

Your Changing Brand World

Making
Brands
Human



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Your Changing Brand World

"The start of a new year is synonymous with reflection and resolutions.

As an agency we use this time to step back and reassess the changing world we live in. It's an opportunity for us to consider some of the challenges our clients may face in the year ahead.

So it gives me great pride to share some of our thinking with you in the form of this digital booklet. From radical transparency to the gap in data trust, all the topics contained within share a common thread about openness, flexibility and relevance.

Our observations consolidate our belief in making brands human. Belief, trust and strong relationships have always been the drivers of sustained progress.

Please enjoy the following thoughts and opinions from our team. I hope they provide a useful stimulus to how you see your brand's story being told in future."

Marcus Chidgey

CEO



RADICAL
TRANS-
PARENCY

The future will belong to brands who actively behave authentically and transparently.

At the end of 2014 Trafigura, one of the world's leading commodity trading firms and third largest oil trader, announced it will join the [Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative](#) and [disclose oil-related payments](#).

Also last year, the G20 committed to improving the [transparency principles](#) of public and private sectors. Young fashion brand EverLane - [a company actively transparent in pricing and production processes through their product labelling and website](#) - increased sales by 200%.

Three different examples, all embracing the emerging world of radical transparency.

2015 will continue to see the reduction of hiding places for brands, companies and organisations. Self publication, citizen journalism, [big data](#), [hacking](#), the [Internet of Things](#); we are living in a hyper connected world where privacy is

not guaranteed, information is captured in fine detail and messages are spread instantaneously.

In this landscape it is much harder to conceal, and in the business world this means it is much harder to make false claims. Brands who actively behave authentically and transparently will be the ones to maintain trust and credibility.

A rising number of consumers are favouring conscientious brands, and apps like [GoodGuide](#) are giving them more easily digestible information with which to make their decisions. As it becomes more accepted and easier to be a conscientious consumer, their numbers will continue to increase: everything is pointing in the direction of radical transparency and the future will belong to those who embrace it with open arms.



Gareth Wesley
Strategy Director

Radical Transparency

The background is a low-poly, abstract geometric pattern. It consists of numerous triangles of varying sizes and shades of purple, blue, and yellow. The colors transition from a bright yellow in the upper left to a deep purple in the lower right. The text is centered in the upper left, over the yellow area.

EXPERIENTIAL TECHNOLOGY

The next step is using immersive technologies to seamlessly heighten real world experiences.

Immersive technology has historically meant placing the user into a seemingly real world scenario and innovations like Oculus Rift are taking this to new heights.

To date, the added value has been in creating worlds; the next step is using immersive technologies to seamlessly heighten real world experiences, enhancing audience engagement.

Audience photos and tweets are curated and played out at events now as standard, yet this is just the tip of the iceberg. 2014 saw audiences crowd-sourced to determine event content, the continued development of interactive shop windows, and iBeacon used not only to deliver exclusive access - as Master-Card did earlier this year at an event in Brooklyn - but as a device to deliver content.

Looking further forward, developments in conductive ink technologies could enable virtually anything to be touch interactive. Beck's playable poster is just the start of this particular journey whilst the inevitable rise of wearable tech, despite the stuttering of Google Glass, will push augmented reality into the mainstream.

Amongst all this innovation the opportunity to maximise experiential marketing, from event sponsorship to retail sites, has never been more exciting. The challenge will continue to be the ability of companies to place technology at the heart of creative storytelling that informs and inspires; those that do will build a bond with their audience and drive their engagement.



Julian Staveley
Client Services Director

Experiential Technology

T H E

D E C E N T

R A L I S A

T I O N

O F

C O N T

E N T

The delivery of content and interaction is being set free from conventional web design.

In May 2014 the New York Times revealed that only a third of its web users visited its homepage, to which the internet proclaimed “the homepage is dead!”

Whilst this may or may not be true, and is discussed further in our trend *Contextual Responsiveness*, the wider question is on the changing role of websites in delivering information.

As people move towards consumption formats that are more aggregated and consistent, the role of the website in delivering information is being diminished. Smarter search engine and social media platforms, richer and more flexible digital media advertising formats, and content aggregators like Flipboard, Newsy and

Buzzfeed are all driving a shift in users consuming information away from the host site. Recently, even purchasing can be done through Instagram with no brand interaction at all.

