

THE

ultimate guide

TO

**CONTENT
CURATION**

tigertiger

SEO AGENCY

intro

*In terms of brands, the great curate. It's really that simple. Mega-brands like **Pepsi, General Mills, Sephora and Cisco** have had great success with crowdsourcing content in original ways.*

Everyone is talking about how powerful content curation can be for brand lift and lead generation, but a great deal of confusion still exists on what it means and how to use it.

Some web analysts have concluded that content curation is merely a fancy way of saying "sharing." That's not wrong, it's just not complete. Professional content curation really involves finding and editing together content that appeals to a targeted group of consumers. Think of it as the opposite of mass media.

The curation process involves content such as social updates, blogs, news, video and graphics that is aggregated by semantic search engines. The result is then presented to readers in a form that is artistically arranged and easily scannable. It differs from content marketing in how the information is gathered and reorganized.

Curation takes marketing to the next level by commenting, highlighting and adding value as part of the presentation. A solid content curation strategy helps turn a basic marketing campaign into a social movement. It can build a brand into an iconic piece of culture.

curator?

“Curator.” *Just listen to how impressive that sounds. It takes a vast amount of experience to become a curator at a top art museum. It takes about 10 minutes to become a content curator, but patience and dedication to become a great one.*

Actually, content curation can hold various meanings at different companies, so let's be clear and define the term broadly.

Popularisation of the term “Content Curation” is attributed to Rohit Bhargava, in his **Content Curation Manifesto**. He summed up the goals of this new sector by specifying:

“To satisfy the people’s hunger for great content on any topic imaginable, there will need to be a new category of individuals working online. Someone whose job it is not to create more content, but to make sense of all the content that others are creating. To find the best and most relevant content and bring it forward. The people who choose to take on this role will be known as Content Curators.”

Content curation is a lot like making a fruit salad. You gather up different types of fruit (content) that seems appealing, and cut it up into interesting shapes, creating something that has never been tasted before. The original pieces were good on their own, but combined, they take things to a whole new level. Add a dash of editorial spice or controversial lemon juice, and you totally change the finished flavour.

There are many different ways to go about content curation, but they all boil down to offering followers an informative and entertaining way to engage with your brand.

HOW DO I BECOME A *curator?*

Just as retailers arrange items in the store to lead customers along an ideal purchase path, curation positions marketing messages that move readers along the marketing funnel from awareness to advocacy. With the right content selection and arrangement, curated sites encourage their visitors to delve deeper and grow from followers into fans. Content curation can turn a scattered collection of information bits into a seamless product story that organically builds sales interest.

Discovering the right content to curate can have tremendous implications. Simply posting to a corporate blog once a week and keeping up with Facebook is not enough, especially when everyone is doing it. Instead, businesses need to be conscious of all of the different content that is posted, and how it can be displayed to encourage click-throughs.

Another factor in content curation is the simple truth that many businesses lack the resources to produce all of their content internally. Sometimes, posting links to articles and videos that have already covered a topic creates the same effect but without the often hefty price tag of internal production.

Curation allows businesses to draw on many disparate sources to tell their story and promote their brand. The trick, of course, is knowing what, when and how to share it with your followers.

content curation

Building on his earlier work on defining curation, Bhargava went on to specify **five basic curation strategies** that he had observed in the business world. These models will help you better understand how curation should work, what the different goals are and how to apply them within your own content marketing strategy. There five basic types of curation are:

- **Elevation** - A content curator will gather lots of different sources together and provide insight using those sources. This follows the very simple rule of adding value to any content you use.
- **Aggregation How Long Should Your Pages Be? - How Long Should Your Pages Be?** - Although it is the most common form of curation, aggregation is frequently misused. Aggregation refers to the simple collection of content which is then displayed in a single place. Top 10 lists often fall into this category, as do many posts designed solely to reiterate information.
- **Distillation** - This process leads to the creation of original content, but it does not include the final step in the process. By taking information from a variety of sources and getting down to the basics, a writer helps get rid of the fluff. A writer might read a dozen articles on the same topic, before finally producing a piece that incorporates all the elements of the story.
- **Chronology** - What happened, when? A chronological approach works like a timeline, showing information in a successive format. This allows viewers to appreciate the pressures that affected decisions along the way and how things developed.
- **Mashups** - Like distillation, a writer uses many sources to get down to the basic information, but then they go one step further. They add their own point of view. They draw conclusions. This turns every mashup post into a truly original piece of content.

