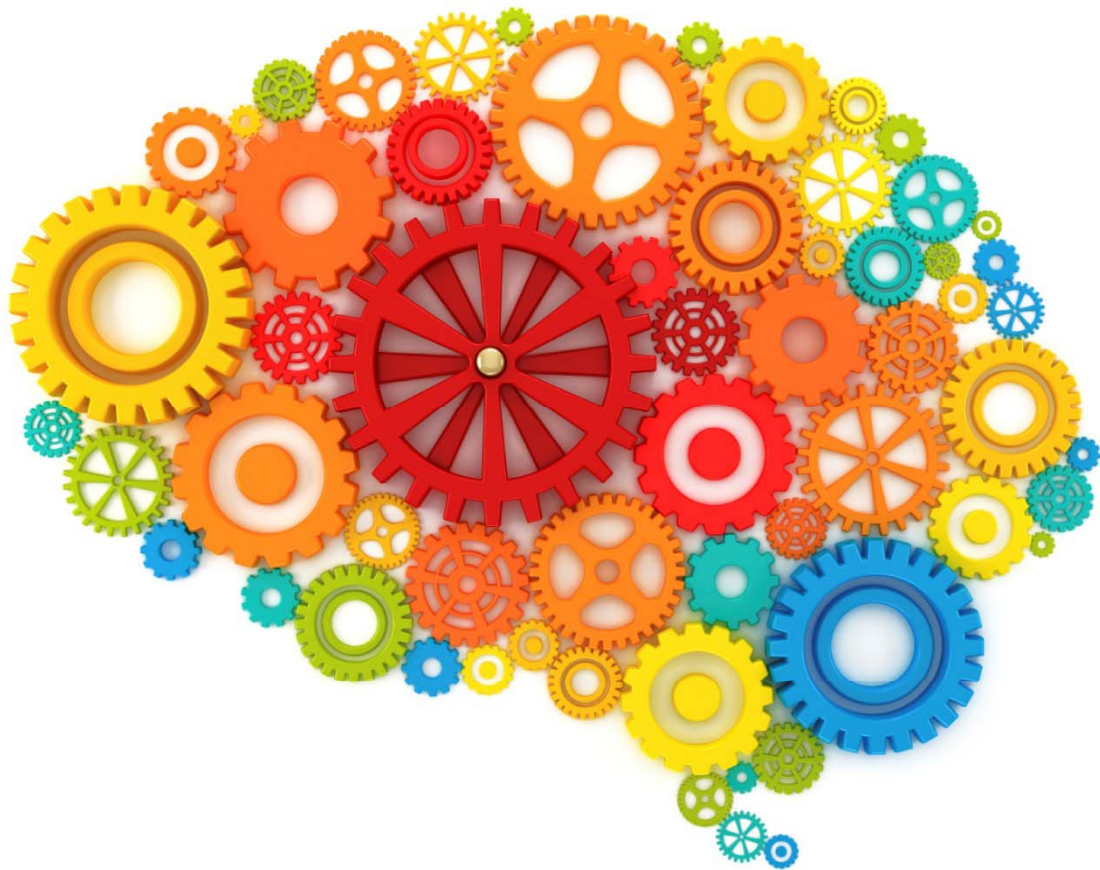


A CIC Social Business White Paper



# From Social Media ▶ to Social Business

**Topic 2: The Social Innovation of Market Research**



# Preface

In March 2011, CIC published the first installment in a series of white papers examining the evolution “From Social Media to Social Business”. In “Topic 1: An Overview of the Evolution of Chinese Social Media”, we looked back over the development history of social media in China, the different degrees and stages of enterprise understanding and application of social media, as well as laying out our expectations for social business.

It’s been over a year since we introduced the concept of social business to China and we are pleased to see that “From Social Media to Social Business” has grown beyond the conceptual level. Ever more enterprises are actively engaging in social business; exploring, experimenting and exercising their social business muscles, just as we expected.

In step with the evolution of social business practice, enterprise activity places an ever greater emphasis on social media research and insight. CIC’s 7 years of experience in the field of social media research in China has shown us that, although social media research is unique from traditional market research, integration and innovation of these different but related disciplines can bring even more valuable insight for enterprise.

It is from this vantage point that we embarked on the second installment in the white paper series “From Social Media to Social Business-Topic 2: Social Innovation of Market Research”, which will explain “4 in 1” social media research, its features and the key points of difference with traditional market research. With close reference to our own cases and industry insights, we will discuss the three-fold integration of traditional market research and social media research; “research technology”, “research methodology” and “data and insight”.

Finally, we are honored that several market research experts from various fields accepted our invitation to contribute, including Mr. Chen Jin, CEO of Consumer Search Group(Greater China) and Rotating President of China Marketing Research Association, Mr. Zong Ruixing, Executive Director of Sina Media Strategy Center Data Research Department, and Prof. Jin Liyin, Vice Director of Management School Marketing Department at Fudan University. These illustrious guests share their opinions on the integration and innovation of traditional market research and social media research.

The integration and innovation of traditional market research and social media research remains in the exploratory stage. CIC will continue to explore this field and anticipate greater cooperation and communication across the industry.

July, 2012

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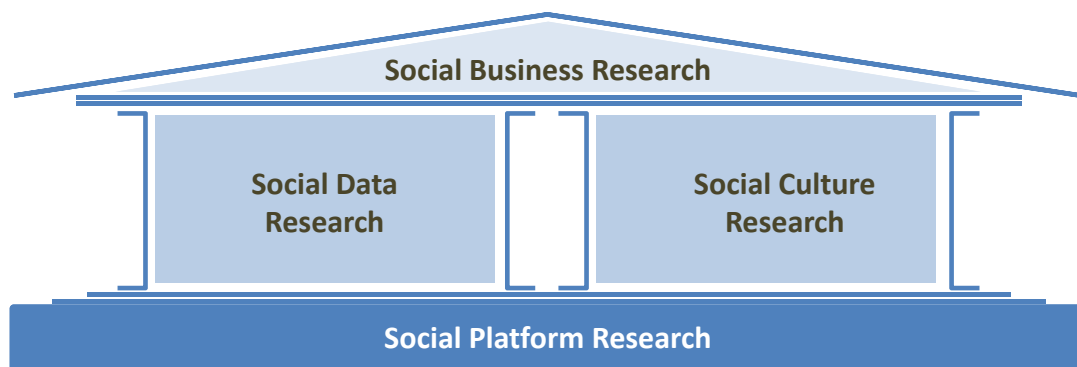
# Chapter I

## What is Social Media Research?

## Chapter I: What is Social Media Research?

With the development of social media, “social media research” has gradually come into focus. MRA, ESOMAR, CASRO and other international associations in the field of market research have incorporated their definition of social media research in their respective social media research guidelines<sup>[1]</sup>. Combining these explanation and incorporating CIC’s practical experience, we have come to conclude that social media research follows a “4 in 1” formula<sup>[2]</sup> which includes Social Platform Research, Social Data Research, Social Culture Research and Social Business Research.

**Figure 1-1 : Social Media Research System**



### 1.1 Social Data Research

We start with data, which is of utmost concern to market researchers. Social media data refers to the type of information people produce or share via social media, which includes comments, videos, photos, personal information, their geographical location, social relations and so on. Before the term “social media” came into vogue, this kind of data was variously referred to as “Internet Word of Mouth”<sup>[3]</sup>, “User Generated Content (UGC)” or “Consumer Generated Media (CGM)”.

Social data shows the following three key features:

1. Unsolicited: People spontaneously produce or share various kinds of information via social media, as opposed to being actively engaged by market researchers. As such, market researchers cannot recruit a representative sample as they would with traditional research.

[1] [MRA/IMRO Guide to the Top 16 Social Media Research Question](#)  
[ESOMAR GUIDELINE ON SOCIAL MEDIA RESEARCH](#)  
[CASRO Social Media Research Guidelines](#)

[2] We only focus on business. Public policy and political issues can also be analyzed through social media research, but we don't involve them in this paper.

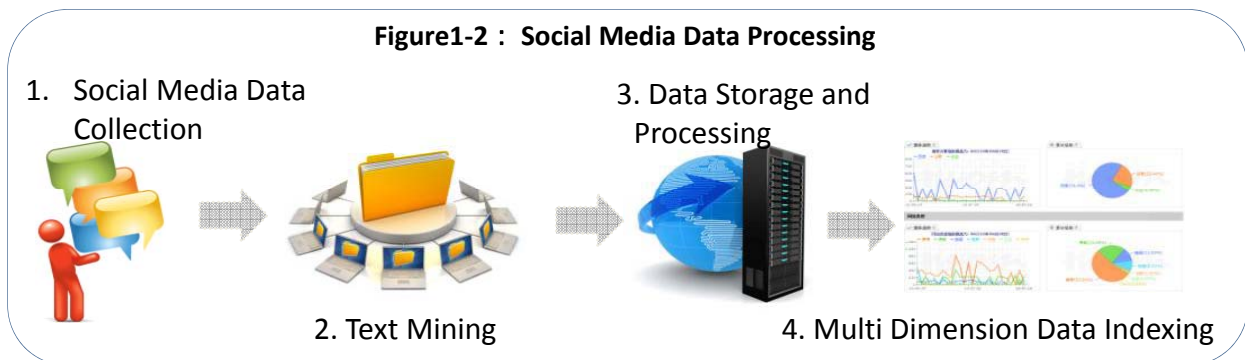
[3] CIC was founded as the first IWOM Research and Consulting firm in China, coining the term “Internet Word of Mouth” in 2005.

## Chapter I: What is Social Media Research?

2. Unstructured: As the information was produced or shared spontaneously, it may involve various formats, including text, pictures and video. Also, the data patterns are not as regular or complete as the data obtained by questionnaire.
3. Uninhibited: Another effect of information being produced or shared spontaneously, is the diverse mixture of topic and content. This is a key point of difference with the data collected by traditional market research, which centers on certain research topics.

These three features highlight fundamental differences with the closed data collection methods represented by questionnaires or surveys. Another feature of social media research is the access to “big data”. Sina Weibo, for example, produces a hundred million pieces of content everyday (tweets, comments etc.); CIC’s automotive industry database is updated with more than 10 million new posts from China’s automotive BBS communities every month.

