



Press Release

GroupM Search and comScore Release Study on the Interplay Between Search Marketing and Social Media

Social media exposure is correlated with search behavior and click-through-rate; Introduces the value of media discovery for advertisers

(NEW YORK) October 6, 2009 – [GroupM Search](#) and [comScore, Inc.](#), (NASDAQ: SCOR), a leader in measuring the digital world, announced today the results of the first study ever conducted by comScore looking at the relationship between social media exposure and search behaviors. Conducted in tandem with social media agency [M80](#), the study, “*The Influenced: Social Media, Search and the Interplay of Consideration and Consumption*,” reveals the dramatic correlation influenced discovery of brands through social media has with search behavior, including more lower-funnel searches and increased paid search click-through-rates (CTR). A white paper exploring the results and implications of the study is available on the GroupM Search blog, [SearchFuel](#).

“Every day consumers express their intent via search. Now, we better understand how that intent is established via social media and the interplay between the channels,” said Chris Copeland, chief executive officer of GroupM Search – The Americas. “There is a valuable audience for advertisers to focus on who are engaged with brands through social media and search. The study further validates our view that media discovery, specifically a brand’s owned and earned media, is as important to success as the paid media we handle every day. Generating upper-funnel awareness and influencing consideration through social media can produce better down-the-funnel performance with paid media, such as paid search.”

The research explored the correlation between social media exposure and search behavior over a three month period across different verticals, including automotive, consumer packaged goods and telecommunications. In addition to looking at total internet users, consumers were divided into three segments:

- › Consumers exposed only to a brand’s paid search
- › Consumers exposed to social media relevant to a brand’s category
 - A blog, message board/forum, user review, social networking site (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn), Twitter/micro-blogging, or video-sharing site (e.g., YouTube, Google Video), as well as a brand’s social marketing program’s “target” sites, or sites which have the most natural potential to hold content about a brand
- › Consumers exposed to influenced social media specific to a brand
 - Identified sites containing distributed social marketing content of a brand’s social media program

Search behavior was broken into segments based on where queries fell among stages of the purchase funnel. This included upper-funnel terms expressing awareness and consideration (industry relevant terms, general product attributes) to lower-funnel terms expressing action and loyalty (campaign brand terms, brand product terms).

The study showed searchers who engage with social media, especially those exposed to a brand’s influenced social media, are far more likely to search for lower-funnel terms compared to consumers who do not engage with social media. Further, consumers exposed to a brand’s influenced social media and paid search programs are 2.8x more likely to search for that brand’s products compared to users who only saw paid search.

The study also showed a 50 percent CTR increase in paid search when consumers were exposed to influenced social media and paid search. This revealed consumers exposed to social media are more likely to click on a brand’s paid search ad compared to those exposed to the brand’s paid search alone. Among searchers using a brand’s product name in the query, the CTR increased from 4.5 percent to 11.8 percent when users were exposed to both influenced social media

and paid search around a brand.

In organic search, consumers searching on brand product terms who have been exposed to a brand's social marketing campaign are 2.4x more likely to click on organic links leading to the advertiser's site than the average user seeing a brand's paid search ad alone.

"Social media-exposed consumers are far more likely to search for brand and product-related terms, and click on a brand's paid search ad," said Graham Mudd, vice president of comScore, Inc. "This finding provides strong evidence that investing in social media marketing can both increase initial brand consideration and drive higher conversion rates once the consumer has decided to purchase."

Surveying the intention of these segments, searchers who use social media are more engaged overall and more likely to be looking for places to buy and brands to consider. Consumers using social media are 1.7x more likely to search with the intention of making a list of brands or products to consider purchasing compared to those who do not use social media.

"Advertisers need to explore their social media initiatives and how they impact user engagement and performance in other channels. This data suggest that social media marketing does positively affect consumer purchase consideration, specifically through the search channel," said Todd Steinman, chief operating officer at M80.

The findings introduce several implications for the search marketing and social marketing industries. "As advertisers consider the allocation of paid media and the greatest opportunity for return, the topics of media discovery and influenced social discovery must be a part of the conversation," said Copeland. "Blending paid, earned and owned media, and putting your brand in places where it can be discovered and part of the natural conversation, will enable advertisers to influence the outcome of intention expressed by consumers, and capture this heavily engaged audience."

About GroupM Search

GroupM Search is the search marketing specialist division of GroupM, the media buying and planning arm of WPP responsible for more than 1/3 of the world's media buying. Honored by *OMMA* Magazine and MediaPost as the 2008 Search Marketing Agency of the Year, GroupM Search employs 600 search marketing strategists globally and has the largest global footprint of any other search organization with 40 offices serving more than 40 countries. GroupM Search provides industry-leading search marketing strategies technology development, research, staffing and training to GroupM communications planning agencies through its search divisions including Maxus Search, MediaCom Search, MEC Interaction and MindShare Search, as well as the direct-to-client brands, Outrider, Catalyst Online and Quisma. Our search divisions provide clients with the right balance of human intelligence and search technology in order to deliver award-winning paid, organic and advanced search marketing strategies (mobile, social media, video, local and more) that help our clients become a part of the online conversation. Global search marketing perspective from talent across GroupM Search can be found on the industry blog, SearchFuel (www.searchfuel.com). URL: www.groupmsearch.com

About M80

M80 is a leading provider of social media marketing and digital publicity services to Fortune 500 brands. Programs drive brand engagement and consumer activation through online word of mouth, conversation marketing, social network management, influencer outreach, digital asset syndication, online publicity and promotions. They empower consumer evangelists, create affinity and build community. Since 1998, the company has worked with hundreds of clients on thousands of programs, offering innovative solutions, producing quantifiable ROI. M80 is a founding member of the Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA) and was acquired by WPP's GroupM in 2006 (LSE: WPP and NASDAQ: WPPGY). The company is headquartered in Los Angeles with offices in New York. URL: <http://m80im.com/>

About comScore

comScore, Inc. (NASDAQ: SCOR) is a global leader in measuring the digital world and preferred source of digital marketing intelligence. For more information, please visit www.comscore.com/companyinfo.

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