



Online Ethnography

Online Ethnography is a key research tool for online social insight projects.

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What is Online or Virtual Ethnography?

- **Online** or **Virtual Ethnography** is the observation and understanding of the online behaviour of a group of individuals engaging online around a Company, Brand, Product, Service or other common topic of interest.
- The **Online Ethnographer** will observe the online websites, forums, communities and public social networks where the individuals in the group are talking, sharing information, experiences or providing support with a situation.
- The **Online Ethnographer** will gather online artefacts including, videos, articles, photos, comments, blog posts and Microblog entries which reflect the online activity of the group.
- The **Online Ethnographer** may engage directly with active members of the online communities, forums and public social networks to gain a deeper insight.
- Online lives are studied, however it is key to that a holistic view is taken as online and offline lives are now very closely interconnected.

Virtual ethnography: identifies leading indicators & conversations



'Virtual ethnography is, ultimately, an adaptive ethnography, which sets out to suit itself to the conditions in which it finds itself.' – Christine Hine, 2007

Trained
online
anthropologists

Technology and
people



Observation & participation in online spaces to gather digital artifacts and insights

Observations & engagement with subset of group in online spaces to gather digital artifacts and insights

Mine and analyse social media conversations to identify sentiment relating to relevant topics

Key stages in Online Ethnography Studies



Agree the business questions to be answered



Identify key online destinations for exploration and analysis



Apply ethnographic principles and explore the questions online through qualitative participant observation & direct engagement with existing consumers



Organize the findings into an eco-system map to understand why online conversations are taking place and the needs that social media is fulfilling for the study group.

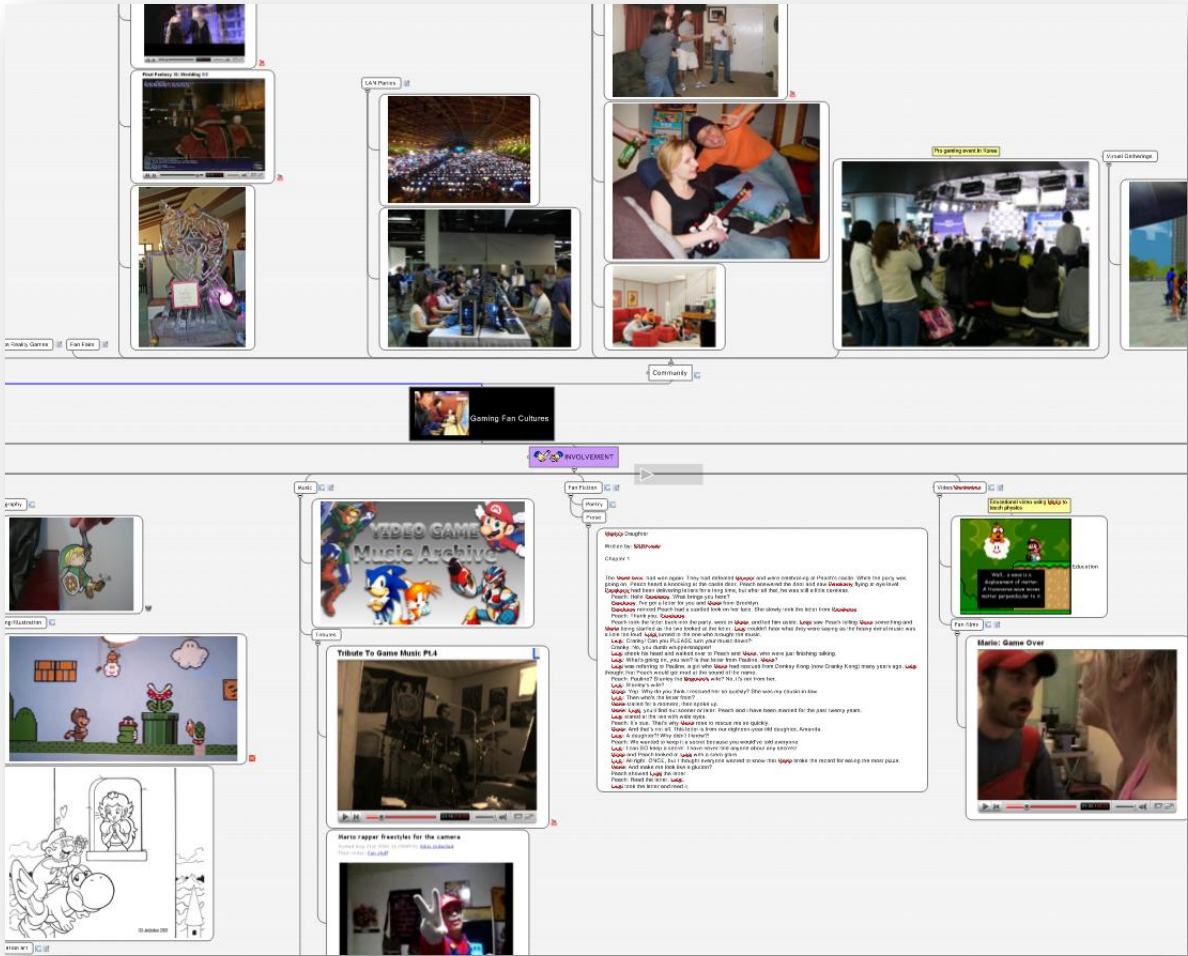


Identify the key themes to be explored using social media monitoring tool, from a combination of the dominant themes arising from the virtual ethnography and the key business themes.



