

A Brief History of Content Marketing

From Jell-O to the iPad



About This eBook

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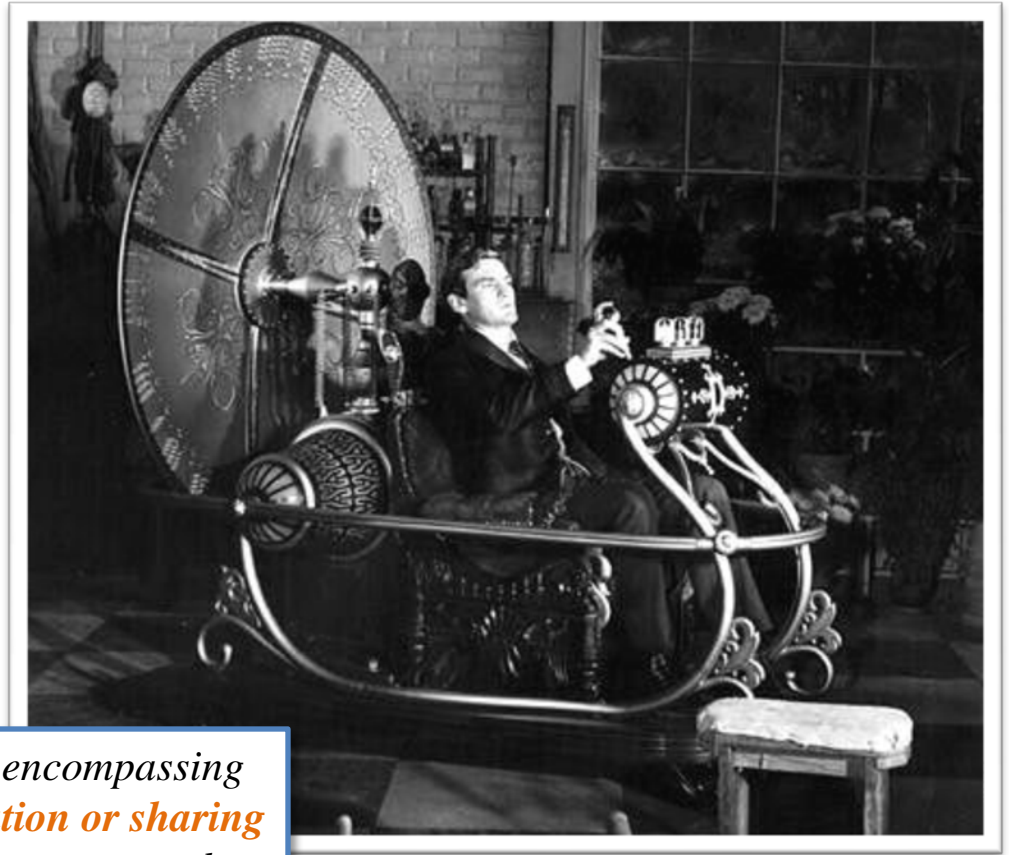
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A Journey Through The Evolution of Content Marketing

Content Marketing has been a tried and true element in the marketer's toolbox for ages. Sure, new technologies have helped disseminate our work even further and for a lower cost, but the channels are always evolving. We hope that with this brief retrospective of successful uses of content marketing throughout the past century, you will **feel energized and maybe inspired** to take your content marketing efforts to the next level.



The Time Machine (1960), H.G. Wells

*“Content marketing is an umbrella term encompassing all marketing formats that involve the **creation or sharing of content for the purpose of engaging** current and potential consumer bases” - Wikipedia*

Step onto our time machine and let's take a journey back in time and see what we can learn from the marketers of ages gone and what new content channels are being created.



1835: The Great Moon Hoax

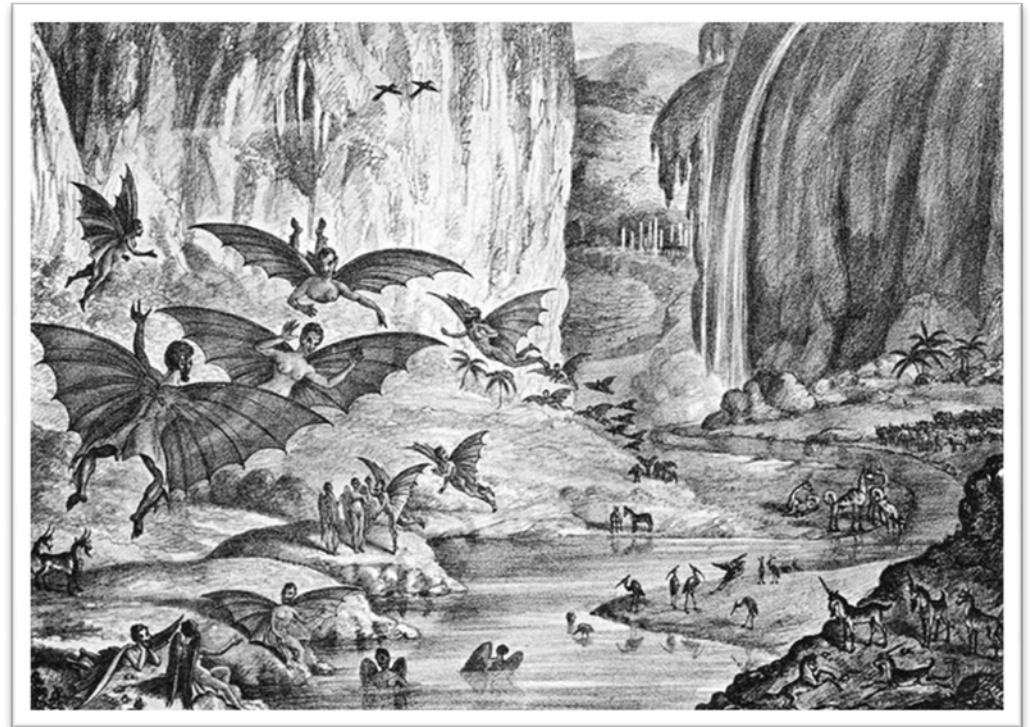
How do you increase your newspaper circulation in a time when competition is fierce and you don't have social media to help spread the word? By creating **unique content!**

Great Astronomical Discoveries Lately Made By Sir John Herschel, L.L.D. F.R.S. & C

And so, in 1835 *The New York Sun* ran a series of 6 articles describing a scientific discovery of life on the Moon, comprised of fantastic animals, trees, oceans, and beaches.

