



Semiotics “The Study of Signs”

Semiotics is a key research tool for online social insight projects.

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What is Online Semiotics?

- **Semiotics** is the study of cultural signs and symbols.
- **Online Semioticians** look at the structure & meaning of online content.
- **Online Semioticians** deconstruct popular and shareable content into
 - What does popular and shareable content look like?
 - Text, Video, Photos, Blog Posts, Conversations, comments etc.
 - What are the key themes and topics in the content
 - News, Health, Science, Finance, Sport, Unusual
 - What is the underlying message in the content
 - Educate, Inform, amuse, alarm,
- **Online Semioticians** identify the relationship between online content & how people consume, share, react and respond to it.

Where can Semiotics add value?

- Semiotics provides analysis of the “unconscious cultural patterns” that shape online consumer behaviour and response to content and other online consumers.
- Semiotics uncovers “meaning” in the wider online cultural landscape, rather than simply spitting back the opinions of consumers.
- Semiotics, in conjunction with other Social Insight Methodologies can be applied to:
 - Brand strategy
 - Brand Positioning
 - Proposition development
 - Gap analysis
 - Market and competitive evaluation
 - Communications and advertising evaluation
 - Creative development
 - Product innovation
- 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.

- Objective of Project
 - Understand the impact of shared content on website visitors
- Key Questions
 - Is there an underlying semiotic code for the content which is most often shared?
 - Is there a difference in content shared in different geographic locations?
 - What impact does sharing content have on new users?
- Key findings
 - Yes, there is an underlying semiotic code for content most often shared
 - Yes, there is a difference in “how” content is shared in different geographies
 - Shared content increase the number of unique site visitors
- The approach
 - Identify Shared Content
 - Develop Semiotic Code
 - Develop Test Content
 - Run Trial
 - Analyse Results

Select "nnn" pieces of shared content

Video

News

Politics

Fashion

Pro-Gaddafi forces launch widespread offensives and rebels fortify their positions

Libya unrest continues – in pictures



- Ex-LSE head's trip vetted by spy chief
- The Monitor Group: Gaddafi's PR firm
- Fierce raids and clashes signals shift to civil war
- Libyan opposition to get advice from UK military
- Meghnad Desai: A heavy price for Saif's PhD

Andrew hosted dictator's son-in-law



Exclusive: Sakher el-Materi, son-in-law of deposed Tunisian president Ben Ali, attended lunch just months before uprising

- Andrew's Tunisia role examined

North-south gap in depression drugs

Doctors in the north prescribe antidepressants far more heavily than the rest of the country

- Blackpool: England's antidepressant capital
- Video: Depression on Blackpool's Golden Mile

Daily Star reporter quits in protest



Richard Peppiatt admits producing fictional stories about celebrities and accuses tabloid of inciting 'anti-Muslim' tensions

- Read his letter to proprietor Richard Desmond

Wales votes for lawmaking powers

All but one of 22 referendum districts support the allocation of new legislative powers to Cardiff

- England to lose 31 MPs in boundary shakeup
- Lib Dems brace for AV referendum after Barnsley
- Barnsley Central byelection results in full
- Tom Clark: Tactical voting with AV won't be easy

Dior runs show without Galliano



All mention of John Galliano hurriedly



Werner Herzog Dark comedy



Polly Toynbee
There is still a way to win this Murdoch media war



In pictures Rebirth



Sport picks

Ferguson set to fight FA charge



Man Utd manager is believed to have decided to appeal against improper conduct charge over his criticism of referee

- Ferguson snubs MUTV after FA rap
- Louise Taylor: Dalglish's rivalry with Ferguson

Touré failed test over wife's diet pill



Arsene Wenger says Manchester City's former Arsenal defender wanted to control his weight

- Bendtner says Arsenal must make style count

Saturday interview: Pepe Reina



Liverpool goalkeeper talks to Sid Lowe about Kenny Dalglish, life after Fernando Torres and why he won't rule out a move to Manchester United

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Identify Primary Code for content which increase new users

The top 5 content formats for driving new unique users to the website is identified.

	Narrative	Theme	Underlying message
1	 The Next Chapter	 Gruesome Spectacle: Horrific, visual, unusual	 Them vs Us
2	 The Next Chapter	 Gruesome Spectacle: Horrific, visual, unusual	 Imparting knowledge
3	 The Next Chapter	 Science & technology	 Imparting knowledge
4	 Quirky/Funny	 Money: wealth, poverty, economics	 Imparting knowledge
5	 The Next Chapter	 Nature	 Imparting knowledge

These are sample semiotic content codes – each website has its own unique code

Content is created which maps to the semiotic code identified

Business

'Third-division' UK: ad tycoon adds to house and car gloom



WPP's Martin Sorrell says business is better in Brazil and Pakistan as car sales fall again and house prices hit 17-month low

- US jobless rate falls to near two-year low
- Obama's big boost: US unemployment falls steeply
- WPP reports 28% rise in profits
- Car sales slump again as Britons tighten their belts
- 📷 In pictures: Geneva Motor Show
- 📷 Eco-friendly cars at 2011 Geneva Car Show

News

Teenagers jailed for running £16m internet crime forum

Court told that Ghostmarket website was the 'criminal equivalent of Facebook', with links to huge losses from credit card details

Shiv Malik
guardian.co.uk, Wednesday 2 March 2011 19:01 GMT
Article history



Nicholas Webber, who masterminded the criminal website Ghostmarket.net, has been jailed for five years. Photograph: Gavin Rodgers

Three teenagers who founded and operated one of the world's largest English-language internet crime forums, described in court as "Crimebook", have been sentenced to up to five years in custody.

Entertainment

Television



Women of a certain age

Feature: A generation of American female leads are getting comedy from cancer, chaotic nursing and drug-dealing. When will the UK catch up?

🗨️ 8 comments

A content test project is carried out which uses the “project” content to test its share ability with the website community and a control group to measure the impact of the content on the project measures.

These are sample pieces of content from www.guardian.co.uk

Business Questions Addressed:

- Key Questions

- Is there an underlying semiotic code for the content which is most often shared?
- Is there a difference in content shared in different geographic locations?
- What impact does sharing content have on new users?

- Key findings

- Yes, there is an underlying semiotic code for content most often shared
- Yes, there is a difference in “how” content is shared in different geographies
- Shared content increase the number of unique site visitors

- We can use this knowledge to

- Understand our readers motivations to share content
- 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
- Measure the impact of the website content strategy



To find out more about
Online Semiotic Analysis
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