

## **Social Business Content Strategy**

Checklist and Outline for Content Strategy

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## I. SUMMARY

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As the social media space becomes ever more crowded the primary differentiator for engaging customers will be the quality and relevancy of your social media content. Customers and partners basically want news and knowledge about your products and services. Before creating a social business content strategy, it is essential to have a comprehensive analysis and assessment of the current relevant content across the company as well as deep insight into customer need for information.

This includes having an inventory of where your content is stored, its formats and how it is maintained and updated. Furthermore, it is desirable to know what taxonomies apply to your content and what corresponding key words represent the interests and needs of customers

Our methodology includes examining all facets of content, including enterprise silos, web sites, blogs, online communities and social media platform pages.

We also leverage social media measuring tools for assessing topics of interest to users and relevant keywords.

The result is a comprehensive report on company content, technical structure and maintenance, as well as a guideline for improvement.



## II. Creating Valuable Content

Ask yourself, why do customers come to your web site or blog in the first place? It is because they are interested in your products and services. Consequently, the best service you can provide is valuable information about your products and services. Most of this lies in your enterprise silos in the forms of marketing and technical information and in your social media accounts in the forms of news and commentary. The best information frequently is commentary from user groups addressing a product issue. The best way to leverage your content is to obtain from silos across your organization and your social media platforms and to organize it with a competent taxonomy and search system, as shown below.



### III. Enterprise Content and Inventory

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It is desirable to have an audit of Enterprise data across the company of content that is potentially relevant to customers. This includes:

- Technical information meant for customers about products and services
- Marketing collateral about products and services
- Customer service related information, such as FAQs.
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It is also important to include an assessment of formats and maintenance, such as :

- Database system and format, e.g. relational DBMS and SQL, XML
- APIs to such content
- Security and compliance
- Maintenance schedule, updating



#### IV. Social Media Content

There are numerous social media platforms which can contain content. We examine the major ones and also others that may be particular to a business.

##### Facebook

- Links, Logo
- Fans
- Wall, pages
- Discussions
- Events
- Links to auto updates, blog, etc. Twitter

##### LinkedIn

- Page layout
- Followers
- Groups
- Membership of other groups

##### Twitter

- Page
- Followers
- Lists
- Following
- Apps
- Klout



*Note: EDiscovery and compliance.* A recent development has been the advent of tracking and maintaining records of social media related content and other electronic records which may be required in the future for unforeseen legal actions. In the past, in any litigation companies were required to provide access to hard copy files of relevant discovery material. Today, this extends to electronic information, including social media and email.

## V. Taxonomy and indexing

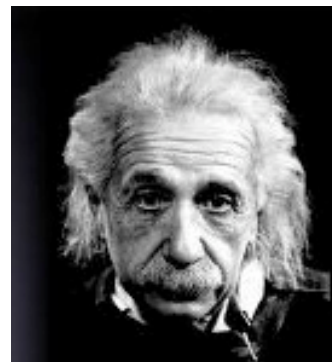
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As the volume and archive of content grows it becomes essential to have a meaningful taxonomy which can be used to index and retrieve valuable documents. This used to be the purview of corporate libraries but “search” is increasingly applied across the organization and in social media.

Some good tools exist for developing and maintaining a taxonomy and using it to index documents. Typical taxonomies, named thesauri in the library world, include the following subjects:

- Main topics, e.g. engineering, chemistry, pharmaceuticals
- Citation formats, e.g. publisher, author, date of publication
- Geographic description, location
- Type of information, e.g. market data, technical, transaction type, news
- Remember to use the same taxonomy for meta tagging of documents for SEO

In a truly sophisticated social business information system highly valuable content will be aggregated, converted, indexed, edited and processed for search. This may be an added cost but can make the difference between a truly compelling social media presence with engaged customers.



*Everything should be made as simple as possible,  
But not simpler.    ~ Albert Einstein*

## VI. Search Features

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As mentioned, as the social media space becomes ever more crowded, it is essential to differentiate your presence by leveraging content about your product and business. Your products and services are the reason you have customers in the first place and content containing valuable information about this will become the most important ingredient in your web and social media services.

There are three types of search systems:

- Relevance searching, e.g. Google search
- Boolean and text proximity searching, e.g. Dialog
- Relational DBMS searching, SQL.
- There is also an outgrowth of several of these systems called semantic search, which attempts to anticipate what the user is searching for based on prior experience and tried to learn to return the most relevant results.

The selection of a search system is dependent to the type of data and indexing you have.

Note : As the examples illustrate companies are now offering a complex set of different ways to organize and index content and make it searchable. Customers don't want to need a Masters in Library Science to find what they want. Perhaps some standards for search (which exists in the Library community) should be integrated in to IT for some degree of consistency and ease of use.





## **VII. Updating, News, Archives and Alerts and Tracking**

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Content is a living entity and is constantly updated, especially today as things develop so quickly. Thus it is important to have a calendar of when content sources are updated

- Develop a routine for processing new information, e.g. daily, weekly or monthly.
- Considering building an Alert system to announce to subscribers new updates and news.
- Include backup systems for important content.
- Consider the need to maintain records of updated material for ediscovery.
- Establish tracking measures to represent traffic, usage patterns, search patterns and so forth. Develop a regular reporting schedule, e.g. weekly, quarterly, that reports on trends. Use this information to refine your content, taxonomy and maintenance.



