



Perspectives

A monthly look at what's happening in
the ever-changing digital world.

Interactive Strategy Group
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From the Editor

Welcome to the second issue of *Perspectives*, a monthly publication of one-page abstracts on digital trends and their implications written by members of the Interactive Strategy group here at RTC Relationship Marketing.

In order to maintain a robust digital presence, you already know it is not enough just to be present online—establish a website, maintain a Twitter account, put up a Facebook profile, etc. True success lies in staying relevant to your digital audience, understanding the conversation that is going on about your brand and participating in the dialogue. This month's *Perspectives* highlights some of the best practices for engaging your online audience.

Read about best uses of social media for retailers in *Using Social Media to Redirect the Conversation*. Then *Smart Phone Apps and Childhood Education* highlights children's education tools for smart phones. *Advances in Web Design Technology* takes a look into the not-so-distant future to discuss what happens when Web designers are no longer hampered by limited font choices. Do you work for a nonprofit organization? If so, *Building a Following for Your Nonprofits – Facebook Pages* offers insights on how to build, maintain and maximize your Facebook presence to spread the word about your mission. If you are interested in Google's new priority-email offering, read *Google's New "Priority" Gmail Feature*. And last, art museums go digital in *iArt Museums and iPhone Apps*.

We encourage you to give us your feedback. Either drop me a line at the email listed below or contribute to the conversation online, where versions of *Perspectives* are available for comment on our website's Sparkblog and on SlideShare. If you are interested in a custom briefing on any topic in this edition, the Interactive Strategy team is here for you—just contact your Project Manager or Account Manager. If you aren't a current RTCRM client and would like a custom briefing, contact me and we'll work something out. And finally, if you can't get enough of what you have read here, visit *Treffpunkt*—the RTCRM Interactive Strategy team blog—at <http://rtctreffpunkt.blogspot.com/>.

Cheers and enjoy.

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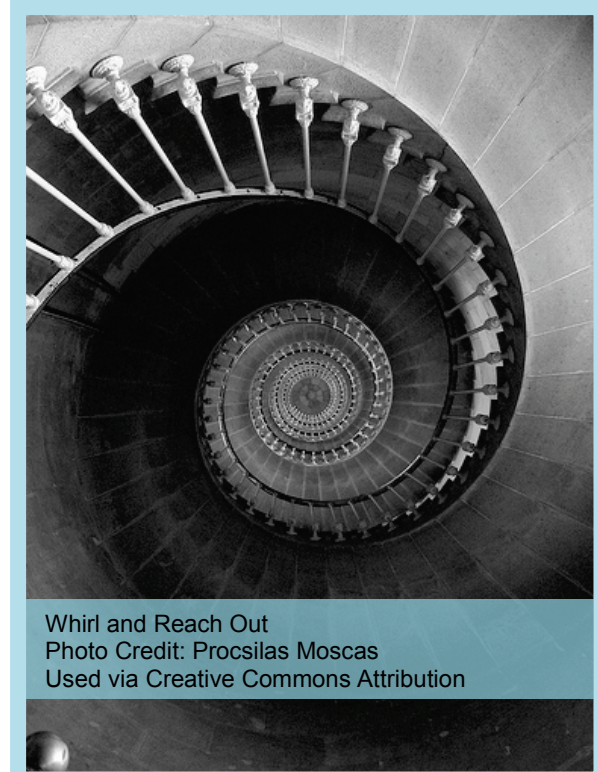


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The RTCRM Interactive Strategy Team introduces themselves in 140 characters or fewer...

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Using Social Media to Redirect the Conversation

Michelle Fares

Summary: Whether they are responding to customer service inquiries online or posting lifestyle content for customers, companies are using social media sites to improve their overall image and add value to customers' lives. Two examples of retailers doing this well are Whole Foods, which dedicates specific channels for specific purposes; and Sephora, which has created an online community and strategic positioning around its social media outlets. To effectively use social media, retailers must specify which channels are used for which purposes and provide relevant and engaging content.

Key Information

As social media grows in popularity, many large retail companies are using platforms like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube as part of their marketing strategy. A major function for these sites is the resolution of customer service issues, and these channels can give companies a quick and effective way to respond to customer complaints. However, some retailers are leveraging their social media platforms even further to direct the conversation beyond just products or service issues. These retailers are providing consumers with lifestyle content that is not directly product related, and by promoting this larger conversation they are building the brand image in a positive way. Fun and compelling content ensures that users keep returning to interact with the brand and with each other. This type of dynamic interaction can serve multiple purposes: It builds brand loyalty, improves brand image and can serve to stimulate overall purchasing behavior.