As you can see, each of these types of curation has a place in content marketing, but you need to be cautious about how you approach the mix.

WHY

curate?

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You might be asking why you should bother with curated content when it can so easily be misused. The simple answer is – success.

Curated content offers tremendous value when handled well. After all, no one can dismiss the potential benefits of sites like Pinterest, which is basically a content curation machine. Consider the success of Fab.com, currently valued at \$1 billion.

It uses curation to hand-pick designer fashions for its customers. Growth Devil recently reviewed some of the biggest **benefits of curation model**, including:

● Lower production costs

Generating original content is an important part of marketing, but it can also consume an inordinate amount of the time and money in your marketing budget. A more efficient method of promoting your brand messaging is to find out what is being said and comment on it. There is a vast amount of high quality content on the web right now and automated programs can deliver it.

● Brand Lift

You are what you curate. The types of stories you promote should fit together to tell your brand message as strongly as any marketing campaign. Your curated content is reposted, retweeted and shared, your site will become the destination for specific emotional connections among your followers. Curated content voice should be coordinated carefully with your social presence to establish that level of connection.

WHY *curate?*

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● **Building Community**

Curate content surrounding healthy dinner ideas and you will grow an very appreciative audience that depends on your site for better recipes and healthier meals. Your brand can develop into the go-to spot for foodies. Another passionate group consists of fashion followers. Picture your brand leading a fashionista community with access to your customer's perception of on-trend. The more you post within your niche, the greater your reputation can grow.

● **Greater market reach**

Curation sites attract visitors like food attracts ants. Consider sites like BMW blog, which mixes original news and curated content, chosen as the **Best Site Using The Content Curation Model** by CurationSoft. On the other end of the spectrum is Pinterest, which is entirely curated. **Alexa Traffic Ranks** reports that Pinterest is the 27th most popular site in the world, and ranks 12th in the U.S. Curation reflects the complexity of the world that we live in today. Consumers expect their preferred brands to reflect that complexity in their content mix.

There are many more benefits of content curation, which is why it has been moving to the top of marketing strategies across the planet. In fact, SEO benefits alone make curated content a must for every business that is concerned with their search rankings.

examples

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Before you can start publishing great content, you need a better understanding of your audience. One common marketing method of doing that is to build personas with as much detail as possible. This gives marketing a more direct tie to the audience they are trying to motivate. Building an emotional connection between your brand and your customer is the most essential aspect of content marketing.

choosing a theme

Diving into content curation means diving into a specific topic or theme. Themes are like that first cup of coffee in the morning. Yes, you can get up and go to work without it, but the day starts on the wrong foot, and often continues in the same vein. With the right theme, you kick off your marketing campaign on the right foot.

Unfortunately, many businesses get caught up in complex mission statements and forget the basics.

When looking at content from the perspective of a theme, the theme comes first, but how do you choose one? Ask the right questions and themes should present themselves. Start by explaining your company in this simple format:

Our company sells _____ to our ideal customer who is _____.

Here are a couple of examples to help you get started:

- **Fashion** “Our company sells purses to our ideal customer who is a professional working woman.” Some potential themes that arise from that include getting organised, accessorizing for the office and the evening or creating a personal style.
- **Technology** “Our company sells PBX hosting to our ideal customer who is small business owners in the Northeast.” A few potential themes might be increased employee productivity, improved communication and cutting technology costs.
- **Retail** “Our company sells affordable housewares to our ideal customer who is middle-class America.” Theme ideas might include decorating on a dime, DIY projects or customizing decorations.

CURATION

examples

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As you can see, by framing the question as simply as possible, you make potential themes obvious. Don't overthink this part. Themes should be obvious. They should also go beyond the immediate theme and touch on human emotions. No one enjoys reading nothing but sales content. Think of your theme as if it is the ice cream in a sundae. The toppings add customization, but without the ice cream it's just a pile of sweet stuff, not a sundae. Your theme is what brings everything together.

marketing strategy

As part of creating a theme, you need to get back to the what and the who. This helps when developing customer personas. Dove, a leading beauty and personal care company, has done an excellent job of answering these questions solely through their advertising and marketing content

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Where other fashion and beauty brands use models and celebrity faces to advertise, Dove remembered their customer — the average person.

In 2004, they launched their **Real Beauty campaign**, using tasteful semi-nude advertisements of women of all sizes and ages. The basic idea of the campaign was simple: Beauty is bigger than the limited options presented by trendy fashions.

