

# New Media Age – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2009

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## Human skills matter as much as technology

Roger Williams, director - international marketing, Right Media



It is great to see the fast proliferation of new trading platforms that drive more accountable and efficient media buying. Not only do they add value for marketers, but also help the digital industry prise even more ad spend away from less measurable media routes.

However, the rapid growth of these new platforms has meant the challenge for many of the online media buying agencies investing in these technologies is to identify and recruit people with the skills to use them effectively.

Technology on its own cannot deliver efficiencies and more targeted campaigns. This requires new skills, with greater emphasis placed on tech-savvy people with data analytics and statistical backgrounds.

## The holy grail of fusing digital and offline talent

Keith Hunt, managing partner, Results International



It was heartening to read of Mark Cridge's plans for taking Glue into the next decade (nma 29 October). At Results International we hear time and again how clients are frustrated by the lack of seamless delivery and any real connection between traditional and digital agencies.

As Mark acknowledges, most digital agencies haven't really quite mastered traditional offline creative skillsets and, equally, few traditional agencies have learnt how to properly integrate digital skills into the offline domain.

The offline agencies which have historically had the wherewithal have tried to tackle this with varying approaches. For example, we have seen Publicis acquire Digitas. Other groups have created digital businesses to run alongside their existing operations. But in most cases turf wars have arisen.

We believe a progressive digital agency group lacking the legacy

baggage of the traditional agency group is better placed to absorb and emerge with an offline agency and in doing so bring the digital and analogue worlds together in a genuinely integrated fashion for the true benefit of clients. For this reason, it will be interesting to see what both the Sapient/Nitro deal and the fruits of Glue's plans deliver in 2010 and beyond.

## What chance a one-stop web shop for all media?

Rick Lippiett, creative director, Skyron



Sky Songs, a new music service, in beta, which offers a streaming service similar to Spotify for a little more than £6 a month, has more than 4m tracks and you get to download 15 tracks to keep. Now that seems like the perfect model - a decent balance of streaming everything, a reasonable monthly charge - and you get a few favourites to keep.

So why has Spotify cornered the market as the plat du jour of the streaming music services? How did it manage to get the drop on Last.fm and, since its adoption of a download costing model (all neatly synched with partner 7Digital), will it be a real threat to iTunes music store?

Indeed, it's easy to see what's next - live gig tickets link-up, TV episodes over streaming subscription, films. You name it. A decent subscription service with hefty bandwidth might be the model for consuming all our media in the not very distant future.

## Comment from nma.co.uk

Re: Cooper on search - How far should Google go in policing search?

Public displays of impartiality towards search results like this make Google appear more trustworthy. It was not condoning the image, but nor was it prepared to edit it out and jeopardise the freedom of expression on the internet. I don't condone the image either, but once you start editing out what someone finds offensive on the internet, how much would be left?

Tim Cox

opinion

PAUL BRADSHAW

Senior lecturer in online journalism at Birmingham City University, publisher onlinejournalismblog



## Crowdsourcing can engage and empower whole communities

What appealed to me above all was the potential of crowdsourcing to engage people

For the last four months I've been running Help Me Investigate, a web platform for crowdsourcing investigative journalism funded by 4iP and Screen West Midlands. It does this by breaking an investigation up into lots of small tasks, or 'challenges', which different people can complete based on their own knowledge.

So I guess we've joined the crowdsourcing crowd, but this certainly wasn't about jumping on a bandwagon. When I first came up with the idea for Help Me Investigate two years ago what appealed to me above all was the potential of crowdsourcing to engage people.

I was inspired by the example of the Florida News Press, which wanted to investigate unusually high charges for connecting new homes to the water supply. It asked its readers to help, which they did, extremely successfully. But what was most remarkable was that the story became the most popular on its website, ever, apart from hurricane stories. And this was a story about water connection charges.

So when we launched Help Me Investigate in July this year I was hoping for similar results: for people to be interested in local issues they wouldn't otherwise read about, because of a social dynamic.

Surprisingly, that's what happened. When a friend asked about two bus companies running on the same route, I found myself learning about bus deregulation. When someone else helped me identify the organisation responsible for hospital parking, I felt obliged to return the favour by following up on the issue.

And because someone asked "What's happening with the Birmingham Council website?" a whole bunch of us uncovered a £2.2m overspend - a story that has since rumbled on and on in the local press.

So what have we learned about crowdsourcing? First, you need passion from someone involved. In the beginning, that someone will be you; if you're lucky you'll attract other passionate people who can drive it forward further (and you will need to be lucky).

Second, I think it makes a big difference if you are already part of an online community. Help Me Investigate worked well in Birmingham because the team are part of - and put a lot into - that city's healthy online community.

Third, people need to get something out of the process. That might be the fun of participating, the social connections that engenders, the satisfaction of learning something new, or of getting results. Different people respond to different things, so you may need all of the above.

## newmediaage

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