The variety of social data sources necessitates an adaptive data collection and processing methodology. In general terms, there are four steps in processing social media data:



Additional information on social media data collection and processing technology can be found in CIC’s blog “seeisee” <sup>[1]</sup> .

As with traditional quantitative research, social data is subject to a series of metrics and processing indexes, which are employed when measuring brand performance and networks in social media. These indexes include:

- Buzz Volume: The number of mentions of a topic, a brand, its products or services, in social conversation online. A higher buzz volume means a brand is more popular, a community is more active, or this topic is more engaging to netizens.

[1] [Text Mining Technique in CIC](#) ; [The problem of Sentiment Analysis](#) ; [Discussing Statistics and Language](#); [Brief Introduction to Sentiment Analysis in Internet Word of Mouth Research](#)

## Chapter I: What is Social Media Research?

- Sentiment: A measurement of the positive or negative feeling associated with brands, products and properties, as expressed in netizens' online conversation.
- Specifically associated to online forum(BBS) research, we will commonly employ specific indices, such as posting rate, conversation participation rate and topic creation factor <sup>[1]</sup>.
- Specifically associated to analysis of Microblog, metrics include retweet rate, comment rate and exposure rate.

The ongoing update of China's social media platforms, and the increasingly in-depth and wide ranging demands of enterprise, new indices for analysis of social media are being established all the time.

### 1.2 Social Culture Research

In addition to quantitative research, qualitative research is an indispensable part of both traditional market research and social media research. In relation to social media, we can equate qualitative research to "social culture research". This includes netizens' profile, interactive modes, community culture codes, efluencers, net language, netizens' perception of brands or products, and the role of efluencers within the community.

As the richness of social media data, researchers in the field of social media analytics can create very impressive, quantitative charts. These charts and indices then allow researchers to extract deeper insight. However, this richness of quantitative intelligence can cause some analysts to ignore deeper research of online community culture. Others may feel that social culture research is intrinsically more subjective, limiting the value of insight for brands. Yet, where it is true that this kind of research is a mixture of art and science, it has a solid theoretical foundation, supported by clearly defined methodology.

Netnography has become a mature methodology applied to qualitative social research. As a starting point for an exploration of Netnography, we must first establish its basis in Ethnography as an anthropological research method.

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[1][Refer to 2008 Q3 CIC white paper Topic two-Alternative Ways to Measure Internet Community Dynamics](#)

## Chapter I: What is Social Media Research?

Researchers traditionally research ethnic groups or individuals by close observation and personal immersion of their activities. As such, in ethnographic research, field work is an important method, which refers to a process<sup>[1]</sup> by which specially trained anthropologist comes engage with a community to gain first-hand research data, involving observation, interviews, accompanied trips/ living experience .

Market researchers also employ ethnographic methodology to research consumer insights. This redresses inadequacies of traditional research, such as opinions expressed by questionnaire respondents that are not consistent with actual behavior. Ethnography allows market researchers to conduct continuous observations of consumer behavior, which can last a day or compile over a longer period, and include accompanying them on shopping trips, nights out, or to gatherings with friends. Insights can be obtained through interaction in a habitat natural to the consumer, allowing for deeper understanding of the respondents' wider cultural context.

Netnography is Internet based ethnographic research. This term was first proposed by Dr. Robert V. Kozinets <sup>[2]</sup> from the Schulich School of Business at York University. The core concept is that the online community generates a huge amount of comments; the sheer volume and diversity of this information has resulted in it being called, "The Field behind the Screen". Researchers can gain consumer insight by observing netizens' discussion, community participation and personal expression. <sup>[3]</sup>

Similar to traditional ethnographic methods, netnography has following features <sup>[3]</sup> :

1. Research is conducted under natural conditions. The observed community is not created deliberately by researchers, which is an essential difference with online focus group.
2. It is immersive. Meaning researchers can participate in interaction and understand the context of netizens' discussion and the cultural phenomena at it's foundation. Traditional market research usually lacks this insight into corresponding context.
3. It is descriptive. Conveying consumers' implicit cultural values through graphics, pictures, symbols, sounds, photos, videos and more.
4. It can be integrated with other methods, such as quantitative research, to provide corroborating intelligence to support netnographic findings.

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[1] Reference to an article on CMRA website [Insight into Consumers through Ethnographic Research of Consumer Culture](#)

[2] [About Robert V. Kozinets](#)

[3] Journal of Marketing Research, 39 (February, 2002), 61-72.



# Chapter I: What is Social Media Research?

The typical netnographic research process:



Dr. Kozinets cited the following approaches <sup>[1]</sup> for brands employing netnographic research:

**Consumer-Driven Innovation:** Dr. Kozinets mentioned that German research institute, Hyve, which is focused on netnography, cooperates with Adidas, using netnographic methodology to research consumers who like to collect and decorate sports shoes. These results effectively support the successful launch of new Adidas products <sup>[2]</sup> . In China, sports brand Anta designed a pair of sneakers for the Houston Rocket’s Luis Scola, for the 2009 NBA All Star Game. Anta created a “4 Carat” logo, inspired by Chinese netizens’ nickname for Scola, is 四克拉 (Si Ke La), which means 4-Carat Diamond <sup>[3]</sup>.

**Revealing the Meaning of Brands:** Dr. Kozinets used netnography to research brand meaning for Listerine within the online community . He gained some very interesting results.

[1] [MIT Technology Review Netnography: The Marketer's Secret Weapon](#)

[2] See more case studies about Netnography in [Hyve](#)

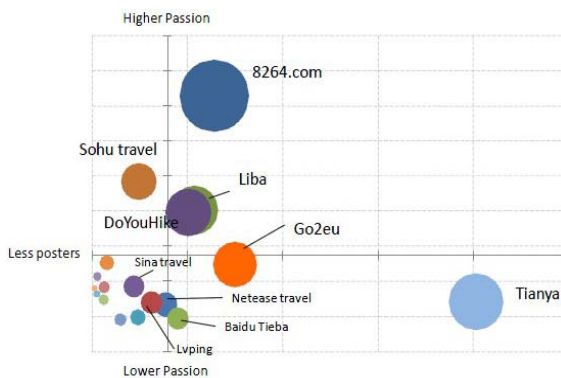
[3] Refer to [2008 CIC "Internet is the Community" Topic 4 - Reshaping the Relationship between Brands and Consumers](#)

## Chapter I: What is Social Media Research?

Some consumers connected the mouthwash with E.T., while others associated a memory of grandparents with its smell<sup>[1]</sup>.

Here in China, CIC found a poem while researching the IWOM of Lancome. The poem, written by an unknown brand fan, described how Lancome's product "enriched her life and made it more beautiful." Inspired by the poem, L'Oreal launched a campaign called "Who is the Lancome Rose Poet?", which generated over 100,000 respondents. This insight also indirectly prompted the foundation of its own Brand community, the Lancome Rose Beauty Site.<sup>[2]</sup>

**Figure1-3 : Travel e-Community IWOM Buzz Mapping**



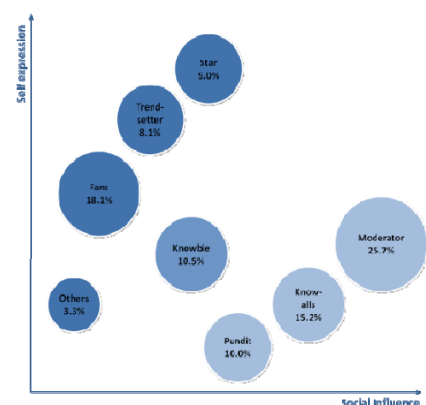
**Mapping Relevant Network Community:** For soup brand, Campbell's, Dr. Kozinets and his colleagues used netnography to help the brand successfully map some online communities related to consumers' meal plans, in order to more efficiently invest their marketing resources. Likewise, CIC have conducted deep research into online communities specific to different categories, for example, helping brands assess the marketing value of travel communities <sup>[3]</sup>.

**Interpreting Culture Code:** While monitoring the buzz associated with Starbucks and Peet's Coffee, Dr. Kozinets pointed out that brands could use communities' specialist vocabulary to interact. CIC found that, in Baidu Tieba, basketball fans would mark special characters in post titles to express love to stars. Based on this insight, NIKE used these symbols in ads placed on Tieba and successfully integrated into community culture.

### Revealing the Opinion Leaders in Community:

Dr. Kozinets once conducted research into how influential bloggers guide public use of new technology. Similarly, CIC divided online key opinion leaders, or influencers, into 7 categories: Pundit, Know-all, Moderator, Fans, Trend-Setters, Stars and Knowbies<sup>[4]</sup>.

**Figure 1-4 : Seven Categories of Influencer**



[1] Click [here](#) for a more detailed description of the Listerine case

[2] [L'Oreal Found Its Luxury Voice in Chinese Social Media](#)

[3] [2012 CIC IWOM Watch Travel Special Edition](#)

[4] 2011 CIC white paper [From Social Media to Social Business Topic 1-An Overview of the Evolution of Chinese Social Media](#)

## Chapter I: What is Social Media Research?

By 2008, CIC had already summarized popular terms in Chinese online communities, and the cultural phenomena behind them. At the heart of this analysis was a desire to deliver business intelligence that allowed brands to reference to these unique cultures in their marketing communications.<sup>[1]</sup> In researching the culture surrounding luxury goods in online communities <sup>[2]</sup>, we began to explore the “Shai” (aka show off) culture among luxury goods consumers, for which we conducted further in-depth analysis.

As with traditional qualitative research, social culture research depends very much on researchers’ experience, defined in three parts: expertise in research methodology; category know-how; and deep knowledge of social communities, which sets social media researchers apart from traditional market researchers.

### **Summary: The Value of Social Media Research**

Social media research has many key differences with traditional market research, both in terms of data and research methodology. So, it was subject to some suspicion from the outset. As early as June 2006, market research experts debated<sup>[3]</sup> the value and scientific merit of social media research (Referred to as “IWOM Research” at that time). On one side of the debate, the key inquisitor of IWOM was Bill Neal <sup>[4]</sup>, often regarded the “Godfather of the Market Research Industry”. On the other, Max Kalehoff <sup>[4]</sup>, a thought leader in the field of IWOM, and a handful of other people.

