WORLD USABILITY DAY

Making Social Media Work for You

November 10, 2011

Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center
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MS. SWIERENGA: Welcome everyone. It’s great to see such a large turnout for this wonderful event. So, I’m Sarah Swierenga. I’m the director of Usability/Accessibility, Research and Consulting here at Michigan State University and I want to welcome you to World Usability Day. We’re pleased to host the Michigan event during the internationally celebrated observance. We’re here to welcome nearly 300 attendees for today’s event. Many of you are familiar with what we do, but for those who are just getting acquainted with us, UARC, that’s our nickname, has been a leader in improving user experience for websites, computer software, and electronics since 2004. We test, train, and consult for academic, non-profit, government, and corporate clients, and perform grant-funded research for a variety of research partners. We’d like to make sure to give a hardy thank you to the sponsors for today’s event. It’s one of the events that we rely heavily on sponsors to pull all of this off, and we’re grateful for our corporate sponsors and also those from Michigan State University. I’d like to name them individually. Deque Systems is a very significant sponsor this year. They are a globally recognized web accessibility experts and they’re based out of Reston, Virginia. Preety Kumar will be speaking at lunch, giving
you a little more information about one of the projects they’re doing that sounds pretty exciting. TechSmith Corporation, who’s been a faithful sponsor through the years, is based out of mid-Michigan. They develop innovative web products, including two that we use at UARC, which are Moray and Camtasia. Daniel Foster will be presenting on a project related to their social media efforts a little bit later today. The Michigan Usability Professionals Association, MIUPA, promotes user-centered design and usability through usability-related events and promotions. We invite you to join MIUPA and sign up for their email list. They’re in the hallway during the break and at lunch. And then Michigan CHI, which stands for the Michigan Chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery Special Interest Group in Human-Computer Interaction; hence, the CHI part, mostly known by CHI. They’re going to be doing a raffle at lunch. I’ll announce that a little bit later, right before the lunch. And we’d also like to thank the following MSU organizations for sponsoring Michigan World Usability Day, and that’s Libraries Computing and Technologies, the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives, the Department of Telecommunication, Information Studies and Media. Constantinou Coursaris, who is giving the workshop this
afternoon, is an assistant professor in that department.
And University Outreach and Engagement, which is our home, the party responsible for all of the logistics and support for this event. So, please give a big round of thanks for our sponsors.

All right, if you’d like to participate actively in the event today, we do have Twitter feeds going, and the hash tags are MiWUD 11, and...WUD, for World Usability Day. We’d like to see some action going on. So, please participate and enjoy all the presentations. I know this is a very popular topic and I’m excited to hear these presentations myself.

Now, I’d like to introduce our first speaker, Kamaria Campbell, who is a usability auditor at ForeSee, and that’s a customer experience and analytics firm based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Her work consists of helping companies and other organizations ensure that their websites and customer facing technologies provide the optimal experience for users. She also plays an active role in the team’s ongoing research into website usability best practices, near and dear to my heart, leading research on emerging trends in the social media space. Ms. Campbell has a Master of Science in Information, with a specialization in Human-Computer Interaction, from the University of Michigan.
School of Information, and a Bachelor of Arts from Duke University, where she majored in computer science and history. Kamaria is a member of the ACM SIGCHI and UPA. She will discuss identifying usability best practices for social media work. Welcome Kamaria.

MS. CAMPBELL: Hello. Can everyone hear me? Okay, great. So, good morning, everyone. As Sarah said, my name is Kamaria Campbell. I’m a usability auditor at ForeSee, and I’m here to talk to you today about how we, as usability professionals, can begin to identify best practices for social media work.

I’d like to begin with an outline of my presentation so that you know what types of things I’ll be covering today. So, first I’ll begin with some background information about me, the work that I do at ForeSee, as well as just some background as to how I even came to be in a position to talk to you about identifying best practices for social media work. Next, we’ll look at three common types of social media, and the reason why we’re focusing on three is because social media is so broad that it was really important for today’s presentation to just focus on three types of social media that you’re likely to encounter when working on different websites. Then, we’ll look at some key questions to ask before diving into social media,
so making sure that’s a really purposeful exercise when you do encounter or engage in social media, and then similarly, thinking about ways to identify best practices for social media. So, that will be the core of the presentation, looking at some methods for identifying best practices. And then we’ll close with some questions at the end.

So who am I? How am I in a position today to talk to you about identifying best practices for social media work? So, I am a native Floridian. I’m from Tampa, Florida. I was born and raised there. I attended Duke University and graduated from there in 2008, and then I went directly to the University of Michigan School of Information, where I obtained my Master’s Degree and focused in human-computer interaction. So, shortly after graduation, I started with ForeSee as a usability auditor, and for those of you who aren’t familiar with ForeSee, we’re a customer experience analytics firm, so we measure the customer experience across a number of customer touch points, including the web, in-store or other locations, mobile devices, as well as social media. So where you’ve most likely encountered ForeSee is when browsing the web, so perhaps you’ve seen our pop-up surveys because surveys are the main tool that we use to capture customer feedback in these various
channels. So that’s probably how you’ve heard of ForeSee or why that company name might sound familiar.

So, in terms of the work that I do at ForeSee, I’m not directly involved with collecting any data around the customer experience, but rather I’m on the usability team, so we have about 12 usability auditors, and our primary work consists of conducting heuristic evaluation on live sites, as well as prototypes, and these sites range from the public sector to the private sector. So, everything from government websites to retail sites, hospital sites, insurance sites -- these are all sites that my team and I analyze and encounter on a daily basis in our work.

So, in terms of the social media piece, we are actively monitoring the web and identifying best practices in terms of web design and development, and so, for us, social media was a natural extension of that research that we already do. So, last summer, we created a small group within our team and we started analyzing social media on websites more closely, and two of the key achievements of that group are listed here. So, the first is we did a big competitive research project across the 15 federal departments, so organizations such as the Department of Energy and the Department of Transportation, we did a competitive research study to evaluate which platforms they
are participating in, and how they were positioning social media work on their websites. So, that was a great achievement for our team. Then we were also able to develop a social media focused offering that focuses solely on usability and social media. So, this was really great for us. We evolved our best practices to the point where we could talk with the client exclusively about usability and social media.

Some of you might still be asking why should we, as usability professionals, even take the time to analyze social media? And there are a couple of answers to that question. So, the first is that everyone uses it, right? So, that’s the easy answer. Social media is everywhere. We see statistics in news articles every day about the staggering growth of various platforms, and it just seems like you have to use social media to be relevant. It’s one of those, you know, all the cool kids are doing it, so we should definitely study social media. So, that’s really not the reason why we studied it. I really prefer the second point, which is that social media matters, and they will continue to matter. So, this is not my point, this is actually a point that the Dean of the School of Information, Jeff MacKie-Mason, made at a talk he gave during the University of Michigan’s homecoming weekend.
So, his talk was entitled, Do Social Media Matter, and he gave a really great definition of social media. He said this is the convergence of human nature and opportunity. So, essentially we are inherently social beings and social media just amplifies the fact that this is our natural tendency. So, these platforms will continue to evolve. There will always be different types of social media, and so it’s really not about which platforms are hot today, but rather thinking about how this space as a whole will grow and how we can keep up with these developments. The practical answer for our team is also around client demand. So, we started getting a lot of questions from our clients about how they could best position social media on their websites, what were some best practices in terms of placement and how they could demonstrate which platforms they were participating in. So, it really became a commander imperative for us to begin developing some best practices in this area.

These last two points, I feel, explain why we confidently enter this space, so we truly are always monitoring the web and keeping up with the latest in website design and development. We truly have an expertise in online best practices research, and this was a natural extension of the work that we do on a daily basis. Then we
also were just willing to seize this opportunity. So, we said, this is an area where we can show leadership, and we’re going to jump in and see what we can come up with.

That being said, I have two goals for today’s presentation. The first is to provide guidance for identifying best practices for social media that extend beyond today’s platform. So, yes, we will look at some screen shots from specific platforms and some statistics from specific platforms, but this is in no way intended to be a platform specific exercise. I really want to provide you with a framework that you can use going forward in your work to continuously identify new social media and identify best practices. Then, the last piece is just to encourage all of us as usability professionals to lead in social media. So, we are a very diverse group in terms of our skill sets and experiences, and this is really a great way for us to lead and contribute some of our background to this new area.

In terms of the imperative, or the why now, why should we look at social media, there are some statistics that make a really good case. So, you take a platform like Facebook, which has more than 800 million active users, 50% of these users are logging in every day. They’re connected to 130 other people on average. They’re interacting with
more than 900 million objects, so things like pages, groups, events, these users are connected to about 80 of these objects on average. So there’s a lot of engagement and a lot of interaction. It’s very natural for people to want to capture some of this interaction and popularity and integrate some of this work into their website. And then, similarly, people are interacting with Facebook on the site as well as across the web. So about 500 million people per month use Facebook apps or experience the platform on other sites. So, at this point, social media is pervasive, and you don’t have to be on Facebook to take advantage of some of the functionalities that are offered on the platform.

So, in terms of two other popular platforms, we have Twitter and some statistics for that platform. They have more than 100 million active users, with about 50% logging in daily, and interestingly, 40% of active accounts have not tweeted in the last month. So, this raises some interesting points. The first is that perhaps people are creating these accounts and then deciding that they’re not worth their time, so they’re just not checking in with them actively or posting any content; and the other possibility is that people are using the platform solely for the content that’s there. So, they are purposely creating an account so that they can follow others and receive
information from those sources. And this really raises the importance of today’s conversation, because if people are going to platforms solely for the content, then we, as usability professionals, need to pay more attention to the formatting of that content and what’s included to ensure that users who are interacting with it are having the best experience.

So, then closing with Google Plus. There are a range of estimates about how many users are on this platform. So, it’s not really clear. I’ve seen everything from 5 to 30 million users, but the point is that this is another form of social media and it is something that we should pay attention to, especially as they do have profile pages for individuals and businesses. So, this is potentially similar to a Facebook, where there are multiple objects that users can interact with, so there will be a lot of engagement that can be integrated into websites.

So, why us? Why should usability professionals feel that they can enter social media work, or have conversations with social media specialists or people who are solely involved in marketing, about social media? I chose this image because, again, we have such diverse skill sets. We are like a Swiss Army knife. We have backgrounds in design and programming and business, and we’re really
able to access any component of this skill set at any time to attack various problems and come up with solutions that are right-sized for the situation. So, I’m really wanting this to be something that you think about in terms of how we can leverage our background as usability professionals, despite the fact that social media is not perhaps considered to be in our domain.

So, now I want to talk to you about three common types of social media. These are the three common types of social media that we encounter in our work. So, social media links, social media widgets, and other API integrations. I do have some examples of all of these. When I talk about social media links, I mean those icons and text calls to action typically that you’ll see on a website that will say things like, follow us on Twitter, connect with us, keep in touch. These are very common, and you see them on a lot of sites. They’re done in different ways. So, this is something that we should pay attention to and begin to develop some standards around where they should be placed, how the interaction should be for users to click on them. Then, in terms of widgets, social platforms typically provide some sort of pre-packaged plug-in or widget that you can easily customize and put the code on your site in a day. So, these are very easy widgets to
add to your site. The examples here, one is from the Wall Street Journal website, so this is a plug-in that’s showing you which content on the site has been shared the most. Then, this other widget is a Twitter search widget, so it’s basically a canned search, and you can enter in any term and it will search the Twitter platform for that terms. So, in this case it’s egov, so if you have this widget on your site and you want to draw your customer’s attention to a particular type of content, this is an option that you could consider.

So, here’s some other common widgets you might have seen. This is a widget to share across multiple platforms, so there are widgets such as add this, or share this, that you’ll see where you click on it, you open it, and there are a number of sources that you can share content or products on using that widget. Then, there are platform-specific widgets, so things like the tweet this, or the like, or the Google +1, and these are standalone widgets for a specific platform that you’ll often see on perhaps an ecommerce product page, or if it’s a news and information site on that particular article. So these are the most common widgets that we see.
In terms of other API integrations -- so basically the widgets do make use of the API on these different platforms, and because many of these platforms have opened their API, there are really any number of ways that customers, that organizations can create unique experiences on their site, integrating functionalities and content from these platforms. So, some things that you might encounter while using the web, you have check-out with the social network. So, it’s actually allowing you to authenticate using your Facebook credentials, and then at the end of process, you can share information about your purchase easily on Facebook. And then, similarly, on news and information sites, once you authenticate with Facebook or Twitter, the content that you see on the site can be customized so that you’re only seeing those items that are popular within your social networks. So rather than just saying, this has been shared the most, it will show you what has been shared the most by those in your network, or what is of interest to people who you actually know.

Building on this concept further, there are a number of retailers who have found ways to integrate this same functionality into their site. So, for a while, Amazon had this area of the site where you could view products through the lens of your social network. So, again, rather than
just seeing everyone’s ratings and reviews, you’re seeing things that just your friends have liked or you’re able to see data around how many of your friends have liked particular products. Then, similarly, Levi’s has a friend store, which allows you to shop and see the different products that your friends have liked on the number of times a particular product has been liked. So, really the possibilities are endless with these types of integrations, and the key takeaway is that we just need to be aware of the different types of integration so that we can begin to identify what are better ways to use the API versus ways that are not as great.

So, before we go any further, I want to talk to you about some things to consider before diving into social media. There are some questions that you should ask yourself if you’re the one who’s working in an organization to develop something on the website related to social media, or if you work in more of a consultative capacity, some questions you should consider with your clients to make sure that they are thinking about social media correctly.

One thing to consider is, are your visitors social? So, is there even a need for you to have any sort of social media presence? If it’s unlikely that people who are
interested in your organization or brand are even interested in social platforms, then it might not make sense for you to even go down the path where you’re doing any sort of large scale social media work. In the event that your visitors are social, thinking about which platforms they prefer is really important. Are they mostly Twitter users, are they Facebook users? Where do they spend their time on these social platforms, and how can you target the platform where they interact the most, so that when you’re integrating different content and functionalities into the site, you’re increasing the success of your own efforts, because these are activities that your visitors are already trying to do.

So, thinking about the goals in providing social media links and functionality. So, this is really an opportunity to be purposeful and intentional. When you’re adding social media links to the site, the goal is to connect users with your presence on a particular platform, so really keeping that in front of you as the “why” will help you make better decisions about where to place these links on the site; and then, similarly, in terms of functionalities, it might be really cool that Levi’s has a friend store, however, if you find that people who like your brand are really not that social or they’re not likely
to get a lot of benefit out of that, it might not be worth your time and effort to go down the road of a large scale integration such as the Levi’s friend store.

In terms of resources, do you have the resources to support your social media work? Social media is not something that you throw together in a day and then leave it alone for a while and see what happens. It’s definitely something you want to monitor on a regular basis and insure that you have the resources to support it. So, whether that’s a full-time staff person or a specific team within your organization, you need to make sure that you have the time and the money, as well as any technical talent, to really make sure you’re putting your best foot forward when you’re doing any sort of social media.

The last piece is thinking about how you’ll measure the success of the social media work that you do. We should not divorce social media from business best practice, where we’re always thinking about the goal and what is it that we’re trying to achieve. So, really thinking about social media work from end-to-end in terms of, should we do it, and if we do it, what is it that we’re trying to achieve, how will we measure that success. These are all questions that need to be considered when you’re
talking with any clients or even internally in your organization in evaluating your social media work.

Now let’s talk about how to identify best practices for social media. I want to provide you with some of the ways that our team identified best practices. We looked at different resources related to social media, we experimented with different platforms, so a form of trial and error, and then we also thought creatively about what skills we already had in our user experience research and analysis toolkit and applied that to our work.

To provide you with some more details around these different things, in terms of resources, when we began this project last summer there really were not any social media and usability texts that we could find. So, for a while we were just developing these best practices using our own competitive research and our own training as usability professionals to begin the project. Now, later on in the summer we were able to find this report by the Nielsen Norman Group on streams, walls, and feeds, which does look specifically at social media and usability, and what was great about that report is that it really validated a lot of the best practices that we’d already developed. So, for us, this was great because we’d spent all this time developing usability best practices, and to find a report
that had some specific design recommendations, and to see that so many of our best practices overlapped, was really a great feeling and experience for us. I recommend that report, which I believe was free for a while on the site. I believe they made it free so you can check out the Nielsen Norman Group website and look at that report. It’s really great.