The Whole Foods grocery chain is a leader in social media. Whole Foods evaluates each platform's capabilities when using them to reach out to customers. Because Twitter promotes a one-to-one relationship and quick communication between brand and consumer, the company uses it for customer service inquiries and has over 1.8 million followers on their corporate Twitter feed. Twitter accounts for individual stores or departments let the company communicate with customers who are interested in specific topics such as wine, cheese or deals and events at their local store. The company uses its Facebook page as a place to disseminate rich media content including recipes, sustainability issues, health concerns and promotions or sweepstakes to over 300,000 followers. Facebook allows users to interact with the company and promotes a community where users can trade recipes, post photos and comment on each others' posts.

Beauty retailer Sephora also encourages customers to discuss non-product-related topics on social media sites. The company's Twitter account focuses on promoting products and responding to customer service inquiries from the company's 84,000 followers. Meanwhile the Sephora Facebook page encourages its 700,000 fans to interact with each other, trade beauty and style information and swap product samples. Sephora also uses its YouTube channel to post videos about makeup application and runway trends, and has over 4 million views and a robust volume of comments. Content like this allows Sephora to be more than just a physical store where customers buy products. By providing relevant, useful information to customers, Sephora becomes a destination for beauty advice and manages to stay top of mind when a customer needs beauty products.

Implications and Action Items

Large companies are using social media channels in various ways: for customer service inquiries, to post relevant content and to provide lifestyle information to consumers. Posting relevant content for consumers on the platforms where they interact with each other can go a long way toward improving a company's image in the consumer's mind.

Here are some guidelines for using social media to disseminate non-product-related information:

- **Specify** which social media platform is being used for which purpose. If a brand uses Twitter to respond to customer service inquiries, Facebook to encourage customers to interact with each other and a blog to post official content, that should be made clear to Web visitors.
- **Provide** content that customers value. Encourage customers to interact with each other and the company by posting lifestyle- or interest-related content that they value. Avoid publishing content just for the sake of publishing.
- **Engage** with customers on the social media platforms that they use, rather than creating a presence online and forcing customers to come to you.

Smartphone Apps and Childhood Education

Rebecca Johnson

Summary: Amid increasing levels of smartphone usage, mobile applications offer marketers an opportunity to create experiences with their customers that go above and beyond what their products and services already deliver. Early-childhood education apps are a growing field of interest for both parents and teachers, and offer brands the chance to demonstrate their value beyond product offerings to their customer base.

Key Information

Smartphones are on pace to become the dominant form of mobile device in the USA by the end of 2011.¹ One emerging mobile trend that is already capitalizing on this technology shift is apps for preschool- and elementary-aged children. Sixty percent of iTunes' 25 top-selling paid apps focus on education for toddlers and preschoolers.² Approximately 93% of all 6- to 9-year-olds living in the USA have access to a mobile device³—whether it be their own or, more likely, that of a parent. Moreover, time usage on smartphones is 12% higher in households with children than households without children, potentially indicating that parents are using these handheld devices to entertain their children, and that the children are secondary phone users. While a direct correlation between the 12% difference and children has yet to be proven, the marketplace certainly has numerous apps geared toward childhood education and games.

Although the demand for children's educational apps is high, few brands have ventured into the marketplace.⁴ Those who have, such as Scholastic, PBS Kids, MadLibs and Playskool, have received positive reviews (from both parents and children) for their apps. These apps teach skills such as reading, math, spelling, spatial recognition and vocabulary. The success of such apps is attributable, in part, to their focus on educational content and user engagement over the brand's marketing messaging. A good example is Kraft Foods' "Big Fork, Little Fork"⁵ app, which teaches children (and adults) about food basics such as the difference between an apple and a banana, how to measure wet/dry ingredients and how to follow recipe instructions. As for product promotion, the Kraft brand is in view while the app is loading, and the app's recipes feature Kraft products, but that's where brand mentions end.



While parents can be sensitive to advertising messages directed toward their children, they are more inclined to expose their children to promotional material if it accompanies some form of educational content. The biggest hurdle is for marketers to develop creative, educational, and engaging apps that promote the messaging of their brands to children in a subtle and non-aggressive way. By creating apps that help parents educate or entertain their young children, marketers have the opportunity to elevate the perception of their brands from product supplier to helper and supporter.