Bill Neal, who largely represented traditional market researchers’ concerns about IWOM, felt that netizen’s stated identities were inherently unreliable, they couldn’t sufficiently represent any definable user groups, and their opinions were elusive. Ultimately, he thought IWOM research couldn’t rely on scientific methods; the samples on which it was based were not representative and as such, the information was unreliable and conclusion unpredictable.

Experts in IWOM research took a different view. Max Kalehoff highlighted that, although IWOM research was not aimed at what might be considered the “general public”, this was precisely its strength. IWOM research specifically targeted user groups who actively used

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[1] [2008 "Internet is the Community" Topic 3 - The Diversity of Chinese Net Language](#)

[2] 2011 CIC GroupM Luxury White Paper [The Voice of Luxury Social Media and Luxury Brands in China](#)

[3] More interpretation of this debate, please read the articles in CIC Chinese Blog [IWOM Research Vs. Traditional Market Research](#) , part of discussion in this session also references to this article

[4] About [Bill Neal](#) and [Max Kalehoff](#)

## Chapter I: What is Social Media Research?

and discussed the products of interest. They were elusive, but eminently valuable. There was no reason to criticize IWOM research as not being based on the common user, as it took aim at the most influential. Now though, a big problem for marketers is a dependence on the general, rather than striving to observe the points of difference more keenly, to capture signs and fluctuations at an early stage. Another expert, Dr. Michael Cornfield, sent a letter to Max expressing his support. He said, IWOM research was not a search for representative samples, but for inspiration, individualism, cultural genes and their transmission modes.

Some market research experts still cast doubt on social media research; at the annual meeting of the market research association in June 2011, Bill Neal continued the debate<sup>[1]</sup> on the scientific value of IWOM research with social media research expert, Marshall Toplansky<sup>[2]</sup>. Brand marketers though, have become increasingly interested in listening to the voice of consumers across social media.

In March 2011, Joan Lewis, global consumer and market knowledge of P&G, expressed her opinion at an industry conference<sup>[3]</sup>. She believes that social media actually goes far beyond changing the mechanism of market research. As consumers grow increasingly accustomed to interaction with social media, they'll express themselves more freely. In addition, it became increasingly difficult to ask them to take part in structured, traditional research. Other industry experts expressed similar attitudes<sup>[3]</sup>. Joe Tripodi, Global CMO of Coca-Cola Group, stated that, compared with impression, which is emphasized in traditional market research, he preferred to measure expression, which is consumers' natural discussion of brands in social media. However, he also thought social media research had not yet developed to the point that marketers were looking forward. He supported industry development towards more complete assessment.

According to CIC's L-K-P model, established in 2007, enterprise application of social media is embodied in the following 6 areas<sup>[4]</sup>, which could serve as a relatively comprehensive system to address quantitative research and cultural understanding of social media: "Online Reputation", "Market Intelligence" and "Marketing Execution Feedback", which focus

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[1] [MRA Conference Quotes: Bill Neal and Marshall Toplansky face off](#)

[2] Marshall Toplansky was the president of Wise Window, which was a social media research company. In April 2012, Wise Window was acquired by KPMG

[3] [Will Social Media Replace Surveys as a Research Tool?](#)

[4] About the specific interpretation of L-K-PTM model, please reference to 2011 CIC white paper [From Social Media to Social Business Topic 1-An Overview of the Evolution of Chinese Social Media P13-14](#)

# Chapter I: What is Social Media Research?

predominantly on data research, while “Consumer Insights”, “Advertising Inspiration” and “Digital Marketing Plan” contribute to long-term insight and understanding of context in social media, which places more emphasis on cultural research.

## 1.3 Social Platform Research

Social media research also extends to platform basic function, features, development trends and more. The diversity dynamism of the Chinese social media environment can often leave brands overwhelmed. Thus, research of social media platforms has become increasingly valuable, which can help brands to stay updated with the latest social media environment and make the right marketing decisions.

In 2008, we made the first of our China Social Media Landscape prisms, summarizing China’s popular social media platforms; BBS, Blogs, Review Sites, Video Sharing Sites, Q&A Sites and Social Networks<sup>[1]</sup>. We’re updating this prism every year, to clearly present the development of Chinese social media to brands <sup>[2]</sup>, with reference to familiar platforms at home and abroad.

Figure 1-5 CIC’s L-K-P Model

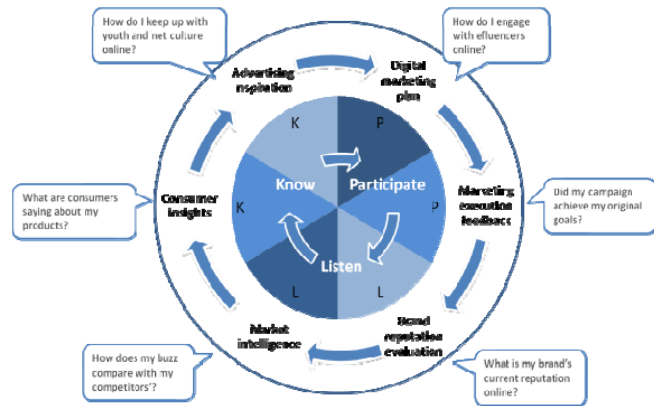
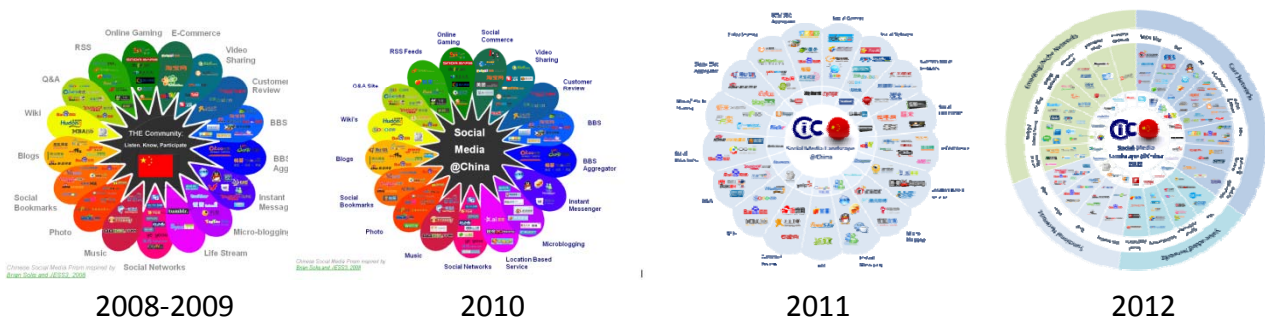


Figure1-6 : China Social Media Landscape



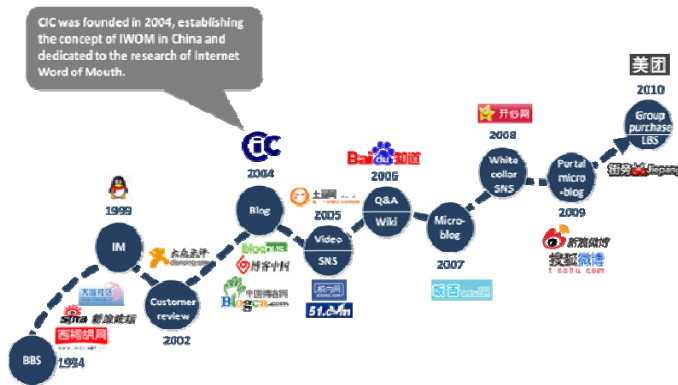
[1] [CIC 2008 “The Internet is THE Community” white paper Topic One: The Chinese IWOM Landscape](#)

[2] Clear large picture and interpretation please visit CIC Chinese blog [Interpretation of Chinese Social Media Landscape 2012”](#)

# Chapter I: What is Social Media Research?

in 2011, we illustrated the development of Chinese social media platforms and their features through China's Internet eras<sup>[1]</sup>.

Figure 1-7 China's Social Media History



We also pay close attention to the function upgrade of specific platforms, user demographics and evolving behaviors. For example, we did a LBS industry analysis in 2010<sup>[2]</sup>, a Sina Weibo user study (collaborated with Sina) in 2011<sup>[3]</sup> and an enterprise Weibo study (collaborated with Sina) in 2012<sup>[4]</sup>.

## 1.4 Social Business Research

CIC were the first to advocate this concept and define “The Evolution from Social Media to Social Business” in China in 2010, establishing the definition of “social business”<sup>[5]</sup> and prospecting its future. The business model of every enterprise and organization in China will eventually evolve to meet the age of “social business”. Effectively, all business will become social business.

Social media is not only reshaping marketing communication channels, but also changing business models and organizational structures. As an example, “group purchase” has been utterly game-changing in terms of social enterprise. Brands have to overhaul their customer service systems in order to respond to the high volume of online consumer queries and opinion. Human resources, particularly in terms of recruitment, have been utilizing social media like LinkedIn in changing the way companies attract candidates. All of the signs indicate that not only does each function need to be ‘socialized’, but that the entire organization may need to be redesigned and recalibrated to fully leverage social media and IWOM intelligence<sup>[1]</sup>.

[1] [2011 CIC white paper From Social Media to Social Business Topic 1-An Overview of the Evolution of Chinese Social Media](#)

[2] [2011 CIC IWOM Watch LBS Special Edition](#)

[3] [2011 cic and Sina white paper Microblog Revolutionizing China's Social Business Development](#)

[4] [CIC and Sina 2012 Enterprise Weibo White Paper](#)

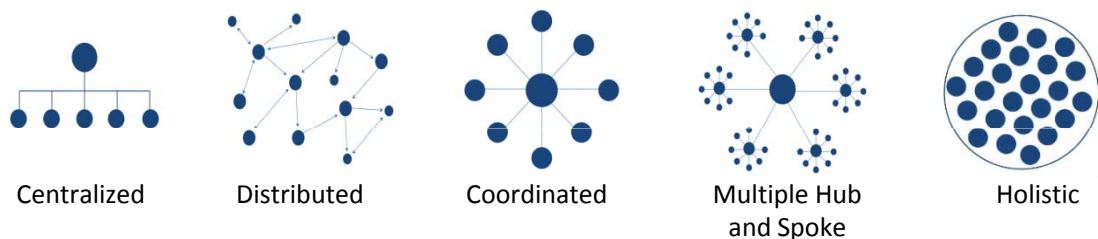
[5] the definition of Social Business by CIC: Social Business is an organization designed consciously around social tools, social media and social networks, as a response to web 2.0's revamped technological space and its reshaped brand-consumer communication and business disciplines.