So then we did look at a design tech, so designing social interfaces by Christian Crumlis, and Erin Malone, this was a great high level overview of some ways that you can make interfaces or websites social, so it didn’t focus on social media in the sense that it didn’t consider these three common types of social media that I mentioned, however, it was a great framework for thinking about how to make any interface or experience social. So, in terms of platform specific resources, we certainly encountered a lot of different platform specific resources. There are so many books written about every platform, and this ranges from the For Dummy series, where Twitter for Dummies, Facebook for Dummies, these types of texts, as well as texts that are written by lesser known authors about these particular platforms. One that was particularly helpful for us was “Twitter Tips, Tricks, and Tweets,” by Paul McFedries. This book really went into the nuances of the
platform, as well as some of the comprehensive details about the interaction that is available there. So, it was useful to consider and informing the work that we were doing. And then finally we looked at a social media marketing text, so Social Media Marketing, by Liana Evans, again, there are so many social media marketing books out there, so you can really take your pick, but this was important just so that we could begin to think, from our clients’ perspective, in terms of what they were considering in even doing any sort of social media work or social media marketing.

So, in terms of trial and error, what did we do? We just started reading. So we would go the platform, and if there was documentation available, we would read the documentation. We would read any links about privacy policies or terms of use to make sure we understood what some of the options were in terms of customizing various settings. We tried to learn about the different options that exists for the platform. So, both Twitter and Facebook offer very standard widgets. So, it’s not something that’s changing all the time. You can go to the site, you can educate yourself about all the widgets and begin to understand which widgets are better suited for specific purposes. So this is a very easy exercise to do.
The last piece is we just started experimenting. So we would just try out some of the tools and figure out what would happen at each point in a user’s interaction with it, and then we could determine how you could minimize some of the constraints of these tools and maximize their strengths.

Here’s an example of some documentation. So, this is the ShareThis Widget Privacy Policy. It’s really critical to know these things, right, because if you’re going to put this widget on your website, you should know what kinds of information will be collected on the--and the user who’s actually using it. So knowing this is really important, especially if any issue ever arises you would want to be informed so that you could let that user who was concerned know how this functionality worked, what the privacy policy was, and give them a really confident answer about their safety in using that particular tool. Then in terms of various widgets, you can create the widgets and see how that process is so you can determine what some of the options are. So, for the Tweet button, you can choose the layout of the number of times that a particular product or content item has been shared, so that can be displayed vertically or horizontally, or with no count at all. Then you can also customize the experience after a user has
shared, so you can recommend certain people to follow. So, once you learn what all the options are, you can begin to say, okay, this client did not use all the options to the benefit of the user, as opposed to this client who really customized it in a way that was better for the user overall. So, you can begin to develop some best practices around creating these widgets and placing them on your website.

In terms of our user experience toolkit and what we utilized there, as I said, we do competitive research, it’s our core strength certainly, and so some questions we consider are how would people in a particular space position social media on their website. So, for the federal departments that we looked at, we kept track of where they put the social media links, was it in the header, was it in the footer, was it in the sidebar, which links were paired together, what was the call to action, things like this. In terms of the widgets themselves, in sharing different content, you can actually evaluate on a live site what is shared when you click on a particular product. So, you can actually do extensive competitive research across what is shared in this message, and because it’s all open and available for you to test.
So, here’s just some examples of the tables of information that we collected for our federal department research project. We were really flexible in this criteria, so we did begin with just a general sense of which platforms were these organizations participating in, and what things we wanted to keep track of, such as link, label, and location, but then over time our criteria developed even further, so we would look at things like, was there a disclaimer when a user moved from the site to the social media platform, were these social media platforms opening in a new browser window. So, as you do the research, your criteria can expand based on some of the things that you’re seeing in your work. So that was really a great exercise for us.

As a result of our research, we actually were able to get this information in front of people who are interested in government website usability and satisfaction. So, quarterly ForeSee publishes an egovernment satisfaction index, and because we had completed our research, we were able to contribute our best practice information to that report, so now people who are working on government websites or are interested in government websites, can begin to think about their usability— their social media work, and how easy it is for users to interact with, and
hopefully make some better choices if they’re not currently complying with best practice.

So, I wanted to do a quick exercise with you just around how to develop best practices for social media using competitive research. So this is an example of a custom tweet that you would see if you shared this product from Macys.com. So it says, Jessica Simpson dress, one shoulder party dress-dresses-women’s-Macy’s, and then there’s a shortened URL. So, in thinking about criteria, you might say, okay, does it have the product name? Yes. Does it have the source? Yes. Is there a shortened URL? Yes. Is there a call to action? No. There are 43 characters remaining. So you can begin to think about is this a message that if a user saw it they would be able to hit the Tweet button right away and they would be posting all the information that would be necessary for someone else interacting with that content to make a decision about whether they wanted to re-tweet it, or even visit that link that’s to that product on a site. So that’s one example. Now, a similar dress on Dillards.com, if you share it, the custom tweet for that site says, check this out, and then there’s just a long URL that is the link to that product. So, in terms of best practices here, we can clearly, using our background and training and common sense, just say no,
this is a terrible tweet, why would you have this as your
message that users see out of the gate in terms of sharing
on this platform. The product name is not there. Yes, the
source is there because it’s in the URL. The URL is not
shortened, though, so it’s taking up way too many
characters. There is a call to action, so it does say
check this out, which is better perhaps than the Macy’s
tweet; however, there are only 15 characters remaining, and
clearly this tweet is missing a lot of information.

So this exercise alone hopefully can help you see some
of the ways that you can begin to experiment with different
platforms and think about what criteria you should use to
evaluate them and make some better decisions about what
content even goes in a tweet that will already be available
when users are sharing product or content.

In terms of other tools and methods, of course we use
heuristic evaluation and some of you might have access to
web analytics or surveys or be able to do some user
testing, so thinking about that further. So, some common
heuristics such as user understanding and control. So when
a user shares using share this, what kind of messaging do
they see? So, this says: Authorize ShareThis.com to use
your account. This application will be able to read tweets
from your timeline, see who you follow and follow new
people, update your profile, and post tweets for you. So, depending on what mindset the user is in, this could look like a very malicious application. It could look as though it’s going to have complete access to your account. It’s not really written in a clear way so that users understand that this application is actually facilitating those actions for them. So, if you were ever in a situation where you were choosing between widgets and you were considering the experience at each point for users, you might want to go with the widget that had better messaging at this point so that you don’t frighten away users who weren’t intending to authorize this unknown application to have free reign over their account, that they were just trying to share something with their social network. So there are the kinds of things that we can think about using the training we already have. Similarly, this is just a confirmation after sharing, so it just says, share again, which certainly again implies that it’s already -- you’ve already shared something, so perhaps this is okay, but again, if you were in a situation where you were evaluating two widgets, the one that had a more explicit confirmation message you might want to go with that one. Then again, this is just an example of what you see after you’ve shared so you can recommend an account. So Walgreens has
opportunistically said that after someone shares from their site they recommend that you follow them. So it’s a pretty smart move. You might not already be following Walgreens. If someone shares from your site they might be interested in following your organization.

In terms of analytics and survey questions, there’s all kinds of data that you can get from the analytics that are built into these widgets and tools themselves. So that’s a great source. You can leverage things like referral sources and web analytics if you want to know where a user is likely to come from before visiting your site. You can ask consumers directly about their social media use, which platforms you use, how often do you use them, have you shared any products, to get a sense of how they’re already engaged in social media.

And then lastly, user testing. There’s no reason why you can’t just watch users share on your site. So, set up a test. Have some different widgets and see how users are interacting with them and which ones are better, and then analyze any issues that you observe or they report. So these are things that we can do without any sort of specialized social media training, just relying on skills we already have as usability professionals.
So, this is the end of my presentation. I welcome any questions, and thank you for your time.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Is it possible to get a copy of your presentation?

MS. CAMPBELL: Yes, so I can—okay, it will be posted on this site afterward. Yes?

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Do you also measure how much of that activity is social and how much of it is just people looking for (inaudible) and playing games, things like that? It’s activity based, not inherently social.

MS. CAMPBELL: So, that’s not something we would really -- so the question -- actually, could you repeat it? I want to make sure I say it correctly.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: I just wanted to know if they make a differentiation between actual social activity and things that are just narcissism and people looking for the coupons and things like that.

MS. CAMPBELL: Right, so people perhaps who -- make a distinction between people who might be using a platform solely to connect with a brand for their coupons as opposed to have some great conversation about the products that they’re using. So, we wouldn’t make that distinction in terms of assessing best practices, but if a client were to say that they noticed that a lot of their -- so, for
example, let’s say they have an account where they only post coupons. It might make sense for them to do some sort of -- use the Twitter search widget, for example, maybe do a canned search for whatever the coupon hash tag is, and then when users come to the site they could see something that said, coupons for our Twitter followers, and then it’s just always pulling in their coupons. So we wouldn’t assess that in terms of telling them any sort of distinction between that, but if they came to us and said, this is something we would like to highlight on our site because we feel like we have a lot of engagement around coupons seekers, that’s something we could talk about, what are some -- what are the best options for highlighting that work.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: I’ve seen some (inaudible) on sites that do a lot of custom information (inaudible) where the saving the customization is actually a (inaudible) on Facebook. You log into Facebook and it’s saved through Facebook. Do you guys have any thoughts or (inaudible) around that? (Inaudible).

MS. CAMPBELL: Okay, so could you give an example of -- you said a site where you log in -- you have to log into Facebook to save --
MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: (Inaudible), and at the end of this process, if you want to save your vehicle -- it’s done through Facebook.

MS. CAMPBELL: I see. Okay. We typically -- we work with our clients around helping them ask critical questions for their social media work, but we typically would never say, you should or should not do something. In that instance, maybe you would want to ask them why they have chosen Facebook as a way for saving as opposed to something more conventional, like something hosted on the site that would save those options. So maybe asking them, do you know if all of the people who come to your site are using Facebook because if you have people who are not using Facebook then they wouldn’t be able to save the vehicle that they’ve customized. So maybe focusing less on the social media aspect and more on how easy is your site to use for all users even for those who don’t use social media, so a more traditional user who’s maybe very leery of social media, are you supporting them in their goal of customizing a vehicle if they don’t use Facebook. So, I might steer the conversation in that way instead.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Can you give an example (inaudible) Google Plus (inaudible)?
MS. CAMPBELL: Yes, so I’ve seen a couple of retail sites that have added the +1 widget to the product page, so when you go to a product page, let’s say it’s a pair of pants, you could like it, you could tweet that item, or you could actually +1 the item. So, it appears as though the platform is following Facebook in terms of its evolution and some of the different widgets or engagement opportunities that they offer. So, very similar to Facebook “like”, it’s something that can be integrated at different points in the experience to help users share with just their network on that platform.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Your statistics about using (inaudible) people (inaudible)?

MS. CAMPBELL: So, that’s a good question, and I don’t really know. It seems as though the statistics change so quickly that it’s never really clear what’s going on with the platform. I did get those Facebook statistics directly from Facebook, so they are doing a great job of providing up to date statistics about the actual engagement on their platform, but I feel as though Twitter and Google, for whatever reason, are more -- they are just not producing or publishing the same type of statistics about the platform. So it’s not really clear. You can’t get a good sense really, I feel, of where those platforms stand.
MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: I ask that because I kind of feel that people put a lot of posts on Twitter, or they tweet on Twitter just to get them out there, but I don’t know that people are necessarily reading that, (inaudible) Facebook, that people are on there more often than actually taking (inaudible).

MS. CAMPBELL: That’s true. There definitely seems as though there’s a lot more content on Twitter, like someone mentioned coupons, that people might -- they might sign up for a coupon, they might try to connect with an organization for coupons, but that doesn’t mean that they actively monitor it every day, especially if they’re following a number of other organizations for that same reason. So perhaps more of a content repository over time. Hopefully not but…

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: I wonder if there’s an app that will kind of feel like scanning of tweets that have been on Twitter and pull out the people or tweets that have key words in them so you can pull out what’s there on things that they’re interested in?

MS. CAMPBELL: Yes. So there’s a Twitter search widget that does that, and it’s really great because it’s automated, so it’s pulling in all the content that has a particular term. However, there have been a number of
examples of this widget really being self-destructive, in a sense, for some brands. So, for example, you’ll go to the site. They’re just pulling in any message that says their brand name in it, even if it says something like, I had the worst customer experience, you know, I had the worst customer service experience at this particular organization, never go there again, you know, and that’s on their website now, because they’ve chosen that widget and put it on the home page. So, in the one sense it’s great because it is automated, but you have to be very careful about the keywords that you use. Probably we’d want to stay away from using just your organization name because you don’t know what people are actually going to say about your organization, and if they say something negative, now it’s showcased on your home page. So, something that you have a little more control over, if you have a particular terms that’s associated with particular type of content that you publish, maybe that would be a safer approach.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: I do like (inaudible) really out there (inaudible). (Inaudible) I think for other people. You know, everybody hates it but (inaudible).

MS. CAMPBELL: Yes, and that’s a good point. And it’s something even as usability professionals, you know, really thinking strategically about how much time you want to
invest in becoming a platform expert given that these platforms change over time. So it’s definitely important to think about what are the core things around all these platforms, like they will likely always have some sort of link or widget or different API integrations and focusing more broadly helps to structure the work that you’re doing. But, I definitely agree it’s hard to use many of the platforms, and they’re also not great about documentation, so even that can be a struggle to figure out how things should work.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Speaking of changes on Facebook, I heard the other day that Facebook has something new planned coming out in January. I just wondered if you could speak to that point.

MS. CAMPBELL: So, I can’t -- I don’t have any special knowledge about that.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: If you receive Facebook (inaudible) going, you---

MS. CAMPBELL: Yeah, I don’t have any, I guess, sense of where it will go. I will say it’s certainly the most popular in terms of where all of the organizations are -- so, I’m sorry, in terms of where all the people are, so it’s definitely something that you likely as an organization should consider Facebook as a platform that
you participate in, but truly these platforms change so much and so quickly that it’s difficult to really give any sort of projection.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: I heard about (inaudible) taking over (inaudible).

MS. CAMPBELL: Well, that would be interesting. It might make our work easier if they did that, a consistent experience at least. Okay, so thank you.

MR. PIERCE: My name is Grant Pierce. I’m a user experience researcher here at UARC. It’s my pleasure to introduce Terence McKinney, user experience manager at General Motors Company. Mr. McKinney manages GM’s internet user experience. He has extensive background in print, illustration, and web design, and has been at GM for 25 years. He manages GM’s internet standards and designs the templates used by some 3,000 internet sites globally. A leading web content manager in SME at GM, he has worked directly with many enterprise software companies to improve the usability of their products and to promote usability testing.

In addition to managing daily operations of the GM home page, Socrates, he is also responsible for the design and usability of GM’s media platform at media.GM.com, in 90 countries and 30 languages. Currently, he is leading the
strategy and re-design of GM’s next gen employee portal, and its mobile design and integration with GM’s internal social tools.

Please welcome Terence McKinney for his presentation, GM in Overdrive.

MR. MCKINNEY: Well, good afternoon, and I’m very honored to be here. I know so many usability professionals. As was mentioned, I’m the usability manager at General Motors for our internal activities. I’m in GM communications, but I’m not a communications spokesman, as you will find out very shortly.

My background, as was mentioned, is in design, and really if I quit this job, I’d go out looking for a designer job, as I tell people at work. I kind of stumbled more into the position over many years. None of this existed. And for those of you old enough in the room to know what the smell of burning wax means, you know what I’m talking about.

A lot of you folks have probably worked with some of our brands, and our brands spend a lot of time on user experience and usability for our public facing sites. Internally it’s like the dark ages. Employees are really second fiddle, and I see myself as sort of the chief user advocate for the neglected masses of the employees.
So, what I wanted to do today, I think it was mentioned, and when I first was asked to do this I thought, you know, how much control do we have over usability of social media tools? Like, we really don’t. We get a skin through an interface. So, I’m not sure I can talk much about that, but what I can talk about is maybe give you some insight into what General Motors has been doing internally, what my team does. We’re the daily news operation. So, as I’ve said, we kind of migrated into this position almost by default. We do the daily graphics and updates for news operations for media and their internal stuff, and just over time, we had become very interested, and realized it’s not just about the aesthetics, and the usability world is key. As was mentioned, we do all the corporate templates for over 4,000 internal sites. It’s a goat rodeo, I’ve got to tell you. Up until last year we had no web content management system in the company. Keep that in mind. It was done through Dreamweaver templates.