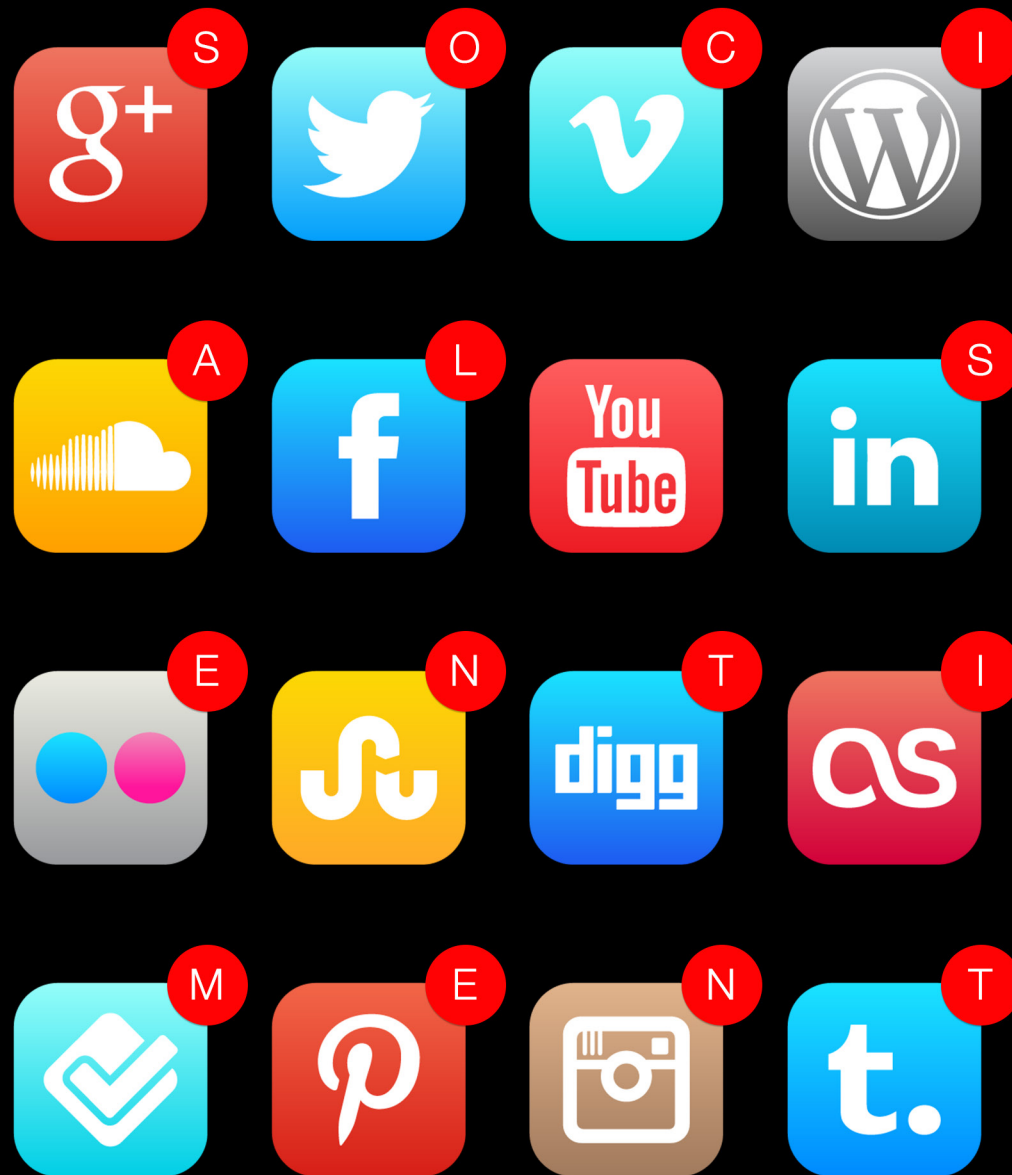
The delivery of content and interaction is being set free from conventional web design.

The website should, at the very least, no longer be considered the home-base of a content strategy, but rather a key player in a squadron of platforms delivering content. The future opportunity lies in developing websites set free from being information driven, that generate stronger emotional connections with a brand's audience. Connections that are ultimately more poignant and shareable.