## **VIII. Conclusions and Recommendations**

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Building and maintaining a content management system can evolve in stages. The first step is to conduct an assessment of your current sources of information and to correlate this to customer need and interest.

Because social media content is “out there” now, it is critical to establish and maintain some degree of management of such content. The Enterprise content of value can be added as desired and on a realistic schedule.

Be sure to study and develop a good taxonomy covering the subjects of interest to your user groups and which represent your products, services, and industry.

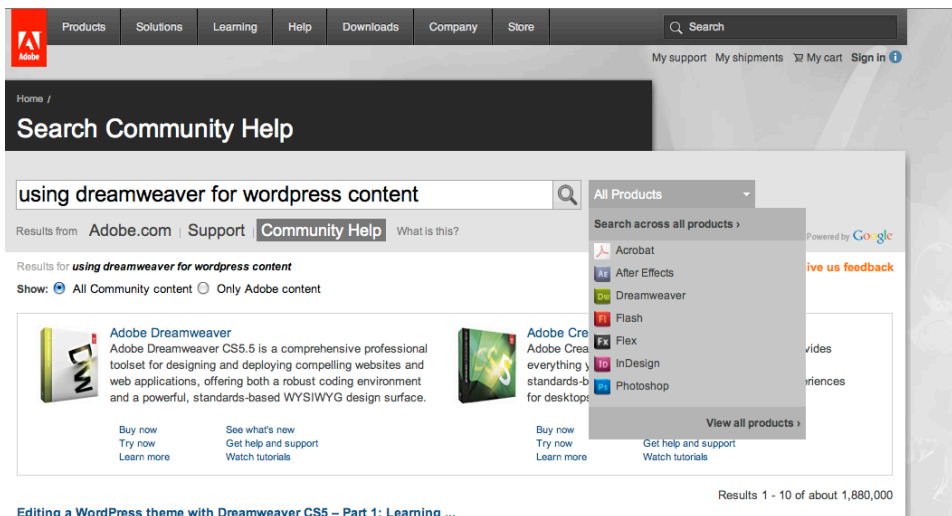
And, while this may be related ore to legal and IT, check that you are compliant with any future needs for edisdcovery.



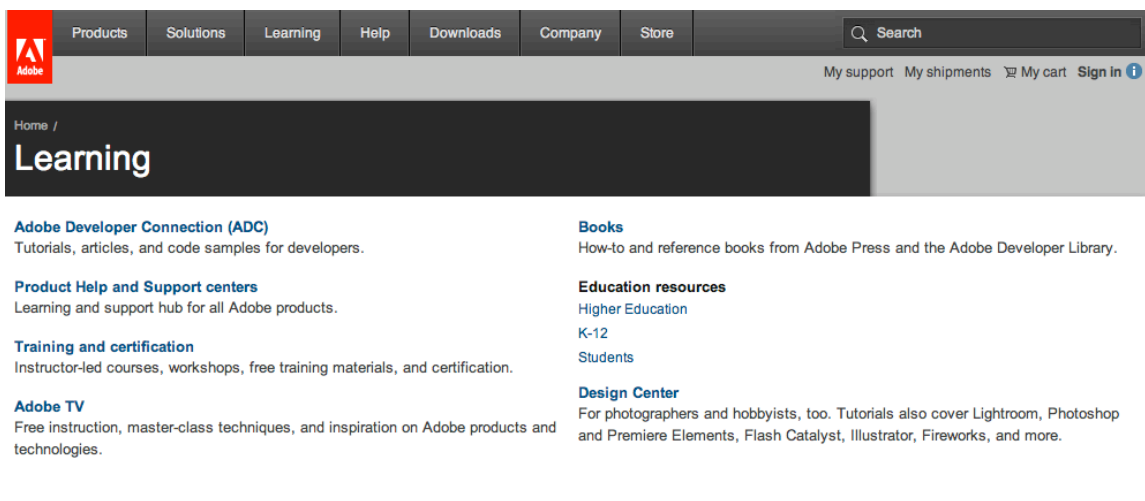
## IX. Examples

We will show a few example of content from several large tech companies, IBM and Adobe, to illustrate some of the good things about content and some of the challenges.

