

# Welcome to Social Media

**G**iving consumers the power to generate web content is impacting every area of the business world. This is the world of 'Social Media' - where consumers publish, share, and influence via blogging, podcasting, videopodcasting, and social networking.

The social media phenomenon has given a megaphone to the masses. It's a rapidly evolving area and many companies are treading carefully, reluctant to embrace these potential routes to market until the whole thing calms down and stabilises.

That said, many big corporates are already advertising their wares amidst the maze of social sites - virtual worlds like Habbo Hotel and Second Life feature adverts and virtual shops dedicated to big name brands. With a relatively young demographic, these outlets are the ideal place to entice the consumers of tomorrow.

Indeed, the numbers are hard to ignore. Apparently there are already more than 100 million active members on MySpace and Facebook. Technorati tracks over 50 million blogs. Thanks to iTunes, podcasts like "Ask a Ninja" are as popular as BBC Radio 4's Today Programme. And each day, 70 million videos are viewed on YouTube, the most recent and biggest acquisition in Google's attempt to dominate the fastest growing area of online business.

Today, enthusiastic bloggers are dictating TV programming in Japan. In the US podcasters and videopodcasters are creating social advertising for major brands. Here in Europe, consumers who have always demanded quality and accountability from the brands they buy are influencing corporate decisions on the highest levels simply by publishing opinions about their likes and dislikes.

Welcome to the fast-growing world of social media...



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