

Marketing & Business Leadership

Justin McCullough: Fueled by a passion to share.

The Social Web Ties Us Together

by J U S T I N on F M E C B C R U U L A L R O Y U G 1 H , 2 0 1 0
in C O N V E R S A T I O N S T A R T E R S

An internet stranger told me what was happening to my next door neighbor at the Beaumont CVB even though I was 1,800 miles away from home – thanks to the social web. Interestingly, I was not specifically looking for info on my neighbor.

32 tweets

This is a three part'er – What Happened, How this Illustrates Web 2.0 and Why this Matters to You.

What Happened – How the dots were connected:

Yesterday, I was in Portland Oregon at the airport waiting for my flight to Houston. I logged into my twitter account and saw a

retweet of a Chris Brogan blog post about a book review. As a Brogan fan and [lover of books](#), I followed the link to [his book review](#). From there I looked at Brogan's earlier post talking about alltop.com and the importance of knowing [how you "stack up" on Alltop](#).



"This is good info", I thought to myself. (even more info on [personal branding with Alltop](#) and why Chris Brogan thinks [Alltop is great for bloggers](#).)

So, my interest piqued, I followed the link to the [Alltop.com](#) homepage. I spent about 3.4 seconds scanning the homepage and realized I had read several of those articles already.

I wasn't finished though, I wanted to see something I didn't know so I scanned across the top row of navigation links and saw "New Topics" and clicked.



New topics on Alltop

- Collaboration
- Data Centre
- Generation X
- Haiti
- iPad
- Lost
- Power150
- Tourism Industry
- Winter Olympics
- Womenrati

Again, more quick scanning (my emotional investment in all this is really low at his point) then I see "Tourism Industry" and immediately think of my friends [Stephanie](#) and [Ashley](#) who handle all the marketing and communication for the [Beaumont Convention and Visitors Bureau](#) back home in Texas (remember, I'm in Oregon).

Stephanie is a long-time friend and recently gave me a reason to [speak on social media](#) so this was a pretty quick connection. Stephanie = Tourism. In a fraction of a second, I decided that maybe I would learn about or find something interesting in the tourism industry and share it with my friends (neighbors) at the Beaumont CVB. (side note, my [book publishing company](#) does tourist related books all around the country so there was a work connection to this Alltop category as well).

Anyway, off I went into the "Tourism Industry" page and started scanning. This was all new information and I saw one line of text that stuck out: "[A new twist on destination marketing with radio](#)" from Sheila's Guide To The Good Stuff. I later discovered that Sheila is a talented freelance writer from Austin TX.



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- [Leaders are Readers My 2009 Book List](#)
- [8 Must Know About Social Media Search Tools](#)

Justin McCullough is a marketer, mentor, business builder and online enabler. You can find out more about Justin here. You can follow Justin at these fine social places.



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Justin McCullough

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Name: Justin McCullough
Mobile: 4095506681
Status: about to board plan in Pheonix on my way to...

Create Your Badge

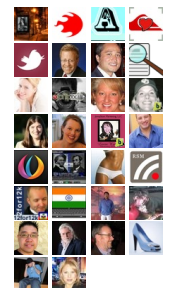
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M Y T W I T T E R
F O L L O W E R S



