



Implementing Digital Communications

10 credits – Level 4

Aims and Objectives

This unit will provide students with insight and some of the skills and knowledge to implement digital communications projects.

Central to the unit will be an exploration of the new models and approaches that are now governing digital communications: these include web 2.0-3.0, social networking, blogging, and subscription-based communications tools.

In recognition of the rapidly changing technologies and approaches to digital communication this unit will also feature a future trends section, which will be regularly updated, and will consider web 4.0 (the synchronized background sharing of data to provide intelligent solutions), new influence models and the growing impact of neuroscience on digital communications practice.

Assessment methodology

Candidates will be asked to write a blog or create a microsite and use Google Adwords and analytics within it. The assignment will be a written reflection on their work.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, candidates will be able to:

- Explain the changes that have been brought about by the advances in digital communication techniques
- Explain contemporary digital concepts and identify how these changes challenge and compliment the conventional forms of communication
- Apply the tools available to measure the effectiveness of digital campaigns and recommend appropriate methods to a given situation
- Plan and execute digital campaigns
- Explain how digital communications are controlled or constrained by social acceptability, the law and voluntary constraints
- Evaluate the likely developments in the sphere of digital communications

Knowledge and Skill Requirements

Element 1: Digital Concepts (25%)

- 1.1 Describe the origins of digital communication and the effects it is having on the business communications industry:
- the evolution of the world wide web
 - self-publishing tools
 - establishment of search techniques
 - development of social networking tools
- 1.2 Explain the changing relationships between marketers and stakeholders brought about by digital developments:
- Speed of communication
 - Interactivity of communication
 - Ease of communication

- Quality and quantity of communication
- 1.3 Explain the relationships between opinion leaders and consumers:
- Deference to reference model
 - Opinion former and opinion leader concepts
 - Growth in power of consumer groups
 - Leading websites eg, Trip Advisor, e-Bay
- 1.4 Evaluate the new and emerging way of digital based two-way communication:
- Emergence of web 2.0 eg, Flickr, Technorati
 - Social networking e,g My Space, You Tube
 - Blogging eg, readkevinread.com
 - Subscription based models
- 1.5 Analyse the demographics and behaviour of the digital user in order to communicate more effectively:
- Consumer
 - Organisational
 - Government
 - Other stakeholders

Element 2: Project delivery, including campaign management tools (25%)

- 2.1 Set communications objectives for a digital communications campaign:
- Acquisition
 - Retention
 - Brand-building
 - Customer relationship management
- 2.2 Assess the organisation's needs and whether internal or external resources are appropriate for delivering digital campaigns:
- Internal skills analysis
 - Scoping of the digital task
 - Knowledge of external resources available
- 2.3 Develop tactics within the digital context:
- Google Adwords
 - Google Adsense
 - Networks
 - Sponsored links
 - Recommenders
- 2.4 Describe Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and its role in project delivery:
- Importance of search engines and definition of SEM
 - How search works (human directories, crawler-based, caches, semantics)
 - Keywords (relevance, density and stuffing) tags and linking
 - Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)
 - Paid-for models (Paid for inclusion - PFI, Paid for Placement - PFP)
 - Free submissions

Element 3: Campaign Implementation, Evaluation and Control (25%)

- 3.1 Create digital campaigns:
- define digital communications objectives
 - identify and research audiences
 - evaluate relevant channels
 - understand the technical implications of measurement and evaluation tools
 - select appropriate measurement and evaluation tools
- 3.2 Explain the structure of the digital communications industry:
- Affiliate
 - Analytics
 - E-mail marketing
 - Mobile marketing
 - E-commerce
 - Display advertising
 - Games
 - Hosting
 - Viral
 - Video
 - Hosting
 - PPC
 - Social media
 - Usability
 - User generated content
 - Behavioural targeting
 - Content management
 - Optimisation
 - SEO
- 3.3 Explain how to manage the interrelationships between the key players in the digital communications industry:
- Changing industry structure
 - Developments in technology and their impact on the industry structure
 - Recognising the optimum combination of resources to meet campaign objectives
- 3.4 Explain how budgets are determined within the digital context:
- Objective and task
 - Competitive parity
 - Percentage of Sales
 - Affordable
- 3.5 Explain the methods of digital creative evaluation:
- Copy testing
 - Attitude research
 - A/B tests
 - Multivariate tests
 - Online focus groups
- 3.7 Explain the procedures used for measuring digital campaigns:
- Primary & secondary data
 - Onsite (Logfiles and Tagging)
 - Offsite (Panels, VOC)
 - Experimentation (A/B Tests, Usability studies)

- Tracking studies
- Conversion funnels

Element 4 Future Trends (25%)

- 4.1 Explain the likely effects of new developments in digital technologies:
- web 4.0
 - new influence models eg, persuasion
 - impact of neuroscience eg, impact of emotions on decision making
- 4.2 Demonstrate an understanding of changing relationships between brands and consumers:
- pre-eminence of brand promise and
 - how brand promise can be reinforced via digital communications
- 4.3 Assess the impact of a borderless digital world:
- Speed of transmission of message
 - Salience of transmission of message
 - Speed of response
 - Impact of response

Reading Resources

Solis B. The State of PR-Marketing

Ryan D. and Jones C. Understanding Digital Marketing (2009) Kogan Page