Simon Baird
Creative Director

The Decentralisation of Content



'What is gamer gate?' was the sixth most asked 'what is' question on Google in the US during 2014. A continuing controversy that exploded on Twitter surrounding misogyny, harassment and ethics in video game culture, 'gamer gate' was still generating a massive 316,669 tweets in a 72-hour period, two months after it first erupted.

More recently, it has becoming famous for demonstrating the continued difficulty in accurately measuring sentiment.

Newsweek enlisted a sentiment analysis agency to unravel the social conversation surrounding gamer gate and reported that 90 per cent was neither positive or negative (a red flag given the heat of the discussion) whilst in response, other analysis conducted showed that 90-95 per cent did in fact take a clear side. A

vast discrepancy between sources who must surely have methods of analysis they trust?

Happily, I believe 2015 will prove a watershed year in being able to rely on sentiment analysis.

In 2014 Hootsuite purchased and integrated analytics start-up uberVu, as well as purchasing social voice technology start-up Zeetl, raising \$60m in financing and following on from \$165m a year ago.

Meanwhile, the Stanford professor who claimed to have solved true sentiment analysis in 2013 was recently unveiled as part of a new deep learning start-up, MetaMind, that just raised \$8m including funding from VC leaders, Khosla Ventures. In addition, Twitter revamped its advanced search to facilitate searching

all historical tweets, and Facebook rolled out its graph search functionality onto its mobile app.

All of these point to a far better understanding of brand perception.

This is an exciting time in social media, where the work of key players like Hootsuite could soon take us beyond a binary thumbs up/thumbs down view of public opinion, gaining a real qualitative measure of social success.

Social media will move from being simple quantitative data and shallow demographics indicators, to become a pivotal KPI mapped against all our activity – online and offline – with real-time response, global reach and a true understanding of our audience as humans, not numbers.



Sarah Little
Social Media Manager

Social media analytics will soon give a true understanding of your audience as humans, not numbers.

Social Sentiment

As featured in PR Week

The challenge for brands will be in taking the same open communication currently employed in other strands of the customer-company relationship, and applying them to the topic of data usage and security.

The profile of data is rising fast and showing no signs of slowing down. 2014 saw numerous high profile hacking scandals, leaks and technical glitches, with even companies like Apple, Snapchat, UPS and Sony not beyond reach. This has come at a time when brands are increasing their use and reliance on data, in order to develop and enable product propositions and deliver more effective marketing campaigns. The combined effect of this increased profile? Expect your reputation for looking after a consumer's data to start affecting their decision to do business with you.

Two reports released in 2014, from IPSOS and the Pew Research Centre, highlighted that most institutions are trusted less with data than they are in general. The reports also pointed out that a large percentage of customers are still insecure about using online services, with a staggering 91% feeling that consumers have lost control over how information is collected and used by companies.

2015 will need to be the year you actively start reassuring consumers that your brand has their best interests at heart when using their personal data, and that you are equipped to act upon these intentions. On the public agenda is usage creep, privacy, lack of personal benefit and loss of data, for which the hacking scandals will only have reaffirmed fears.