## Chapter I: What is Social Media Research?

This leads us into research of enterprise attitude and behavior. Social business conduct focuses on social media's influence on enterprise strategy, various engagement functions afforded by the development of social media, and how enterprise should adapt to changes in the social business environment, including staffing configuration, organizational design, resources and technical implementation.

Some foreign research and consulting firms conducted a prospective study on social business. Jeremiah Owyang from Altimeter Group found that Companies organize for social business in 5 ways <sup>[1]</sup>.

**Figure 1-8 : Organization of Enterprise Social Business**



Michael Brito puts forward three essential factors for social business: human resources, management processes and information technology<sup>[2]</sup>. Deloitte, in collaboration with MIT Sloan Management Review<sup>[3]</sup>, found that social business implementation and success depended on the business leaders and scale of the enterprise.

In researching social business conduct, we are particularly concerned about enterprises' social business objectives. That is, the kind of goals that enterprise set to achieve via social media. We have concluded that the following are typical social business objectives<sup>[4]</sup> :

**Figure 1-9 : Typical Social Business Objectives**



[1] [Social Business Forecast: 2011 The Year of Integration](#)

[2] Refer to Michael Brito «Smart Business, Social Business»

[3] [Social Business: What Are Companies Really Doing?](#)

[4] [2011 cic and Sina white paper Microblog Revolutionizing China's Social Business Development](#)

## Chapter I: What is Social Media Research?

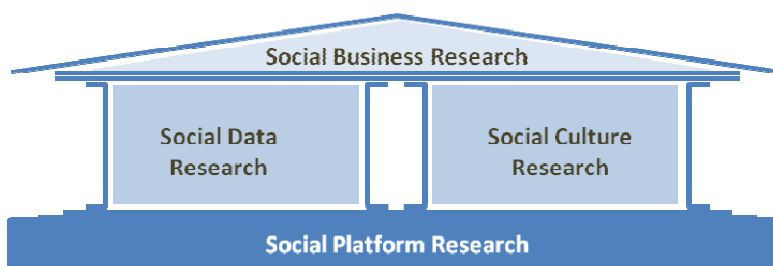
We believe that clearly defined objectives are at the core of social strategy. Based on these social business objectives, enterprise can develop innovative engagements. After engaging in social media, enterprise must continue to assess and optimize their social business conduct to better meet social business objectives, then finally achieve the social business revolution in the whole organization.

To learn more about enterprise engagement in social business, CIC developed a survey to assess social business maturity in collaboration with the School of Management at Fudan University. This research will be published in the second half year of 2012.

### 1.5 “4 in 1” Social Media Research

Above we have listed four views of social media research and hope this kind of decomposition is able to make social media researches more clearly to the readers who do not quite understand before. In fact, from our several years of projects practice experiences, these four views are closely linked to each other:

Figure 1-10 : Social Media Research System



1. Social Platform Research can be regarded as the foundation of social media research. When brands engage in social marketing or hope to embrace the wider ideal of social business, they first need to understand the features of the different

social media platforms, the netizens who inhabit them, and the scope of their application.

2. The two pillars of social media research built on this foundation are Social Data Research and Social Culture Research, embodying quantitative and qualitative research in the age of social business.
3. These two great pillars of research, set on a solid foundation of Social Platform Research, support the overarching establishment of Social Business Research. Insight into social business conduct is the final goal of the whole social media research system.

Therefore, the so-called “Social Media Research” is a “4 in 1” mix of research method.



## **Chapter II**

# **Integration and Innovation of Traditional Market Research and Social Media Research**

## Chapter II : Integration and Innovation of Traditional Market Research and Social Media Research

### 2.1 Driving Factors of Integration and Innovation

As we have explored in Chapter 1, social media research has features which differentiate it from traditional market research. Yet, these features needn't lead to the conflict. Instead, social media research can integrate with traditional market research to offer a holistic enterprise understanding.

There are three key factors at the heart of integration and innovation of social media and traditional research:

1. **The Development of Social Media:** No matter where you are in the world, social media is an important communication channel that simply cannot be ignored by any marketer or market researcher. Improvements in access to data means that researchers can now analyze, amongst other things, behavioral and demographic data. The "crowd" mingling in social media is no longer "faceless". Social media research can clearly characterize the influence of consumers, precisely evaluating the role and efficacy of the opinion leader in the online community. So, amongst other things, this wealth of consumer data cannot be obtained through traditional market research.
2. **The Challenge of Traditional Market Research:** With the ever increasing penetration of digital devices and the flourishing of social media, traditional market research methods, like interviews, focus groups and questionnaires, feel increasingly dated. New market research technologies, like online surveys, online focus group and IWOM research are effectively updating these practices. Integration and innovation of market research technologies insures it's survival.
3. **Needs of Clients and Market:** Ultimately, the needs and behaviors of consumers shape the market, and with the development of social media, the marketing environment continues to change rapidly. Clients hope to understand social media, as well as consumer behavior and culture in the social media, to gain faster and actionable insights.

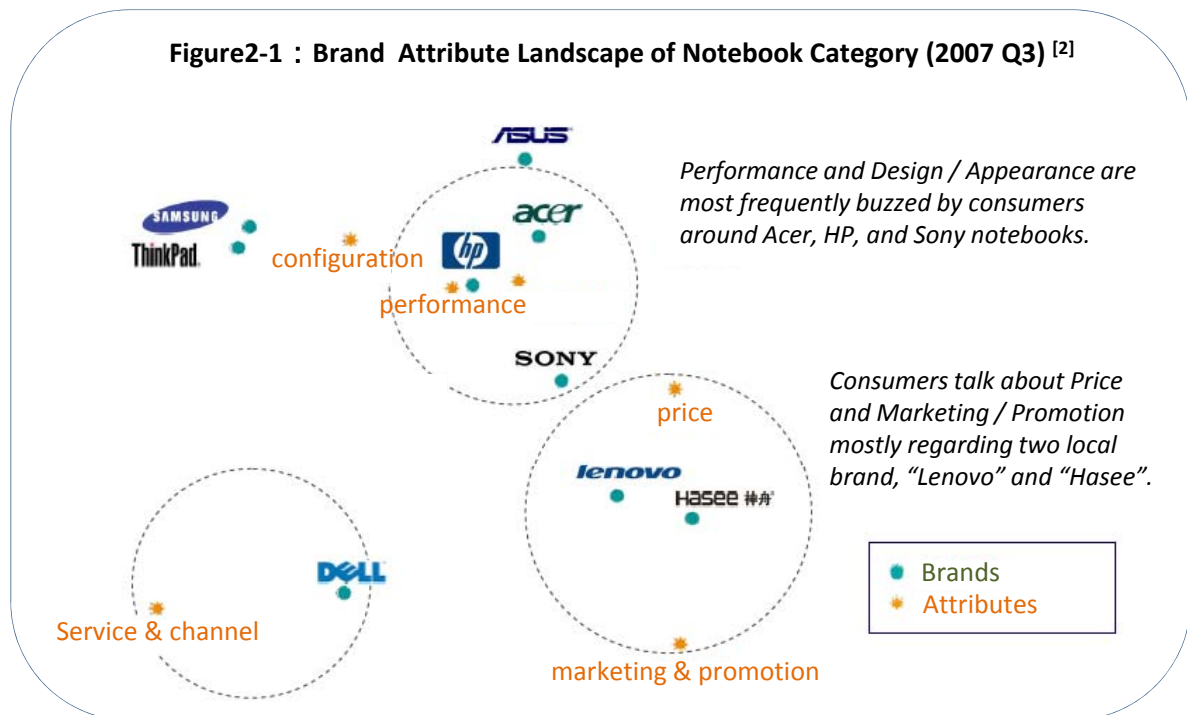
How to integrate traditional market research and social media research? CIC integrated cases with industry observations to offer inspiration from three sides; "Integration and Innovation of Research Technology", "Integration and Innovation of Research Methodology" and "Integration and Innovation of Data and Insight". We aim to explore and develop this field with the research industry as a whole.

## Chapter II : Integration and Innovation of Traditional Market Research and Social Media Research

### 2.2 Integration and Innovation of Research Technology

As social media platforms provide a place where large numbers of consumers or potential consumers gathered, traditional researchers can regard social media as a channel for sample recruitment and conducting online surveys. Social media doesn't change the methodology of traditional research, but in so doing, made it more efficient.

The analytical technology of traditional research can also be applied to social media. For example, the perceptual mapping of brand image is common to traditional market research. Essentially a figurative representation of consumers' perception, the aim is to represent the brand or product preference and association with figurative images. Especially in relation to the mapping of products and brands, this is achieved through an imagining of the relative position between brands and competitors. As early as in 2007, CIC analysts applied this methodology to social media research, developing the "Brand Attribute Landscape"<sup>[1]</sup> to explore the relationship between brands and their perceived attributes in naturally occurring network discussion.