(Laughter from the audience)

MR. MCKINNEY: Is there another answer? So, also the employee portal, which is called Socrates, and I’ll show you examples of these later. So, I’ll explain about what my team does, and them talk about a project for our corporate micro-blogging. It’s really a story kind of the
journey. So, give me a second to figure out this yolk here. So, here we go.

It started back for me personally back in 1999. I was working with communications, and I was a designer. I designed our first corporation home page, Socrates, and then some real bright spark in communications said, you know, there’s usability people out there, we should call someone and see if this makes any sense; not that your work is in question, but let’s trust but verify, I think was the term we used later. So, we brought in Norman Nielsen group. Nielsen Norman Group, NNG, and I got a good opportunity firsthand to work with NNG and participate in the actual usability testing, and that’s where I got my basis in the discipline of usability. And we brought people in. We got global people. We did Brazil, Germany, the UK, Australia, Korea, hourly, salaried, and this is their second language, and importantly spouses who actually have to use the employee portals for benefits management. That’s a big “gotcha”. We brought in people with visual disabilities, and people under 30 who can read 19 billion pixel screens, and we have a large portion of people over the age 40 - 55.

After doing this exercise, we realized that this wasn’t a one-time deal. And communications wisely decided
to invest some time and resources and set up its own usability group. There wasn’t that much, we had a short conference room, we put a web page out there, announced to the world that here is our certificate, you know, our certified program for the Dreamweaver templates, the downloads. We explained what usability was. We bought some equipment. We were able to record the sessions, and it was interesting. What we had -- occasionally we would get clients would come in and some agency had come in with a project that they were suspicious that it was a portfolio project that only their mother could love, you know, so they would say, would you come in as a third party and just clinic this thing. So, you’d talk to the agency and they’d be all excited, and they would say, look, what are the top 10 things you’re trying to do with it. And you’d have a discussion with them and, of course, that wouldn’t go well because you’re telling them their children are ugly, instead of, how about this, we’ll use usability clinic, you know, you tell me the ten things we should ask people, you get to sit in the other room and watch them. And usually halfway through it they were in tears, and said, oh my god, it’s worse then you said. So it takes a lot of emotion out of doing the testing in that manner. As a consequence, we were really busy. As I said, we do this almost as a
sideline. It’s a practice we do every day in our work, but HR and everyone else calls, and this is when they’re rolling out large applications. The challenges are COTSS, commercial off the shelf software. We get into big enterprise, SAP, People Soft, just horrendous things. And I like to say, like, there are other standards for testing on humans or animals. I asked them, seriously, you know, has any human ever used this? Have you ever watched them? The humanities. What’s wrong with you people? And they just sort of blankly look at you and say, we do usability testing. They mean UAT. So, there’s a big disconnect there, and I think that what, as I’ve been thinking about this, really you need to sort of nip it in the bud, and my long term plan is to go back to our purchasing groups and to find out what should be certified to make sure some human tested it. We would test toothpaste. Let’s at least try that much, you know, and see if we can get it as a part of a purchasing process before the damage is done, because by the time they call me, it’s too late. They want a logo and a change of color -- 286 blue and it’s a square box. Away you go. You know, sometimes there’s nothing you can do. So, you do the best you can.

Another big challenge for us, I got to tell you, is metrics. We have not very good metrics inside our
enterprise, and then addition of the Cloud-based services it’s just that much harder. Next year we’re going to have an enterprise-wide sort of look at who’s coming in, on what devices, what are they doing when they’re here. New ideas. Another big challenge -- anyone out here use SharePoint? Yeah?

MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE: (Inaudible comments).

MR. MCKINNEY: You know, if you want to take it out of the box and use it, God be with you. I just can’t figure out what they were thinking. We have sort of an ongoing Jihad inside of the company with IT over -- I just can’t figure out what the hell my site is supposed to do. It’s a collection of things that just happened to fall in a release. They’re like things you would never do in the same day, sort of in the day of life journey. So, we’re trying to de-couple that and figure out what to do with it. To the degree that SharePoint requires customization, IT doesn’t like to customize. So I’m not their best friend, but we’re working through it, actually, and they do understand the benefits of making this stuff usable. So, we’re learning SharePoint and getting better at it. There are no experts of SharePoint 2010, we found out, because it’s all new. So, we’re working our way through that.
Legal. You know, for any stuff in security, as you can imagine, General Motors, we have been sued by everybody and anybody for anything. It’s just the nature of being a large company, so there’s always sensitivity to everything that we do that would be secure, which is a big driver for things like SharePoint. So we’re hoping that gets better. We do grand things and we do little, tiny, stupid things that just got to get done that drive me nuts.

So, this was a screen I designed about eight years ago. It’s your entry screen -- we have 225,000 employees globally, a quarter million. This is the log-in screen for all employees to anything secure. I call it the blue bridge to nowhere. But after I designed it, somebody in IT started putting all this wonderful red text on it, which, if you can read it, really sums it up. The last red line says: You should continue to log in with your ID and password. After logging in and the password, which is the reason you’re there. So I went back to them and said, I don’t know who high jacked this thing, but all of that red text and stuff like that, which, by the way, are not links, they’re not warnings really -- they’ll be changing it to this. It’s exactly the same message. So, we’re just busy. We work with -- you know, as soon as you fix something, something breaks. You hear the glass breaking behind you,
and you get a vacuum and clean it up and find out who did it, and then explain to them why that’s bad.

But anyway, we do a lot of simulation work, and we do a lot of work that’s completely skinned out. The reason we’re a daily news operation -- often -- earnings was yesterday, you know, we didn’t find that out until the week before so all of this stuff has to be ready. We have to do simulations. Wireframes for us are a luxury. Usually we’re doing HTML. IRISE is way too slow. We do HTML simulations, everything clicks, works through, we show it to them, explain to the business exactly how it’s going to work. So this is exactly the kind of things we give them, and we put it up there on the line because that’s what we have to do. We make it real-time.

One of the big projects that we took on was redesigning the media site. It’s not a real glamorous operation, as you can see. That’s the business and developers and user experience team and the media site. This was the media site in 2009 before GM reorganized. I think you guys probably read about this in the paper and we had some trouble. Okay. Yeah, well it’s a new company, and literally it’s a new company, and one of the challenges that was given was after telling them for ten years that we needed to redesign the media site, they finally said, you
know, you’ve been talking about that for about ten years, now you get a chance to do it in 15 weeks, and we want to put it on our contact management platform, which it wasn’t, and redesign. And it’s in 90 countries and 30 languages, global. So, I wasn’t -- they weren’t asking me, it wasn’t a rhetorical question. So, we did it. And that’s what it looked like before and since then this is what it looks like. It’s a fair good better. It has all of the usual suspects, social media, Google +. I’m not sure we know what half of them even mean, but we got them all. We’re covered. We have to deal with privacy issues, with Facebook in Germany, so it’s a truly global -- we have two things in the company. One thing I call “globble”, which is when you use the word global but it really isn’t. That’s globble. This is global. So, that’s the design for the media site. These are the poor souls that do the Internet day-to-day. They’re designers and user experience people, and when we did our IPL in November, this was my gift to them, that we were going to be up all night doing it. But in terms of what the team does, it’s been gratifying because the business -- the business realized that they liked what they see, and then when you get awards, they go, oh yeah, that’s cool, too. So the media site has won several interactive media awards this year,
which we’re pretty proud of, and the Socrates intranet home page has won several awards last week from the AIBC. So, that’s all cool.

What I’m here to talk about, though -- that’s sort of what goes on in user experience at GM, such that it is, and, as I said, my background wasn’t formally trained in user experience, it’s sort of a practical matter of this just makes no sense, there has to be a better way, and you kind of go from there. Honestly, common sense has to be the underlying rule. I mentioned GM had some trouble there and we did a reorg and one of the things we did, very important through the organization where social was really important and really insanely successful was we set up a blog bead evolution platform, and it was called, Answer Me Now! The tone, exclamation point. It was, I want an answer now, damn it. Because things were going on and we couldn’t even keep up with what was going on in the press. There were things going on in Washington, things were -- you could say they were a little out of control. Employees wanted to know what was happening with the company. So the blog was set up, and there was a commitment by leadership to answer any and all questions. And so they did. And it was insanely successful. It ran through the re-organization, and it was really a critical, pivotal role.
And that was a big wakeup call for them that social media was thing to do. It didn’t scale, and it nearly killed the communication staff. Honestly, it was just insane. So, by the end of 2010, Answer Me Now had run its course, and GM communications was looking around for collaboration tools like Facebook and Twitter, and we looked at those, and we have those external tools, but they said it’s got to be inside or legal is going to have a spasm. These guys, you know, you just cannot do that, and rightly so. And IT had concerns. Everybody was concerned. So we said, we need to do something internally, and so what we did is set out goals and objectives which were to come up with a collaboration tool where you could brainstorm and share. We involved a small group of people who were the beta, which at GM a small group is 1,800, to do a beta. And we brought in two tools, Yammer and Social Cast. We ran it for several months, and parallel to that we started establishing internal social media guidelines for conduct, so the employees could understand what it was, and it wasn’t to tell about the mouse under your desk, it wasn’t about what you had for lunch or sports teams. And you can see the Europeans getting about the soccer team, things were getting badly out of control. So all of those things were vented, and they said, we wouldn’t do that, we’ll make
sure that doesn’t happen. It had to have a private and team area, and we had to be able to measure what was going on in that environment. And, of course, security, legal, record retention, government regulations, TREAD Act, and if any discussions were ever run safely, everything had to be pulled back in, you had to be able to recall it, record it for discovery. So the reason it didn’t really launch until January of 2011 is because we spent a year really going through with -- going through all the requirements. Not for the faint of heart.

The audience. We’ve got 64,000 salaried global employees, and really that was our target. We have a thing called a GM ID, that’s the blue bridge to nowhere that I talked about. I just told you some of that blue bridge design. I spent quite a bit of time trying to figure out what the global log-in ought to look like for GM. And the more I thought about it, the more depressed I got, because, you know, you can’t use people, you can’t use a car, because it’s got to be every brand, you can’t even show a road because there’s right and left hand drive. So that’s why I got to the bridge, and there’s a blurred suggestion of vehicle. Anyway, so the GM ID is the authorized ID and password for GM ID. Hourly people can get to it from home. Contractors, and all with the appropriate credentials, can
get to it. How they get to it, generally speaking, this is a screen grab of our very busy corporation home page called Socrates. It’s the employee portal, first started in ’99. As I mentioned, I did the first design and the six subsequent designs since. It’s got daily news, leadership messages, social media. It’s in 37 countries. It’s in a dozen languages, quarter million people almost. It includes all of the HR stuff. We have pulse surveys that are on it. You can navigate -- one of the things that we didn’t do at the portal which we did in the previous version is we said, oh, you’re from Brazil, you get the Brazilian view, and we un-did that. That was a big mistake. We let people suggest where they would like to go, we give them a choice, and we remember it. So that’s remembered in your profile, and then there’s an opportunity -- I don’t know if you can see it at the bottom -- there’s a flag there, very small. But you can navigate to any of their country view and only the stuff -- it gives you a choice to have your preference and still go around the world and learn about the other countries. I’ll give you a closer view there. You can get to all of our products around the world through the Vehicles Around the World. It’s all content pulled in from our media site. But on our page, down aways, is a link here to something called
OverDrive, and right next to that is our social media, or underneath it, I should say, is our social media policies. And also I’ll point out underneath that again, if I go back to what the page looks like, this is halfway down, and below that is our employee survey, which is some of the most popular content, which you’re told, oh, not below the fold. It’s not possible. We would have a folding screen or something, and even though it’s that far down, it is some of the most popular connect on the site. But this is where people sort of entered into Overdrive. So, they log into the employee portal, and generally speaking, this is sort of there number one entry port.

The user experience for it, well, these are sort of factoids, right? We begin as a pilot with 1,800 employees, and it was rolled out formally in January of this year. It’s a Cloud-based service with social cast. We had the beta group look at Yammer, and because of legal reasons and hold (sic.) and everything else, it was decided that that was probably a better platform for us. As I said, you can get to it from anywhere. If you have a GM computer, you get single sign-on. That’s good. First time users have got to go through a battery of terms, services, social media policies, IL and guidelines, only once, and that was a battle with legal to say you don’t have to do that every
time. You can view the company stream. You can’t comment. If you want to participate, you have to sign up to be a user to the tool. First names and last names are required.

In Answer Me Now, it was anonymous. It was a time of great tumult in the company, and we wanted people to be honest. We let them do it anonymously. It’s a new GM, and now people can speak their minds, and people have been very — we really struggled back and forth about that, and we’ve been very happy with the decision, and so are the employees. I’ll talk more about mobile in a minute. Posts that are not commented on or are not active are automatically deleted in 180 days to comply with Information Lifecycle Management Rules. Attachments are not yet allowed. That’s a legal issue. We are working through that and we are very close to doing that, probably before the end of the year. The issue is, again, to be able to say is it a safety concern, what’s in the document, what’s the nature of the document, to be able to pull it all back in for legal reasons.

So, getting through all that, the name, OverDrive, was kind of fun. We let the beta group, the 1,800, come up with the names, put it up on Socrates, picked out the top five from that calling, and then brought it back to the beta team, and put the poll out ultimately on that Socrates
homepage that you saw in the poll there, and the employees voted on the name. And, then introducing the OverDrive product to employees was about -- we have -- I didn’t play the video. It’s kind of fun. It’s an opening video. We have a video, a user guide, and a very, very interesting and compelling What Legal Wants You to Know. We helped them title that. It was worse. We have stories on -- we put out stories in our daily news. We did a feature on Socrates itself, which, as I said, is the corporate homepage, and we have a daily enews line, daily news blast to employees, that went out to them sort of announcing it. So they had plenty of heads-up. We give them a lot of guidance about what it is for and what it is not for to make sure there were no issues, and we haven’t had issues. If some place the size of GM can pull it off, you know, you shouldn’t fear too much, with the right prep work.

This is what the skinned -- we’ve talked about it. It’s Social Cast. We get to do a skinning. We work closely with Social Cast. They’ve been great to work with on usability issues that we had and what can we change in the product and what can’t we. So we worked closely with them. But this is sort of a -- this is generally what it looks like.
The user features. They can have a picture. They can have an Avatar picture. Again, they have to have the real name. And there’s different views. And this will all look pretty familiar to this audience anyway, so we don’t need to spend a lot of time on this, but there’s a home stream which is sort of the anonymous view of what’s going on. There’s mentions. There’s flagged -- very Facebook-like. So, no surprises here. This was one of the big requirements. We have to know what’s going on. So, we’ve got a small team of people in HR communications and IT that monitor this tool, it’s an admin tool, to try and get us insight, are we being effective, and are people talking about the mouse under the desk or what they had for lunch. So you can track over time, and you can see where the bubbles of conversation are. It talks about volumes of users, posts, scripts, and polls. So everyone on OverDrive can post their own poll if they like. It gets some pretty interesting results. Really, it gives you a trend of conversations over a period of time, which is really important.

Numbers. So, as I’ve said, there was 1,700, 1,800. It’s grown ten times since the launch in January. A quarter of our salaried workforce now are on it, registered users. You can see the numbers here. 5,400 messages.
15,000 comments. Tons of likes. Almost two million connections. It’s probably over two million because this was over yesterday. And we had an earnings result yesterday. So we get big spikes, and of course that will be the conversation, what did you think, how did we do, what did the media say. It’s really changed the way things are running inside GM. It makes it real-time, and talking about what the conversations are, so it’s interesting.

So technical issues for IT. IT was not a big fan of this at first. Now they’re sort of big fans of it for a lot of reasons. It’s become the unofficial support for all of the people with personal mobile devices trying to get into our network because they’re officially supported. Company business is discussed, as I said, the earnings. HR has got a workplace and trust initiative, there are discussions there. And as I’m doing new user experience simulations for the next version of Socrates, that’s where it’s going to live out there and the discussion will be there. We already have the user experience forum posted out there. And, as I said, nothing too silly so far.

This is what a profile page looks like. I will show one of our internal communications people, one of the leads on this. There’s profile settings. Again, nothing too strange or unfamiliar here. It allows you to set
notifications, invite colleagues, and see follows. And, coming soon we’re going to be doing town halls, which can be moderated for many people, and the categorization of comments and things of that nature. We’ll have that probably early part of next year. Attachments, as I said, we’re getting the technical pieces put in place for legal discovery. The mobile app -- I’ve got some more about mobile but it’s run securely on people’s personal devices. And on Socrates homepage today it’s just a link, we’re going to go to a company stream, and then in the next phase of that, too, what are you following in OverDrive.