By highlighting the sizes and shapes of real customers, Dove was able to reinvent their brand, creating an **emotional connection** with women all around the world. This strategy helped them come up with a theme that has continued to resonate with consumers for a decade. Dove made the statement that there is beauty to be found in all women that resounded with consumers, even if it didn't change the popular notion of beauty.

Their research into related keywords helped them bolster their SEO by organically including keywords that were related but not immediately obvious. For example, along with the concept of inner beauty, Dove gained access to keywords related to health and wellness.

Broad topics offer a wealth of themes, both big and small. Dove's theme of beauty offers a variety of different topics and smaller themes. Even with a focus on inner beauty, there are dozens of themes available to explore, from hair care to cosmetics. By choosing a topic that touches everyone, Dove created a basis for content curation that allows them to serve their customer base using different avenues.

Yes, every piece of content must tie in to the overarching theme, but they have given themselves a great deal of leeway by keeping the theme broad. It works rather like keyword phrases and long-tail keywords. The keyword/theme is inner beauty. Some of the long-tail keywords might be beauty on the outside or the inner beauty of that comes from body care.

Turn the same scrutiny on your own marketing strategy. If you sell accounting services to individuals, look at the themes that affect their lives immediately. Some examples might be retirement planning, financial responsibility, or ways to save for big life events. If you sell food, think about themes that promote family and friends, like Friday nights out or everyday easy dinners.

GETTING STARTED WITH

content curation

Keep in mind that you can choose more than one theme, but you might want to focus on them in a serial way and organize them logically. Going back to an accounting firm as an example, a tax theme makes sense during the first quarter of the year, and retirement planning or ways to save should follow shortly thereafter, as people collect their tax returns.

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Organisation is a critical component in the curation process. It is not just about the content, it is also about the display. The curation process calls for the collation, organisation and display of information.

By starting with a simple picture campaign and expanding to include social programs and educational offerings, Dove started small and grew their campaign into one that will be looked at as an industry-leading example of top marketing for years to come.

They have also earned top rankings for the keyword phrase “Real Beauty.” This is an amazing accomplishment from a simple marketing campaign.

Once you have your broad theme chosen, you can get into the nitty gritty of the curation process. You know the types of content you need, now it is just a matter of finding content and publishing it in an accessible way. Thankfully, there are tons of tools out there that can help.

Content curation tools come in two basic formats: sourcing and publication. Sourcing tools help you find information and content to sort through. They act as the filter, so you don't have to look at the nearly **700,000 pieces of content** posted to Facebook every minute. Not to mention, there are hundreds of thousands of blog posts, articles, press releases and more.

Publication tools help you put together your curated content and get it out to your readership. Both have value, and you should be using them to help you get started.

mobile user

Mobile devices are where business is headed. Many businesses are curating with mobile-first design. Before you begin curating, however, you need to understand the types of content that motivate your followers. Some basic tools that can help are RSS feeds and Twitter.

With Twitter, you can stay up to the minute on what people are saying about your industry. RSS feeds help you source content from your favourite providers. It will take a good deal of research to narrow in on the blogs with the voice and style you want.

Once you find them, their RSS feed can help you stay current and ready to nab the next title for your curated content. In addition to these well known tools, there are a couple of mobile apps that can help by curating content for you.

Zite – This formerly CNN-owned app offers you the ability to create a personalized magazine of niche-specific content. (A recent acquisition by Flipboard may impact future curation using Zite.) When you first sign up, there are a variety of pre-chosen suggestions like politics, economics, fashion, etc. You can then create your own. Plus, you can link your Google Reader, Twitter and Read it Later accounts to organize all of your content in one place. The best part about Zite is that it learns. As you use it, you give content a thumbs up or a thumbs down. It uses this to make predictions about your future likes and dislikes. You and the software work together to find the most perfect content for your needs.

Flipboard – This personalised magazine that shows you news based on your selections. It adds the ability to link practically all of your social media accounts to add in social content. You can link your Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Instagram, Flickr and more. By adding in social media you gain access to content that would not normally make it into a curated list. Your friends organically help you source content, along with news sources, web crawlers, and other traditional sources. This dominated market share by being one of the first magazine-style news aggregators on the iPhone and iPad, making it Apple's App of the Year in 2010. It soon moved to Android as well as is still building a substantial following.

mobile user

Feedly – This app took over when Google Reader closed down a few years ago. The mobile app aggregates top stories into one easy-reading display. It can also operate as a browser bookmarklet for Firefox, Chrome or Safari so readers can enjoy their personalised magazine on their laptops.