I M F O L L O W I N G





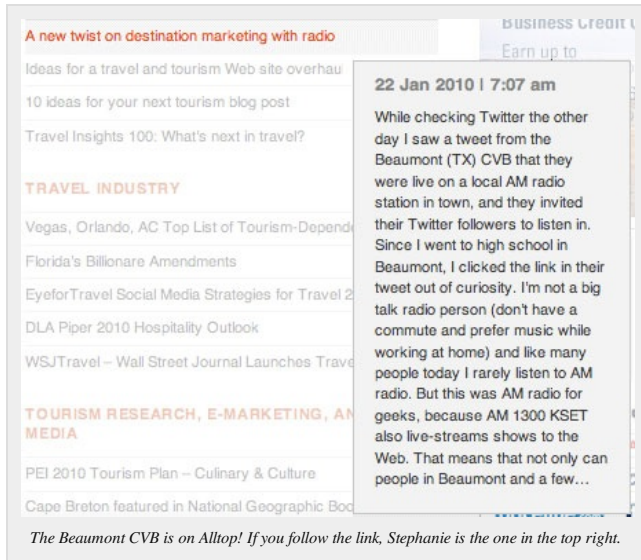
SHEILA'S GUIDE TO THE GOOD STUFF

Can you see this? Let's talk Web accessibility

Un-fry your brain with blog burnout remedies

A new twist on destination marketing with radio

"A new twist on destination marketing with radio" looks good to me. I mouse over it for preview information on the article.



My mind must have been read. I was amazed to see how a seemingly random series of clicks led me to see an article directly connected to me. That's the power of the social web. It's also a very telling demonstration of how we are looking at the "world wide web" but seek to make relevant connections to us, our area, and our personal lives.

For the record, it does not surprise me when I come across posts for Seth Godin or Chris Brogan and countless other people because it is expected, it's normal to see these names dotting the digital map of the internet. However, it is not 'normal' to see your local convention and visitors bureau via Alltop by way of Chris Brogan. At least, not normal yet...

How this Illustrates Web 2.0 – from both the creator of content and the web surfer.

I'm creating right now – this blog post. Right now, you are the web surfer. In the story above, I went to great length to paint a picture of my thoughts and actions as a web surfer. Why? Because too many people are still unsure how they fit into the fabric of the social web and I wanted to tell a "normal" story – not one that makes me look like some special web user or social media person.

It is safe to say that the story I just told is a basic experience. Go to a common place, see something interesting, follow the link, read and follow another link (or quit). I did what you would do. I shared my thought process, because you are thinking and deciding on what to do next as well. Nothing new here. This is normal stuff.

Here's were Web 2.0 kicks in.

Stephanie, was either invited or created an opportunity to be on KSET AM radio to talk about Beaumont Tourism. She (or someone else tweeted it on twitter) from which Sheila saw the tweet and, as explained in her blog post, made a personal connection with Beaumont (even though she is in Austin) and followed the link to the online radio show. According to Sheila, she was already thinking about radio based on something happening in San Antonio and this Beaumont CVB tweet was building on that event in her mind. She was compelled to sit down and write a blog post sharing her perspective on radio, the internet, and my good friend Stephanie.

Does Sheila (Freelance Writer in Austin TX) know Stephanie (Marketing Director in Beaumont TX)? She may, but I don't think so. Do I know Sheila? Not at all. Was I tracking or searching for Stephanie or Sheila? Nope, I was following interesting links which originated from my enjoyment of Chris Brogan.

Walt Gordon Jones

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Facebook: Leader4hire

LinkedIn: Leader4hire

Twitter: Leader4hire

RECOMMENDED

Mad Nonnie

SETX Social Center

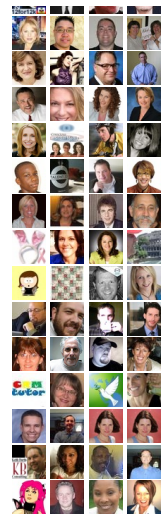
SoutheastTexas.com

THINGS I DID

Pediment Publishing

Southeast Texas Social Center

Turning Minds Media



As this story reveals, we are all disconnected (or independent) and yet connected through the social web.

Why This Matters to You – online and offline

Now that virtually everyone is online and [almost everyone is in some social place \(blogs, Facebook, Twitter, etc\)](#) that means the work you do, the things you say and the people you impact could end up online – either by you or by someone else. This is great for brand development, personal branding, exposure, SEO, business building, marketing, creating friends etc. But it also means that we have to be mindful of our actions, both online and offline, because “somebody” is watch, listening, or somehow involved and they now have a platform to share their experience – the social web. If you do good things, the social web will feed you. If you do bad things, the social web will squeeze you.