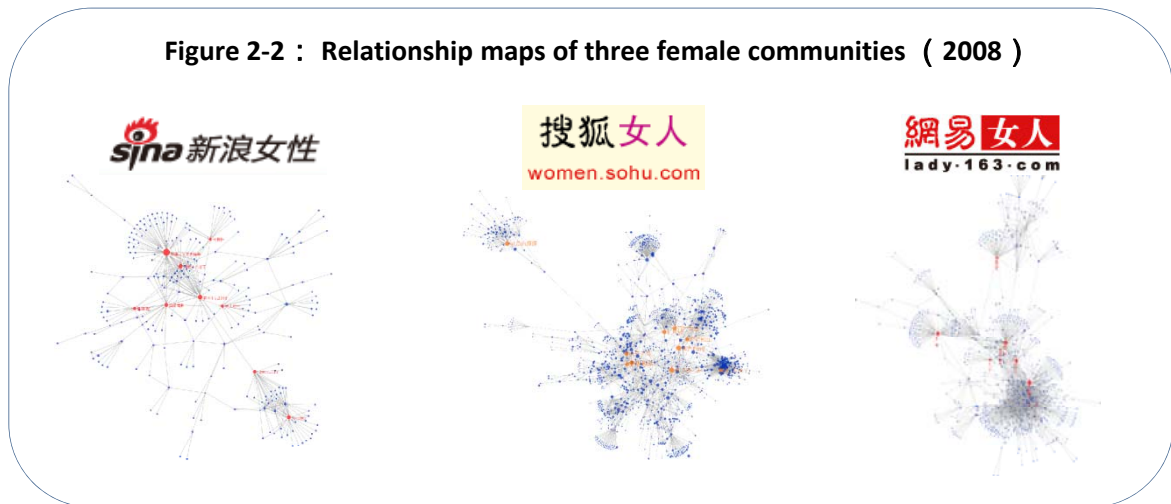
[1] "Brand Attribute Landscape" took into comprehensive consideration of IWOM performance of different brands and attributes and did an intuitive display of this multiple relations in two – dimensional map. In the map, the closer the attribute from the brand means that attribute gained more concerns from consumers.

[2] CIC IWOM Watch Jan,2008 《Tuning into Notebook IWOM 》

## Chapter II : Integration and Innovation of Traditional Market Research and Social Media Research

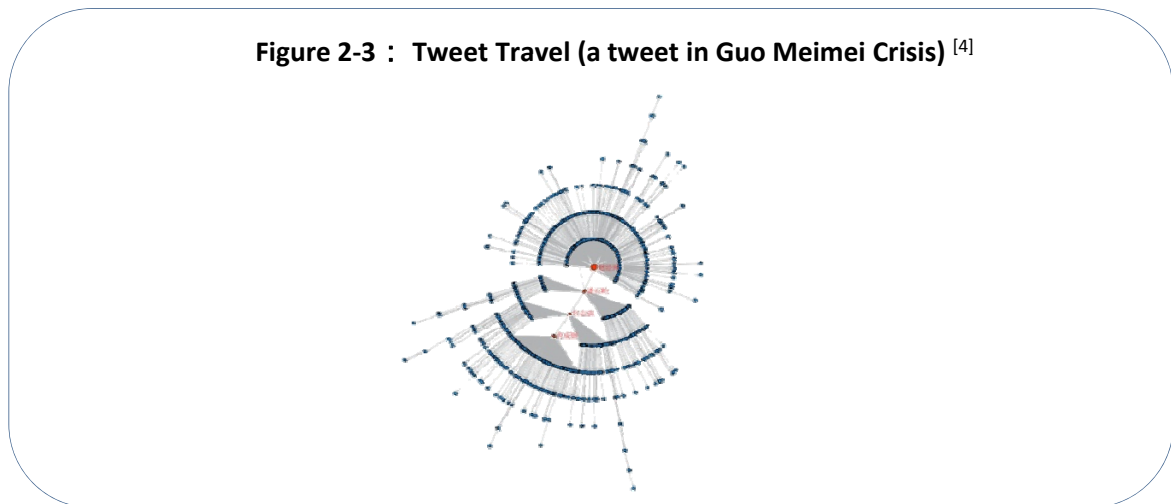
Similarly, CIC analysts tried to apply the same model of social network analysis<sup>[1]</sup> in 2009 and in so doing, developed the Social Network Analysis (SNA) model<sup>[2]</sup>, which is used to analyze community interaction, the role of influencers and position of sub-groups in BBS.

Figure 2-2 : Relationship maps of three female communities ( 2008 )



In the Weibo era, CIC continued to integrate research technologies in sociology and communication with Weibo research. In April 2011, we pioneered the “Tweet Travel Model”.<sup>[3]</sup>

Figure 2-3 : Tweet Travel (a tweet in Guo Meimei Crisis) <sup>[4]</sup>



[1] About the integration of Social Network Analysis Method and IWOM Research, please visit CIC Chinese Blog [Preliminary Study on the integration of Social Network Analysis Method and IWOM Research](#) , part of discussion in this session also references to this article

[2] In SNA model, every dot represents a poster and wired represents interaction relations. Bigger dot represents higher amounts of posts and rougher wired represents more interaction.

[3] The model was first revealed in the sharing conference “Engage Digital Research” held by CIC in April 2011, and then used in business practices and products.

[4] [CIC & Ogilvy PR joint white paper - 'Crisis Management in the Microblog Era](#)

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An examination of research technologies, whether based in traditional market research and applied to the features of social media, or social media research that references traditional market research models, this kind of integration and innovation has already shown the significant value in real practice.

### 2.3 Integration and Innovation of Research Methodology

Beyond the integration of technology, market researchers can integrate the methodology of social media research with traditional market research to deliver increasingly comprehensive and innovative marketing insight.

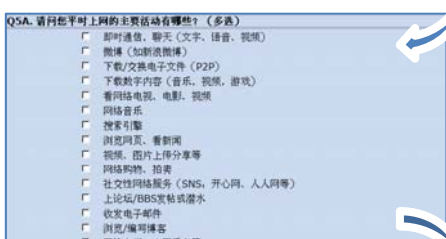
At the end of 2010, CIC launched a piece of research aimed at analysis of social influencers<sup>[1]</sup>. Integrating IWOM research methodology with traditional online survey and online workshop, the aim was to comprehensively analyze the features of influencers and assess the value they offer marketers from three perspectives; “content and sentiment”, “identity and behavior”, as well as “motivation and attitude”.



发帖人	网站	帖子数	粉丝数	回复数	评论数	转发数	私信数	私信回复数	私信回复率	私信回复人数	私信回复率
北京舞蹈学院!	博客社区	19,830	19,830	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
北京舞蹈学院!	红孩子育儿论坛	4,018	3,900	66	2,929	52	2,977	692	234	224	1
德商西点	博客社区	3,909	549	3,350	9	1	6	110	1	1	0
陈数陈	太平洋亲子网	3,087	3,707	133	2,374	47	2,327	1,844	431	431	0
Pisaveeap	淘宝网	3,235	2,460	720	1,735	47	1,688	600	204	204	0
tonky	淘宝网	2,295	654	1,542	511	9	502	449	190	190	0
apatt10	博客社区	2,035	2,035	0	991	0	991	0	0	0	0

**Purpose:** Understand influencers’ content and emotional tendencies

**Method:** In relation to a series of indices, network influencers from various BBS were selected by CIC for unique semantic analysis, profiling, evaluation, and inclusion in an influencer database.



Q5A. 请问您平时上网的主要活动有哪些? (多选)

- 即时通信, 聊天 (文字, 语音, 视频)
- 微博 (如新浪微博)
- 下载/交换电子文件 (P2P)
- 下载数字内容 (音乐, 视频, 游戏)
- 看网络电视, 电影, 视频
- 网络音乐
- 搜索引擎
- 浏览网页, 看新闻
- 视频, 图片上传分享等
- 网络购物, 拍卖
- 社交性网络服务 (SNS, 开心网, 人人网等)
- 论坛上/BBS发帖或潜水
- 收发电子邮件
- 浏览/编写博客
- 其他 (请注明)

**Purpose:** Understand influencers’ offline identity and real-world behavior

**Method:** Invite influencers to participate in an online survey to research basic information.



Online Workshop

搜索您的关键词: ( ) 论坛: gtpand 2011

将 online workshop 加入收藏夹

社区化营销2010

论坛列表

- 论坛名称: 社区化营销2010
- 发帖数: 11,025
- 回复数: 11,025
- 发帖人: 11,025
- 发帖时间: 2010-11-25
- 发帖人: 11,025
- 发帖时间: 2010-11-25
- 发帖人: 11,025
- 发帖时间: 2010-11-25

**Purpose:** Understand influencers’ motivation and attitude

**Method:** Invite influencers to a closed, online community where we conduct a deeper analysis of opinion and perception of specific topics by community activity, such as discussion topics and voting.

[1] [2011 CIC white paper From Social Media to Social Business Topic 1-An Overview of the Evolution of Chinese Social Media](#)

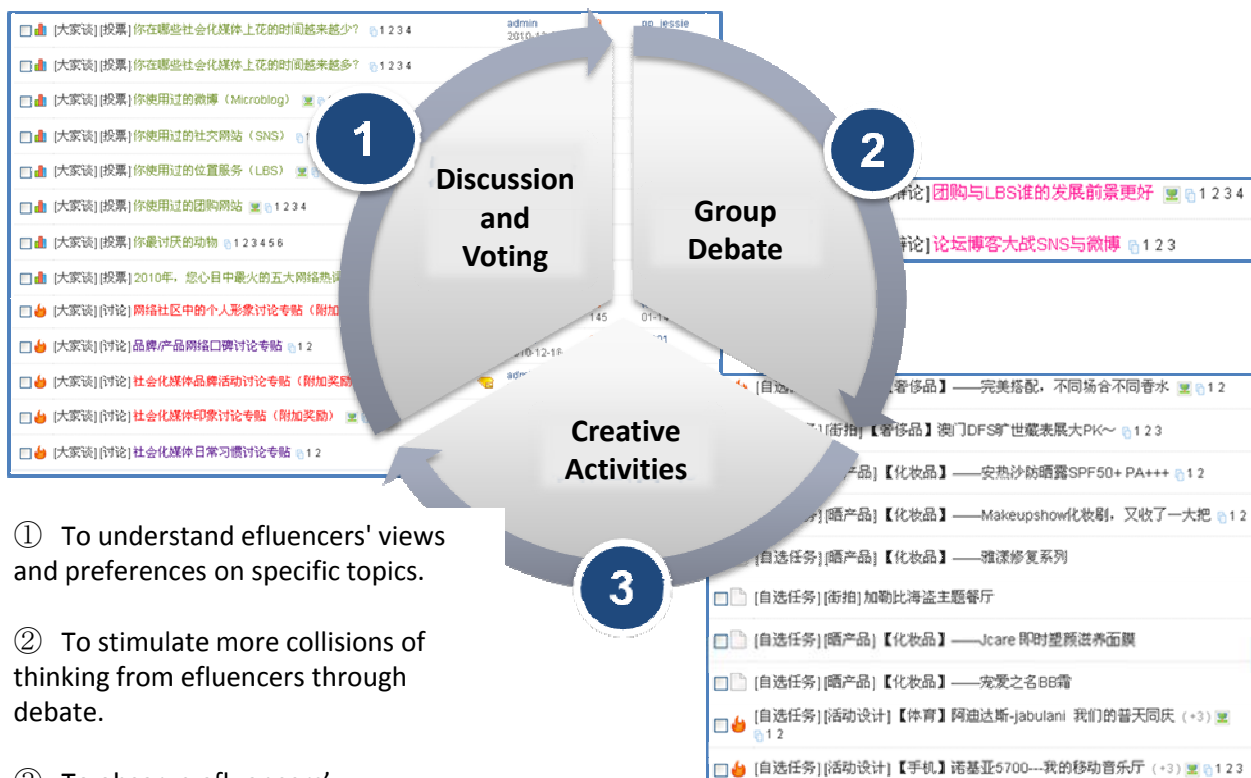
## Chapter II : Integration and Innovation of Traditional Market Research and Social Media Research

The CIC influencer database covers 15 industries, including cosmetics, sports, FMCG, IT, luxury, baby care, home decoration, travel and others. As such a key ingredient in the recipe for maximizing exposure, effectively leveraging the right influencers to amplify brand communication is a priority for brands. Our database can help brands to identify and evaluate the influencers.