Factiva – The Factiva app from by Dow Jones goes behind paywalls to uncover hardcore news and financial reports from licensed sources. Its designed as a communications channel for a corporate internet or a company-sponsored news reader.

PostPost – Twitter users will love the functionality of this neat little app. It only takes content from Twitter, but it makes that info much more readable. PostPost breaks down the content on your Twitter feed by type and priority.

Prismatic – Displays articles you're likely to be interested in based on what your friends share. Think of it as Flipboard mixed with Google Reader. The site's goal is to get the news that interests you the most to the front of the line.

Scoop.it – Whenever you see a fascinating tidbit online, you can grab it, add your thoughts and publish to your blog or social networks. This approach is ideal for small to medium sized businesses that often get bogged down in the complexities of curation. The final product is a ready-to-publish magazine.

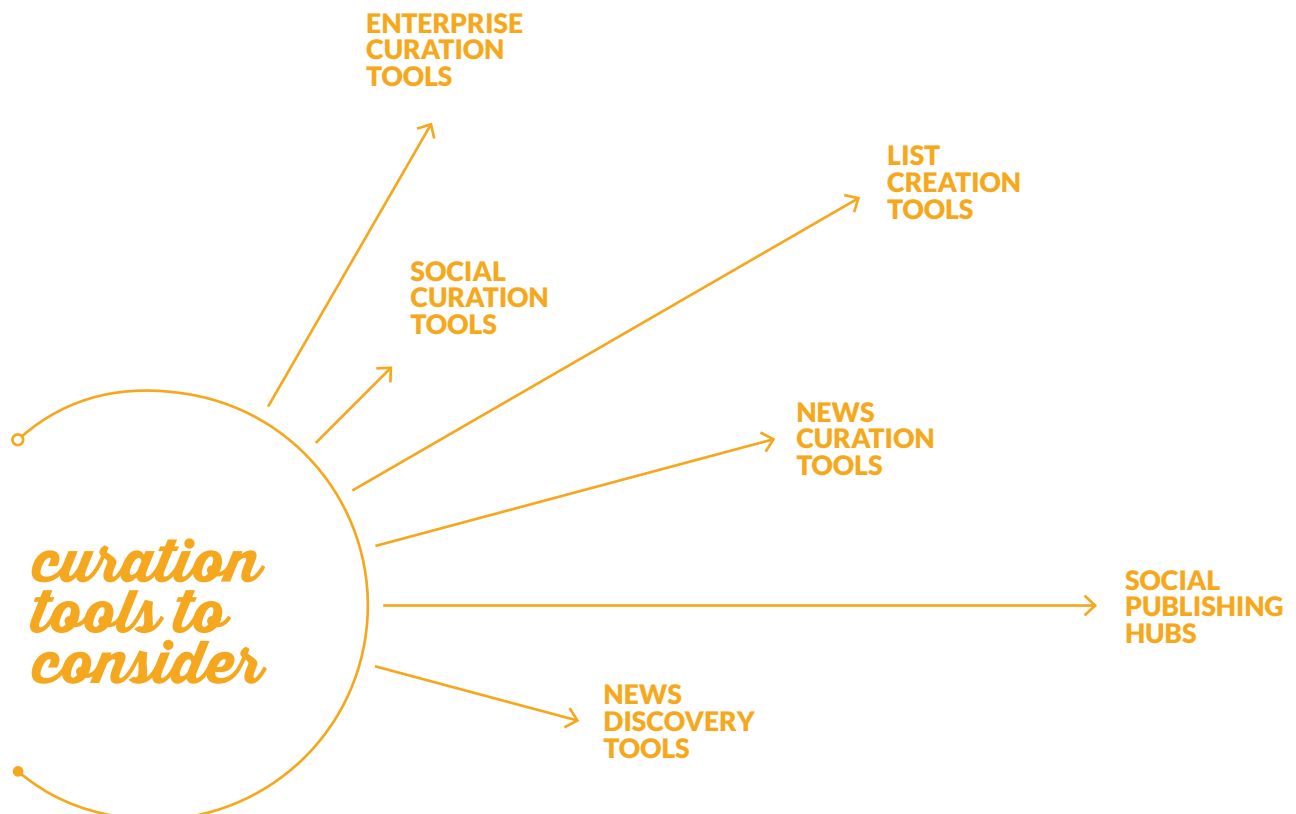
Pocket – Save almost anything from the Internet with this app. You can view anything you've put into your "pocket," even if you're offline, on your tablet, phone or computer.