So, regardless of whether or not you have embraced the social web, know that the social web has already included you. And as this story shows, one small informative tweet can go a long way (through Austin TX and into Alltop.com) or if you’re like me, [one misstep on the social web](#) can get a lot of unexpected attention.

Bottom line: Since it’s here with or without you, you may as well embrace (and feed) the social web.

Keep doing good!



32 tweets

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Seafarer 1 day ago

Wow, how cool is this! I know how much work went into creating this post (all of the links, screenshots, etc.) and I really appreciate how beautifully you've illustrated why Web communication is so very powerful. Thanks very much, and a big congrats to the Beaumont CVB!

(And my teen says I "goof off on the Internet all day." Hmmph.) :)

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Leader4hire 16 minutes ago [in reply to Seafarer](#)

Sheila,
You had a great article and you were the inspiration for this post. Thank you!

("goofing off" is relative *grin*)

Keep doing good!

[Flag](#)

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Stephanie=Tourism 1 day ago

Love this article Justin! I'm so glad you wrote this because its tough to explain the benefits of social media to those that are using it. I'd like to add a little more if you don't mind. This radio interview was the first where Elizabeth and I used Twitter & FB to solicit and field questions. We tweeted that we were about to go on air and encouraged followers to call in, listen or send us a question they'd like answered. We had no idea what the response would be but we actually generated some interest. Sheila picking up on it was above all, one of the most amazing hits we could imagine. Her interest that in and of itself was a huge thing it its on way. But what listeners didn't know was one of the questions we were asked by Teresa was answered by a quick search via cell phone to our website. I didn't know ticket prices & specific times off the top of my head so with a quick search, I was able to find it and answer the question. Add to this, the fantastic "atta girls" I had from FB & Twitter followers and the immediate post of our photo on the radio stations FB acct; and you can see on both sides what social media has done to communications. You must have events details posted online, you must have fresh content on your site, and you must let people know its out there. I stand amazed at the powerful effect social media has on our activities here at the CVB.

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Like Reply

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Leader4hire 13 minutes ago in reply to Stephanie=Tourism

Stephanie,

Awesome insight on how things were going on your side. Facebook + Twitter + Mobile device for search and communication = Social Media success for the Beaumont CVB. Nicely done.

To the readers out there, they should know that your primary job is to "get heads in beds", yet you guys have blazed a path locally for being social media savvy and engaged in both the offline and online community. Great job.

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Kathy Catalano 1 day ago

Excellent information and I also enjoy reading about our hometown heroes at the Beaumont CVB! Thanks Justin.

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Leader4hire 8 minutes ago in reply to Kathy Catalano

Kathy,

Great to see you here! The Beaumont CVB has been doing great havent they?! I see you have gone from 1,000 Facebook fans to 1,110 in just a few weeks. Great snowball effect happening. Thanks for a great service with the local community calendar of events!

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Geoff Dennett 1 day ago

Justin, I like your post. I just started following Chris Brogan on Twitter today. I saw the link to this post, and coincidentally my girlfriend works at the Greater Boston CVB. Not too many people that I know are familiar with CVB's in general, so this caught my eye. I've been having a tough time explaining why all of this web presence is important, and why it may not seem important all the time, but simple connections online can bring people and businesses together to create something that otherwise wouldn't have come into fruition. Thank you

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Leader4hire 0 minutes ago in reply to Geoff Dennett

Hey Geoff,

Thanks for stopping by and commenting! Chris Brogan is awesome - good idea to follow him. Of course his blog is a goldmine of information. You may also check out www.hubspot.com as a resource for inbound marketing tips.

I agree with you - the CVB groups are often unknown to most people in the community. They provide a wonderful service don't they?! What's happening in Boston? Are they using social media?

Geoff, let me know if you need any help, tips, thoughts are anything else - I'll help anyway I can. All my contact info is on my about page.

Good luck on your social media endeavors!

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