As far as mobile goes, today it’s just through Socrates. The issue is around the device as people’s personal devices. Unless you have the Company Traveler, Lotus Notes, installed on your personal device, it kind of puts on this draconian every three-and-a-half seconds you have to put in a password. If you don’t have that, then there would be no auto timeout. So there are no mobile apps until we figure out how to do this with an auto timeout or some other forced security.

Then I’ll finish up here with a couple of real examples. The first one here -- I’ve got about a half dozen examples and then I’ll take a few questions. But Andrew here was -- this is interesting. He’s an engineer
in Australia with our Holden division. And he had a question -- and this is like real-time usability for engineering, which is really cool. And he said, you know, what do people want when they open the key on a deck lid. Deck lid is Australian for the trunk. If you’re a Brit, it’s the boot. But, anyway, he wanted to know, do you want it to pop up and lift, do you want it to go halfway, or do you want it to swing up and bounce. And he put a poll out there. And at the time this was taken, there was no clear leader, but it’s interesting to ask questions like that. And it shows that engineers and people are thinking about that. It’s little details that you would spend a million dollar study to do, or you can put out a pulse poll. It’s like, what the hell, it’s like guerilla tactics. It’s terrific that way.

GM’s Neil McDonald. He posted his question about a way to order parts at 10:58 and at 11:08 he had his answer. So it’s real time answers.

(inaudible), and in this case here, this is interesting. Remember the snow storm we had the early part of this year? We had a lot of people staying home, couldn’t get down to work in Detroit. We had so many, in fact, it brought down our VPN. So, OverDrive, being a Cloud-based service, was still working, and gave people an
alternative way to communicate what was going on, and in addition to that, (inaudible) here said, by the way, we have a European VPN and if you switch your settings you actually can use that because that’s fine. So, saved the day. By noon, people who needed to know knew it. And IT is a big fan.

Marco here is in Ramos Point in Mexico, and he was able to contact someone at the GM Tech Center about a question about paint operations.

Saqib [Rahim] here was trying to find out where on earth he could find a Chevy Volt. They were in short supply at one time, and it’s a marketing opportunity, he was going to meet with a bunch of university students that would love to have a Volt...where would I get one...and he found one the next day. If you had followed the official channels, God help you. Not to say that we don’t have very effective operations, but this is an alternative.

And then really the silly, mundane things. This is just someone asking where can they get inter-org envelopes. This is the sort of Ziggy stuff that sort of just, argh, you know, why can’t you get a simple answer.

So, ranging from deep thoughts about workplace of choice, philosophy, earnings, to where do I get an envelope, or what’s going on with the construction on a
certain highway, it’s a real time collaboration. Just to kind of sum it up -- I’m sorry, here’s Karen’s comment here about the envelopes -- and to sum it up, in our employee survey since this, this is the most often-cited sign that it’s a new company. So it’s been a big success and we think it’s going to grow in the future.

So if I can take any questions? I don’t know if I have any answers, but I’ll take the questions.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: How do you think (inaudible)?

MR. MCKINNEY: I think the question was, how do they know that what they posted wouldn’t be used against them?

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Right, how do they feel -- why do they trust in OverDrive (inaudible) to communicate?

MR. MCKINNEY: I think because we had the Answer Me Now before, which was anonymous, and it was very open and people were able to post things anonymously and got right answers back. GM gets social media. My boss is the director of social media and it’s about being sincere and honest and open. You can’t divulge company secrets, but that’s part of the training in OverDrive that to say this is what this is for. You know, your name is there, be accountable, don’t say anything silly, and we’ll get you honest answers. This is about being an adult. Yes?
MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Whose idea was it to create (inaudible)? Was it your team?

MR. MCKINNEY: It was an internal communications directive, yes.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: I was wondering (inaudible) with globalization, how much of that stuff is actually translated into English? How do you make those decisions?

MR. MCKINNEY: So, the question is being a -- not a globble company -- we’re global, and how do you manage the language translations. These aren’t translated. These are conversations of people. So there are streams where you see it goes in German, and you’ll see streams where it goes in other languages, and, I mean, how does Facebook or anyone else do it? It’s a social media tool. A lot of the key communicators around the globe speak English. They’ll find somebody who does if they need help from someone (inaudible). Yes?

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: You mentioned (inaudible). How did handle (inaudible)?

MR. MCKINNEY: Good question. Yeah, how did we handle the roll-out from beta to everyone else? We told the beta group, start telling your friends. It was really -- it was not a -- you know, the company didn’t say, okay, here’s the way we do it. After we were sure legal was good, and
we had a name, then we told the beta group, your job is to become the evangelist, and go out and share it with your friends. And the results since then largely has just been through word of mouth. I mean, who reads the email?

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: The first time you talked about (inaudible) six weeks and multiple languages, what’s the (inaudible)?

MR. MCKINNEY: Day Communiqué. Adobe Day. Yes?

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: I was wondering, is anybody assigned to monitor questions and things within different departments so that they can respond, for instance, with the mailing envelopes or warranty questions or things like that, or is it totally equally involved because they want to be?

MR. MCKINNEY: People, because they want to be. You know, it’s a big company and I can’t say that somebody hasn’t said, Mary, start watching OverDrive. We haven’t dictated that to anybody. There’s enough people out there that if we see a question -- if I see a question out there and I know Pete knows the answer, I’ll ping Pete and say, Pete, have you looked in OverDrive, there’s a question; or I’ll refer Pete, and say Pete is the guy you need to talk to, and then Pete gets a message, you do an app (sic.)
Pete, and he gets the message, and he jumps in. So it’s very non-prescriptive.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: And how is the volume of usage or (inaudible) changed? Do you anticipate it leveling off or dropping at some point as the novelty wears off?

MR. MCKINNEY: I don’t think it’s a novelty because people are getting answers to real questions. If it was a novelty it would have petered out by now. Any other questions? Thank you very much, and I look forward to the rest of the day.

MR. COURSARIS: We’ve got a terrific crowd, and I want to thank our speakers, too, because this is obviously an exciting topic for all of us, and for those of us who are just using Twitter for the first time, it’s a great opportunity to see how it works, including me. I also wanted to let you know that there is more coffee on the way in case you need that. It’s my pleasure to introduce Julian Bond from the Detroit Medical Center, also known as the DMC. Julian is the social media marketing manager at the DMC where he helps lead their social media efforts and outreach in the metro Detroit area. As you know, everybody in New Center is being very proactive in terms of getting people to move back into Detroit, offering incentives and
developing critical mass there to help bring more excitement and more people to the city of Detroit. He’s a current contributor for the National Regan Health Care Communications News. Julian is a long-time supporter of Detroit. He’s part of the growing local Detroit social media community. Prior to joining DMC in 2005, he worked for the Detroit Free Press as an apprentice, and he was the head feature writer for the University of Michigan college newspaper for their Dearborn campus when he was there. I would like you to please help me welcome Julian Bond for his presentation, The Adventures of @DMCJulian, How A Hospital System Uses Social Media to Reach People.

MR. BOND: Hello everybody. Good morning. My name is Julian Bond. I am the social media manager over at Detroit Medical Center Hospital System over in Detroit. Today I just want to talk to you all about what we do at Detroit Medical Center, aka the DMC, what our social media efforts, show you guys the history of what we’ve done so far, how we’ve gotten to using social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, etcetera, and talk about the fun adventures that I’ve had at the DMC so far and how we use social media to reach audiences everywhere and also be informative, fun, and creative at the same time.
This is me, Julian Bond. My Twitter handle, @julianbond. Throughout the years at the DMC I eventually evolved it into a separate Twitter alter ego of @dmc_julian. So I will get into how I got along to creating this profile here.

A little introduction for how we -- the DMC social media operates. Our hospital system is made up of eight different hospitals, most of them located in the metro Detroit area. They include Children’s Hospital of Michigan, Rehabilitation Institute, and our Hutzel Women’s Hospital. We’ve been using social media regularly for the last three to four years, and since then we’ve had over 20,000 total followers and likes on all of our total combined hospital and main pages there. And then we had over one million views on our main DMC YouTube page since 2007.

So a little background before I actually get into -- how I got into social media. I’ve been working at DMC for over six years now. I started off as an intern from University of Michigan. When I started I kind of was the jack of all trades, as I kind of still am now. Right now I’m known as Mr. Facebook amongst DMC. But I was an intern starting off there, started doing everything, and then our VP over there, who is great, she noticed that, you know, as
a young person I was just -- I was really into social media. I was into Facebook before Facebook was Facebook, you know, before Facebook had access to everyone, I was using it in college in between classes. So she noticed that, and I told them, yeah, I’m on Facebook all the time, and how I use it, and it’s like, hey, we’re getting into this a little bit more, let’s have you put a focus into it, and that’s how my role there as a social media manager came into play.

When we started social media, we have this correspondent here, his name is Emery King. He’s a famed vocal Detroit correspondent. He worked for Channel 4 Detroit News for a number of years, and then I think it was about seven or eight years ago he came to work for the Detroit Medical Center as our video -- kind of our spokesperson for all of our medical services in video. So we started off with this video library where he went around to our different hospitals, talked to our doctors and nurses and everyone to talk about what kind of procedures do they do, what kind of medical breakthroughs they have done, and he wanted to -- he went into our operating room and did things kind of like news journalism kind of thing. He went into our operating rooms with a video crew and he filmed people having surgery, like open heart surgery,
having their hip replaced, everything. So it’s the kind of thing you see on the local news, and he did it really, really well. So we created ourselves a library years ago that we pushed mainly on our DMC.org main homepage, as well as Comcast On Demand, and everywhere else but social media.

So when we got into it we decided first to take the video content to get into social media, we started to put them on YouTube. YouTube then, when we got onto it, it wasn’t just all about dancing kitty-cats, or dancing pandas, or stuff that people know YouTube for mostly nowadays. It was a little bit quasi-new and stuff. So we just thought it was another website for us to expand on besides our main homepage, we put all our videos on here and then expand it from there. So, we started doing that, and then once we did that, okay, then the main social networking sites like MySpace came up. So we started off with MySpace. By a show of hands, how many of you guys remember MySpace by any chance? Okay. Probably want to erase that memory out of your head now. MySpace was the craze back then so we started a MySpace page. It is predictably defunked math. But we started off with that page, started off with Emery King MySpace page, and then after that went the way of the dinosaurs, we naturally went to Facebook after it expanded from college students over to
everyone, including my grandmother, and to sites like Twitter when that started we expanded there, too.

What we wanted to do was, we didn't want to, as great as Emery King's medical video library was, it was great information and it had the procedures and great information about our doctors and everything, but we wanted to expand that. We didn't want to become unintentionally a talking board for people to just go to our social media sites and we're talking about ourselves. That's what everyone does. That's what, naturally as a company, you do, you just promote yourself. But social media is all about being social. So if you're not about being social, it's really about transparency. If you go to the site and you're not a patient seeing us, you know, you don't have a friend of the family that's in one of our hospitals, why would you want to visit our site? So we thought about that and we wanted to kind of put a face to it, we didn't want to be a faceless entity, you know, with this hospital system. So what we started was the DMC social media team, this is me, dmcjulian, my alter ego. We started this team just a couple of years ago. We wanted to put a face to what we do at a hospital system. We have great doctors and great nurses but we wanted to kind of put, you know, a quote, unquote, everyday person. For me, like, I've never been --
watched medical procedures. I’m kind of an everyday person, and it’s wow, this is the first time I’m seeing it as well, too, so I can relate that to the people that want to come to our page.

So this is my colleague over here, Dan, and this is the team that we started. We got these orange t-shirts. They’re really, really bright orange. You guys can see them from space. And we started wearing these around our hospital campus just to identify ourselves. It seems like a really simple t-shirt, really simple design, but we started promoting ourselves this way and when people see us around campus or even on the streets, they’re hey, you’re that Mr. Facebook guy going around talking about everything. So, this is a nice little simple way that we wanted to promote ourselves and put a face to our social media efforts.

So with that we first wanted to start off with making, you know, the stuff that we did with our Emery King videos, going into the emergency rooms or operating rooms and medical procedures, and make it fun and interesting. So if you weren’t a patient there and you weren’t particularly interested in learning about medical education, we wanted to make it fun, where it could just easily accessible to
all, and that you would be interested in checking out our information.

The first thing that we did, and this was like three years ago, we did live Twitter surgeries, as scary as that sounds. What we did was, around three years ago, we saw a couple of our hospitals kind of dabble in -- and honestly, when I first heard about them, I’m like, oh, no, no, I’m not doing a live Twitter surgery at all. But me and our team, we decided to do that. We got full consent from this patient that was getting a hip surgery, a minimum invasive hip surgery at one of the hospitals. And we went into the operating room -- I was working there at that point for like three or four years, and I never went into an operating room, I had no reason to, so I put on my gloves, put on my scrubs, I’m scared out of my mind. And we went in there and we live Tweeted the surgery. So the surgery, minimally invasive, took like 45 minutes to do. So we did the surgery. The surgery really wasn’t bad at all, it was like no blood or anything. We took, you know, nice pictures, not crazy pictures. Don’t want to get squeamish or anything. So we took pictures there, and it was really interesting because I learned a lot, too, but we related in our tweets that, hey, everyone is following us at 10:00 a.m. this morning, following this live surgery, and they
could see, hey, if I was a patient there, I could see how long this procedure takes in real time, but then the next tweet is like, the first incision is there, second tweet, second incision is made, 40 minutes later surgery is done. So from that we got -- I think we had a good five or six referrals from there, from people to say, hey, I need a hip surgery, too, I saw it live when going on Twitter, so I’m going to call you guys up, call your doctors, and I would like to get that surgery as well. So, on top of that, I don’t think we did too many more surgeries after that because it was a little bit crazy, but we did some doctor chats on the site as well, doctors talking about various hot topics at the time as well.

Another fun thing we did was the 9/9/09 baby race, and this Monday, tomorrow is 11/11/11, I think I’ll probably end up doing the same thing tomorrow. What we did is we teamed up with local Detroit radio station, Channel 95.5, and had this interesting -- for all the hospitals that had maternity wards, like for expectant mothers, we went around and said any mothers on the morning of 9/9/09, the baby that was born closest to 9:09 a.m. won $999.00. So it sounds like a really simple kind of like cliché market ploy, but it was really great because it promoted our hospital, it promoted our services -- hey, you’re having a
baby, come here. It was interesting because me and my colleague, us two guys getting phone calls because we weren’t actually in the hospital, we had marketing representatives in each hospital, so we were getting calls like, so and so is at two centimeters, so and so is at -- and we’re all wiping our forehead. So we’re like, I don’t have kids yet but when it happens, you know, I’ll know about it. So it was a really fun thing. It seems really cliché but it was one of those things that we just casually did, took advantage of our hospital services a good way to get it out there.

Everything we did after 9/9/09, a lot of, you know, everyone that knows YouTube knows that for every informative of great, really good serious video, there’s a silly one, like this cat playing the piano. So what we wanted to do is combine the two here as well, make our own YouTube video, our own silly little thing to get people’s attention, but also at the end of the video, show a message for them to come back to our hospital system. So I wanted to play one of those videos right now for you.

(Video played – theme song from the movie “Rocky” playing the background and laughter)

MR. BOND: Got the “Rocky” music playing.

(Audience applause)
MR. BOND: Thank you very much. So that right there, that craziness right there, that was our attempt -- we are sponsors of the Detroit marathon, there’s like this huge marathon that the Detroit Free Press puts together every year. So, we teamed up with them, and they were like, hey, do you guys have any marketing ideas to help promote to run out, and then even before that we promoted things about like healthy running tips and make sure to stretch out before you run. So, we got something silly to do, we had this run with the DMC t-shirts, it was the Run DMC emblem, some of you may recognize it. So we just put this silly together and got a lot of great responses. I’m just happy that I wasn’t that guy, my colleague Dan Ward (sic.) ran the whole thing, so I’m just happy that I was behind the camera and not in front of the camera.