Quantify volume of conversations in each area, conversation drivers and sentiment. This phase will generate the key areas of opportunity where action may be taken and impact measured.

A digital eco-system map is created highlighting key findings.



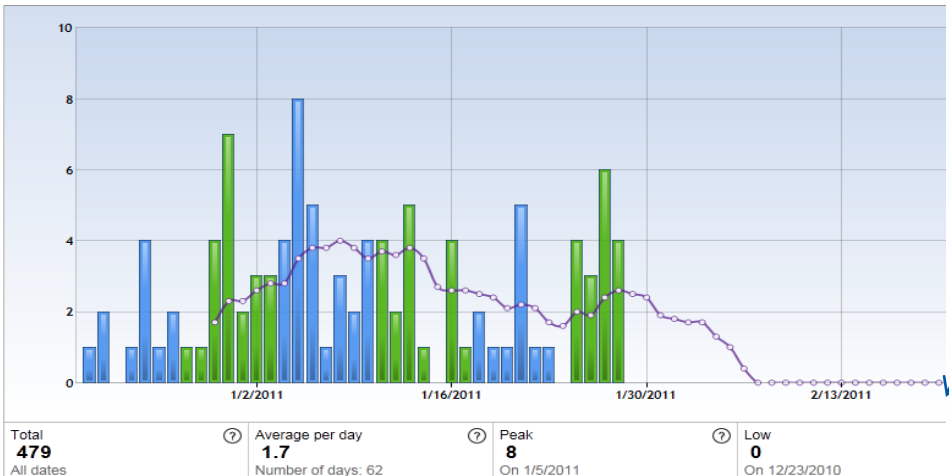
A collection of user-generated digital artifacts organized in topics and themes.

Artifacts are indexed and tagged.

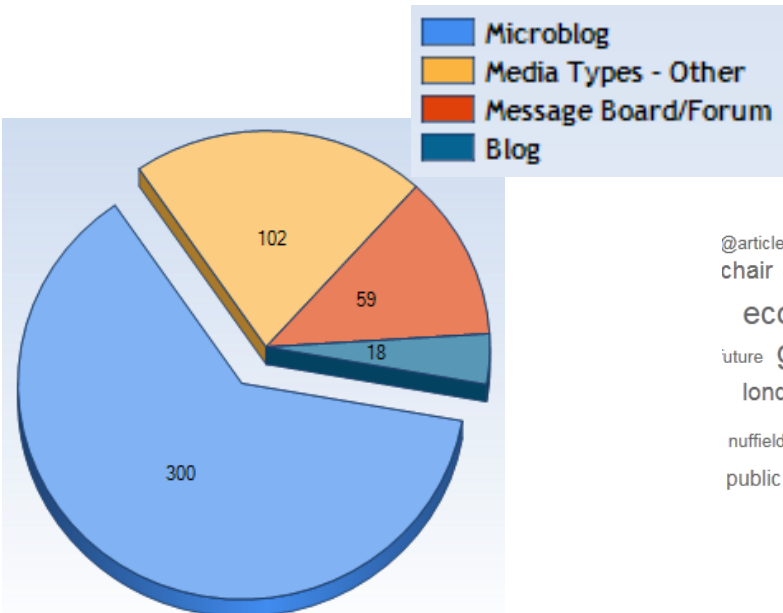
The themes & conversations, prioritise and drive the search criteria for

- tool based social media analysis
- Insight analytics including influencer (individual and domains) identification

Verify & validate key themes using Social Data Analysis



Primary Channels where conversation is taking place



Key themes and Topics

@article academic american annual **approx** author bank banks **bibtex** billion **building** business centre chair chairman change chief china city company council credit **CRISIS** david day debt development director **drag** economic economics **ECONOMY** europe european **event** executive financial fitness forum uture **global** gold government group growth gym health high house housing international journal london lse market markets meeting minister **minutes** model **mp3** national network networks news nuffield number obama obesity people percent **playlist** policy posting president prices **professor** public published **recorded** report social speaker street system **theatre** time title today two united university uploaded url volume where work **world** year years

Business Questions Addressed:

- What are the key areas which our key consumer groups are engaging with and which topics are they talking about?
- How can we use this knowledge to
 - understand our customers motivations when making purchase decisions
 - enhance or change our messaging to be more aligned to this group
 - increase the relevance of web site to reflect our customers interests
 - enhance or develop our existing products or create new ones
 - Enhance or develop our existing services or create new ones
- How can we enhanced our destination web properties using the digital eco-system to
 - Enhance and refine the content on the website
 - Increase share ability of content within the key customer and prospect group
 - Refine content to reflect key interests and seasonal changes
 - Increase traffic to the website or online service
 - Improve search engine optimisation keyword strategy
 - Improve social media connections and discovery of property



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