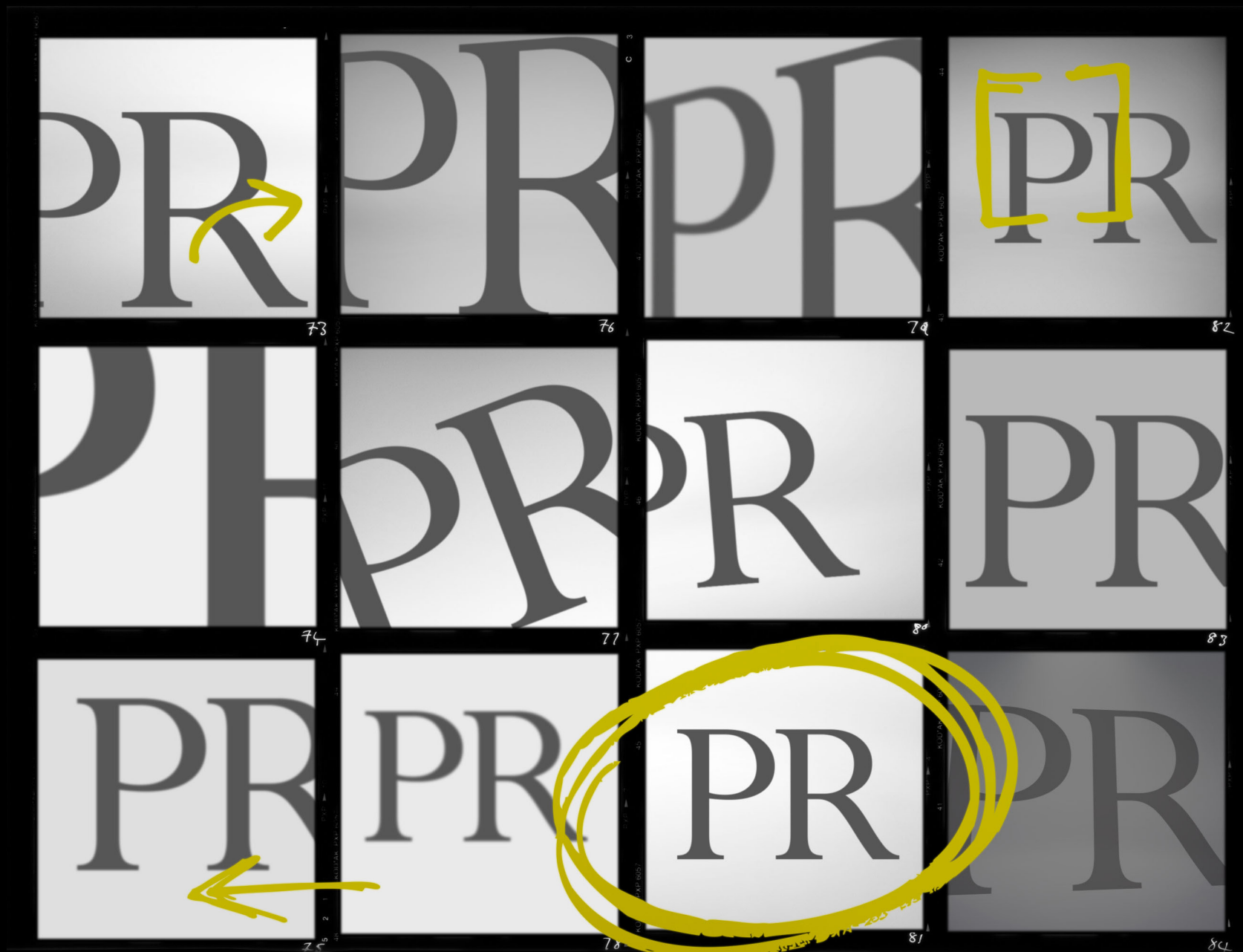
The way a brand looks after personal data will implicitly influence how trusted they are on a wider brand level.

A generic 40 page privacy policy won't cut it anymore. 2014 was not the year of increasing attention spans, mass legal training and opening up of free time! The challenge for brands will be in taking the same open communication currently employed in other strands of their customer-company relationship, and applying them to the topic of data usage and security. The brands that get this right will access one of the most sought after competitive advantages going: trust.



Jacques Viljoen
PR Manager

Their Data, Your Reputation



Visualisations are key to making stories stand out from the crowd.

In 2013, a survey by [PR Newswire](#) and [PR News](#) revealed that 76% of communications planners intended to use more visual storytelling in 2014, yet even today only [5% of PR budgets are dedicated to producing visual content](#).

This lack of adoption provides innovative brands a competitive opening: visualisation as a PR tool.

The consumer landscape is ever more saturated with marketing messages and earned media is still the holy grail as brands seek to participate in conversations and gain audience trust. In this setting, compelling images and [visualisations](#) are key to [making stories stand out from the crowd](#). They provide not only quick audience consumption, but

the all-important stimulus for people to actually share that message. Think of it as a prop around which it is easier for people to share opinion - it is your stimulus to drive earned media.

PR teams have always had to think about what an article would look like on a page before pitching, and this is more important than ever. Thinking “what would it take for someone to publish this” before the content is produced will make it easier to sell in, gaining wider exposure and, ultimately, better results for clients.

In 2015 brands will continue to grapple with this and must consider the questions of what will our audience share, and what will they say when doing so.