The Sun reached a circulation of 15,000 daily on the first of the stories. **It became the largest newspaper in circulation**, with 19,360 readers. Even after the hoax was discovered, circulation kept growing.

By 1837 it had a circulation of 30,000.

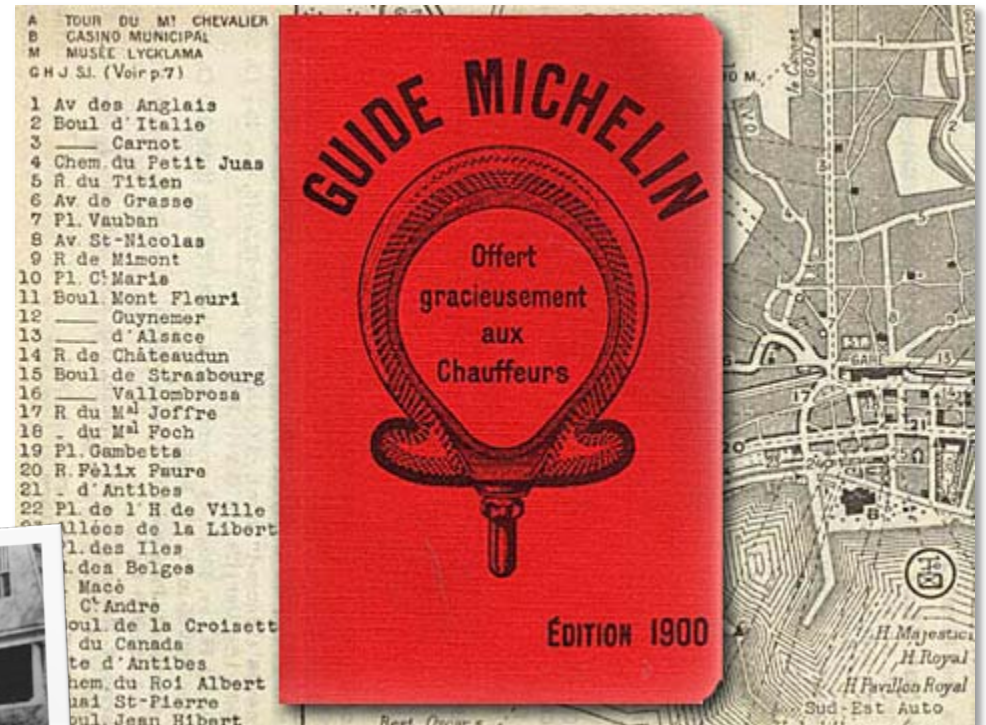


1900: The Michelin Guides

In 1900 Michelin, **a tire manufacturer**, started producing the “**Michelin Guide**” to help drivers maintain their cars, find decent lodging, and eat well while touring France. The 400-page guide, with its now iconic red cover, included addresses of filling stations, mechanics, and tire dealers.



A 1915 Model T Ford Coupelet



A Michelin Guide from 1900, when the guide was first published

The guide was offered free until 1920, and is still in production today (but now it will cost you about U\$20).

1904: Jell-O Recipe Book Pays Off Handsomely

It was 1904 and Frank Woodward was so dismayed by the low sales volume of Jell-O that he offered to sell the Jell-O rights (for which he had originally paid \$450) to his plant superintendent for \$35.

Before the final sale, though, Woodward's strategy of sending out salesmen to **distribute free copies** of a Jell-O recipe book paid off. By 1906 sales reached U\$1 million.



Cover for a Jell-O cookbook from the early 1900's.

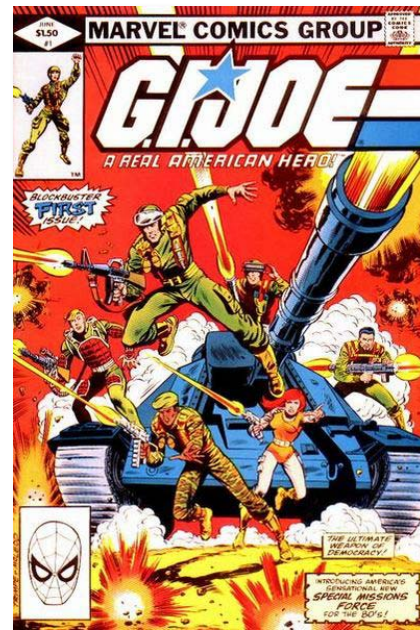
1982: GI Joe, an American Content Marketing Success

In 1982 Hasbro resurrected the GI Joe Action Soldier (originally introduced in 1964). But how do you get youngsters excited about one more toy at their local toy store?



GI Joe Action Soldier, from 1964

First, tell a story. While the original toy was a basic representation of the four branches of the US armed forces, the new line came with a complex back-story of the heroes fighting against the Cobra Command which seeks taking over the world using terrorism.



Cover of first issue of GI Joe Comic Book Series

Reach your audience with unique and entertaining content. Comic books, an animated television mini-series, and even video games brought children into the world of GI Joe, making it a huge success.

1991: The Fax Machine Transforms Communications

In late 1991 Western Union decided to permanently shut down its telegraph service around the world. Fax machines, originated in the mid-80's, were taking over as the primary means of written information exchange. Fax Modems were becoming prevalent in personal computers, giving home-offices the same technology large corporations enjoyed.

Custom Fax Messaging is the new marketing angle. MacWarehouse, a computer hardware provider, offered “computerized fax-on-demand” numbers for its catalog. This allowed customers to request detailed technical specs and receive those by fax directly.