After compiling the influencer lists, and with the support of a third-party online survey company, we engaged with influencers via online questionnaire to better understand their motives, opinions and behavior.

At last we designed the online workshop to give influencers opportunity for expression and a platform to share professional knowledge via “discussion and voting”, “group debate”, and “creative activities”, enabling observation of influencer inter-dynamics in a semi-open environment.

Figure 2-4 Online Workshop



- ① To understand influencers' views and preferences on specific topics.
- ② To stimulate more collisions of thinking from influencers through debate.
- ③ To observe influencers' performance and value for brands through various “shai”(show off) activities.

## Chapter II : Integration and Innovation of Traditional Market Research and Social Media Research

Integration of these three methods facilitated a comprehensive method of influencer profiling via combination of Social Graph (performance in public online community), Demographics and Online Behavior (performance in CIC online workshop).

To explain these three elements and the relationship between them, the following is an example of a genuine influencer, presenting the image of a cosmetics industry “pundit”, fleshed out to create a full profile.

Social Graph	Demographics	Online Behavior
This influencer’s professional affiliation is evident through a large number of skin care related posts by her.	This influencer’s purpose and her recommended brands are in accordance with a “professional” image, which can be leverage by brands.	This influencer maintained her professionalism and brand orientation throughout the online workshop.
<p>Nickname : XX            Original posts : 81            Posts : 1500            Digest post : 13            Average Online Time : 1 hour per day            Average Daily Posts : 3.9</p> <p>Post Views : 80% of posts reviewed skin care and make-up products, or offered step by step skin care guides. Occasionally mentioned healthy recipes, personal fitness and related topics.</p> <p>Online Period : Usually in the afternoon and evening, 5% of time online from 2 a.m. to 4 a.m.</p> <p>Most Discussed Brands : Willing to try, mainly discussed Japanese and South Korea brands, and occasionally American and European brands.</p> <p>Most Discussed Brand Attributes : Essentially, all attributes were covered, including product packaging, texture and efficacy, often enhanced with illustrated descriptions.</p>	<p>Age : 22            Degree : Undergraduate            Occupation : Student            Monthly Family Income : 5,000 – 5,999 RMB            Hobbies : Online shopping, writing blogs, watching videos</p> <p>Purpose on BBS : Making friends, sharing experiences, helping others</p> <p>Recommend Skin Care Brands : Kose, Fancl, Shu Uemura (in accordance with her most discussed brands in BBS)</p> <p>Preferred Invitation to Participate in Enterprise/Brand Relevant Activities : Invitation under the brands’ name via BBS message, email or telephone</p> <p>Preferred Online Campaign: simple process, clear rules, attractive rewards</p> <p>Preferred Incentive : Small gifts, cash, charity activities etc.</p>	<p>Original Posts : 42            Replies : 122            (Top poster to CIC workshop)</p> <p>Sharing their own cosmetic and make-up products, opinions, usage experience, make up skills and more, covering a wide range of brands and products.</p> <p>Posted several posts about the cosmetic products purchased, generating significant netizen attention.</p> <p>“[Shai Products] 【Luxury Goods】 — — Perfect Match, Different Perfumes on Different Occasions”</p> <p>“[Shai Products] 【Cosmetics】 — — ANESSA Sunlight Lotion SPF50+ PA+++”</p>

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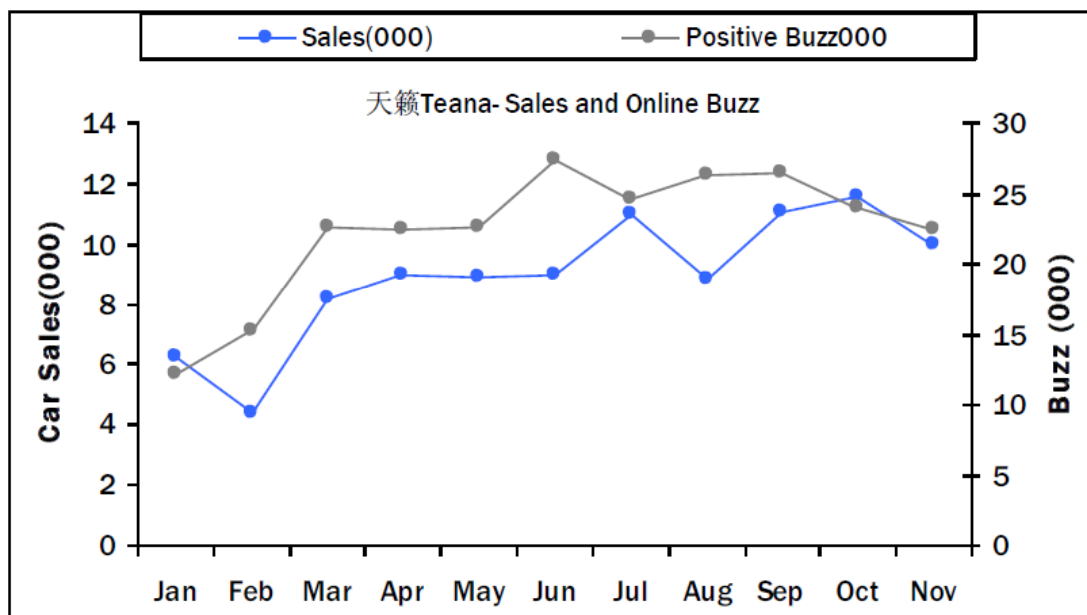
### 2.4 Integration and Innovation of Data and Insight

As we have shown, market researchers can integrate and analyze data from social media and traditional market research to explore new areas of insight. Over the years, CIC has worked with various partners to explore the means of such integration.

#### ➤ Case 1: Social Media Data + Sales Data

In 2010, CIC and marketing consultancy R3 collaborated on exploratory research into the relationship between IWOM and car sales. In so doing, we found a clear pattern of short term residual effect on some auto brands. Take the Teane for example, its positive IWOM led the way by one month for positive sales results .

Figure2-5 : Relationship Between Positive IWOM and Teana Sales



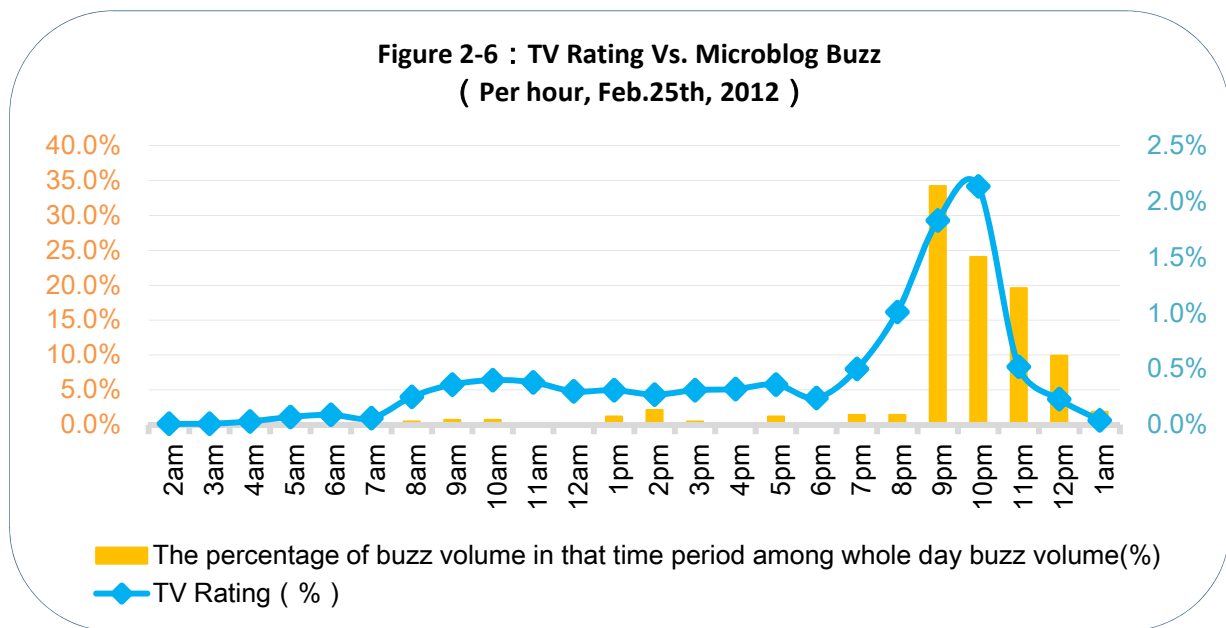
CIC currently collects over 10 million consumer comments from mainstream automotive BBS communities every month. Since 2007, that's a cumulative historic data volume of over 600 million comments from the automotive industry alone. This wealth of historical data, made available by social media, facilitates large-scale research across time and makes sales forecast a tangible possibility. We will continue to explore this exciting area of research to create ever more detailed studies of the relationship between IWOM and sales modeling.