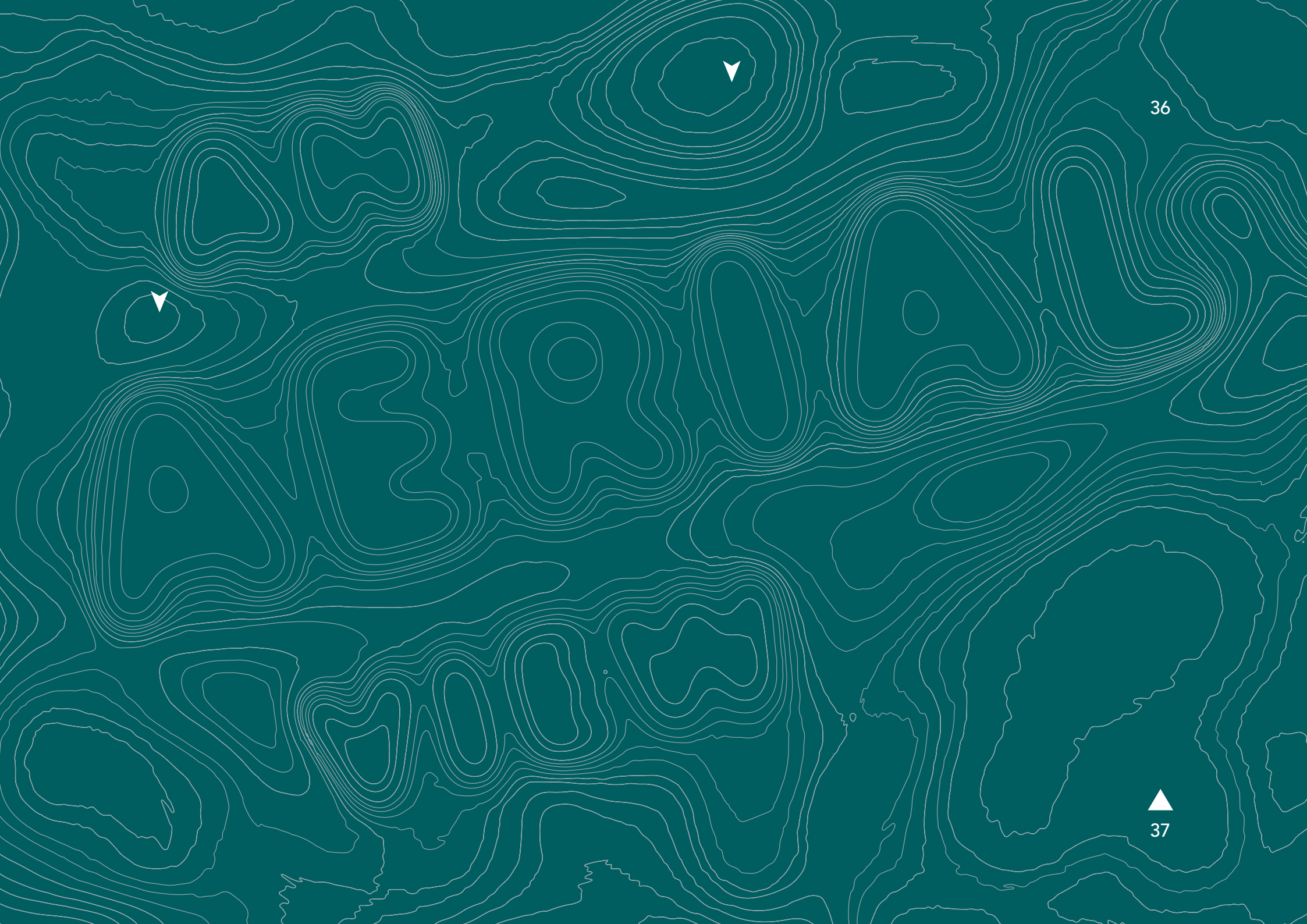


**Emily
Conrad-Pickles**
Communications Director



**Antonia
Fenwicke-Clennell**
PR Executive

The Visualisation of PR



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It becomes less a matter of who has been given prime position in the press circle, rather 'who is controlling that drone?'

2014 was the year that saw drones burst onto the scene. 2015? This will be the year we make sense of how to get the most out of them, whilst regulators worry about controlling them.