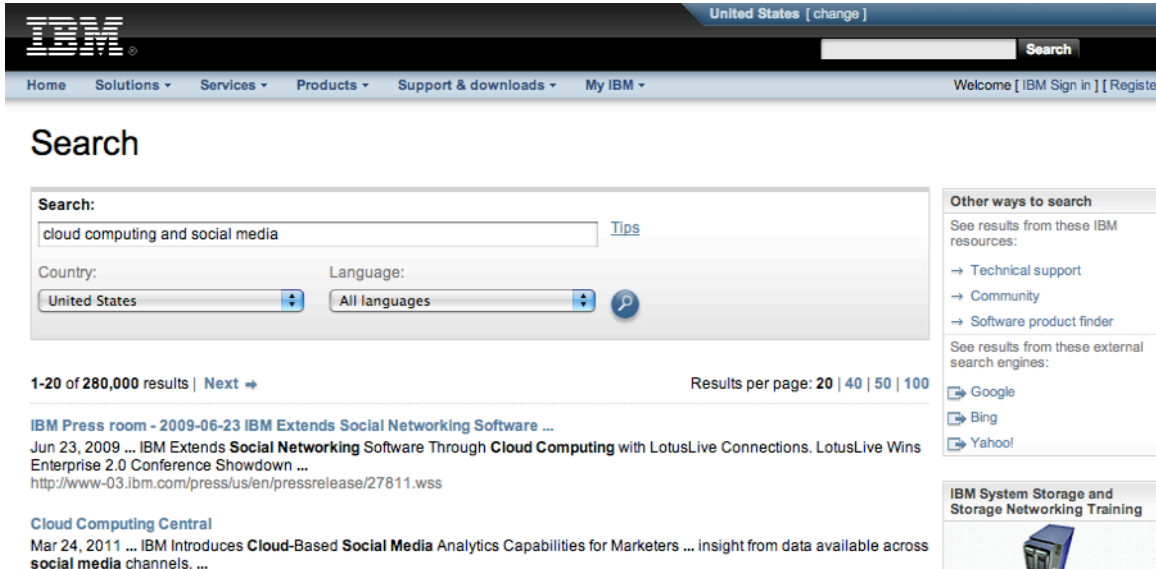
In this example, Adobe has a service for searching for community help, in this case for using Dreamweaver for editing Wordpress



Adobe offers a search box for a general search but also labels for linking to different classes of content, e.g. Products, Solutions, Learning, etc. IBM also has a similar approach by providing a general search box at the top with navigational subheadings to different classes of content



The IBM search for “cloud computing and social media yields 280,000 results .... They also list access to other content on the right, such as Technical support, Community, etc.



The screenshot shows the IBM website's search interface. The search bar contains the text "cloud computing and social media". Below the search bar, there are dropdown menus for "Country" (set to "United States") and "Language" (set to "All languages"). To the right of the search bar, there are links for "Technical support", "Community", and "Software product finder". Below the search bar, the results are displayed as "1-20 of 280,000 results". The first result is titled "IBM Press room - 2009-06-23 IBM Extends Social Networking Software ..." and includes a brief description and a URL. The second result is titled "Cloud Computing Central" and includes a brief description and a URL. On the right side of the page, there is a section titled "Other ways to search" which lists "Google", "Bing", and "Yahoo!". Below this, there is a section titled "IBM System Storage and Storage Networking Training" with a small image of a storage device.

IBM's general search on cloud computing yields 7,600,000 results.



The screenshot shows the IBM website's search interface. The search bar contains the text "cloud computing". Below the search bar, there are dropdown menus for "Country" (set to "United States") and "Language" (set to "All languages"). To the right of the search bar, there are links for "Technical support", "Community", and "Software product finder". Below the search bar, the results are displayed as "1-20 of 7,560,000 results". The first result is titled "IBM Cloud Computing: Overview - United States" and includes a brief description and a URL. The second result is titled "IBM helps clients excel in Cloud Computing, offering reliable and secure SaaS, IaaS, and PaaS solutions." and includes a brief description and a URL. On the right side of the page, there is a section titled "Other ways to search" which lists "Google", "Bing", and "Yahoo!". Below this, there is a section titled "Getting started with highly" with a small image of a storage device.

IBM also offers studies:

IBM uses LinkedIn primarily for recruiting


Adobe does the same ...

LinkedIn Account Type: Business ▼ Geoffrey Sharp Add Connections

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Companies > Adobe Systems

Overview **Careers**



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IBM doesn't appear to have much of a blog presence :


Adobe has a lot of blog content :



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**Completing the Circle: EchoSign Acquisition Rounds Out Adobe's Electronic Signature Offerings**

Adobe's history is one of not only inventing and adapting amazing technology, but also making those same innovations easy to use. Over ten years ago, we took the complex world of public key infrastructure (PKI) & digital certificates, and in turn, made digital signing a one-click process on a PDF... [Read more](#)

**X. About the Author**

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**Geoff Sharp**



Certified social media and content strategist. Geoff Sharp co-founded successful Internet search companies including Transium, acquired by Alta Vista, and Dialog, acquired by Knight-Ridder. He is a certified social media strategist and has developed effective social media programs for clients in the publishing, information technologies and hotel industries. Geoff has extensive experience in the information industry, product development and business development. He negotiated hundreds of database and partner licenses with major publishing firms including McGraw-Hill and Dun & Bradstreet. He also negotiated and managed large strategic investments for Knight-Ridder in Internet companies and served on the Boards of PLS, Individual, and RDS. Geoff has an M.A. in Mathematics from California State University at San Jose, and completed executive leadership programs at Lockheed, Knight-Ridder and Stanford University.

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