“Any business that regularly sends out documents and information as a means of servicing its current customer and prospecting for new ones should find fax-on-demand to be a very attractive medium.”

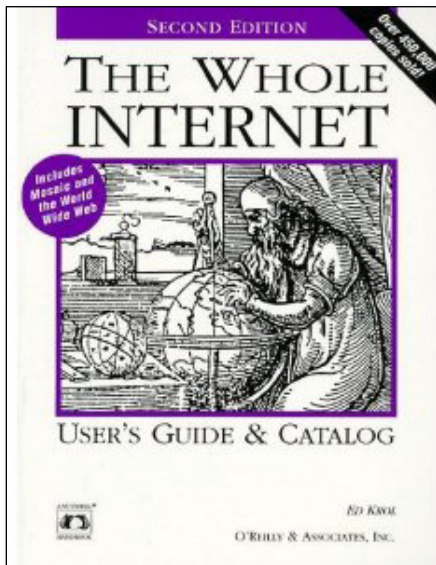
Don Peppers and Martha Rogers in their 1993 book, “The One-to-One Future”, talk about Interactive Fax-on-Demand, the precursor to modern Marketing Automation.



Marketers take notice, but so does the FCC. In 2003, it issues rules restricting companies from sending unsolicited fax advertisements, requiring companies to get the recipients written consent, and giving recipient options to “opt-out”.

Today faxes have been largely substituted by email communication but are still in use despite warnings of its demise.

1994: The Year The Earth Went Online

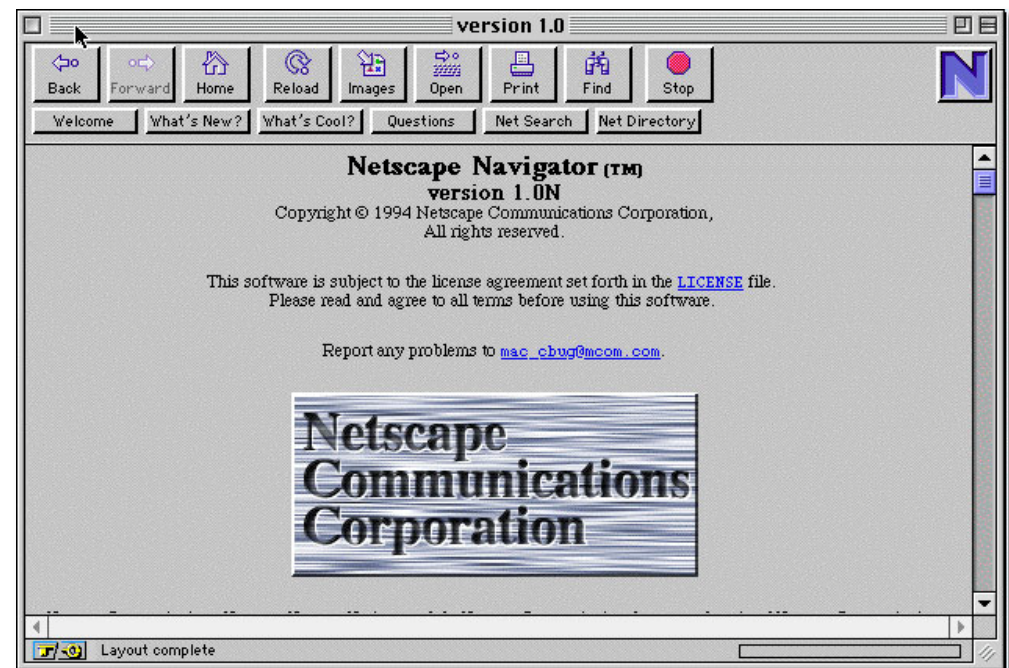


GNN, **the first commercial website**, was launched in 1993 by O'Reilly & Associates, Inc., and included a section called **The Online Whole Internet Catalog**, based on the book of the same name (which contained 529 entries).



In early 1994, Netscape Communications is born and **the Internet goes mainstream**.

Marketers gain a new channel and start **creating more content** in one decade than it has been produced in the whole previous century.

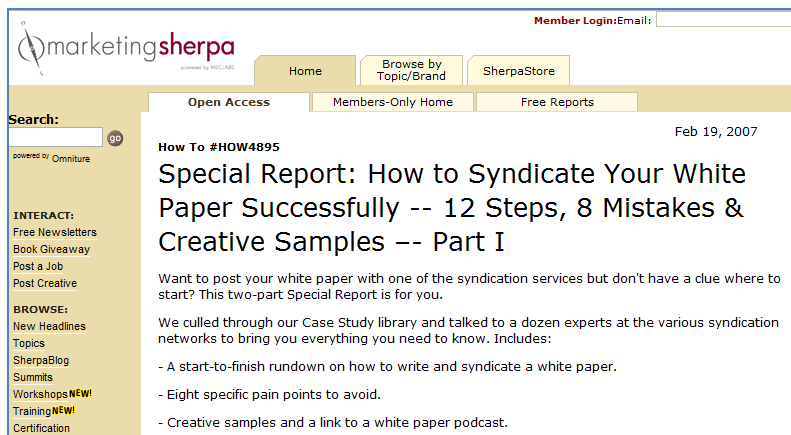


Screenshot of the first version of Netscape Navigator, the internet browser that changed the way we communicate.

Early 90's: Web Pages and Whitepapers Abound

A plethora of websites come to life, and a **new era of content is born**. Marketers take advantage of the new medium, but are still learning how to better use it.

Whitepapers – which were previously used mainly by governments, start getting traction online and become **standard product-centric content marketing** for technology companies.



The success of whitepapers as content marketing tools sparked many “syndication” sites to help marketers distribute their whitepapers.



Screenshot of IBM's Library from the early 90's show whitepapers available for download. Tech companies relied on whitepapers as one of the main lead generation tools (and still do today).