The technology required for sustained flight has become more ubiquitous, drones have become more affordable, and as their ability to carry larger loads has increased so has their potential. [DHL delivered medicine](#) to an island in the North Sea, whilst permission has recently been granted to use drones to [monitor oil pipelines, farms and construction sites](#).

Drones give us a [unique perspective on the world](#) and access to places we otherwise wouldn't be able to go; in doing so they will provide an array of business opportunities.

A benefit of drones that a wider number of businesses and brands will be able to utilise is in [creative video work](#).

We have the ability to turn smaller-scale productions into something that seem much larger, and their use in live broadcasts will completely circumvent the normal jostling of the press crowd - it becomes less a matter of who has been given prime position in the press circle, rather 'who is controlling that drone'.

Innovative users will continue to astound us and provide some of the most powerful content in the coming year, and aerial shots will fast become not only the norm, but expected.



Oliver Clague
TV Content Producer

An Aerial View



THE



INTERNET OF THINGS



GOES



MAINSTREAM



As the Internet of Things goes mainstream consumers will start expecting 'everything' to be connected.

Assuming personal data trust issues prevalent in today's society are overcome, the Internet of Things is poised to take off. Apple has a history of disrupting the technology market through making technology accessible and the Apple watch will soon be available with analysts believing the company is expecting to shift 30-40 million this year alone.

Additionally in 2014 Ralph Lauren trialed its smart shirt at the US Open tennis tournament, giving weight to the suggestion that brands carrying social currency are pushing wearable technology, and it will have a wider knock-on effect.

Various figures have been thrown about regarding the 'number of things' connected to the internet with Cisco claiming 25 billion devices will be connected this year. That's significantly over three times the number of people on the planet.

A key benefit of the Internet of Things is supporting human planning and decision making.

As it goes mainstream, consumers will start expecting 'everything' to be connected and more intelligent in the provision of information. We are entering the era of Ubiquitous Connection.

Businesses that can adopt this mantra of creating a more intelligent offering will gain competitive advantage. Doing this will need a reversal of brand data flow, from pull to push, and companies that think along the lines of 'what information can we give (push) to our customers to help their decision making and planning' will be the ones who gain an advantage and will not have to play catch up.



Alex Rayner

New Business Director

The Internet of Things Goes Mainstream



Can I help you with that?

ADAPTIVE MACHINES



Microsoft



This will prove a watershed moment for our human relationship with technology.

A new era of applied artificial intelligence and machine learning is being ushered in where the vast benefits of immense networks of information can finally be leveraged.

2014 saw Google purchase DeepMind for \$400m, a company whose mission is simple, solve intelligence, whilst the world's first family robot, JIBO, was successfully crowdfunded and is machine learning capable.

Machine learning and artificial intelligence have been slowly seeping into our lives for a number of years. Google and Facebook algorithms are easily recognisable examples of this trend yet our phones best illustrate this shift. Smartphones

have been learning how we type since their introduction, their voice assistants are seen by manufacturers as intelligent assistants and now they can become aware if they have been stolen. Machines are adapting to us everywhere.

The leap forward is in the combined ability to digest huge datasets - seeing trends not always recognisable to human analysis - and then adapt to that information accordingly.

