

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PARTNERS

Curation: An Evolving Trend in Communications



In his book, *Curation Nation*, Steve Rosenbaum makes some interesting speculations about the future of information exchange on the internet. Rosenbaum has previously produced a television show for MTV (*MTV Unfiltered*) and hosts his own website, Magnify.net.

While some pessimistically greet the remarkable explosion of information on the internet with despair, Rosenbaum believes users are developing their own 'filters'; ways and mechanisms by which to sort out useful and trustworthy information from the surrounding "noise" (useless or untrustworthy messages). People performing some of this filtering - through their blogs, on their websites, through emails or via Twitter postings, to name just a few - he labels *curators*. The sorting process they're developing: *curation*. But, it's far more dynamic than the sterile curating activities museum directors and librarians have performed over the ages. Rosenbaum's curators interact with information, adding value through their sorting and even editing and amplification.

Crowd-Sourced vs. Corporate Communications

Beyond the mechanics of how it occurs, curation marks a shift in power. Crowd-sourced information (on the internet) gives everyday people power previously held by only the largest communication companies. (Andrew Blau has coined this power a "massive megaphone".) However, "crowd content" without curation tends to drive the thoughtful voices to the edges and gives overdue emphasis to the loudest and most outrageous ones. But if a "human editorial layer" inserts itself, civility, accuracy and thought can regulate and transpose the information making it more generally useful.

Rosenbaum defines curation as the selection, organization, presentation and evolution of content, information or data. So curation is about the sorting out (from the morass of information available) items pertinent to a particular "editor's" interests. Curators accumulate, prioritize and highlight the most important articles in an interest area. In this way, order and value are added to an otherwise useless agglomeration of information through the selection and even active editing (qualitative organizing) of the material. [We note Target's current TV commercial: "The shops we loved at Target, collected and *curated* for you".]

Which Curators Will You Trust?

And so, individuals are stepping forward in various channels to undertake their roles as curators. This is an interesting twist to the prevalent drive towards simplification and direct communication because it inserts an intermediary between the creator of the message and the consumer. But, Rosenbaum postulates that consumers will embrace the "complication of" the middleman for the value he/she adds... In our parlance, this curator could, in many cases, be the known and trusted *everyday advocate* - an individual we've suggested brands should identify to help spread favorable word of mouth.

To learn more about identifying and enabling your everyday advocates, contact us:

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