CURATION TOOLS TO *consider*

There are so many curation tools on the market you could feel a little lost on which one to pick. The first question to start narrowing down the field is how much curation you intend to do.

The first list below covers enterprise-level curation tools that are able to supply a steady stream of articles, blogs, graphics and video. These tools tend to be heavy on the organisational features in order to manage the vast amount of content involved.

However, if you have more targeted marketing needs, like boosting your social presence or building your reputation as a thought leader with news commentary, the following categories help you design your own ideal content curation strategy. Here are a couple of examples to help you get started:



CURATION TOOLS TO *consider*

ENTERPRISE CURATION TOOLS

Curata – One of the most popular curation engines in the business world, Curata guides your search for content with auto-learning algorithms. If you have existing news feeds, import them and Curata goes to work refining your search.

Kapost – This was designed to work with Curata, but it can stand alone as a simple publishing tool. Its intuitive calendar system, channel organization and analytics make it a favourite for marketers.

Aggregate – Build your own online communities around the best content related to any given business segment. Based on audience social signals, the site auto-curates what they like and share. The new collaborative site can be viewed online or emailed out as a personalized newsletter.

PublishThis – Monitor the key concepts and trends in your industry, along with what the competition is up to while you create a site from a combination of curated, aggregated, and self-generated content.

Eqentia – Although there are free and low-priced options, the true benefits of this curation service begins at the enterprise level. Power users will see a personalized news page with drag and drop content boxes and interest categories are broken down by multiple streams and portals.

OneSpot – The next generation of advertising features high quality graphics in a content promotion spot that have become the rage on the web. The content targeting engine places your spot directly onto the sites where your users are most likely to visit.

Percolate – Project management meets content marketing with this tool for managing your campaigns and brand consistency across platforms.

EditorEye – Long-form editorial content is generating better SEO rankings under the new search algorithms. This tool collects relevant breaking news on any subject from millions of sites to establish your company as a thought leader.

StoryCrawler – Business intelligence and data mining are vital components of any curation strategy. Start here to produce reports and better organize all of your curation projects.

CURATION TOOLS TO *consider*

Bundlr – Behind-the-scenes analytics to help you track the success of each set of curated content. It also allows you to remove the Bundlr branding when embedding the information into your website. Its ability to sync with Dropbox also allows you to pull content from a variety of places. It is available on mobile platforms for convenient use. This clipper tool has a lot of functionality for the business user.

BundlePost – This simple but effective tool imports content from selected sources four times per day. You can then go through the collected content, select the best, edit for publication and create a posting schedule. BundlePost helps you stay ahead of the game. No more struggling to put together last minute mashups using their highly portable and effective back-office administration.

Roojoom.com – A combination of content curation with sales and training presentation software sets this tool up as an ideal lead generator. If you are planning to scale up from small business to enterprise-level content curation, this is a good platform to take you there.

SOCIAL CURATION TOOLS

Swayy – With built-in hashtags and @handles, this social engagement engine makes it quick and easy to get started with curation. It is designed to find and auto-tweet the kind of articles that your Twitter followers are craving.

Faveeo – The best aspect of this service is its query builder to help curators build sophisticated queries visually with suggestions on the most relevant sources and keywords. It can also help you locate the strongest social influencers on certain topics.

Newspin – Advances in semantic algorithms, social graph analysis and crowdsourced curation have driven the success of this new social curation startup.

Rallyverse – Salesforce integration makes this curation tool a powerful lead generator as well. It works well for coordinating marketing and sales projects.

Meddle.it – This platform allows you to very simply grab a piece of information that your followers will want to see, add your insights and publish across social networks.

CURATION TOOLS TO *consider*

LIST CREATION TOOLS

List.ly – Lists have become extremely popular thanks to sites like BuzzFeed. Many readers only have time for top 10 lists and best of posts. Listly makes creating these types of posts a breeze. You can create your own lists or pull information from around the web to generate a photo-rich list that is ready for posting.

Urist – Educational institutions made this site popular for organizing research and sharing learning tools. Now it has expanded to the consumer market with sharable lists of hard-to-find facts.

Liiist – Lists can be like mini-project management tools. That's the idea behind this site that makes list-building into a push-button operation.

ZEEF – This site hopes to turn all of the jumbled information on the Internet into a neat and searchable index. Users create list pages around individuals, companies or subjects and then let the user community rank the listing based on how useful it is.

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