



with **Eric Schwartzman**

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TRENDING: Social Media in Schools Social Business Online Influence

Why Do People Share Online?

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3 **comments** Posted September 10, 2011 by **Cory Howell** with 2094 reads

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The New York Times Customer Insight Group recently conducted a three-phase study, titled "The Psychology of Sharing," to determine what motivates people to share information online. Understanding the factors that spur the sharing of content on the web is valuable to online marketers, [social media experts](#), and business people in general.

The first phase of the study involved in-person interviews in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. The second phase of the study was a one-week sharing panel. The final phase included a survey of 2,500 online sharers and the identification and classification of sharers.

Sharing is Not New

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September 13, 2011 by **Jon Hartley**

hi ,this is really very good information. i am planning to make this years...

September 13, 2011 by **kevin headen**

I have to say I absolutely agree with you. A good friend of mine always says '...

September 13, 2011 by **Website Designer Perth**

Hi, TarynWonderful post. I do think most business owners have not thought about...

One participant of the study noted that sharing is not new; people have always shared information, thoughts, and ideas. How else could a culture possibly be passed on? Imagine family clans of old, telling and retelling stories to pass along information to the younger generations. Today, as we are no longer bound by the physical realm (pencil and paper), the Information Age allows us to share:

- more content
- more often
- with more people
- more quickly

The enormity of the change the internet has brought to the world is still unfolding. Consider that events that were once recorded on paper by journalists to be distributed to the public via newspaper, radio, or television can now be captured and uploaded or even streamed live for all of the world to witness in just a few seconds. Information is coming in a purer form, which allows individuals to think for themselves.

Reasons to Share Online

Several main reasons for sharing online were identified through the course of the study. In general, we share:

- to bring valuable and entertaining content to others
- to define ourselves to others
- to grow and nourish relationships
- for self-fulfillment
- to market causes or brands

Types of Sharers

The study revealed six types of online sharers:

Altruists are helpful, reliable, and thoughtful. Many altruists stay connected with email and pass along information in attachments and links. An example of an altruist is someone who sends a relevant job posting to an out-of-work friend or a medical article to a family member with health problems.

Careerists are intelligent web users who have been quick to see the immense value of social networking. Careerists use websites like LinkedIn and FaceBook to build professional profiles and relationships. Some careerists find online work (such as contractual projects) and can forget about setting the alarm clock, working independently at their convenience.

Hipsters are young, popular, creative, and prefer the cutting edge of technology. They're less likely to email, opting for newer, quicker methods of communication, like text, Twitter or Skype message.

Boomerangs share content for validation and reaction. Empowered with information, Boomerangs use [social websites like Twitter and Facebook](#) to post thoughtful questions and comments to engage other users.

Connectors are creative, thoughtful, and relaxed. They are likely to make plans via email and Facebook, hook up online discounts, and take advantage of freebies and promotions. Think of the money Connectors can save! (Remember not to text and drive as you look for the address of your half-priced manicure.)

Selectives are resourceful, thoughtful, and careful about the information they share. Someone who is a Selective sharer may prefer to send an email or private message to communicate, rather than a social update or post. These intelligent sharers understand the permanence of everything posted to the web, knowing that every message is indexed, even if you delete it or move it to your desktop trash bin.

How to Encourage Online Sharing

If you appeal to the motivation to connect with each other -- not with just your brand -- you will encourage sharing. Here are some tips to remember when soliciting replies, posts, or other online content.

- keep it simple
- have a sense of humor
- create a sense of urgency

Remember, you are not simply trying to share your content one time. You want it to be shared and then shared again and again and again...

Image Credit:

By Gautheron (Own work) [CC-BY-3.0 (www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)], via Wikimedia Commons

About Cory Howell

10+ year SEO veteran w/ MorePro Marketing in Phoenix, AZ. Experienced in all aspects of Search Engine Marketing, including: link building, social media, on-site/off-site optimization tactics, local search

September 13, 2011 by [jopinto](#)

My perspective on negative reviews is simple: if I see the occasional negative...

September 13, 2011 by [John Coombs](#)

I'm glad you both liked it, it's a model I recommend most often because you don...

September 13, 2011 by [LeighDow](#)

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sirenf said:

Really enjoyed this post, thank you Cory. May I just suggest one addition to "How To Encourage Online Saring"? Be nice! Those who share negativity online are less likely to be successful than those who share positivity.

[reply](#) 0 points

Sun, 2011-09-11 08:27 — sirenf



Cory Howell said:

Thanks for the great feedback on the post. One of the things I think you can take from this is that most people are probably a blend of the different types of social sharers. Even myself, I've been in several groups of the years and probably don't fit well in any "1" group.

[reply](#) 0 points

Sun, 2011-09-11 01:15 — Cory Howell



Roberta Budvietas said:

Well I feel it is important to respond to this. Love the different types and have never thought of this before. I like the **Connectors** are creative, thoughtful, and relaxed. I have done boomeranging

Shared with my fanpage as relates to several of my recent blogs

[reply](#) 0 points

Sat, 2011-09-10 21:20 — Roberta Budvietas



Anonymous said:

Cory, this is a really interesting article. Of all the points, the thing I relate to the most is "keep it simple", a mandate which is exceptionally pertinent considering the mobile use case. Along those lines we have just released Peers, a new web app at <http://peers.com> that could be a game changer, especially among Connectors and Selectives. There's a [quick-start tutorial](#) on Facebook. Let us know what you think!

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