Another thing we wanted to do, one of our efforts, making the medical education fun, is that often we notice that companies or brands, unintentionally, they don’t pay attention to all, (inaudible) when they’re talking about employees, and they’re talking about marketing, they really focus on marketing to their audiences, marketing to their demographics, but, you know, the focus does have to go back to internal employees, we have tons, thousands of employees that (inaudible) is great, nurses, doctors, and staff, that
do great work every single day, so we kind of wanted to turn the camera on them and what they do for our hospital system. So what we started to do is that -- ironically, actually, and you know, full disclosure here, our hospital system, we currently have social media sites banned, we currently have Facebook and Twitter banned from our places from our ICU Department and our HR, and the reason they -- and they wrote this policy like four years ago, and they wrote it up essentially because they don’t want doctors and nurses tweeting while they’re trying to help out a patient, take care of everything, and we’re talking about reversing the policy right now. But what we did in the meantime, we wanted people internally to have access to the great things that we’re doing here. That video that I played a second ago, not all people may be able to play video due to their computers not being able to run it or the site crashing. So we did was, Flicker is a really, really great (inaudible) site. It’s recommended to everyone. It’s like the picture side of -- kind of like the YouTube of pictures. And what this site does, it’s like a picture album, just like any other plain and simple picture album, but the way that it is it’s really great in setting up albums where you’re going to be tagging up everything. So we started to use this site to take pictures of all the
events and great things that go on in running a hospital system that even we internally may have not known about. It may have been an event that happened at a hospital a few miles away that one hospital didn’t know about. So started accessing Flicker to put up pictures about all the events going on at the DMC.

We have great people at the DMC, a lot of great great events that either end up hearing about by the time the work, for the most part, and like the pictures shown here included like, we sponsored this one (inaudible) in Novi that goes on every year. We had a run in downtown Detroit. We got out all the DMC employees, get out there, get healthy, get fit, run out there. We took pictures of that and then we took pictures of this Go Red heart disease and wearing this in one event that happened back in February. So we had a contest internally for people to design their units with all red. So we went over there to take pictures. So it seems simple to take a picture, but we noticed that a picture is worth a thousand words, so we got a lot of great responses internally from us just going to different events and different departments and taking a snapshot.

Also we are very lucky to sponsor a number of sports teams in our area, and they stop by at our hospital often.
When I first started working there, I didn’t really know that the Detroit Red Wings were going to stop by Children’s Hospital to visit the children there. The next day I was like, darn it, I wish I was up there, I wanted to meet a player, shake his hand, get his autograph or something, being a fan, but at the same time I’m like take a picture of them and put it out there. So we started taking pictures of all sports players that stop by. The Detroit Tigers, Red Wings, a Detroit Lion up here, and, you know, it was really great because they don’t mind us taking a snapshot and when both internal employees and the public saw it, they were like, hey, that’s really cool that so and so of the Red Wings stopped by to go visit the children at Children’s Hospital.

We have a number of actual press conferences and events that with, just like any other company, and what we started to do was a live tweet at these events. So for the public, you know, with Twitter, you guys know the power of Twitter is really powerful, it’s in real time, so instead of a news break and traditionally where news breaks and you see it on the channel, you know, so and so news at 6:00 p.m. and it happens in the morning and you’re on Twitter, you’re going to hear about it ASAP, like really, really fast. Just like way back with the pilot that was in New
York, Captain Sully, I believe, who landed the plane, and new broke from the picture that somebody took on their cell phone. They took a picture of the plane, you know, being landed, and no one else knew about it until someone just took their smartphone, took a picture, and got it out there. So we wanted to be like that. If we have press conferences, we invite news media out there, but if me and my colleague are out there with our smartphones and our orange t-shirts on tweeting about it, the news media will actually get wind of it before they actually have time to talk to a reporter, talk to their news anchor, and then get it on the air. For instance, we had this event last year, and actually it wasn’t an event, it was a big press conference where we got bought out by this huge company, and a lot of concerns were expressed, like is it really bad, they’re going to lay off people. But it was a great thing, there was no loss or anything. But we wanted to be there live to convey the good news as in, here’s some recaps, here’s some pictures, there’s no lapse, and they just really get run and actually get improvements from this buy out here, and we tweeted it live. So before the channel at so and so came on at noon, at 11:00 we’re already tweeting about it, taking pictures about it, and getting the information out there.
Another thing with it, too, we really wanted to use social media to boost our employees’ morale. So they saw our pictures in our newsletters, they saw pictures online, but we wanted to actually say, hey, we want to get you involved, we really want to get you into -- put the social in social media. So one of the bigger things that we’ve done in the last couple of years was we had this hand washing contest for all the intensive care units. As you know, hand washing should be simple, especially in a hospital it’s a really necessary thing for hospital a system. You have to stay clean, you’re taking care of patients, you have to make sure that infection rates are down and everything. So our staff had a really good record of washing their hands and being safe, but we also wanted to push that message forward, especially during flu season, like, hey, wash your hands, it only takes two seconds but really wash your hands, not just wash your hands for two seconds, but really wash your hands. So we thought of this kind of “Grease” style hand washing dance that we had all of our employees do. So we had the idea until we thought they were all going to freeze and didn’t want to do it at all. But we were so lucky that all of our intensive care units signed on board. We had people coming in droves, to the point where we had to like filming took a whole month
just for them to get their dance routines down, like, okay, I’m going to dance, everything is good. So it was really interesting. We got a lot of great response from it, and I just wanted to play you the video right here.

(Video played. Music playing. Laughter from the audience.)

MR. BOND: As you really noticed really closely, you saw some people with shirts and ties on. That was some of our hospital’s CEO’s and vice presidents there. So every time I see that clip and I see them there, I’m like, yeah, we got you on tape. It was a really big hit internally. People loved it. People loved watching their own co-workers there, not even in the department, but everywhere all over our hospital system really loved it and it really helped to boost employee morale, and also made them aware that we, you know, the DMC social media team existed.

From there we then in a press release, it was just a casual thing we did internally, and we were like, oh, let’s put it on YouTube and try to see if we get any hits on it, and just casually put it out there. With no press release at all, filmed it on this tiny little flip cam, this little portable camcorder, we put it out there, we filmed it, it only took like a few hours to film it. I reached out to our local Detroit news station and stuff, we wanted their
news anchor, Stephen Clark, a really great social media person, I reached out to him and he’s really good in connecting social media to his news broadcasts, so it was like casually, hey, check out this video that we did, no big whoop, and if you like it maybe mention it on a tweet or something. And he ended up not only just doing that, he was like this is a great video, I’m going to pass it on to my health producer, and then the health producer pass it on to the health reporter, and I swear like 48 hours later they came out to our hospital system with their cameras and everything, interviewed all the people that put this -- great people that put this together, and we were on the news. So we like a media value of 24,000 and 153,000 impressions, and no press release whatsoever. A tiny little portable camera that really didn’t cost anything at all, as opposed to all the other hoopla that we normally usually do with a good press release. We just kind of -- had to do it this way. And I don’t want to jinx it saying viral, but that’s what we did with this video, luckily so.

Besides the craziness and the hand washing and the fun YouTube stuff, we wanted to get more focused on the patients themselves. The patients that go through our hospitals, all the great doctors and nurses are there, but the patient story, we really wanted to tell it. So we’re
like we’re going around doing the (inaudible) we wanted to take that same approach and interview one of the patients. So our marketing person over at Rehabilitation of Michigan, a really great marketing director, she ran into a patient up there, and they talked all the time, and it was this young girl from Windsor, Canada. She went there to our hospital system because in an accident three years ago she was paralyzed from the waist down in this really horrific car accident. Her and her fiancé at the time were in the car accident. So she told her that they wanted to -- they were going to get married, and this was this past April, and they wanted to get married, and her goal was to walk down the aisle. She was confined to a wheelchair, but her goal was to walk down the aisle without the use of crutches, just to have her father and her brother all on her arm to walk her down the aisle. So what we did is we started off the story, we wanted to tape it, and so here’s a snippet from that, too.

[Beginning of Video]
WALK FOR LOVE – PART ONE

JEN: Hi, I’m Jen Darvin, I’m 28, and I’m from Bell River, Ontario, Canada. In 2008 I suffered a spinal cord injury in a car accident on the way to Grand Bend which is a beach that we pretty frequently went to. We were on our way, we were about a quarter of the way there and we were turning a corner and the oncoming car came into our lane and hit us head on. From then I don’t remember a whole lot but I folded over in my seat and the seat belt kind of caught me at the waist and it gave me the injury that I do have. I have an L-1 cauda equina (sic.) injury. I was pulled out of the van by my now fiancé and his friends and they kept me on the side of the road until the paramedics found me. They airlifted me to London Hospital where I spent probably a week in ICU and then another couple of weeks in the hospital itself until I was transferred over to in-patient.

The first time that I heard that I wasn’t going to be able to get out of the bed and walk again, I was in ICU and I was kind of in and out of memory and remembering everything they were telling me, but I do remember very clearly the doctor coming in and saying that I had damaged my nerves so greatly, probably the worst damage they have seen of nerves without actually severing them, and therefore
I would not be able to regain my ability to walk again, so I would be in a wheelchair for the rest of my life.

When I first started the program my goals were to be able to get up and do some sort of walking with my braces on and with the skirt around my legs so I can’t see my feet, so I’m practicing for my walk down the aisle. My fiancé and I, Mike, are going to be married on April 16th and the next couple of months are going to be very exciting. And I’m making a video diary of everything, all the progress leading up to it. Keep checking back and you’ll be able to be updated on the progress as well.

WALK FOR LOVE – PART SIX

JEN: I think my best memory of the day was definitely the walk down the aisle with my dad and my brother.

MIKE: As soon as they opened up those doors, seeing Jen standing there with her dad and her brother, it, you know, it just felt like that was the whole reason for the day.

JEN: That was probably the one thing I was really hoping I was going to get right that day.

MIKE: We had everything planned on how Jen was going to get to the alter. Nothing was really planned on how we were planning on getting back. We were able to use one of
Jen’s friends to help distribute some of Jen’s weight while her bridesmaid undid the locks and the braces and I was able to carry her right out, without dropping her.

JEN: When we first got there we got to say hi to everybody as they were coming in and I got everyone’s well wishes and everything. And we went on to our first dance right away.

ANNOUNCER: The reason we are here, please get your hands together for our beautiful bride and groom, Jen and Mike.

JEN: We were kind of a little worried about it, but at the same time we thought, well, whatever happens happens.

No problem stepping on his feet which was amazing, and my steps were great, and we did circles which was even better, more than what we had practiced, just the straight back and forth.

Giving the speeches at speech time, and me and Mike were thanking all of our family and friends, and a big thank you had to go out to my therapists at the Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan because they were the reason that I was able to walk down that aisle and do the first dance with Mike and do all the standing that I did that day.
(Jen’s speech at the reception): I want to say thank you to a few of my therapists that are here. Without them I would never have been able to walk down the aisle and stand.

Everyone in the entire room stood up and clapped and gave them a standing ovation which they so definitely deserve. They deserve everything, all the thanks in the entire world, and from the bottom of my heart I thank them as well, because they got me to do what I was able to do.

I think the most important thing from all of this from doing the entire series on the YouTube site was the fact that my story got there to a lot of people and I really hope that it helped people realize that the wheelchair is not the end. It’s definitely something you’ve got to get used to, you have to work with, but it’s not something that will stop you from doing things in your life. I’ve definitely proved that to myself. I questioned so many things that I was able to do. I questioned being able to walk down the aisle, and be able to do the first dance with my husband, and I’ve proven myself that I can do things as long as I put hard work into it and keep trying. I really hope that other people will take that message as well and use that in their own lives, regardless of what disability or problem they have in their lives, as long as they have
dreams and goals they can work towards them and move forward in their life rather than looking at the things that you can’t do anymore.

[End of Video]

So, we started that story with her. She was great. Her goal was to walk down the aisle, so she was like, hey, do you guys want to record this, I’m great with it. Her and her finance were great. Her friends and family were great. They were like, hey, we don’t mind you guys with your little flip cameras, and my colleague over there, and she really wanted to tell her story to the world for anybody that has been in this situation or know a family member or friend that has been in that situation. She wanted to let the world know that this is my goal, I want to walk down the aisle in my wedding dress, I want them all to know this. So we put it up on YouTube and we filmed it. After a while she got used to us, you know, coming to all her sessions and stuff and filming here. She was a great sport. It was a really cool thing that we did. We just wanted to do something that was kind of, you know, outside of the box. In a way we don’t want to have a gigantic, professional film crew, we just wanted to do a nice little intimate filming with our camera to follow her progress. And as time went on really without -- I think we
had one press release to a Canadian newspaper, but that’s it. But after that people got wind of her progress and they were, oh, this is a really good story, let’s pass it on. I hate to use the word again viral, but virally through (inaudible) media-wise, it started spreading to our Detroit newspapers, the Windsor, and the word started getting out nationally. So in the middle of me and my colleague filming it on our little portable cameras, CBS called us and ABC World News called us, and even someone from the UK came to us and said, hey, we heard this story from Detroit, from Windsor, great inspiring story about this girl walking down the aisle. So all of a sudden, we’re filming with our little portable cameras and all of a sudden a film crew with a boom mic. is right over our shoulders, and we were like, okay... And it was great and Jen didn’t mind at all. She was like, hey, the more media the better. And she was like, I just want to get my story out there because I’m doing this either which way. So it was great. It was a great experience seeing all this media attention come out there, but it was a really good inspiring story that we really wanted to tell to the world. So surprisingly to us, me and my colleague -- she asked us, you guys are coming to the wedding, right? We were like, oh, we weren’t planning on it but we’re coming. So we did
that and we were like, do you mind if we tweeted this, because there was a lot of local and national people following us and our DMC employees, and a lot of people following this progress, and we’re like, the wedding, April 16th, 2011, Saturday, 2:00 p.m. And we did (inaudible), hey, follow us, live tweets, and we’ll tweet all the progress. We weren’t like we’re Entertainment Tonight or something. But it was great. The moment she walked out that door without any crutches, as she walked down there was not a dry eye in the house at all. I was like with my Kleenex and, couldn’t keep it dry at all. It was really, really cool to witness that. And from the beginning, her aggressive therapy, she really, really worked hard to getting down the aisle. It was like one of the most satisfying things I’ve ever done in social media. So, otherwise, I wanted to play you guys just the first minute of some of the footage from her wedding day.

(Video played)

MR. BOND: Due to time I have to stop right there. But if you’re interested but if you’re interested please go to our YouTube site to view this -- a little promo right there. It was great, once again, that we got a lot of great coverage from it, and we really again appreciated Jen and her now husband to let us listen their lives through
her therapy, and she did, she walked down the aisle. So from that, a couple of weeks later, Matt Lauer gave us a buzz, and I didn’t even know about it until the day before, and said like, hey, I want to fly you guys down to New York to the Today show to actually come on the Today show. So me and my colleague turned on the news and we’re like, oh my gosh, it’s them, I can’t believe they’re actually there, because all the stories were kind of done at our place in Detroit but not actually anywhere else. So we were just like that was the cherry on top that, you know, they made it out there and told our story. So, from that we had 60,000 views and I’m pretty sure it’s like a little more than that now since I updated this. 60,000 views since February, 2011, and two million total impressions from all of our Twitter and Facebook and social media sites. We actually ended up having some patients (inaudible) as well, too, people that were in similar situations, were paralyzed and bound to a wheelchair, they saw her story and were inspired to give us a buzz and do physical therapy over at our Rehabilitation Institute. So that was the cherry on top and showed us that social media does work for letting the world know about one’s brand and one’s company and really getting the message out there, and I’m just really happy to be a part of the Detroit Medical Center, the great
hospital system. I’m really lucky to be able to get pictures like this, and stories like I showed you guys today, and really tell the world about it. And that’s the end of my presentation. Thank you very much. Any questions?

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: What kind of tools do you use to make those movies? Do you use (inaudible)?

MR. BOND: Oh, we use everything. That’s a really good question, too. We use a combination of everything. We used IMovie, we used Final Cut Pro, we used Windows, Movie Live, Movie Maker, the one that comes standard with Windows 7 now. So we used literally everything, the programs made, and we tried to do it. It takes like, between myself -- like I self-taught myself and my colleague taught himself on IMovie and Final Cut. As great as these videos are, they do take a little bit of time. In some of the videos like you saw, oh, did this take you a day to produce? And we’re like, no, it took us a few hours of recording and editing and putting something together just for a two minute piece.

Question?

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: You talk about some of the push back that you got about tweeting and Facebook posts
and the employees and the legal staff, do you have other challenges?