Implications and Action Items

The current trend of mobile app usage among smartphone users for early childhood education offers a unique opportunity for brands to engage their audience and demonstrate the additional value of their products.

- **Follow** regulations. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has strict guidelines for advertising to children. Become an expert in these rules, and learn what is and isn't allowable.
- **Develop** your app for two audiences. While children will most likely be the primary user, be sure to clearly communicate the value of the app to the parent; if parents think an app's content lacks both education and monetary value, then it will not be successful.
- **Emphasize** fun and education, de-emphasize brand, keep brand or product mentions to a minimum. Creating a fun, engaging and educational app is the primary objective. Better yet, incorporate your product, spokesperson, character, logo, etc., into the app, à la Disney's *Toy Story 3* app.
- **Think** engagement over absorption. This age group doesn't have a long attention span, so apps need to connect quickly and engage the user.

¹ <http://tiny.cc/jnmb2>

² Sesame Workshop. *The Media Utilization Study*. New York (2007)

³ Sesame Workshop. *The Media Utilization Study*. New York (2007)

⁴ <http://tiny.cc/m4ird>

⁵ <http://tiny.cc/60n46>

Advances in Web Design Technology

Carlen Lea Lesser

Summary: Since the advent of the Web, designers have lamented the limited font and color choices available to them. “Web-safe” colors are no longer a topic of conversation. Now, new technology allows for designers to begin moving beyond Web-safe fonts. However, before designers can utilize these new options, brands need to research the font engines they will support and ensure they meet all brand, load-time, licensing and accessibility requirements.

Key Information

Brands, marketers and designers have long struggled with maintaining brand standards on the Web. For years there were two main challenges: colors and fonts. Because a designer cannot know what fonts an end user will have installed on her machine, the designer has had to utilize primarily system fonts like Arial or Verdana⁶ – unless they were creating graphics. But even in a world of high-speed Internet connections, it’s still not a good idea to create an entire webpage that uses only graphical text. Since about a year ago Web designers’ dream of the concept “Web-safe fonts” has become as anachronistic as the concept of “Web-safe colors.” Monitors have long been able to display more than 256 colors, and now the font barriers have begun to break down too.

With the release of the Firefox 3.5 Web browser in June 2009, the Web was introduced to @fontface.⁷ This feature allowed designers to display fonts hosted on their own servers to any site visitor who is using Firefox 3.5 or higher. As of July 2010, Firefox has 23% of the global market share⁸ – but that still leaves almost 80% of the audience seeing Arial, Verdana or other Web-safe fonts. In addition to the lower market share, there were also licensing issues that limited which fonts could be used. Most current font license agreements don’t allow you to redistribute the fonts to others, which is an aspect of how this feature works,⁹ as even its creators acknowledged.

Now there are newer and more reliable options for website typography. Three key programs that have come to the forefront are TypeKit, Google Font Directory and Fontdeck. All allow designers a wider selection of fonts to choose from when designing HTML pages without having to resort to using bandwidth-clogging and search engine-unfriendly graphics or Flash. Since TypeKit announced a partnership with Adobe¹⁰ in mid-August, some of the licensing challenges may be clearing up.

As sites undergo major redesigns in Q4 2010 and all of 2011, we should begin to see this technology become more mainstream. Already we are seeing use of these font technologies on sites like <http://media.twitter.com> and smaller websites created mostly by developers and designers. According to TypeKit, the New York Times and Harvard Business Review (HBR) websites utilize this technology, but it’s not obvious when looking at the websites. If you dig into HBR.com you might notice that they are using TypeKit to enhance the H1 headline on internal pages, but it’s pretty subtle right now. Oddly, on the post promoting the new Google Font Directory, they are using a graphic to display the pretty font, not their own engine.¹¹

Implications and Action Items

As promising as these technologies are for enhancing the visual experience of websites, there are limitations to consider. We recommend you:

- **Evaluate** the service, including pricing, fonts available, cross-browser compatibility, load times and service stability—both technically and financially.
- **Ensure** the service you choose will be around as long as your website uses the fonts.
- **Plan** for what happens when the service either fails temporarily or has a catastrophic failure.
- **Allow** for ample time to bug-test the site across multiple browsers and bandwidth speeds.
- **Test** on landing pages and small micro-sites before engaging in a full website redesign that incorporates the technology.
- **Communicate** with your client or agency well in advance to ensure that all parties understand the options.