1996: PlaceWare, WebEx Make Webinars Successful

In 1996 PlaceWare, a spin-off from Xerox's PARC Laboratory, starts offering web conferencing services. Later that year, WebEx is founded. **Web conferencing starts to make its way into the marketing mix, branded as Webinars or Webcasts.**

In 2003 PlaceWare is acquired by Microsoft and rebranded as LiveMeeting. In 2007 Cisco acquires WebEx.

To this day, **Webinars are an integral part of the marketing budget.**



MarketingSherpa Chart based on August 2010 Survey

Article from BtoBOnline Interactive Marketing Guide 2006

1997: Hotmail Gives Everyone Free Email, More SPAM

Hotmail launches in 1996 and is acquired by Microsoft in 1997, when it had over 8.5 million users. Free webmail accounts spread, email volume skyrockets, and so does spam. By early 2000 email is one of the **main forms of marketing outreach** by corporations worldwide. The CAN-SPAM Act of 2003 does little to reduce the volume of junk email.

The Weekly for Permission-Based Emailers
emailsherpa.com

Free Newsletter

For Email Marketers & Email Newsletter Publishers:

If you are sending broadcast (bulk) emails, EmailSherpa is just for you. You'll get tips and tactics on how to:

1. Grow Opt-ins
2. Develop creative that works
3. Pick the best rental lists
4. Choose the right technology
5. Stay on top of the law
6. Measure your results properly

If you care about email deliverability, improving results, and staying legal ... this is the free newsletter for you:

Your work email here: [input] [Join]

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Executive Summary: Email Marketing Metrics Survey Results - 1,711 Marketers Reveal Data [read on...](#)

The **inbox overflow** problem is still prevalent today, frustrating both marketers and customers. **Carefully crafted content** is more important than ever.

WIRED SUBSCRIBE » SECTIONS » BLOGS » REVIEWS » VIDEO »

Politics : LAW

Congress Votes to Can Spam
Associated Press 12.08.03

WASHINGTON -- Congress on Monday approved the first national law to ban unwanted e-mail pitches offering prescription drugs, cheap loans and other products.

President Bush has revamped its own e-mail policy.

May Promotional Email Volume Rises 13% YOY
June 6, 2011

The top online retailers sent each of their subscribers 3.1 promotional emails on average during the week ending June 3, 2011, according to Chad White, research director at Responsys and author of the Retail Email Blog. That's down 1% week-over-week, down 7% from where it was four weeks ago, and up 13% year-over-year.

Email Marketing to Hit \$2B by 2014
June 17, 2009

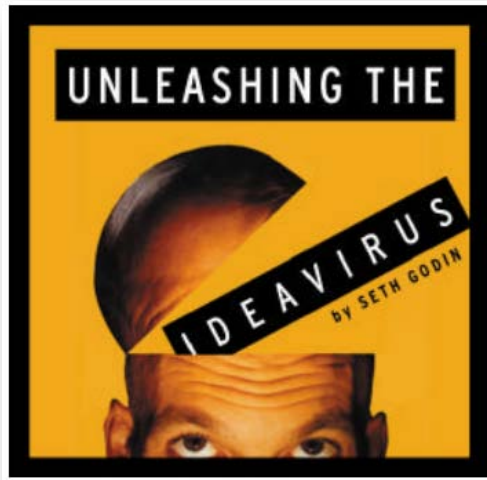
By the year 2014, a typical email user will get more than 9,000 email marketing messages a year, which amounts to 25 messages per person per day - double the average of 10 to 12 messages per person per day (according to a new report from Forrester Research, reports marketing spend will rise to \$2 billion in 2014 - nearly double the \$1 billion for 2009, Forrester said.

All Associates confirmed email and online coupons will enjoy a resurgence of direct marketing, in part because email is faster, less expensive and easier to track than traditional creative.

MarketingSherpa, today one of the leading providers of marketing analysis, reports, and benchmarks started out in 2002 focusing on email marketing.

Top left, Wired publishes the passing of the CAN SPAM Act in 2003. Top right, predictions of email spend and email volume reported by ClickZ; Left, news article on MarketingCharts website shows prior predictions may prove true (email volume keeps rising even today).

2000: Seth Godin Shows eBooks Are Big Business



In July of 2000, author and blogger Seth Godin creates the eBook “**Unleashing the Ideavirus**” and makes it available for free. The eBook has been **downloaded over 1 million times** and is considered the most downloaded eBook of all times. The eBook’s success helped Seth land publishing deals with 41 countries and started his speaking career.

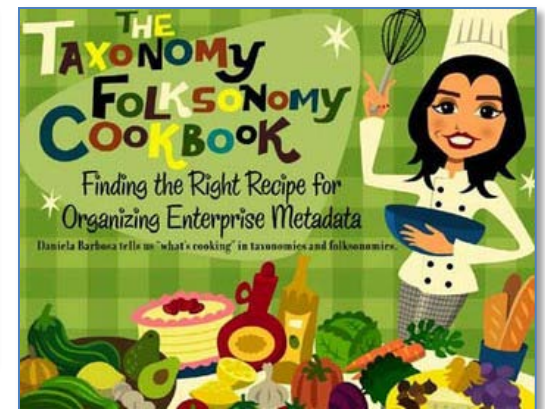


Soon, other authors started using **free eBooks** to promote or to get book deals. For example, in January of 2006, David Meerman Scott released the free eBook “**The New Rules of PR**”, generating 1,000 downloads the first day, and 15,000 after the first week. Overall the eBook has been downloaded over 150,000 times and got David a book deal.

Often compared to Whitepapers, eBooks have been gaining adoption as a new way to produce and distribute content.

2000 and Beyond: eBooks Keep Growing

Companies take notice of the **eBooks popularity**. With **an easier-to-digest format** than Whitepapers (who carry a reputation of being overly technical and lengthy). Content Marketers now have a new channel to educate potential customers and establish the company as a **thought leader**.



2001: The iPod is Born, Podcasting Follows

On October 23, 2001 Apple releases the first iPod. In late 2004 a new channel for content marketing becomes increasingly popular: **podcasts**.

On June 28, 2005 Apple adds a podcast subscription feature to iTunes and a directory of podcasts at the iTunes Music Store. By 2008 19% of US internet users were downloading podcasts.