## Chapter II : Integration and Innovation of Traditional Market Research and Social Media Research

### ➤ Case 2: Social Media Data + TV Ratings

Recently, Sina and CIC cooperated on a research project to explore the possible correlation between TV ratings and Microblog buzz volume<sup>[1]</sup>. Research focused on the viewing performance of a popular show program and the associated discussion on Sina Weibo.



The study showed that the show broadcast period and the peak in Sina Weibo based mentions of the program were consistent, reflecting the ability of the microblog medium to facilitate netizens' real-time discussion of offline content, augmented by creation of related topics and promotion of program highlights.

This research also highlighted the benefit Sina Weibo brings to traditional media programming, by enhancing TV viewers' online participation and overall enthusiasm for the content. This effectively recognizes and promotes dual-screen engagement, turning viewers into influencers that promote televised content online, and convert their Weibo followers into viewing figures.

[1] Joint Project with Sina

## Chapter II : Integration and Innovation of Traditional Market Research and Social Media Research

### ➤ Case 3: Social Media Data + Brand Assets

In 2011, CIC contributed to the “BrandZ 2012 Top 50 of Most Valuable Brands in China” study and integrated social media data into brand assets.

To create the Social Media Ranking, Millward Brown first established a Social Media Index. Using BrandZ™, the world’s most comprehensive, customer-focused brand analytics and equity database, Millward Brown calculated the Social Media Index for all of the brands in the China Top 50 study<sup>[1]</sup>. The Index comprises these three elements:

1. FanZ: The percent of consumers that claim to be a fan/follower of brands and keep up with the brands via social networks.
2. Digital Brands Existence Rate: The percent of consumers that have recently seen, heard or read about the brand online.
3. The percent of consumers who are likely to recommend a brand, based on understanding of social media enthusiasts who are also relevant category consumers for each brand.

CIC then validated the Social Media Ranking with detailed reference across social networking sites (Renren and Kaixin) and microblog platforms (Sina, Tencent, Sohu, Netease), to check each brand’s following (their number of followers) and their passion for interaction with customers (number of tweets). The Social Media Ranking is based on a combined view of social media from both Millward Brown BrandZ™ consumer research and CIC’s social media research and observation.

**Figure 2-7 : The Top 15 Social Media Brands<sup>[1]</sup>**

Social Media Rank	Brand Name	Industry Sector	Brand Value US\$ Mil.	Brand Value Rank
1.	China Telecom	Communications	US\$10,860	11
2.	China Mobile	Communications	US\$53,607	1
3.	Haier	Appliances	US\$1,584	29
4.	Mengniu	Food & Dairy	US\$3,446	18
5.	China Southern Airlines	Airlines	US\$1,610	28
6.	Gome	Retailer	US\$1,232	33
7.	Suning	Retailer	US\$2,415	21
8.	Air China	Airlines	US\$4,731	16
9.	Ping An	Insurance	US\$9,715	12
10.	Lenovo	IT Hardware	US\$2,319	23
11.	China Unicom	Communications	US\$6,254	15
12.	Li-Ning	Apparel	US\$1,020	37
13.	China Eastern Airlines	Airlines	US\$2,245	24
14.	Hainan Airlines	Airlines	US\$427	46
15.	Yili	Food & Dairy	US\$2,403	22

[1] Quoted from “BrandZ 2012 Top 50 of Most Valuable Brands in China Report”, welcome to click [here](#) to read the complete report.

## Chapter II : Integration and Innovation of Traditional Market Research and Social Media Research

### ➤ Case Three: Social Media Data + Brand Assets (Continued)

Key findings of this research<sup>[1]</sup> :

1. Brands scoring highly in the Social Media Ranking tend to have a higher brand value.
2. The average brand value of the top 20 brands in the Social Media Ranking is \$9.6 billion, compared to an average of \$4.2 billion for the 30 other brands in the China Top 50.

### 2.5 Practice Modes for Reference

Having summarized three distinct views of the integration and innovation of traditional market research and social media research, let us now begin to integrate these three approaches from the vantage point of specific business practice.

#### One: Social Media Research as A Pre-study

Brands often regard social media research as an ingredient in the preparatory stage of large-scale consumer research, central to understanding trends, consumer culture, perception of brands, products and services, and so on. This view takes social media research as an exploratory method, regarding social research results as the foundation for carrying out traditional, quantitative or qualitative research.

Kraft Foods carried out such a research project in 2009<sup>[2]</sup>, hoping to understand changes in consumers' purchasing behavior in an environment of economic crisis. In this research project, the consumer research department at Kraft Foods and experts from market research companies used Social Media Research as a pre-study.

Conducted by social media research company, Cymfony, this began with analysis of discussion related to "shopping" across various social media platforms, and a qualitative exploration of new trends and cultural phenomena.

Following this, traditional market research company, Synovate, designed questionnaires according to the qualitative findings presented by the social media research. This facilitated more quantitative analysis of the conclusions drawn from qualitative research, while verifying the findings of social media research in the broader population.

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[1] Quoted from "BrandZ 2012 Top 50 of Most Valuable Brands in China Report", welcome to click [here](#) to read complete report.

[2] Click [here](#) to get the full introduction of this case

## Chapter II : Integration and Innovation of Traditional Market Research and Social Media Research

Finally, Kraft Foods' consumer research department summed up the qualitative and quantitative research results, augmenting them with research from other channels, to form the basis of comprehensive strategic proposals that empower their sales department.

Figure 2-8 : Kraft Research Process



### Two: O2O Market Research

O2O, or “Online to Offline”, is growing increasingly popular, and although there remains inconsistencies in its interpretation, at its core, the concept rests on a view that online marketing, engagement and purchase, feed offline consumption and overall business operation. We borrowed this concept to describe one of the means of integrating traditional and social market research.

Researchers can first observe netizens' online discussion, then invite representatives to participate in offline focus group or in-depth interviews, which is “Online to Offline”. In turn, researchers can also invite offline respondents online, to develop an understanding of their behavior by interaction, which is “Offline to Online”.

### Three: Embedded Social Media Research

Holistically speaking, it is actually a relatively big challenge for researchers to embed social media data into operations data, sales data, or other market data. However, the research in this instance will ultimately reveal social media's effect on business. In the cases we have so far examined, we integrated social media research with sales data, TV ratings and brand assets.

At CIC, we are striving to pioneer ever more involved means of integration for market researchers, which comprehensively embed social media data throughout the research process.

## **Chapter III**

# **Challenges and Prospects for Industry Integration and Innovation**

## Chapter III: Challenges and Prospects of Industry Integration and Innovation

The development of social media brings new opportunities and challenges to the market research industry. So, how are market researchers embracing these opportunities and addressing these challenges? How are leading researchers integrating and innovating social media and traditional market research? To answer these questions, we invited several market research experts from different fields to share their opinion.

### 3.1 Opinions of Traditional Market Research Expert

**Chen Jin** (CEO of Consumer Search Group(Greater China) and Rotating President of China Marketing Research Association)

The appearance of new Internet technology leads to changes in consumer behavior and attitude. Web 2.0 technology allows brands to communicate with consumers directly and to interact with consumer groups. From manufacturers to retailers, their marketing concepts and activities are changing. Across the entire market research industry, these changes require adaptive research methods, but that doesn't mean the new methods will fully replace the old.

#### **The Value and Uniqueness of Social Media Research:**

1. Brands are able to better understand opinion leaders and prospective trends via social media research. In traditional research, these unique individuals would likely be lost to traditional sampling.
2. The market's competitive environment requires quicker insight and traditional research usually takes longer. The immediacy of social media research is a great advantage, which enables enterprises to grasp consumer and market evolution more quickly.
3. Social media research offers some new perspectives for market research, such as analysis of message dissemination and influence. These perspectives are rare in traditional market research.

#### **The Integration of Social Media Research and Traditional Market Researches also faces the Following Challenges:**

1. Lack of Cross-Industry Talents. While traditional market researchers may lack in-depth knowledge of social media and the wider Internet environment, social media researchers may not be entirely familiar with the mechanisms and methods of traditional market research.

## Chapter III: Challenges and Prospects of Industry Integration and Innovation

2. We must continue to explore and evolve the process of advancing towards social business from social media. The analytical technology of social media also needs to mature, becoming more accurate in its semantic analysis and sentiment recognition.
3. The assessment modes and standards of social media have not yet fully formed. Social media research is involved in marketing, statistics, social network analysis, dissemination analysis and more. The overall social media research system is still immature and not standardized in index system.
4. Clients awareness of social media and social media research is also in it's formative stage, requiring further education across the market.

### 3.2 Opinions of Social Media Expert

**Zong Ruixing** (Executive Director of Sina Media Strategy Center Data Research Department)

#### **The Value of Social Media Research:**

I think there are two main aspects to the value of social media research. One regards social media as a research tool and the another as a research object.

Regarding social media as a research tool refers to insight into brand and consumer behavior through analysis of social media data. This is a complement and development of traditional consumer research. Although the users of social media are more active compared with those subject to traditional research, if you want to find the opportunities for brands and products, you need to focus on the users who are most active and with more ideas. After finding the opportunities, it is possible to integrate traditional research to verify and assess the market.

Regarding social media as a research object is about guiding social business conduct. Social media research can analyze the plans and execution processes of social business activity, offering direct support to strategy as well as optimization of social business activity.

#### **Traditional Market Research isn't yet fully aware of the value of Social Media Research:**

Traditional market research companies are not yet fully aware of the value of social media as an insight tool, without sufficient understanding of social media itself, or the technology

## Chapter III: Challenges and Prospects of Industry Integration and Innovation

involved. For example, obtaining social media data often requires an API, which is then subject to methods of semantic analysis and social network analysis, which are significantly different from the data collection and analytical methods of traditional market research.

### **How to Integrate Traditional Market Research with Social Media Research:**

Traditional market research companies have a mature research model for brands, communications and products development, like product concept development, concept testing, advertising pre-testing, brand image research and so on. If using social media platforms innovatively, enterprise can complete this research quickly and with low cost, provided that researchers fully understand the media and characteristics of dissemination. Transforming the traditional research model, they can carry out a large number of controlled research projects utilizing social media platforms and data to come to credible conclusions. If, in the future, there is a research company that can combine the understanding of brands and products, traditional research methods, social media platforms features and the analytical tools of social data, market research will truly achieve a breakthrough in the social media era.