⁶ For more on Web-safe fonts, see: <http://tiny.cc/sskxx>

⁷ For more on @fontface, see: <http://tiny.cc/ctfix>

⁸ “Firefox market share drops as IE makes slender gain.” *The Register*, Kelly Fiveash. August 2, 2010. [Accessed 8/30/2010] <http://tiny.cc/32qtt>

⁹ <http://tiny.cc/dtxdr>

¹⁰ For more on the TypeKit Adobe partnership, see: <http://tiny.cc/2oo43>

¹¹ <http://tiny.cc/117li>

Building a Following for Your Nonprofit: Facebook Pages

Sara Weiner

Summary: Nonprofits that develop a consistent following and support system from the public are often more effective in their mission (and in receiving donations) than those that do not. Facebook pages are a great medium for engaging with the public and providing a forum to draw this following and support system. Although fan pages are relatively easy to set up, there are a few things to keep in mind in order to get the most out of your nonprofit's Facebook efforts, including targeting the proper audience, planning ongoing content and implementing community management.

Key Information

Facebook fan pages—profile pages designed for brands, groups and business—have increased in prevalence over the past year. Companies wanting to initiate a social media presence for their products and offerings often look to Facebook first as the easiest way to get involved. Specifically, Facebook is a great place for nonprofits to gather followers and maintain an open dialogue about the nonprofit's mission and related issues. However, while it is easy to create a fan page, maintaining and managing one requires an ongoing content strategy. It also requires time, dedication and discipline. The most successful Facebook fan pages are those of organizations, nonprofit or otherwise, that provide frequent valuable updates, engage with followers and are able to dedicate internal resources to managing their Facebook community.

Setting up a fan page is fairly easy, but there are a few things to know to ensure smooth sailing:

- **Profile:** In order to set up a fan page, you need to have an associated individual profile. Whoever the person is that will be the fan page caretaker will first need to create a personal profile. Anyone with an email address can do this, and they don't necessarily need to complete the profile. However, linking to a profile of a person who has many contacts and friends will make spreading the word about the fan page easier.
- **Getting started:** Once you decide to set up the fan page, there are instructions on how to complete each section of the page. This part is easy. You can copy, paste and import pictures in just a few minutes.
- **Getting fans:** A fan page cannot approach people directly, people need to come to the fan page. Start by having your admin(s) suggest the fan page to their friends. Also seek support internally and by mentioning the page in all your marketing (website, e-mail, newsletters, etc.).
- **Maintaining:** A good rule of thumb is to use the fan page the same way you would use your own profile, just with a more business-appropriate tone and message. Say please and thank you, respond to questions and keep status updates interesting and photos frequent. Determine a content calendar that can feed your community over time.
- **Management:** Sometimes fans bring unwelcome content and comments to your fan page. Be careful how you engage with these people—just like with product reviews, people want to see varying commentary, so it's best not to delete negative feedback altogether (unless it's really obscene), but you also want to be sensitive to your community's position and your organization's mission.

Implications and Action Items

While fan pages are easy to manage, there are guidelines to consider in order to get the most out of your effort:

- **Evaluate** your audience's interest in Facebook. Determine whether your audience is on Facebook already, and if they are, are they active participants or just spectators? Nonprofits with active Facebook audiences will see more success than those whose audience is there just to look at pictures of their grandchildren.
- **Promote** others by posting thank-you's and "kudos" for people who attend your events, donate to your cause and interact with your pages. Consider promoting other nonprofits for their efforts as well—they may return the favor.
- **Discuss** topics! "Topics" means content that drives discussion, opinions and "talk value." Creating a publishing calendar and finding topics that tell a story over time (including any of your own content/events/news) will ensure that the fan page stays active and interesting.
- **Stay true** to your nonprofit's mission. If your nonprofit focuses on animal rights, don't talk about the financial crisis or politics—while posts don't need to be only about animals, stay close to your central objective and distribute content that the public will recognize as related to your cause.
- **Create** a plan to address unwelcome comments and negative feedback. Determine proper responses and etiquette ahead of time, so that when someone tries to belittle your fan community, you are prepared.