FILED UNDER [Portable Audio / Video](#)

Engadget Podcast 001 - 10.05.2004 / How-To: Podcasting (get Podcasts and make your own)

By Phillip Torrone posted October 5th 2004 8:15PM

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IN THE OCTOBER 2006 ISSUE OF THE IFS RADIO NETWORK:

Enterprise Application News Update
Encapsulated news on IFS and other major enterprise application vendors.

Business Topics
IFS North America CFO Mitch Dwight and Rampart Global CEO David Dunn fill you in on the new 21st Century megatrend, *The Project Economy*.

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This week's How-To is a three part series. The first part is how to get "Podcasts" on your computer, as a file, a MP3, most likely, in talk show format, automatically delivered to your iPod whenever you want.

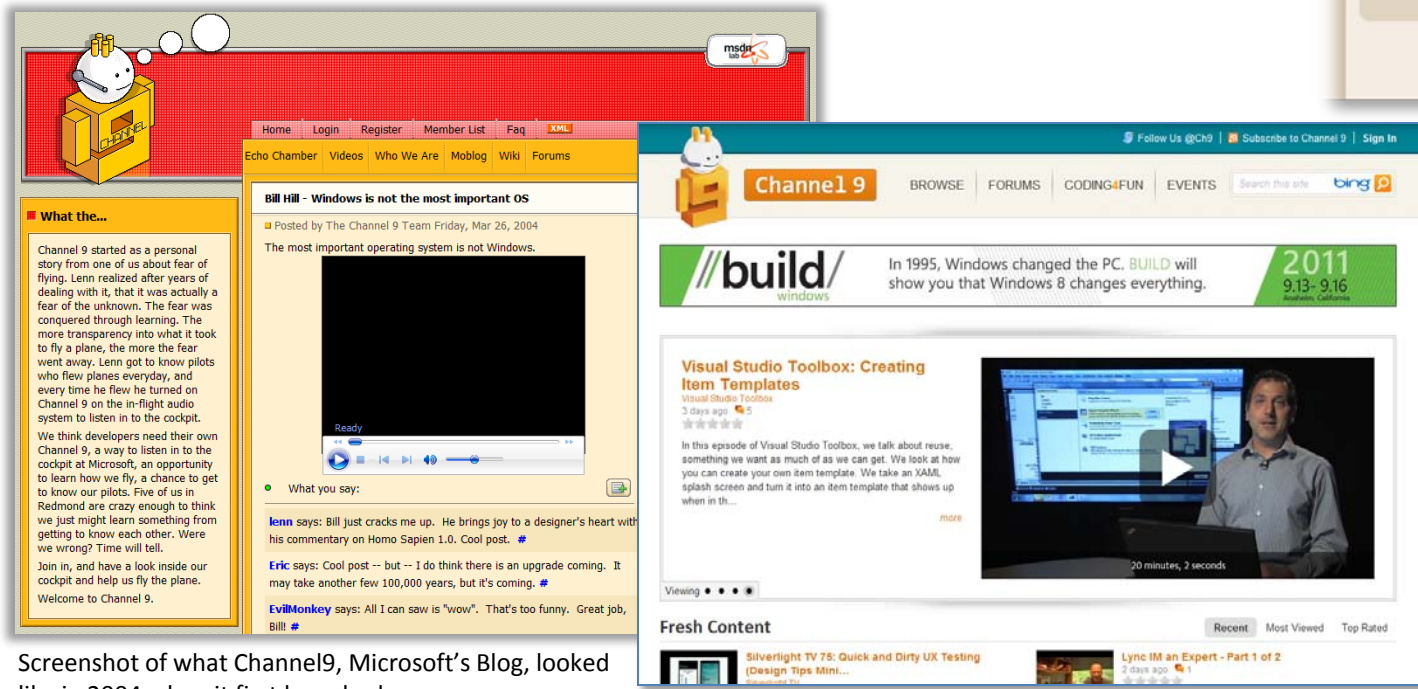
In July of 2005, **Fidelity Investments** becomes one of the first major corporations to use podcasting to reach its customers.

IFS, a provider of ERP software for manufacturing companies, launches a series of podcasts in 2006 generating **over 10% conversion rate**.

2004: Microsoft Launches First Corporate Blog

In 1998 Open Diary, the first blogging platform was launched as a form of “online diary”, soon followed by LiveJournal and Blogger in 1999.

In 2004, Microsoft launches **Channel 9**, its first blog (and **the first blog** coming from a major public company) to target the developer community.



