse—that marketing would take over PR. Instead, I said that analytics would take over both.

As a result, somewhat convinced, Paul Holmes wrote a post at his blog ([blog.holmesreport.com](http://blog.holmesreport.com)) titled, “Does Your Agency Need a Chief Analytics Officer?” Holmes agreed that PR people needed to understand analytics better, in order to make it a much more robust element in both their planning and their evaluation, and that, in two or three years from now, every public relations firm that wants to be taken seriously in the C-suite and/or to play a lead marketing role will have a chief analytics officer in its senior leadership ranks.

I think Holmes was right in what he said in Davos. When you finish reading this book, you will be much closer to knowing what your own position is and understanding how to make sense of the technology, methodology, and platform choices before us.

Marshall Sponder  
Brooklyn, NY

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This book is too big to thank *any one person* for its preparation, but I'd like to thank many people who helped me, usually found by browsing my Facebook and Skype friends (in no particular order, so as to be fair to everyone) including my close friends, coworkers, and analytics subject area experts, including JoAnn Lefebvre, Leticia Colon, Cecilia Pineda Feret, Baraka Zahabian, Dean Landsman, Barry Flemming, Israel Mirsky, Stephanie Agresta, Rob Key, Stuart Levinson, Alexis Bizares, Mark Bennett, Philip Sheldrake, Giles Palmer, Luke Brynley-Jones, Murray Newlands, Simon McDermott, Gary Vaynerchuk, Loic Moisand, Michelle Chmielewski, Sebastian Wenzel, Dennis Mortensen, K. D. Paine, Lawrence Wintermeyer, Aleksander Stensby, Neil Scaife, Danny Dearlove, Elena Haliczner, Gianandrea Facchini, Valeria Maltoni, Gary Lee, Nathan Gilliatt, Drew Knapp, Richard Newton, Stuart Tracte, Trey Pennington, Jim Reynolds, Dennis Yu, Jennifer Needly, Gary Angel, Jim Sterne, Gail Gardner, Matthew Snodgrass, Bob Pearson, Jim Wiess, Paul Dyer, Jakub Hrabovsky, Kris Waldherr, Thomas Ross Miller, Alexa Scordato, Amber Naslund, Cory Hartlen, Amy Crehore, Avinash Kaushik, Bryan Eisenberg, Bill Hunt, Chase McMichael, Danielle Culmone Simon, Dani Horowitz, Charlie Oliver, Jeremy Merrin, Connie Bensen, David Meermen Scott, Dean Myers, Ingrid Saxon, Greg Verdino, Jayanth Vasudevan, Josh MacKey, Joseph Franklyn McElroy, Donna McElroy, Justin Kistner, Michael Demby, Paul Barron, Rebecca Lieb, Sara Holoubek, Stephanie Schwab, Valentina Atanasova, Warren Sukernek, Keith Woods-Holder, Sam Phillips, Sabrina Merchant, Drew Fortin, Eric Austrew, Karen Costa, Aaron C. Newman, Michael Hussey, Curtis Hogland, Pedro Leboy. Still, I probably left out



a lot of people who helped me, and there's no way to acknowledge all of them, but I hope by to honor them all with the best book I could write.

I also want to give a special thanks to my agent, Dean Landsman, for helping me create strategies to tackle writing *Social Media Analytics* and keep me focused throughout this process, plus my editor at McGraw-Hill, Donya Dickerson, who believed in me enough to help make this book happen. Also, a hearty thanks to Julia Baxter at McGraw-Hill for helping to promote the book. Finally, special thanks to JoAnn Lefebvre of Shift2InBound Marketing for helping with my overall Web site messaging, and the city of Providence, where much of this book was written.

Last, but not least, I want thank my family, Ilona Grochalska and Adam Sponder, for bearing with me while I was creating this book.

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