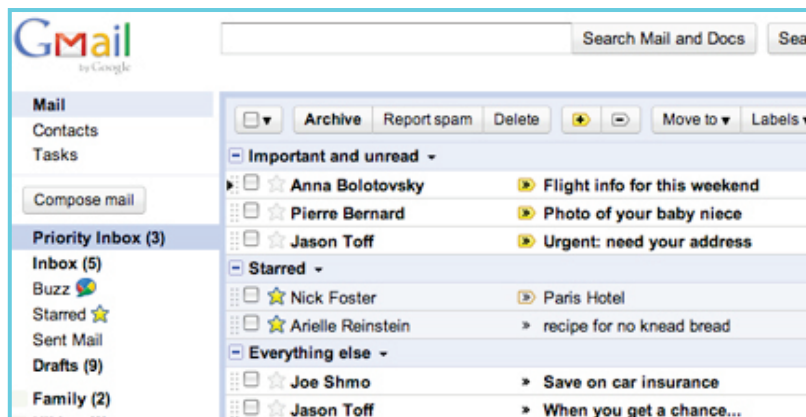
Google's New "Priority" Gmail Feature

Michelle Fares

Summary: Gmail, from Google, is rolling out a new Priority Inbox feature that automatically sorts through inbox messages and ranks them according to their importance to the user, using a proprietary algorithm based on past user behavior. E-mail marketers must now consider whether their audience uses Gmail, and how this new automated system will impact e-mail marketing campaign effectiveness.

Key Information

In August of 2010, Google announced a new Priority Inbox feature for its e-mail program, Gmail. This feature uses an algorithm to filter messages into categories based on the user's e-mail habits. High-priority messages are put in the "Important and unread" folder at the top of the screen. Google filters these messages based on keywords, the people you e-mail the most, and other characteristics, such as whether the message was sent to one user or a mailing list. If a user tends to open and respond to messages from a certain address or with certain keywords, Priority Inbox should be able to recognize that. Other messages go into the "Everything else" section. Users can also star messages that they want to keep handy or return to later and move them into the "Starred" folder. Users can also train the program by using two buttons that let you mark messages as unimportant or important and adjust the section labels.



One technology blogger found the program extremely accurate; Priority Inbox correctly identified his most important messages 50% of the time when he first started using it. After a few days, the program was identifying messages correctly about 80% of the time. Google's product director for Gmail, Keith Coleman, says that it should take about two weeks for Priority Inbox to become optimally efficient at recognizing e-mail behaviors.¹² Also, Google recognizes that Priority Inbox may not be helpful for all users. Users who don't receive that much e-mail or don't need to prioritize their mail have the choice to still use the old Gmail format.

Implications and Action Items

Priority Inbox is an indication of the next trend in technology innovation: relevance. Because customers are inundated with so much information online, they value programs that look at past behaviors to make their lives easier. Rather than inundating consumers with information, cutting-edge companies are finding ways to improve customers' lives by delivering content that customers are directly interested in.

Here are some guidelines for deploying e-mail marketing with Google's new Priority Inbox feature:

- **Determine** what percentage of your mailing list is using Gmail.
- **Develop** e-mail messages with clear calls-to-action that encourage users to respond or open the message immediately.
- **Provide** relevant and engaging content to viewers so that e-mail algorithms will sort messages into high-priority folders or users will star messages that they want to return to later.

For more information on Google's Priority Gmail function, visit <http://bit.ly/bq3U7x>

¹² <http://tiny.cc/ncxit>

iArt – Museums and iPhone Apps

Kara Reinsel

Summary: Art museums can have a reputation for being old-fashioned and intimidating. However, a handful of museums are working to make art more accessible and enriching by connecting with visitors via iPhone applications. At their best, these iPhone apps enhance a visitor's experience by offering in-depth information about the art collection, providing tours to audiences with unique needs, and allowing visitors to connect with the art even after they leave the museum. Even the most basic apps provide useful museum information (hours, admission, location) plus selected highlights from the collection. Most of the apps are available for free or a nominal price (\$1.99–\$2.99).

Key Information

The first art museum iPhone app was launched by the Brooklyn Museum in July 2009. Since then, a handful of museums have gotten into the mobile game. General awareness and popularity of a museum does appear to have an influence on the number of people who are engaging with the iPhone app. The Louvre app has 28,895 ratings (average score 3.5 stars) since its launch in March 2010. The iPhone app created for the Yves Klein (a modern artist with less mainstream appeal) special exhibit at the Hirshhorn in Washington, D.C., launched in June 2010 and has 16 ratings (average score 4 stars). However, popularity is no guarantee that an art museum will have an app—both the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the National Gallery in D.C. have not yet created apps.