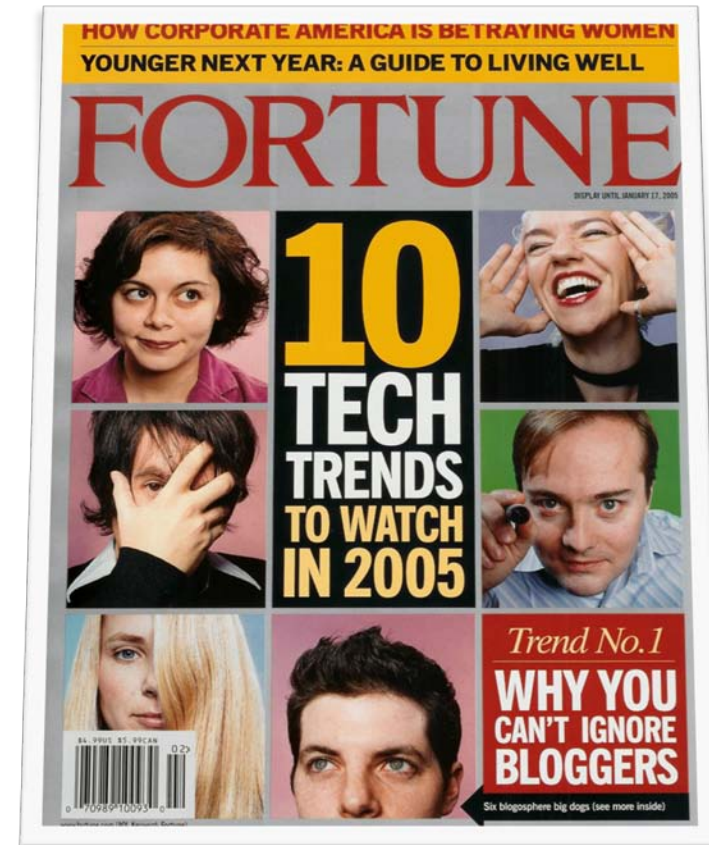
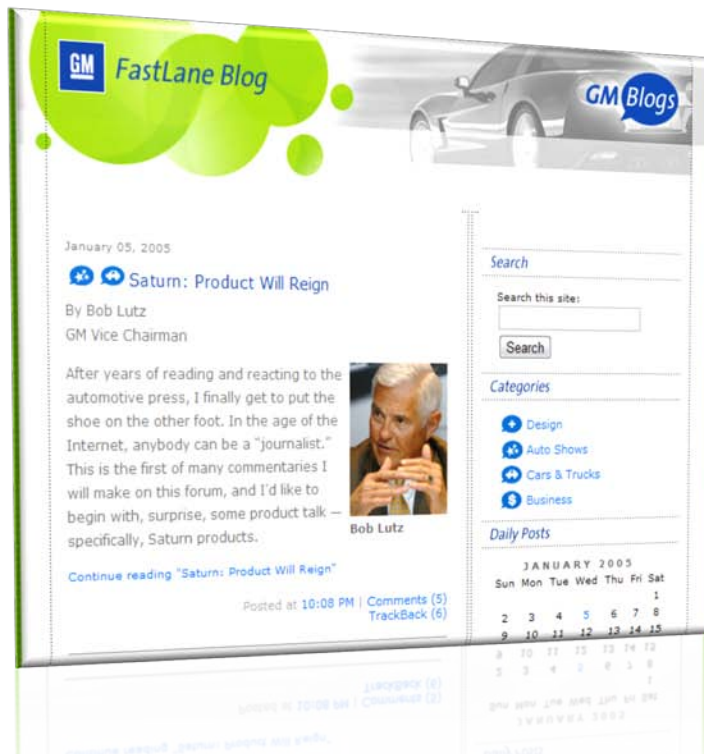
Screenshot of what Channel9, Microsoft's Blog, looked like in 2004 when it first launched

Screenshot of Channel 9, Microsoft's developer blog still active in 2011.

2005: GM Starts Blogging, Fortune 500 Slow to Move

In late 2004 **Dell and Sun** followed Microsoft, but it wasn't until **2005 that blogging would become mainstream.**

On January 5, 2005 GM decides to create its first blog, "GM FastLane Blog", the first of the Big three automakers to publish a blog (which is still live to this day).



Cover of Fortune Magazine, January 2005 Edition

Still, by November of 2010 **only 116 (23%) of the Fortune 500 Companies had a blog.***

* Source: UMASS Dartmouth Center for Marketing Research Study

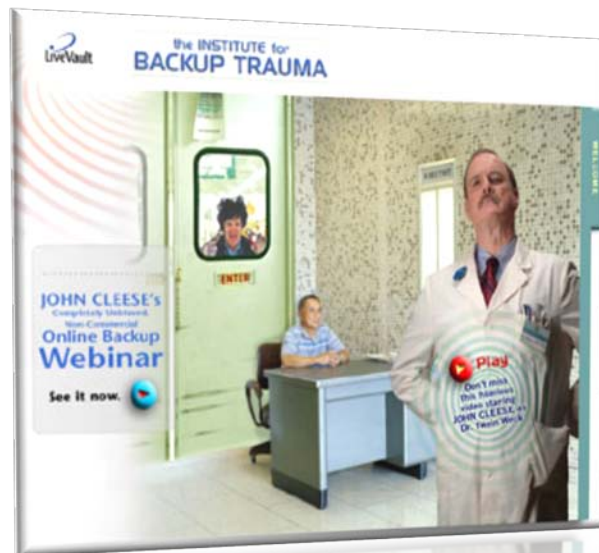
Still 2005: LiveVault's John Cleese Video Goes Viral

It's February 21, 2005 and LiveVault, a provider of data backup services, sends an email to 150,000 people (mostly IT managers) promoting two new products and a new **6 minutes video** featuring John Cleese and the "Institute of Backup Trauma".

The incredibly funny video **goes viral** with a 20% clickthrough rate on the 150,000 emails they sent out, generating **over 250,000 downloads** within the first couple months.



John Cleese in the video "Institute for Backup Trauma". One of the best examples of corporate videos gone viral to date.



The campaign included a micro-site where users could explore all LiveVault products and services.

10 Months later the video was being downloaded between 2,000 and 10,000 times a week.

And all of this was **BEFORE there was YouTube.**

Late 2005: YouTube Revolutionizes Video Sharing

In November of 2005, **YouTube officially launched**. In November 2006, Google bought YouTube for US\$1.65 billion. Companies start using the new channel to more easily promote their online video efforts.

On January 30, 2007 **Blendtec** uploaded the first of its now famous **“Will It Blend”** video to YouTube.



The video shows a Blendtec blender easily made a smoothie out of 13 spicy buffalo wings, a bowl of tortilla chips, and a can of soda. It becomes an instant hit and spans a series of “Will It Blend” videos showing the industrial-strength blender utterly destroying and making powder of iPhones, firearms, golf clubs, and other items.



The Blendtec videos have amassed **over 6 million views** and its YouTube channel boasts over 385 thousand subscribers.

2006: Twitter Emerges, Content Creators Rejoice

Twitter launched publicly in July of 2006 and gained popularity at the South by Southwest in 2007. It now has over 150 million registered users.



Twitter home page back in 2006



Twitter home page in 2011

The power of Twitter as a content marketing channel is still a hot topic being debated. Is interesting to note that **only 60% of Fortune 500 Companies have a Twitter account**. Companies are using Twitter to announce promotions, drive attendance to events, and **share links with more content**. A number of companies have sprung up to help marketers measure their Twitter campaigns results .