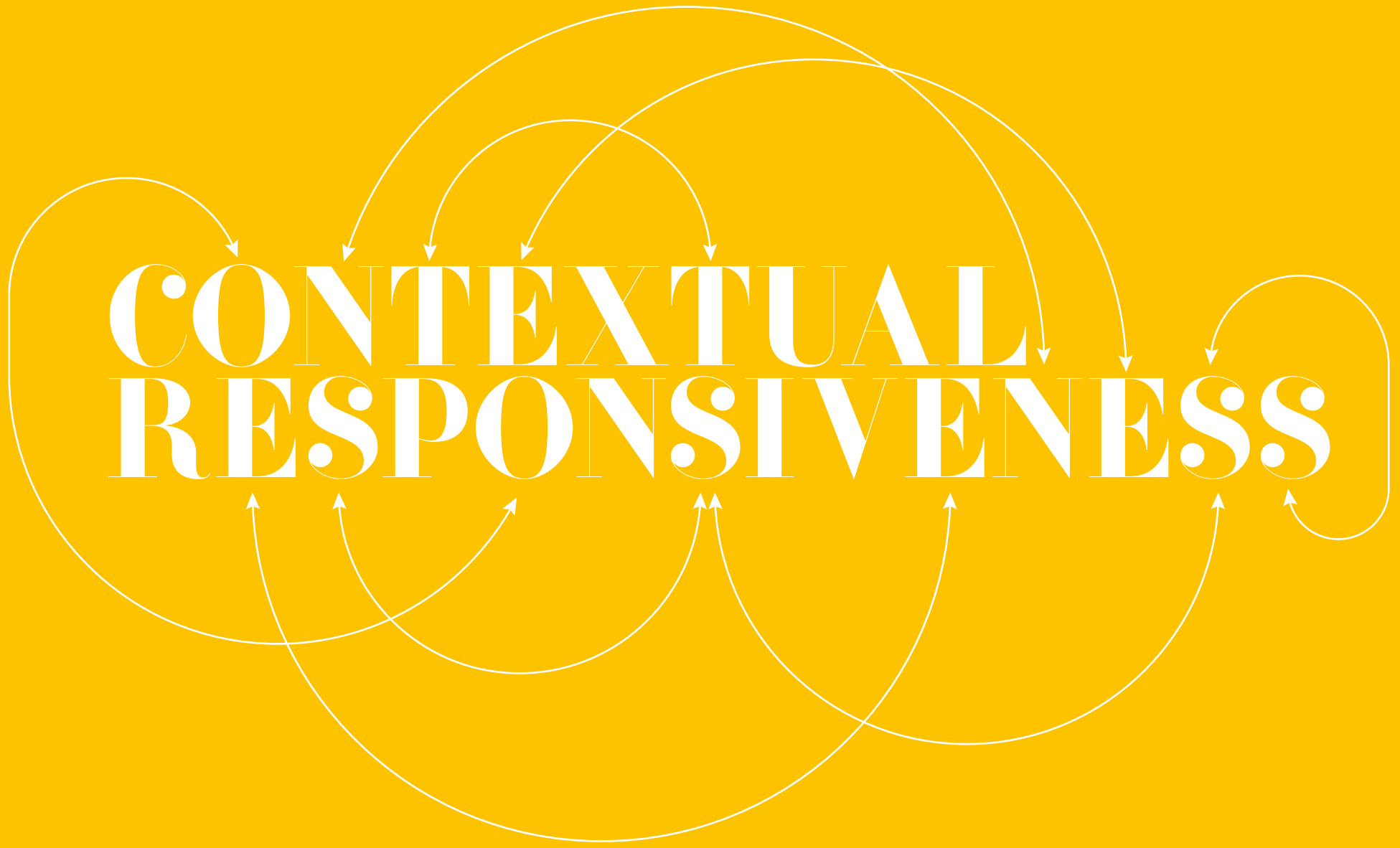
Living in a constantly changing world, this capability will prove a watershed moment for our human relationship with technology and brands in general. The ability to adapt without instruction will become the norm.



Wasiq Islam
Chief Technology Officer

Adaptive Machines

CONTEXTUAL
RESPONSIVENESS



It is important that companies direct their focus onto being as responsive as possible.

Bespoke viewing experiences are developing at a fast pace and repackaging the delivery of content for users is the next frontier.

Responsively designed websites that re-purpose themselves based on the device being used to view them are fast becoming standard practice. The ability to change the content served in adverts and newsfeeds by identifying the audience or user has been around for years. The next stage is combining both content and interface responsiveness to achieve truly bespoke experiences.

The most apparent existing example of this comes from [Google](#), which uses location, behaviour, browsing history and device identification to adapt its design as well as content served. When a user performs a search, Google takes these factors into account to determine which elements of its menu it will show,

the arrangement of information, and what actual content to display in order to better suit the individual. Benefits of this contextual responsiveness include increased relevancy, emotive connection and reduced steps to conversion.

Currently, to do something on the scale of Google takes significant resources, but this technology will become more accessible. Notably, last year a web build start-up named [The Grid raised \\$4.6m](#). Their concept? An AI web builder able to intelligently produce a design based on the content you submit for display - a true indication that the era of the fully responsive website will soon be upon us.

This technology might still feel a long way off the mainstream, but it is important that companies direct their focus onto being as responsive as possible in all digital delivery today, to provide the most relevant experience for their audience.



Jacob King
Designer

Contextual Responsiveness

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