Three challenges that museums face when developing an app are the cost, how much content to include and how it impacts the bottom line. Art museums typically don't have the in-house expertise, budget and staff to create an iPhone app. The Brooklyn Museum's app was created for free by an outside developer;¹³ the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) app received generous support from Bloomberg. Art museum development offices could leverage an iPhone app sponsorship as a way to attract forward-thinking donors. A number of app development agencies such as Toura and Antenna Audio offer more off-the-shelf solutions that can help minimize costs and speed time to market.

Art museums have an enormous amount of content, and deciding what to include in an app can be daunting. The MoMA app offers access to 32,000 works of art while the Louvre offers approximately two dozen of its most well known works. MoMA, the Uffizi in Florence, and the National Gallery in London offer customized tours for different visitors (children, visually impaired) and artistic themes. The content should enhance the experience of looking at the art in person—visitors should not be so distracted by the app that they fail to look at the art itself. All of the apps offer visitor information, including museum hours, calendar of events, admission, location and museum maps.

For museums that offer their iPhone apps free of charge, the apps can help to raise a museum's profile with tech-savvy visitors as well as the general public. Attracting more visitors can lead to increases in revenue from admissions, gift shops and concessions. For paid iPhone apps (The National Gallery London \$2.99, Uffizi \$1.99 and Yves Klein at the Hirshhorn \$1.99), the price is an additional income stream. Finally, while harder to measure, having an iPhone app is an opportunity for PR and can convey that a museum embraces new technology.

Implications and Action Items

With projections that half of mobile users will be using Web-enabled devices by Q4 2011,¹⁴ it's not too early for art museums to begin thinking about how they may want to integrate an iPhone app into their program. Art museums can approach an iPhone app in a number of ways. All of the options listed below should include visitor information such as hours, admission, events calendar, location and maps in addition to the content.

- **Launch** an app for a special exhibit. It's a great opportunity to test the waters and gain experience. In addition, the narrow focus of a special exhibit lends itself to a more manageable scope.
- **Create** an app with selected works. Rather than provide access to thousands of works of art, offer detailed information for the "best of" the permanent collection. Often, these are the works that many visitors are drawn to anyway. Culling visitor research data may offer some insights into the pieces that are the most visited.
- **Build** a comprehensive, full-experience app. Provide robust access to the museum's permanent collection, special exhibits, specialized tours and multimedia enhancements.
- **Consider** using an iPhone app as an opportunity for sponsorship and/or charitable giving.

¹³ *Artnet News*. "What Should a Museum iPhone App Look Like?" (August 27, 2009)

¹⁴ *NielsenWire*. "Android Soars, but iPhone Still Most Desirable as Smartphones Grab 25% of U.S. Mobile Market." (August 2, 2010)

About RTCRM

RTC Relationship Marketing (RTCRM) is a full-service direct marketing and relationship marketing agency based in Washington, D.C., in the heart of Georgetown, with an additional office in New York. RTCRM boasts more than 40 years' worth of innovative, targeted solutions that grow its clients' brands and help them forge lasting, valuable relationships with their customers. What distinguishes RTCRM is its unique ability to analyze data and research on both a rational and emotional level. RTCRM's clients include major brands in the telecom, technology, pharmaceutical and other business sectors, such as AARP, BlackRock, Eli Lilly and Novo Nordisk.

To learn more about RTCRM, please visit www.rtcrm.com or follow the Twitter feed @rtcrm.

About the Interactive Strategy Team

The RTCRM Interactive Strategy team is tasked with keeping track and making sense of the ever-changing digital world. It's our job to understand the nuances of how and why different types of people use technology and what that tells us about them. More importantly, it's our job to help our clients apply this knowledge to better communicate with their customers. We help clients translate business goals into marketing campaigns that build relationships with customers. In the 21st century, understanding how and why someone uses technology is as important as understanding where they live, what gender they are, and how old they are. That's where we come in. From ensuring that technographics are considered in the research phase, to tactical plans that align digital, print and broadcast tactics, we work with clients and internal partners to make sure it all works.

It's not about what's cool. It's about what's smart.

Treffpunkt, Interactive Strategy Team Blog: <http://rtctreffpunkt.blogspot.com/>