MR. BOND: Yeah, definitely legal. I think it’s really acceptance because -- this is no knock on the hospital system at all because I love working for it, but there’s a lot of people that may be like older staff that, like, I’ve been here for 20, 30, 40, 50 years, and that’s with any company, too, like any kind of company, and for them to say, hey, we’re going to come there with a flip camera and do this really crazy thing with some orange t-shirts and film you on Facebook, and they’re like, no, no, no, no, I’m a doctor, I take care of patients, leave me alone. So I think that’s our only major push back. I mean, everyone -- we’re really lucky to have a positive administration. Our VP is great, our directors are great, and a lot of people accept us. So I think for those that don’t know about it, those older doctors, they’re actually slowly coming out there saying, hey, Julian, come over here and teach me about Facebook and stuff. So, that’s why they call me Mr. Facebook...I need to know how to work that Facebook thing. So I don’t mind doing that at all and it’s really great that they’re really slowly accepting it.

Anymore questions:
MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: (Not audible enough to transcribe.)

MR. BOND: Oh yeah, for sure, yeah. We get permissions. We dot the “I’s”, cross the “T’s” for every single thing that we do. So we, for the most part, internally we’re kind of like if legal says it’s okay, if you’re an employee of the DMC, we’ll like film you. If it were for any patient, especially that live surgery that I showed a little bit earlier, we make sure they sign every single thing because -- not only do we do that for everything in general for any traditional video or whatever ad we do with patients or anyone else, we make sure to get that consent form there. If we don’t have a consent form, we run back across the street and grab them. We treat that just like we do with (inaudible), especially with social media because the information there gets viral really fast and gets out there.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: What provisions did you have in place in case something went wrong?

MR. BOND: Oh, that’s a really good question. Luckily for that surgery right there, we actually asked that ahead of time. You know, it wasn’t like open heart surgery, God forbid if anything goes wrong. For the (inaudible) of that surgery, they reported that nothing has been wrong in it,
and if anything -- we did a live Twitter thing. We weren’t like live streaming it on video. Someone suggested that idea to us, said, hey, did you guys actually want to put a video there? We’re like, no, no, no, no, HIPPA violations, everything. Legal would be on us really bad. So if anything bad were to happen we would just stop tweeting, and then the whole thing, we have to end this. But luckily nothing happened. We did three or four surgeries after that and we didn’t have any problems.

Anymore questions?

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: When you made yourself the face of the social media group, did you find that you became an interface for (inaudible) administration?

MR. BOND: Yeah, yeah---

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: (Inaudible).

MR. BOND: Yeah, it was funny because I never -- I’m that kind of person where I like being behind the camera, I don’t like being in front of the camera at all, but I think that with a lot of companies and brands that they, you know, they can put out as many tweets and posts as they want to, there’s no face behind it and you can’t really relate to it, you have to like humanize it, so instead of putting our -- will Emery King, like I showed earlier, and stuff like that, they kind of looked at him and he’s really
great, but he’s a newscaster, he’s the PR guy, they kind of
know his thing. For someone like myself, no one knew who I
was or who my colleague was so we were just like everyday
marketing guys, kind of, from our point of view, kind of
saying kind of step back and saying this is really cool
surgery, this is a really cool, inspiring story, and it’s
really got a human feel to it. So I’m kind of like used to
it now. When people say Mr. Facebook, I’m like what do you
mean -- oh, okay, that’s me. And they recognize it on the
t-shirt. I think it’s really necessary for more companies
to put the social back into social media.

Anymore questions? That’s it. Thank you very much.

MR. COURSARIS: Good morning. I’m so pumped for my
own session in the afternoon. How many of you are actually
sticking around after 1:30? I’m going to try to wake you
up after a nice lunch, but I’m really excited to be the
closing speaker, but I’m even more excited to introduce the
next speaker, Mr. Daniel Foster, who is heading up the
social strategy at TechSmith, just around the corner. For
those of you that may not have heard of this very great
success story from our neighborhood, they used social media
tools well before it actually became commonplace, a mandate
in corporate settings, and Daniel is helping TechSmith
scale up to get more employees involved with better tools
and processes to delight and learn from more customers. Perhaps more importantly, he’s a big Spartan fan. Go Green. Go Green.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Go White.

DR. COURSARIS: Go Green.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Go White.

DR. COURSARIS: That’s better. He’s a “upper” from what I understand, and loves some classy jams, like Chrome (sic.) and Capital (sic.), right? That sort of genre, I believe. A big family man. So I’m very excited to be here. But his talk is actually going to be even more excited because he’s going to give real world examples and applications about how the suggestion box model can actually help generate more conversations with fans and critics, assuming you make it easy enough, you make it usable, to make it -- to engage your prospective participants in the suggestion process, which will generate richer insight. This is something that has been in discussion, I can tell you, in the academic world for decades in terms of participation in all our communities and feedback mechanisms, and we still don’t have the answer, but hopefully Dan can point us in the right direction. So, with that, please help me in joining to welcome Daniel Foster.
MR. FOSTER: Okay, can you hear me in the back? Okay, thank you very much for the introduction. I appreciate that. So, one thing I want to do right away is try to connect in your minds TechSmith with some of our product terms because what we find, we go places and we say, hey, we’re with TechSmith, and people are like huh? And then we go, Snag It. And they go, yeah, I love Snag It. So Snag It is what you’re going to use for screen capture. I used it for all of the bits to go into this presentation. And Camstasia is another one of our products used for taking presentations and making them available on demand. We’ve got a booth here. Hit up Jeremy. He’s out there at the booth during break. He’ll tell you about Morae, which is our usability software. If you haven’t heard about that, he can answer all of your questions. The cool announcement right now is that one of the eye tracking software companies has just announced the integration with Morae, and that’s kind of one of the things that we’re on the verge of doing is making the cost come down for being able to do eye tracking usability studies. So we’re excited about that.

One other thing. All of the TechSmithies in the room, raise your hand, please? So take a look at those folks, and if you have any questions, hit them up, ask them
anything, and they are obligated to answer. We’re a pretty open place. Put them on the spot.

So, I recognize I’m the only thing standing between you and lunch, so I take that responsibility very seriously. But I want to start by thinking for a moment about the mechanism that you use in your organization to collect feedback about your product or your website. So maybe you’ve got an email address, right, that people can ping you. Maybe you have a web form on your website. Maybe you don’t have any mechanism, and actually people are out there talking about your products and your services, but they’re not talking to you at all, and they just talk to each other. So I want to challenge you today to think about the user experience of giving feedback; what is that experienced like. I’m going to frame the question this way: Why on earth would your users give you a second piece of feedback?

So, do you do anything to reward the first attempt at sharing ideas with you, and is that an experience that they want to repeat? Because that’s kind of what you want, right? You want repeat customers of your feedback loop just like you want repeat customers of your product, your service. And the truth is, while people might give you their best ideas on the first go around, chances are it’s
the third or the tenth interaction where some of the good stuff is going to happen. It may turn out that playing a role in co-creating your product will keep that person around so that they do become a lifetime customer, just the very act of engaging with you in that way, that at that point they have some buy-in.

So, what is the typical feedback experience like? So, you pull up the website and you dig around in the footer, you find the “Contact Us” link, and then it takes you to this form, and you’re like, holy crap, that’s a long form, and it’s like why do you need my shoe size, and is this like in regards to a previous order, or maybe it’s some general comments, I don’t know which one to fill out, and then you see fill out the whole darn thing, and then you click “Submit”, and then you’re like nothing, right? Crickets. No one is going to get back to you, and they’re like because nobody is even reading this stupid thing. Or maybe you get this canned response that says, you know, thank you, we value your feedback. And it’s like, right, just like you value my time when you put me on hold, you know.

So I see this approach to customer feedback as kind of being a holdover from the old days where all that customer contact is part of the cost center, right? Those are costs
of doing business, and control and efficiency, that’s the primary objective; that’s what you’ve got to do to survive. So, let me see if I can bring up this thing. Awesome. So here’s what I would say are the unwritten rules of the old suggestion box model. It’s private. That’s because no one can hear you scream, right? It’s non-committal, because after all, we’re not going to make any promises here, we don’t want to be on the hook for doing anything. It’s one-way. So, you know, just drop your suggestion through the slot and it’s opaque, there’s no peeking behind the curtain of what goes on after you send in your feedback. So, I’m exaggerating a little bit, obviously, but if you really want to test this in a really kind of personal way, go -- step into the shoes of your users, right? Every good usability researcher I’m sure does this all the time. And go to your own website. Find the contact info. Fill out the form and give some feedback, just like you were a John or Jane Doe, and then pay attention to how you feel as you go through that process. That’s really the key to any design. I’m not a designer, but I think that’s probably key to any design is how it makes you feel.

I’m going to throw this up here. You know, okay, this could be trite but honestly people will remember how you make them feel. So, in trying to improve this process, how
can we make this all better, we’ve got to think about some of the motives that people have for giving feedback, what’s in it for them? I’m a marketer, so WIIFM -- what’s in it for me. And how can you give them more of that. So I’m going to pull out my handy mental notes here. This is my street cred because I’m not a usability guy, so this, you know, okay? You can believe I know what I’m talking about or I’ll pretend. I only have the sample back (sic.) so you know I’m not really legit. So I went through here and just kind of a random, all right, these are four things, right? I mean, you can choose any number of motives to think about it and appeal to in the process of designing the feedback loop. So the peak end rule says that we judge experiences by the high point and the end. So, are there highlights along the way of your feedback loop, and how does it end, is there anything satisfying, is there any payoff at the end? Does the feedback experience give -- are you giving users a venue for self-expression, where they can say what’s on their mind, and does that venue or platform enable any sort of reputation, so the more they contribute, the better their contributions, the more their reputation goes up. And then think about autonomy. Is there anything that your users can point to and say, you know what, I
influenced that, they made that change because of me, at least in part. These are all pretty powerful motivators.

So, stepping back and talking about what are we doing at TechSmith. I want to tell you some stories of things that we’re doing and hopefully there’s something that’s generalizable from that. During our 20 years, yes, 20+ years now, TechSmith has really been engaged with customers, and we welcome feedback from customers. We’re really heavily invested in traditional usability testing and even more recently a market research. So we kind of have those bases covered. We have a customer evangelist, Betsy Weber. Probably everybody here knows Betsy or Betsy knows everybody here. That’s just how she rolls. She would be here giving this talk but she’s in like Norway or something. Anyone here have a spork (sic.) from Betsy? Okay, I see a couple of hands. Great. She’s known for sporking. So, Betsy is our evangelist out there, meeting people, and then she brings that feedback of those conversations back into the organization, and that’s been fantastic. So for all of that, our approach to product releases through the years has been really rather traditional. We do a closed beta, and then a big launch on launch day. And all of the details of that release are secret until the moment that they’re all made public, so
it’s all or nothing. And then also if Joe User just showed up at our website -- and this is in the past. It’s not true today, but he had showed up at our website to share his brilliant idea for how we can do something better, we had, yeah, this form that you fill out. Guilty. But in 2009, one of our project managers, Tiffany Wood, wanted to try a different approach. And it was during the development of Snag It on Mac. So this is the product, Snag It, it was on the pc for what, 18 years at the time? So we had multiple revisions, a ton of features, and millions of users. So we couldn’t just port that straight over to the Mac. First of all, it would take forever, we would never it done. And secondly, it really wouldn’t honor the unique needs of Mac users to just do a straight port. So what we needed was loads of detailed input from real users during the development phase. We need a lot of people to use it. And then we could build that Version 1.0 product that would be a home run on a platform where, you know, we’re not used to this. We are the Johnny-come-lately. There are other competitors out there already owning that space. So, we needed to have a great experience right off the bat.

So, Tiffany and her team decided to go out on a limb and try this new approach, an open beta. Gasp. We’d never
done it before, at least not to my knowledge. And they facilitated this using an engagement platform called Get Satisfaction. And they hoped that it would result in a lot more feedback and it would be, you know, a larger swath of potential users than our typical closed beta where you have smaller numbers -- and if you’ve ever been part of a closed beta, the people that join those are kind of unique, right? I mean, they have certain motivations to be there. You might say squeaky wheel, maybe not always fair, but they tend to dominate the private beta. So this was Tiffany’s summary in retrospect of that experience, and what it was like. It turns out it went way better than we could have expected doing this kind of crowd-sourced development effort.

Here’s some of the numbers. It took about ten minutes to set up the Get Satisfaction site. We added some light branding and some really simple configuration. At that time, it was separate, it wasn’t even a sub-domain of our website. But even that took like 20 minutes when we finally did that. Ten months was how long the beta period lasted. There were 100,000 people that downloaded the beta version and tried it out. They posted 120,000 unique topics on Get Satisfaction, this feedback form. There were 450,000 people that were involved in giving us feedback,
and our estimates -- always a bit of an estimate, sure, but that we saved like $500,000.00 that we would have had to spend to get that quality and breadth of feedback and input using kind of traditional usability methods. This is what UX designer Sylvania Dye had to say.

So, in short, this beta was a smashing success, right? I’m going to be honest, this experience didn’t change how we do all of our betas. All the rest of them so far are closed. We haven’t adopted that. But I would say there’s a shift or an openness toward openness, right? So I think we’re heading in that direction, little by little. In the short term, what it did is it gave us a vision for how much broader and richer all of our online customer conversations could be if we conducted them in a public, kind of social space. The platform, turns out, does matter. Rushton McLuhan is right, the medium is the message. So our traditional, sort of opaque suggestion box web form at that time was already causing us some grief and some pain, but this caused us to really think seriously about just blowing it the heck up, just be done with it. So we formed a small team and took a hard look at the outside of the box, the web form, and we realized over time that we added more hurdles for customers in an attempt to get more detailed information. It was all with the best of intentions. It
was so that we could serve them better and make better decisions. But customers didn’t agree that it was a good idea. So we would get some feedback like this, and then we also found that -- we had one opportunity to do sort of a before and after and when we looked at those numbers our feedback for one of our products dropped by 90%. So we were really successful at shutting off that spigot, like, don’t talk to us. Those are things that you kind of, until alarm bells go off -- I was looking back at the thread in my email last night -- I think it was a developer on the product who said, hey, we’re not getting feedback anymore, what happened? And this started this whole chain of events.

So, then we opened up the suggestion box and took a look at what was inside. A lot of us were foreign to it. There was one guy who was shoulderng almost the entire load of responding to all these people. So he was the one to ask. So it turned out that a lot of people weren’t leaving feedback at all. They were in the wrong place. Stupid users, right? Of course not. They just wanted to tell us something and this is where they ended up. So there were people who were stuck. They were using our products or whatever and they just needed help finding a certain feature or getting this certain task accomplished.
Here’s a sample of what that looks like. Fairly simple question, has an answer, just needs some help. And there were people that were broken, they needed tech support. I have no idea what any of this stuff means, cabs, dot, whatever. We have people who are really good at that. This person needed to talk to them.

We have people who wrote us love letters to tell us how awesome we were. This guy can’t even stand it. So there’s this gold mine, right, you dig in there, and you’re like, oh my gosh, there are people saying all these amazing things. Yeah. Very enthusiastic. We love those people. And then there is actual feedback...hey, I want Jing to be able to print on paper, dead trees, can you make it do that? We haven’t yet, I don’t think, but that’s great.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Isn’t that what you use Snag It for?

MR. FOSTER: Yeah, that’s what you use Snag It for.

So, the situation was our customers had to work too hard to slip the idea through the slot into the box, and then for those who did, too few of them were actually rewarded for their efforts in any meaningful way, or even got the help that they needed, right, if they were in the wrong place, and then too few of our staff were ever learning or seeing what was inside that box. It was a black hole. We did try
to respond, right? There was one guy who was the champion of it, but it wasn’t what it should be. In fact, this guy, who was the champion, Mike Curtis, he summed it up. He said, “It’s impeding our ability to have a relationship with our users.” This was a frustrated email he sent. And that just shows how awesome Mike Curtis is, right, because that’s what it comes down to. We needed a platform that could give us conversations at scale. We also needed to make sure we could support it with internal resources, right? Dumb idea, if you put it out there, it becomes as ghost town or there are tumbleweeds going through. So, the recent Snag It on Mac beta at that time really provided us with some precedents and some experience to build on so we sort of knew what we were getting into. Tiffany was a great champion for it, having been through it, and then last fall we ended up making the decision, all right, we’re going to kill the web form and replace it with this public social platform for collecting feedback from users, and it’s specifically for users of our released products and services, so not our beta users at this point.

Not only does this platform provide a better experience for customers who seek us out with feedback, you know, they’re the ones coming to tell us something, it also enables us to really flip this whole suggestion box model
on its head and go initiate conversations with customers and ask them what they would like us to do, and have confidence that the experience isn’t going to suck.

