**Social Networking: What is it and is it useful to you?**

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| **Capacity** | **Importance** | **Type of social networking** |
|  |  | 1. **Social networks** – the core social platforms in most countries where people interact through social networks are Facebook for consumer audiences, Linked In for business audiences, Google Plus and Twitter for both. |
|  |  | 2. **Social publishing and news** – nearly all newspapers and magazines, whether broad or niche, now have an online presence with the option to participate through comments on articles, blogs or communities. |
|  |  | 3. **Social commenting in blogs** – a company blog can form the hub of your social media strategy and you can look at tapping into others blogs whether company or personal or through blog outreach. |
|  |  | 4. **Social niche communities** - these are communities and forums independent of the main networks, although these do support sub-groups. You can create your own community this way. |
|  |  | 5. **Social customer service** - sites like GetSatisfaction as well as companies own customer support forums are in- creasingly important for responding to customer complaints. |
|  |  | 6. **Social knowledge** – these are informational social net- works Yahoo! Answers and similar plus Wikipedia where you can engage an audience by solving their problems and subtly showing how your products have helped others |
|  |  | 7. **Social bookmarking**– these are the bookmarking sites like Delicious (www.delicious.com) which are relatively unimportant in the UK except if you are engaging technical audiences. |
|  |  | 8. **Social streaming** - Rich and streaming media social sites - photos, video and podcasting. |
|  |  | 9. **Social search** - Search engines are becoming more social with the ability to tag, comment on results and most recently, vote for them through Google +1. |
|  |  | 10. **Social commerce** - We’ve left this one until last, be- cause it’s mainly relevant for the retail sector. It involves reviews and ratings on products and sharing of coupons about details. |