2006: Facebook Opens Up to Everyone



A September 2006 article on the Wall Street Journal talking about Facebook opening up to everyone.

On September 26, 2006 Facebook was made available to everyone over 13. Soon businesses begin flocking. A new way to engage customers and fans, Facebook becomes an **essential part of a marketing department's content plan.**

3,007,251 people like this

772,275 people like this

22,956,378 people like this

609,687 people like this



The ever evolving Facebook fan pages allow companies to take advantage of new media and make them really engaging. Dell, for example, uses video to showcase new products.

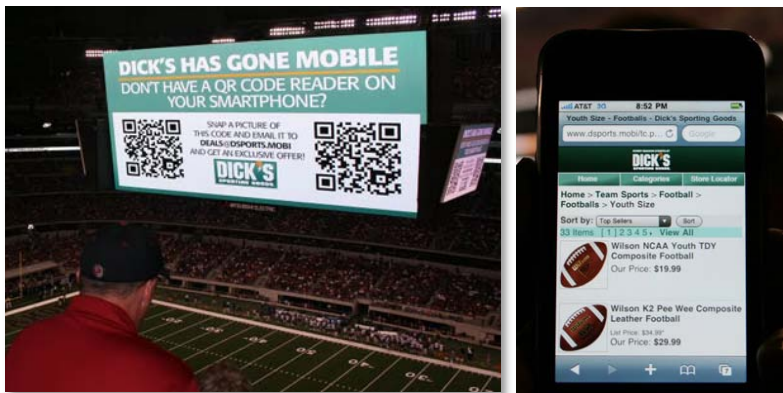
Two hundred and eighty **(56%)** of the **Fortune 500** companies are now on Facebook.

2008: Ralph Lauren Launches Campaign With QR Code



In October of 2008, Ralph Lauren launches a new campaign that includes print ads with a QR Code, the **first major corporation to start using them in the US**. Not soon thereafter, Calvin Klein posts QR Codes in billboards **as part of their advertising campaign** for the new Jeans X. QR Codes have now officially made into the US market.

Polo Ralph Lauren included a QR code on a US Open advertising campaign in August, 2008. If scanned by a cell phone, the code would link a user directly to a new mobile site.



September 2009: Dick's Sporting Goods kicked off its new mobile commerce site using a Quick Response (QR) on the world's largest HDTV video board at the new Cowboys Stadium.



2010: Wholefoods supermarkets start adding QR Codes to certain food displays,.

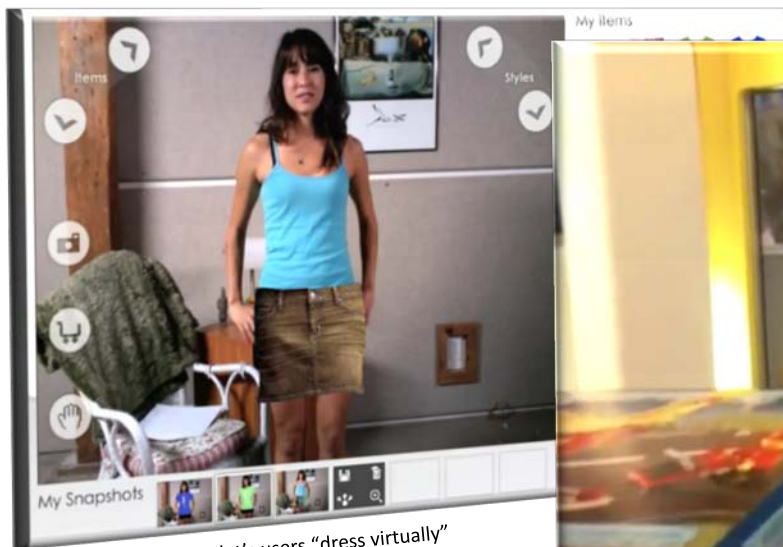


April 2011: Radisson Edwardian Hotel adds QR codes to its restaurant menus.

Although **not a piece of content per se**, QR Codes can help engage users and drive them to other online content.

2009: Augmented Reality Brings New Content Ideas

Although Augmented Reality (AR) has been around since the 60's, it wasn't until recently that US corporations started to take advantage of it. Advancements in broadband connection and the adoption of smartphones and tablets have given new life to this category.



Zuggara's online store let's users "dress virtually" to make shopping easier



LEGO uses Augmented Reality to show kids what their construction sets will look like fully assembled



In 2010 Hotels.com launched a campaign and a Augmented Reality website that allows visitors to "see" their destinations in 3D

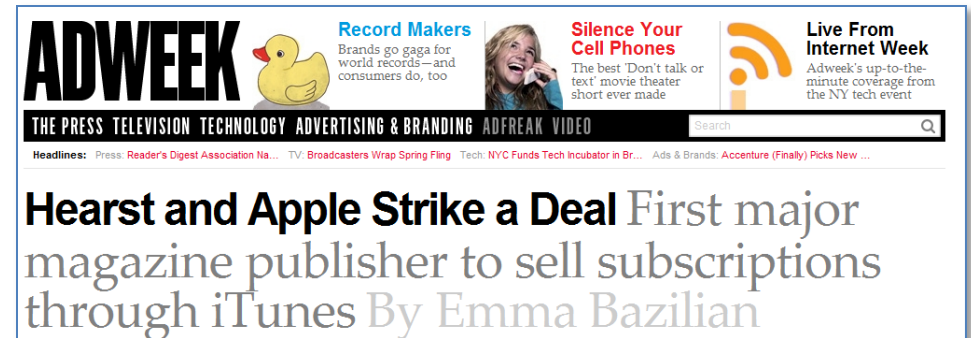
Augment your content. AR technology can give marketers three dimensions to work with when creating new content. The applications are endless, and especially for retail marketers the possibilities are many. **AR gives another meaning to engaging content.**

2011: iPad Points to Possible Content Revolution

In 2011, Conde' Nast announces that will start **selling magazine subscriptions for the iPad** via iTunes store, **the major magazine publisher to do so.**

The iPad can open a new wave of content creation that takes advantage of the inherent interactivity the device offers. What used to be static content, can be transformed in a major way.