There’s nothing worse than sending someone to a form and then, like, why did you do that, I’m not going to fill that out. I actually had someone say that to me and it was sort of a wake-up call. So here’s what this looks like in practice. It’s one of our day-to-day -- over the past few months I built a small team of people and it’s nobody’s full time job but it’s a few of our part-time job to monitor Twitter each weekday, and we do a search that searches for all of our brand terms, except for Jing, because it turns out that’s a word in Indonesia, and it’s a really common Chinese name. So that one is really hard to monitor. Just a word to the wise, when you’re picking a product name, check it on Twitter. So this team of people, we each take a different weekday and then we look for these brand term mentions, and we responded to everything. We probably over-respond but we’re sort of erring on the side of responsiveness. So you’ve got one end diehard Snag It, right? And then the other end is like “f you” Camtasia. So -- and not that they’re always in those roles, right, in case anyone from those teams are here. Sometimes it’s worse. So a typical response to a happy person might look
something like this, you know, we’re actually sending them to our feedback form to give us feedback. Now why would we do that? They’re happy, they’re already content. But TechSmith has a stated goal, it’s on our little secret internal mission thing that we’re going to delight customers. Cool. So we think it makes sense to ask users who are already thrilled with the experience how we can make it even better. The other thing I think is sneaky about this is it gets them while the neurons are sort of bouncing around and they’ve had their morning coffee and they’re all jazzed up. So, you know, hopefully we’re getting a good variety of feedback because we’re getting them at different times in the user experience. If they look like someone who might fall within a market segmentation of particular interest or maybe they’re using the product in a unique way, and we think maybe they would be interesting for a user story or a case study, then we also refer them to a different area on Get Satisfaction, our feedback form, where they can fill out that story. And what that does, we did have that going into a private, hidden folder, too, but we just found that it was hard to have internal accountability and just -- it wasn’t satisfying for them because then they might not get a response. So this way, they’re giving their praise out in
a public form as well. So far that’s working pretty well. Then we can follow up with them and see if it leads to a formal story.

And then there are people at the other end of the spectrum, right? So, these are people who -- they need tech support, and so our job is to connect them with an agent or possibly a link that’s going to help them out of their trouble. Sometimes it’s hooking them up by phone, like this one. That’s more rare, actually, so, you know, it’s five back and forths to get this all arranged, but hey, we’re going to do it. In the end, you know, he ends up happy. We love these turnaround stories. This is one of my favorite things is when you see that person who is really angry, and you’re like, that’s an opportunity, right, to turn them around, and often that’s the way it works because the agent that we sent him to was awesome and timely and knew everything, so it’s just trust in the whole system.

So it might turn out also that this person just needs a listening ear. So here’s another person, pretty upset, flat out hates it, and then we inquire, so what’s the deal. Too many problems to even fit in 140 characters. So this is 12:16 p.m. 5:42 p.m.: Very impressed by your efforts to help. And then the next day he’s thanking our product
manager, Shane Lovellette, who we hooked him up directly with Shane so he could talk to the product manager and tell him why he was frustrated, and changed his view of the company and the experience.

These are a little bit outside the norm but what we often try to do is encourage any customer who has an idea to share that on our feedback form so the idea can get voted up by other users, and then we get some sort of sense of how popular that it, and it gets attention, and then also those conversations provide insight to our development staff. So when someone does share an idea, the things we try to do are, one, thank and acknowledge them in a really human way. We encourage everyone who’s interacting to just be conversational. In some cases we’ll engage with them to try to get at the root causes of what their issue is or what their request is. And then we also try to use the built-in status indicators in this platform that let us give a general sense of where it falls in the backlog. So this is, we’re never going to do this. We usually don’t apply that one. But, we’re not planning to do this, or we’re working on it, or then once it’s implemented, we can change it to implemented and then they automatically get a notification that says, this thing that you asked for is done, go get the update, whatever.
So, yeah, this is extra work, and it’s a struggle particularly with ideas because they’re not on fire, you know, we have to keep ourselves accountable to go in and reward those people who took the time to give us feedback. And then we also have some internal arguments about how open and secretive we should be, right? So, should we say, yes, we’re going to fix that in the next release, and then maybe something slips? Those are conversations we’re having. But then when it goes well, it goes well, and people do find that it’s a rewarding experience, and we hope to satisfy their motives for sharing in the first place. Then we also wanted, as part of this process, cultivate a sense that we’re people, too, we’re human and we really care about solving your problems, and we hope that you’ll be encouraged to a share a second and a third and a fourth idea.

I’m kind of going through these phases of where people are when we meet them on Twitter, and then there are the people who are just confused, right? They just need help. One of the things this feedback platform Get Satisfaction allows us to do is see that tweet and then actually go suck it into the feedback platform and answer it there and then they get this -- in the center tweet here is the response. It’s automatically generated back to them that says, you
know, your answer is over here. Now, that’s fantastic because now we’ve answered it not just for that one person but for everyone who searches the web or the forum, and we have a link then that we can give to the next person who asks, and be like, yeah, your answer is over here.

One of the things that we might do as part of that process of answering the one person’s question is we might use Jing or another tool to make them a quick screencast or a screenshot and then what we try to do is turn those into a tip that we feed back into our outbound communication, social media communication. So if you subscribe to us on Twitter or Facebook, you should get something of value. One of the things of value is these kind of tips. Again, just trying to build some efficiency into the system so that as we scale we’re not killing ourselves. And there’s some really nice affordances of the platform itself, Get Satisfaction. So there are the (inaudible) indicators, and the notifications, so people can subscribe to some topic that they feel strongly about, or they just can’t wait for us to implement. And subscribing is super frictionless. There’s a +1 button, or if you comment on any posts then you automatically get alerts whenever there’s more activity on that post, unless you opt out. The platform also helpfully divides all the feedback into four buckets:
questions, ideas, problems, praise. Updates are things only we can post. That’s helpful to kind of make some sense out of the chaos, and it encourages people also to tag every post with either a product or a keyword tag, or both. All of that helps make this the right place for every user, right? So almost any question, this is the right place, you’re not in the wrong place, we can handle it, or in some cases re-assign it. So if someone comes in with a question, I’m trying to make the product do this, or, do you have a feature that does that, I’ve poked around and I can’t find it. And it turns out if the answer is yes, we point them to that, and if the answer is no, we can turn it into an idea and then other people can say, yeah, I’d like that, too. But basically they still get their question answered and they are more or less happy. What we try to do when we shift it to an idea is say, well, okay, if you can’t do this now, but here’s our workaround, and here’s a way that you can still get your job done today that you’re trying to do even though we don’t have that feature. Sometimes we’ll throw it out to the community and say, hey, everyone else, what do you think is the best way to solve this problem.

Probably one of the most important features of the platform is de-duplication of topics. So if you’ve ever
been part of a normal forum, it’s sheer chaos. But with this, one of the things I really love about it is when the user starts typing in a question, it tries to match, and say, maybe there’s a conversation already going on that you could join in instead of creating a new one. It’s not perfect. We still have to do some merging and manual stuff, but having canonical threads is also really helpful for our staff who goes in here and instead of having this overwhelming feeling, it helps sort things a bit. Having the staff in there is actually one of the really vital benefits of this platform because having more employees across our organization rubbing shoulders with customers on a daily basis is a good thing. About half of TechSmith’s staff have created an account on this platform, and then about half said, last time we asked them, said they used it in some capacity, either in monitoring or posting.

Everyone drives different value, depending on where they sit in the organization, which is another reason it’s great to just throw open the doors to anyone that wants to participate. You’ve got product managers that might be looking for top (sic.) issues, or road map validation. You’ve got UX and user assistance, and they might key in on these little nuances of where customers are falling down, and then they can adjust the UI of the product or the
support materials to address those things. Marketing can pick up cues about how real people talk and put that back into our communication. Developers and designers can post mock-ups or post questions to test assumptions. There was a developer who said, you know, we’re struggling with how to solve this problem and here are three ways or whatever, you know, give us some feedback. The list goes on. Oh, and I should also mention there’s a less measurable but I think still really important other value that people are getting from it throughout the company is having these raw, unfiltered conversations that they’re engaging in or that they’re witnessing, and I’ve had people say this to me, that it fuels my passion for my work and it reminds me that there are real people out there benefitting from what I do, and kind of getting screwed up if I don’t do it right. So it’s just this…why what I do matters.

So when we asked -- we asked the participants, internal staff who were participating, for some of their top reasons for why they both were using this platform or not using it, and the using it people said that it’s because they could see customers’ pain points and struggles and that kind of thing, or things that they love, and it gave them direct, unfiltered feedback. The top reasons for not using it were lack of time, which means it’s not
important to me yet; and uncertainty about why it has value, which is another way of saying the same thing, like, why should I. And we’ve taken this broad volunteer army approach where it’s nobody’s job and its everybody’s, you know, I want to do it. So it doesn’t require 100% participation, so it’s not a big deal, but I think as we keep chipping away at awareness I’m amazed at how many times we can say this thing exists and still talk to people and they’re like, what, what is it, I’ve never heard of it. All the emails, all the videos we’ve made, funny videos even, I thought, but, yeah, so, just awareness and then proving the value. Yesterday some product managers in a cross-functional team were trading some emails and one of them -- it was kind of centered around this link that went back to this feedback form where a customer conversation had unfolded over a series of months. It was, you know, basically this validates, in a small way, some of the hunches that we have about how customers want to use our products with the Cloud, and that’s kind of a topic of conversation. I think as those customer topics and conversations become our topics and conversations, we’re going to see this virtuous cycle keep going.

So I don’t know where your organization is along the curve of social media sophistication. I’m sure we’re all
over the map. But here are four questions that I think all of us should probably be thinking about. Hopefully, it’s safe ground.

Are we creating the right internal culture? So, is it in your DNA to actually, truly care about customers and users.

Are you tough enough to weather some of the storms that come. You know, public criticism, oh my gosh, they’re saying they don’t like it, and it’s public, right? And then you get the trolls every once in a while that come in, and can you handle that without overreacting?

Are you biased toward roadmap openness about where you’re headed in talking with customers, or at least maybe moving toward open?

Are we hiring the right people? So, one of the things I love about TechSmith is that it seems like we hire people who we feel good about sending to work our booth at a trade show. So, if you would send them to work your booth at a trade show, then you should trust them to be online talking as well. I don’t know if that’s an actual HR litmus test. I should ask him.

Have we equipped people to engage? So, what we’ve done is come out with five really simple rules or guidelines, like, be yourself, reveal that you work at
TechSmith, and be yourself, be conversational, right, just be friendly because you’re a nice person and be likeable. When you have knowledge, speak, if you don’t, shut up basically. And then we also have given some more specifics about when you’re responding to people asking for timelines, because all customers want to know when you’re going to fix this for me, you know, here’s how to handle that. So, are you giving some guidance on how to engage? And then efficient tools, so it’s not like a total time sync for people to even engage with customers at all.

I think the last question is sort of the bottom line. Can we afford to risk not being customer obsessed? I pulled this from Josh Bernoff, who is doing some great research with Forrester, and you haven’t looked at it, it’s the Age of The Customer Report. He really goes into like these are the things you need to be doing in terms of being customer obsessed and actually listening to customers, using all that data that’s floating out there in social media and bringing it into the organization, and then just trying to go way above and beyond in terms of the way that you service and support and talk to your customers.

So that’s all I’ve got prepared, and I’m happy to answer questions.
MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: (Not audible enough to transcribe).

MR. FOSTER: So the question, or actually the statement was, go get Coaches Eye, only a dollar. That’s what he said. It’s a new app we just released for iPhone that you record someone doing something and then give it a voiceover and do slo-mo analysis of it. And the question really is, as you scale to more platforms, like mobile and get bigger, how do you sustain this darn thing. And, yeah, I can’t speak to how GM would do it. I have no idea. I’m glad I’m not in Terence’s shoes. But what we’ve done is just try to integrate it into the product. I think that’s one of the things. And, honestly, a platform like this really helps you scale because of that de-duplication. So, the more questions that get asked, like there’s kind of this curve at the beginning, right, when every question is new, but what we hope, and we’re not really there yet honestly, is that eventually it sort of levels out, right, where most of the typical questions have been asked and answered well, and then most people, when they hit this service, what they do is find an answer rather than ask another question. And then, with the ideas and stuff, the more the merrier. We love the breadth of ideas and a lot. I will make a note in case you call me a liar. Coaches Eye
is actually integrated with User Voice instead of Get Satisfaction. That’s just because the team wanted a perfect user experience and Get Satisfaction is working on their mobile support and improving it, but they weren’t there yet, so they chose that platform for now. I’m going to be reminding them constantly that, you know, we need to get back over on one platform as soon as we can.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Thank you for sharing the insights. I’m grateful. I’m wondering in terms of customer support that you have and how they work with Get Satisfaction with your customers. Are they jumping in soon, are they trying to (inaudible) the conversation, or are they backing out? Is it mostly for their product Teams?

MR. FOSTER: So, there’s no hard and fast breakdown, but what you tend to see happen -- the question was customer support, or what kinds of things do they jump in on versus the product teams. Is that right? And what we kind of see is people actually go toward their area of expertise. So we do have some support people and this user assistance team which we have, which may be kind of unique, they’re creating like our training materials and documentation and all of that, and they’re always really knowledgeable about the product. So, those are kind of a
lead on answering a lot of the questions. And then when people have a flat-out problem, we try to actually put them into our queue. We have a form of ticketing system that our agents like to use because it helps them keep everything really locked down. But we will answer kind of the peripheral questions as much as we can on the platform. And then the product teams, like I said, it’s really a work in progress. So, the product teams are there monitoring, right now I feel like probably they’re waiting for the product managers to take the lead on actually responding to future requests. So, that’s kind of a protocol that we’re working out. My feeling is, what I’m trying to promote is that, you know, if you’re in Q A, particularly, you have a really good sense of when this bug is going to be fixed and when that little thing is going to be released. So you can speak with confidence about that. But as far as like the big, fancy new features, we sort of leave those up to the P.M.’s discretion right now, because you don’t want to get in trouble with P.R. because if we give away, you know -- Natalie is at the back of the room -- if we give away all the secrets before launch then sometimes that risks some of the coverage that we might get, like giving exclusive to some big New York Times or whatever. Does that answer the question?
MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Yes, thank you.

MR. FOSTER: Yes.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: (No audible enough to transcribe.)

MR. FOSTER: The question is about metrics and how we measure overall success of these efforts. Yeah, we don’t have a, what is it, a net promoter score. We’re not doing that already, and we’re not doing sort of those satisfaction scales already with our other channels of interaction. So that would be the place where I would love to piggy-back on someone’s effort already because I’m one guy. But we do try to track the things that we can track, so we do look at usage, and one of the main metrics on this feedback platform is, as the line goes up with questions being asked, does the line also go up with the responses that we’re giving, right? That’s sort of a dumb metric, but are we actually delivering on our promise of being responsive. And we’ve got some guidelines internally that are rough measures, like, you know, I can’t spend money with you, should be answered in seconds, right? Or, I can’t get a refund from you, should be answered in seconds. You know, kind of the, hey, I have an idea for how to make the product better, it could take a little longer. So, I guess the shortest answer is no, we haven’t really tied
this back to say, you know, we know that are product sales are increasing because we’re doing this. So much of our stuff is cross-channel right now, and we don’t even have a good handle on that. People come to the website, download the 30-day trial. They come back with a different browser, different whatever later, or they call the sales number. So there’s just a lot of disconnects that we haven’t figured out. I’m being honest.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: (Not audible enough to transcribe.)

MR. FOSTER: So, probably everyone could hear, but the question was about whether the old model of trying to keep your reputation shiny clean and not let any of the besmirching comments, you know, be viewed as even sustainable. I would say it’s already a thing of the past. People are already talking about your product or your company, and there’s some websites that, you know, that catalog all the happy things that people say about you on Twitter and the bad things they say, and it keeps a little gauge that goes back and forth. I mean, I don’t know if anybody actually goes and looks at that, but it’s all out there. As far as having it hosted on our own, your web property, right, you kind of take a breath and go, are we ready for this, and, you know, we did talk about that. If
someone is just being completely over the top and inflammatory, we do have latitude to delete or to just kind of tone that back. But we’re -- and I guess this goes back to culture, too, you know, we’re fairly comfortable with criticism and actually we tend to see it as an opportunity. A lot of the product teams will say this, even developers will say it, like, yeah, sending those emails with the happy things customers say is nice but tell me what they’re pissed off about, you know, tell me what they want to be better. So, we kind of embrace that. I know, so much for growling. One last question.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: (Not audible enough to transcribe.)