### **3.3 Opinions of Academic Expert**

**Jin Liyin** (Vice Director/ Associate Professor of Management School Marketing Department at Fudan University)

In the social media environment, the communication mode of enterprise and consumer underwent a fundamental change. Communication behaviors between enterprise and consumer, as well as between consumer and consumer, have become readily observable. The cost of recognition and tracking of consumer behaviors has therefore been greatly reduced. So, it is both an opportunity and a challenge for market research. In this environment, both traditional market research and social media research need to serve the same goal; offering insight into customers' psychology and behavior, then to provide a scientific basis for enterprise market strategy. Therefore, future market research requires better integration of traditional research methods and social media research to this goal.



## Chapter III: Challenges and Prospects of Industry Integration and Innovation

### **The Advantages of Social Media Research:**

The biggest advantage of social media research is the realization of accurately measuring customers' communication behavior, identifying the key features of individuals and groups involved in the conversation, and observing the dynamic communication process at low cost, which can't be achieved by traditional market research. At the same time, social media research also has the advantage of access to a huge volume of data at low cost, so permits real time research into new phenomena, as well as providing opportunities for participatory research to enterprise.

### **Social Media Research proposed new challenges for Market Researchers:**

First, market researchers are likely to be attracted by the rich amount of information, particularly mass behavior data. For example, it is possible to draw various beautiful charts. However, the risk associated is a loss of motivation to go deeper and explore "why".

Secondly, the hot topics in social media come and go, which may lead to the excessive tracking of such topics by market researchers, instead of maintaining their enthusiasm for valuable research questions.

Thirdly, in the social media environment, there are too many people (opinion leaders) and issues (food security crises, negative news about brands etc.) that need to be tracked in real-time. This makes "tracking and monitoring" the most important function contributed by social media research to the whole market research process. While other advantages may be generally overlooked, such as the research of viral seeding strategy, or correlation analysis of different brands' official Weibo accounts.

Finally, social media research expands in the wider society. Hence, the generation of a cultural phenomenon is inevitable a result of various factors that may be jointly complex, making it more difficult to identify the key factors accurately.

### **Integrate Traditional Market Research Methods with Social Media Research Methods:**

In order to solve these problems, it is necessary to integrate the traditional market research methods, like in-depth interviews, experimental testing and so on, with social media research methods, according to the original research aims.

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Social media research and traditional market research should play to their respective advantages in the same project, undertaking the research function of different natures. For example, we can find some interesting behavior trends through social media researches (the what), and explore the reasons and mechanisms by traditional methods (the why), then develop and manipulate the research to achieve the optimal solution for potential audience behavior by experimental methods (the how), finally use the advantages of social media in tracking consumers' behavior in real-time to monitor the effectiveness.

Social media research and traditional market research should cross-validate. For any research objective, the jumping to a conclusion without repeated cross-validation is not uncommon in the market research and consulting industry. With the development of social media research technologies, carrying out cross-validation of research finds will become one of the most important integration methods for traditional and social media market research.

Whether traditional research or social media research, it is necessary to build metrics for measurement of effectiveness and usefulness, such as ROI, then combine with the enterprise strategy and performance. For example, several sets of alternative communication plans, coming from traditional market research, can carry out "seeding" tests in the social media environment, before "tracking and monitoring". Throughout the process, not only is there a need to observe the dissemination and dynamic process of various communication plans in social media, but also to establish a connection with enterprise sales, stock fluctuation and other indices.

Finally, social media has penetrated into every aspect of people's lives. Therefore, the future of social media research should go beyond the narrow "business" category, and join traditional research methods in making a difference to "livelihood issues", "environmental protection and public welfare", "life satisfaction" and other socio-scientific fields of study.

## Chapter III: Challenges and Prospects of Industry Integration and Innovation

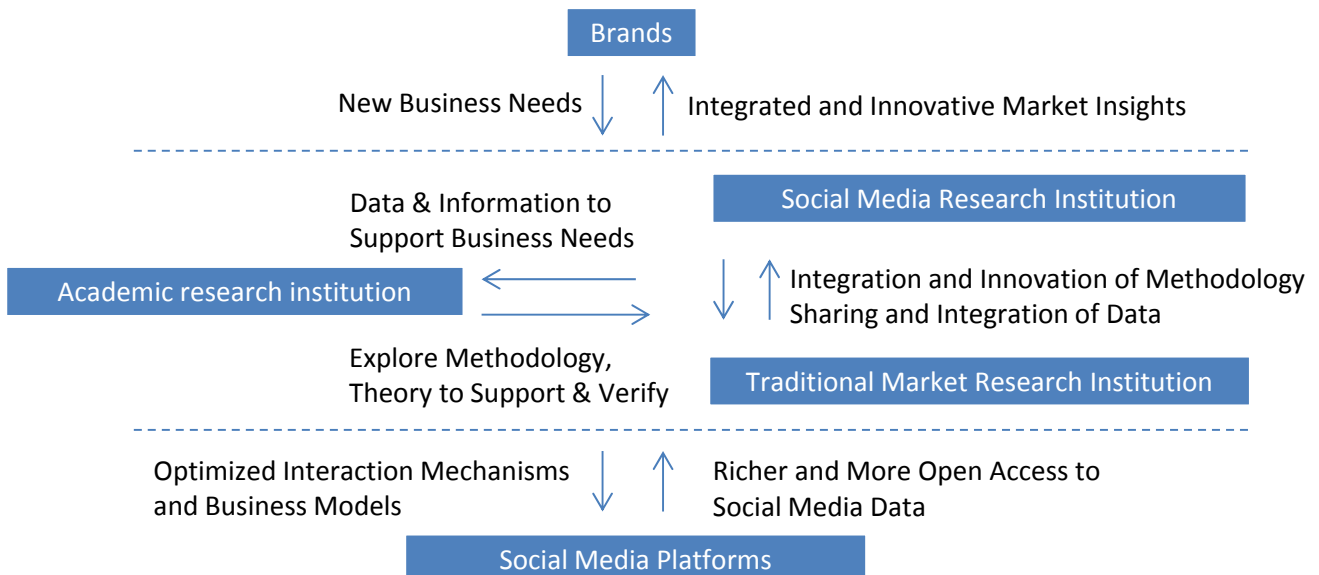
### 3.4 An Open and Collaborative Ecosystem

It is evident in the opinions of these experts that the integration and innovation of traditional market research and social media research has achieved initial success and its role in the future development of the whole market is self-evident. However, this kind of integration and innovation requires a collaborative effort, while the business needs of brands and marketers will be the driving force for integration and innovation of traditional market research and social media research

<b>Social Media Research Institution :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The breakthrough in data mining and semantic analysis technology</li> <li>• Build and standardize the research system</li> </ul>	<b>Traditional Market Research :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deeply understand social media research</li> <li>• Innovation in research methodology and modeling</li> </ul>
<b>Social Media Platforms :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer richer social media data</li> <li>• Open platforms</li> </ul>	<b>Academic Research Institution :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further study of real business needs</li> <li>• Summary and deep review of industry practice</li> </ul>

CIC hope to advocate an open and collaborative ecosystem, to the benefit of all parties, jointly promoting social innovation of the market research industry.

**Figure 3-1 : Open and Collaborative Ecosystem for Market Research**



CIC will continue to explore this field in collaboration with industry leaders and strive for further cooperation and communication across the industry. For more cases and cooperation opportunities, please don't hesitate to contact us.

## About CIC

CIC is China's leading social business intelligence provider. CIC enables businesses to fully leverage the power of social media and Internet Word of Mouth ([IWOM](#)) intelligence across the organization. Since coining the term IWOM in 2004, CIC has pioneered the industry to help companies meet their social media marketing and social business needs by providing customized [research, consulting services, syndicated reports](#), as well as [technical solutions](#) and platforms, all from an objective, third party perspective. In addition to helping companies leverage social media intelligence for more informed decisions, CIC is monetizing the social business industry in China by creating an integrated [social business support system](#).

CIC utilizes its own patent pending technology to capture millions of online conversations and 'makes sense of the buzz' by assembling them into easy to understand intelligence and provides interpretation which informs strategic decisions and leads to action. CIC gathers and mines over 100 million naturally occurring consumer comments every month from a range of uniquely Chinese social media platforms including blogs, BBS and social network sites and applies its unique, China-derived methodology and indexes to provide a detailed and comprehensive picture of the social media landscape and its implications for business. CIC has well over 3.8 billion mentions of brands and products from well over 1 billion consumer comments that have been indexed and archived.

In early 2012, as China's leading social business intelligence provider, CIC consented to acquisition by WPP's Kantar Media, the media research and insight division of Kantar, expanding their social offering across Asia Pacific markets. [linkage of media release](#)

CIC will continue to provide social business intelligence from an unbiased, third-party perspective, to the world's leading brands and agencies.

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**2012: CIC & Ogilvy PR joint white paper - ‘Crisis Management in the Microblog Era’** | [view](#)

**2012: New Mothers’ Online Life** | Coming soon

**2011: Weibo Revolutionizing China’s Social Business Development (CIC and Sina)** | [view](#)

**2011: The Voice of Luxury: Social Media and Luxury Brands in China (CIC and GroupM Knowledge)** | [view](#)

**2011: CIC 2011 White Paper: From Social Media to Social Business Topic 1: An Overview of the Evolution of Chinese Social Media** | [view](#)

**2010: Chinese Consumer Report (in collaboration with Roland Berger)** | [view](#)

**2010: Internet word of mouth proven to have impact (CIC and R3)** | [view](#)

**2010: ExpoSay: Shanghai Expo tickets are the focus of intense buzz in China's Social Media (Edition\_1)** | [view](#)

**2009: Making Sense of IWOM**

**Topic 1: IWOM White Paper on the Role of Internet Word of Mouth in Driving Purchase Decisions** | [view](#)

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**2008: Tuning into Sports IWOM** | [view](#)

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