The question is not whether the iPad will revolutionize content marketing, but when.



Other Forms of Content Marketing

During the creation of this eBook we decided to focus on Content Marketing examples and channels as defined by Wikipedia:

*“Content marketing is an umbrella term encompassing all marketing formats that involve the **creation or sharing of content for the purpose of engaging** current and potential consumer bases” - Wikipedia*

We purposely didn't include in our review some other forms that you may also consider part of content marketing, such as:

- Magazines and Advertorials
- Direct Mail
- Coupons
- Billboards
- Radio & Television
- Press Releases

Whether any of the items above should be included is debatable and we welcome your thoughts on the matter. **Let us know of great content marketing uses that we haven't covered** in this eBook so we can include them in an updated version. Email us at marketing@aprixsolutions.com with your comments and suggestions.

Notes and Credits

Pg 3: Time machine picture from <http://overthemoonscifi.wordpress.com/2011/03/02/h-g-wells-and-the-time-machine/>. Based on the book “The Time Machine” from HG Wells.

Pg 4: Image sources for the thumbnail of The Sun and the illustration that appeared in that newspaper came from Wikipedia.

Pg 5: The Michelin Guide image came from <http://www.whitejacket.net/blog/2009/02/14/bibendums-guide/> while the car, a 1915 Ford Model T Coupelet was found and is copyright by The Henry Ford website: <http://www.hfmgv.org/exhibits/showroom/1908/photos.html>

Pg. 6: Jell-O cookbook cover and inside pages from <http://specialcollections.wordpress.com/2009/01/23/even-if-you-cant-cook-you-can-make-a-jell-o-dessert/> and from Duke University , “The Emergence of Advertising in America: 1850 - 1920 (EAA)” <http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/ea CK0029/>

Pg 7: The vintage GI Joe soldier picture is from the Old Joes website: <http://www.oldjoes.com/coll-earllysoldier.php> and the cover of the first GI Joe Marvel comic book was taken from Wikipedia.

Pg 8: Photo of fax machine, by Sapphireblue on Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/sapphir3blu3/with/3290478769/>). The story of MacWarehouse and the quote about Fax on Demand are from the book “The One-to-One Future”, by Don Peppers and Martha Rogers. In 1993 Peppers & Rogers were visionaries, sparking interest into what would become “1-to-1 Marketing”, or the concept of personalization and targeting to individual customers instead of mass marketing. That was the precursor to today’s marketing automation systems.

Pg 9: You can learn more about GNN and The Whole Internet Catalog at <http://oreilly.com/gnn/>. Netscape logo and screenshot taken from waybackmachine.com and http://www.macx.dk/50_Best_Tech/

Pg 13. Seth Godin talks about his success with eBooks in a blog post: http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2007/03/you_should_writ.html and a great description of how David was able to get his eBook go viral can be seen in this MarketingSherpa article: <http://www.marketingsherpa.com/vas2006/3.html>

Pg 14: Thanks to David Meerman Scott (www.webinknow.com) for most of the eBook suggestions. eBooks covers shown in that page are: Nortel’s “Business Communications Manager 50/450 Solutions eBook”, by Nortel Networks; “7 Things CEO’s Should Know About Information Security” by Lumension Security; “5 Secrets of Talent”, by the RPO Group; “On the journey to promoting loyalty with prepaid customers” by Amdocs; “The Taxonomy of Folksonomy” by Dow Jones; “Better Recruitment Starts With Better Search” by Career Builder.

Pg 15: A research conducted by Pew Internet & American Life Project released in 2008 indicated that 19% of US internet users had downloaded a podcast. The story of IFS using podcasts to reach a larger audience was reported by MarketingSharpa at <http://www.marketingsherpa.com/article.php?ident=29811> and Fidelity Investment’s foray into podcasting is chronicled here <http://www.marketingsherpa.com/content/?q=node/4891>.

Pg 19: Another good example of B2B video gone viral is the one created in 2007 Netcosm, a network performance management provider (acquired by CA in 2009). For details on their video and results, check out <http://www.marketingsherpa.com/viralawards2007/2.html>

Pg 20 and 21: Source of Twitter and Facebook adoption by Fortune 500 is the UMASS Dartmouth Center for Marketing Research Study

Pg 22: The use of QR Codes by Dicks Sporting Goods was described on the Branding Blog, at <http://brandingbrand.com/blog/dicks-uses-qr-code-marketing-on-cowboys-stadium-jumbotron/>. The photo of a QR Code at Wholefoods was taken from <http://tastytouring.com/2010/10/small-organic-farm-uses-qr-codes/>. Polo Ralph Lauren’s use of QR Codes can be seen directly on their website at http://entertainment.ralphlauren.com/magazine/editorial/fa08/QR_Code.asp.

Pg 23: For more uses of Augmented Reality in corporate scenarios, check out “16 Top Augmented Reality Business Models” at <http://www.personalizemedia.com/16-top-augmented-reality-business-models/>. The website Augmented Planet talks about commercial applications of Augmented Reality. For more about the Hotels.com campaign, see <http://www.augmentedplanet.com/2010/05/superb-augmented-reality-travel-application-from-hotels-com/>

About The Author



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Daniel is the Co-Founder and CEO of Aprix Solutions, Inc. An experienced B2B marketing executive with high-tech background, Daniel is passionate about marketing technology, and blogs frequently at <http://www.effectivemarketer.com> and <http://blog.aprixsolutions.com>.

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LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/danielkuperman>

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Aprix Solutions provides **Marketing Resource Management** solutions for mid-sized marketing departments and enables marketing teams to collaborate, track deadlines, exchange files, plan and manage their marketing projects, campaigns, and events online.

Check us out at www.aprixsolutions.com.



Simplify Management. Maximize Marketing.