MR. FOSTER: So the question is proprietary and pirating the software particularly?

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Functionality (sic.)

MR. FOSTER: Oh, so giving away some of the features that we’re working on, and then they beat us to it. So, this is my personal Daniel Foster view, is that that is happening now out in the open to the point where -- because we talked about that, well, what if our customers come on this feedback form and they’re seeing what we’re doing and it’s like, yes, but I feel like the pace of change is speeding up to the point where it kind of doesn’t matter,
right? And, also if the competitors are smart, they’re already monitoring the public Twitter stream to see what our customers are disgruntled about. Now, whether that says anything about what we’re going to do about it, right, we might give more cues about here’s what we plan to do to fix that on our forum, so that might be tipping our hand a little bit. Here’s one of the things, as I’ve stepped into a role where I’m kind of on the customer end of bigger products and platforms, I’ve found that I tend to privilege a product where I’m getting information about the roadmap because it gives me confidence that I can stick with them for the long haul. So, we use Co-Tweet for our Twitter platform. It’s super expensive, and we had to sign a year commitment, so I’m constantly looking for, like, and I’m pounding the people, like, tell me more about what you’re planning to do with this platforms that I have confidence I’m making the right choice. I think at a smaller level, even with a $300.00 or $50.00 app like ours, people want to know that, you know, where it’s headed matches with what they need and where it’s going. So, I think there’s a lot of upside that we don’t measure. We look at the potential risk of a competitor getting there first, but we never look at what we’re missing out on by being so close to the vest and not telling them, yeah, we’re planning to do that, so
stick with us, you know, you were thinking about switching, but don’t because we’re getting there.

And with that, I think we need to eat.

MR. BARRELL: So, I was going to do a product demo but then I saw what the topic was, and I decided I was going to change my presentation to be something that’s more relevant to the topic of social media. So instead of doing a demo and try to sell you on the product, FireEyes, I’m going to tell you about two or three minutes about us and about that product that I was going to demo, and then you can go down there yourself and play with it and give us usability feedback, user interface, criticisms, etcetera, yourself.

So what I’m going to talk about instead is a program that we just finished that just went live yesterday with a very large health care provider where we did a social media campaign that actually killed two birds with one stone. We were able to create an accessible version of the Flash application and at the same time we were able to provide support for (inaudible) mobile devices.

Let me just talk a little bit about who Deque is. By the way, although we’re based in Reston Virginia, I actually work out of Ann Arbor, and I’m going to put a little plug in right now. We’re actually looking for between three and five programmers of different types in
Ann Arbor and also a QA specialist, so we’re looking to build out our presence in the Ann Arbor area. I know it’s not Lansing, but it’s not that bad as well. Once you get used to the maize and blue instead of the green, it’s kind of a nice place to work. So, if you know anybody or you yourself are interested, come see me after the break and we can talk about that.

Deque was founded in 1999 and its private. It’s been profitable since the beginning, and although it’s done a lot of different things, gone a lot of different directions, our main focus is really accessibility. We’re a leader in the accessibility space. We’re recognized. Everybody knows our name, and they know our products. Our two main products today are the World Space Enterprise, which is kind of a very highly scalable enterprise level product for assessing web applications. It’s actually able to run all the JavaScript application and do scripted use case execution of an application, and at the same time it’s able to test that application for accessibility. It’s highly scalable. It can do millions of pages, and it’s used by large companies like AT&T, Humana, CitiGroup, etcetera. We also do -- a lot of our revenue comes from other services, so we do training on accessibility. We train developers on how to write accessible applications.
We train them in how to assess them. We also can set up the accessibility program within a large organization, and we also do actual assessments and remediation in fixing inaccessible applications, too.

What I’m going to talk about now is the Facebook Family Tree app that was done for Humana. Humana, you may or may not be aware of them, they are a Fortune 100 healthcare, health insurance provider. They are actually one of, in the accessibility space, I’ve got somebody there whose name is Elle Waters. I actually wanted to bring her along today, but she was in Chicago and couldn’t make the presentation. But she’s really turned that company into a leader in accessibility in the health insurance marketplace. They spend a huge amount of money on it. They are really trying to take the company from where it was before Elle started her program to the forefront, and this is an example of an application that, you know, purely by the book because it was living inside of Facebook, which is not something that they control. Technically, they wouldn’t have had to make it accessible, but because of the fact that they wanted to show leadership in the space and show leadership in accessibility, Elle decided -- they spent quite a lot of money on making this application accessible.
So what they’re doing is, they wanted to create an application, a Facebook application that they could tie together with all the other marketing. So the Medicare and open enrollment program started about four weeks ago and it runs for three months. So anyone who is on Medicare can go to different health insurance providers and change without a problem. So, of course, it’s a great time for Humana to do a lot of marketing to attract those people to come and sign up with them and do the insurance through them. So they have a lot of advertising on TV. If you’re in the demographic, which probably a lot of you aren’t, but some of you might be, or if you’re up late at night, like I am, watching TV, you’ll see some of these adverts, commercials on television, telling you to sign up for the open enrollment. What they wanted to do was tie it together with all sorts of social media campaigns and social media stuff. So, they have a Facebook page. In fact, if you go to Humana Medicare Facebook.com/Humana Medicare, you’ll see this page. They created a Facebook app, a Flash application, where you could go in, the idea being that you could go in, you could take your family members from your Facebook information, and build a tree that kind of celebrated one of your ancestors, so, say your grandfather or your great-grandfather, and then you could share that
with other people on Facebook, you could share it with that person on Facebook, and that would also draw people back into the Humana Medicare page, and then, of course, to Humana itself. So that’s the whole idea behind this Facebook campaign that they did. So, for the industry, I think quite a forward-looking kind of advanced use of social media tied together with regular advertising.

The problem that they had from an accessibility point of view is that they had a subcontractor of their main marketing consultant who had written the Flash application and, as is often the case with these sorts of things, accessibility was forgotten. So after the fact, Elle brought us in and we did an analysis of the Flash application that was basically -- it was invisible to a non-sighted user. For example, if somebody has to use a keyboard, it was -- none of the controls were keyboard accessible. When JAWS or one of the other assistive technologies that screen readers that read out the screen to the user looked at that Flash application, basically it was silent, it was like it didn’t exist. Our first -- and this is what that application looked like. So you can see, there’s a family tree, you can go in there, you can hit the Edit button, add different notes, put in people from your Facebook account, put in your friends, and then at the end
of the day you can share it on either Twitter or Facebook itself.

So, our first approach was to fix the Flash application because, although Flash -- most Flash widgets that are written by developers out there aren’t accessible. It is possible to make Flash accessible if you know how to do it. So our first approach was to, okay, we’ll take this Flash application and we’ll just make it accessible, make it keyboard accessible, make all the correct announcements at the correct times, all that sort of stuff. But the contract that they had with the subcontractor didn’t allow for us to get access to their source code, so we couldn’t do that. The other thing is because it was Flash it doesn’t work on any of the mobile devices. So, even though it hadn’t been part of the original requirements, the kind of senior level executives who all have iPhones and iPads, they really wanted to see this running on their iPhones and iPads. So our second approach was to actually write the application from scratch. So we’re going to use the back end data server and utilize that as it was and just kind of integrate with that, and then we’re going to run an HTML5 application that would fall back using progressive enhancements. So on older browsers like I6 and I7, etcetera, where some of the newer technologies are not
available, it would just progressively get less pretty, but basically would still be accessible. So, we wanted to use HTML5, and progressive enhancement technologies, and some of the things like SVG, to do that. And that would actually solve two problems with one stone -- kill two birds with one stone, solve two problems at the same time, which is, it would be accessible because we’d write the HTML5 application in an accessible way, and it would be usable on any mobile device. So if you want to go and see this, there’s a URL if you want to have a look.

So, the technologies that we used and the challenges that we had, we used basic (inaudible) for cross-browser support. Most of you -- that’s nothing new. And then we used something which, I’m surprised, I’ve been using this for over two years, it’s an open source library called RaphaelJS. If anybody here is a Flash programmer, were asked to create good looking applications, and thinks that you can’t do that with JavaScript and HTML, you can. Go to RaphaelJS.com and you can download it, you can play around with some of the examples. It’s a great library. Not only does it support SVG, which is kind of a new HTML5, it’s in the HTML5 group of technologies, but it also falls back on all the Internet Explorer browsers to use VML. So, it actually works all the way back to IE6 and IE7. So you can
do really good looking SVG-type applications and diagrams
and things like that with it. The other thing we used
which is something that’s very accessibility specific is
something called Aria, which is a specific type of mock-up
for rich internet applications, which allows the JavaScript
application to tell the accessibility technology a lot more
about what it’s using the HTML for. If any of you are
programmers, you’ll know that things like a tree, the tree
that I showed you there, that can be programmed as
basically a set of embedded list items. UL, LI, UL, LI,
etcetera. And that can get infinitely deep. So, what you
can do with Aria is you can tell Aria that that is actually
a tree, so on the major UL item itself, you can say, this
is a tree. Then, on each of the individual LI elements,
you can say this is a tree note or a tree item. And then
what the accessibility technology will do is it will make
extra announcements to the blind user or the assistive
technology user telling them, for example, how many levels
that deep there are down in the tree, how many peri-nodes
(sic.) there are in that tree, and those sorts of things,
so you don’t have to program those yourself, or you don’t
have to create off-screen text using CSS to do that. And
then, of course, if you’re doing that, then what you have
to do is create a pretty good keyboard handler so you can
do the keyboard navigation throughout that tree. So, basically that’s what we did is we took that tree, which is vertical, we took like a normal list, which normally indents this way, and we turned it 90 degrees, and we basically drew it nicely using CSS and RaphaelJS to make it look like a tree. So then, of course, that’s the theory. The theory is that it just worked, but because we had to support IE6, IE7, and IE8, we had to create this CSS (inaudible) specific to those browsers because nothing worked like it does in all the other ones.

Then what we did is -- so that someone going to the application with a mobile device, if you go there -- the first time you go that application, it will ask do you want to go to the HTML version or the Flash version. If you click on HTML it will take you there. But somebody just coming in with a mobile device, it will recognize that Flash is not there and it will automatically send them to the HTML version. So we put in a Flash fallback like that, which makes it nice to use on a IAS specific device. And then there were one or two things that we wanted to that we had to do IAS specific…event handlers, and that was, if you touch the nodes it pops up a little thing that gives you information about that user, so we used some specific you touch (sic.) JavaScript events to support that on IAS.
The biggest challenge is no big surprise. The biggest challenges we had were getting things to look good. It was easy to get them to look good on Firefox, easy to get them to look good on Chrome and Safari. Getting them to look good in IE7 was a challenge, for example. And then surprisingly difficult to integrate with an existing backend. The other company had programmers in the Ukraine, and we had programmers here and on the west coast, so the time difference was big, so that was one of the bigger challenges that we actually faced.

This is some screen shots. When I took these screen shots I wasn’t sure whether I could use Humana’s name for the first two screen shots, so I’m just showing you kind of the tree view. This is what the tree looks like when you’re in edit mode, and you can see this kind of nice little vines that connect the nodes to each other using rounded edges and graphics. If you hit the + or the - button it will do what you expect, you will be able to add nodes to the tree or delete them. And then the same thing when it’s in the view mode was to add little random birds sitting on the tree and little random leaves on the vines. If you look at the two, the Flash application and the HTML application next to each other, they’re not exactly the same because we only had -- we only had a couple of weeks.
We wrote this base application in two weeks because it was very late in the game. It took us two weeks to write this. It took us another three weeks to get it integrated and working in all the browsers. But given the amount of time we actually had to do this, if you look at the two versions next to each other, they are remarkably similar. They look almost exactly the same. They were very happy with the outcome, we were very happy with the outcome. The end result, as far as I’m concerned, is we kind of proved -- you know, Elle came to us and said, I know we can do this, we don’t need Flash to do this type of application. And for her, her internal agenda was to show the senior leadership that you could write good looking marketing applications that, up until now, everyone had used Flash for, you can do that with HTML5, and there’s a lot of additional advantages you get if you do that. You get mobile support and you get -- it’s easier to do the accessibility stuff as well. That’s what it looks like in the iPad simulator. So it looks exactly the same, and it’s pretty easy to use as well. That’s it. Thank you very much for your time.

Any questions? Anybody have any questions? All right, well thank you. Oh, sorry.
MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Given your experience, which actually turned out to be a different approach than what you originally thought because you didn’t have access to the source code for Flash, would it be your preference, if you had a similar situation that came up where you did have access to the source code to do it working with Flash or to bypass that and build an HTML5 version of it?

MR. BURRELL: If it was just accessibility, it’s normally a lot quicker and cheaper to retrofit the existing application than it is to build a new app. So if you’re just looking at accessibility and you do have access to the source code, that’s always the first recommendation we would make. But if you wanted to make it available in IAS devices as well, then, of course, you don’t have that luxury. The only alternative you have is the HTML5, or the HTML alternative, other than writing, you know, an IAS app itself. That’s the other approach for that. So, it depends. Yes? Red jacket.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: (Not audible enough to transcribe.)

MR. BURRELL: We use our own applications, so we have the two that I showed at the beginning, the one is called World Space Enterprise, the enterprise level application to analyze applications. And then there’s a free tool that we
give away called Fire Eyes, which is a Firefox fire bug plug-in, and what that allows you to do is analyze individual pages or analyze a JavaScript application while it’s running inside your Fire Bug extension. So those are the two basic products that we use for the automated analysis. Unfortunately, even though we’ve -- we think we’ve got the best products to do that, it only takes you so far. There’s certain types of accessibility testing that you have to do using some kind of assistive technology. So, we generally use NVDA because it’s free, so all of our developers can have NVDA, and then JAWS as the two basic AT’s that we always test for everything. So we always do some assistive technology testing on top of that.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: (Not audible enough to transcribe.)

MR. BURRELL: NVDA is -- well, if you do a search on Google for NVDA it will be like the second link, I think. I think it’s NVDA.org, but I’m not sure. And then JAWS is Freedom Scientific. Yes?

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: (Inaudible) that was not accessible and it didn’t work on a lot of platform (inaudible), was there any change in terms of like more use of the app or it became more of a success (inaudible)?
MR. BURRELL: We do have analytics tied into it so we have -- I think it’s called Metrix, so every time you do those like five or six different events, they are actually tracked in the back end, that we built into the JavaScript itself. It only went live yesterday, so I can’t tell you yet. And one of the things about -- there’s a lot of politics in these things always, and one of the pieces of politics was that the original supply and the original marketing company, they didn’t want to make the HTML app the primary app. So, if you go there, you’ll notice -- if you have JAWS or NVDA it’s pretty easy to get to HTML because there’s an off-screen link that you always use to get there, but if you’re kind of a normal user with Flash enabled in your browser, you will always see the Flash version. It will be difficult to tell what impact it would have had if it had been more easy to get there. So we’ll probably never really know. Yes?

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: (Not audible enough to transcribe.)

MR. BURRELL: Apple. If you go and sign up for the Apple developer. They’ve got three different developer programs, and where you sign up for the Safari one or the IAS one, you get X-Code, and part of X-Code is the simulator. So, it costs $100.00 a year. I think they
might have -- they offer to students as well, and it might be cheaper for students. Yes?

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Are there any tools that you found to be helpful in translating well-formed HTML, CSS to the various versions of IE?

MR. BURRELL: If you know a tool, I’d like to know. No, I don’t actually. We do it all by hand. But if there are tools, I would like to know.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: What do you make of Adobe’s announcement yesterday about Flash and Flash.01?

MR. BURRELL: It doesn’t surprise me at all. I think that, for me, that’s the death knell of Flash. It’s one of the things I’ve always said is going to happen is that HTML5 and Apple are going to kill Flash, and it will take a little longer for it to really get killed, but I think it’s dead. I think HTML5 is going to take over that role that Flash had. And, as we’ve kind of proven, it can. There’s obviously going -- more libraries need to be built and slightly better development tools for certain things to bring it up to a level where Flash is today in terms of the development support, and there’s still some quirks with different browsers in terms of what’s supported where, but, you know, my experience so far with HTML5 has been very good.
All right, well thank you very much. I’ll be around if you want to talk.

(End of recording – presentation after the lunch break not transcribed.)