

# BARK







This copy of

**BARK**

belongs to

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# CONTENTS

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## 01 WORK

**10**  
TOP TIPS FOR BRIEFING YOUR  
DIGITAL AGENCY

---

**12**  
THE PONY CLUB - UMBRACO CASE STUDY

---

**16**  
BRIDGE COFFEE ROASTERS - WORDPRESS  
CASE STUDY

---

**19**  
ACTIVE NORTHUMBERLAND - KENTICO  
CASE STUDY

---

**22**  
HARTPURY UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE -  
DIGITAL MARKETING CASE STUDY

---

**24**  
SPINDOGS WEBSITE GO LIVES

---

## 02 TECH

**28**  
WHAT IS WEB ACCESSIBILITY?

---

**30**  
UMBRACO VS WORDPRESS

---

**32**  
IS IGTV A THREAT TO YOUTUBE?

---

**34**  
FIFTEEN YEARS OF SPINDOGS

---

## 03 DESIGN

**38**  
BARK TO THE FUTURE

---

**41**  
DESIGN YOUR OWN COVER

---

**42**  
CIWW CAMPAIGN

---

**44**  
POSTCARDS

---

---

# 04 OM\*

(\*AKA ONLINE MARKETING /  
DIGITAL MARKETING)

**50**  
DIGITAL DETOX

---

**54**  
HYUNDAI - SOCIAL CAMPAIGN

---

**56**  
E.A.T, RESEARCH, OPTIMISE, REPEAT

---

# 05 CHAT

**60**  
INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD COOK - MONZO

---

**62**  
INTERVIEW WITH SHELLEY PHILLIPS -  
RSPCA CYMRU

---

**64**  
INTERVIEW WITH DAWN WALTER -  
MUNDY & ANSON

---

# 06 NEWS

**68**  
INTERVIEW WITH AN UMBRACO MVP

---

**70**  
BEST OF INSTAGRAM

---

**72**  
SPINDOGS CHARITY WORK

---

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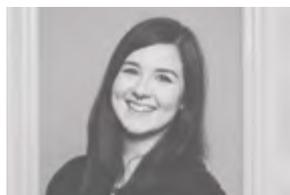
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# WELCOME

**LIAM GILES**

Managing Director



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Welcome to the new look, Issue 9, of BARK! At point of publication we have taken the decision for the whole team to work remotely during these challenging times of Covid-19, launching issue 9 is testament to the determined and collaborate nature of our team to get this issue published, when everyone in the country faces such an uncertain foreseeable future. We hope this issue brings you some much needed respite and inspiration.

Having published the magazine for 6 years we decided it was time to reflect on the format and our content, to ensure we are producing a magazine that is full of brilliant content that genuinely adds value to the reader and that you want to share with friends and colleagues.

This year has brought with it another period of change for Spindogs, we have expanded HQ, have grown the team across the board and worked on a variety of interesting projects across the UK.

This year we launched 36 new websites, 2 of which won Kentico site of the month and some of which appear in this issue, add to that our Umbraco Gold Partner status and Umbraco MVP Nik joining us and it has been a year of solidifying our position in the .Net space. With Kentico forming part of our core offering we have also ensured we have the largest (and only) team of Kentico EMS qualified marketers in Wales and you can expect more Kentico related content to appear on our channels in the coming months.

Looking to the year ahead, we look forward to working on more exciting projects for global brands, having welcomed Hyundai Europe to the Spindogs team this Spring.

We're really proud of the new BARK format and hope you like it, and I wish you all a safe and happy rest of the year.

Liam

# 01

## IN THIS SECTION:

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**10**

### **TOP TIPS FOR BRIEFING YOUR DIGITAL AGENCY**

Senior Account Manager Luke Cardy, shares his top tips and easy-to-follow guide for creating a flawless brief.

**12**

### **THE PONY CLUB - UMBRACO CASE STUDY**

Project Manager Andrew Maisey, gives the inside scoop on The Pony Club and how we helped them on their latest Umbraco website project.

**16**

### **BRIDGE COFFEE ROASTERS - WORDPRESS CASE STUDY**

Learn about Bridge Coffee Roasters, a B2B coffee company with a passion for good quality coffee, and their recent WordPress site from Project Manager, Ceri Bower.

**19**

### **ACTIVE NORTHUMBERLAND - KENTICO CASE STUDY**

Discover how we developed the new Kentico website for Active Northumberland as part of their transformation strategy from Project Manager, Andrew Maisey.

**22**

### **HARTPURY UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE - DIGITAL MARKETING CASE STUDY**

Learn about how we helped Hartpury generate course interest through a series of digital campaigns from Paid Advertising Strategist, Rhiannon Headlam.

**24**

### **SPINDOGS WEBSITE GO LIVES**

Did you know we launch over 30 websites a year? Take a look at some of the projects we launched in the past year.

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# TOP TIPS FOR BRIEFING YOUR DIGITAL AGENCY



LUKE CARDY

The process of briefing an agency on a new website project can be a really exciting time. Perhaps your current dated, uninspiring site is getting no conversions and isn't fulfilling its potential? Or you might have a new business that you can't wait to show the world? Whatever the case, you may be tempted to skip a few steps and jump straight to asking, 'How much is this going to cost?'

Here's why you should ask some other questions first:

When starting any new website project, it is really beneficial to everyone involved to have a clear brief. This doesn't always mean compiling a 50-page document which induces an information overload. Instead, consider the key functionality and page types that your new website needs to fulfil the requirements of all users.

We know it can be really daunting deciding what information to include, so we created this handy guide to help you deliver a top-notch brief:

## #1

### AGREE ON YOUR BRAND BEFORE YOU START THE WEB PROJECT

It can be tempting to let a new website influence the visual identity of your brand, but considering brand first always results in a more engaging outcome.

## #2

### REVIEW THE CONTENT ON YOUR CURRENT SITE AND CHOOSE WHAT TO KEEP & LOSE

- Decide whether you need our help to populate the new site with content
- Consider how getting rid of large amounts of content will impact your SEO

## #3

### CREATE A SITEMAP OF ALL THE PAGES YOU'LL NEED

You can avoid surprises such as missing pages or content further down the line by mapping out your pages and how they will be accessed on the site up-front. (We can help you refine this later on!)

## #4

### DON'T RUSH THE WEB PROJECT JUST TO GET SOMETHING NEW LIVE

Allow yourself enough time so you don't have to rush the project. We'd suggest a minimum of ten weeks for a website project, but this could be longer depending on your requirements.

## #5

### DO YOUR HOMEWORK ON THE AGENCIES SUBMITTING THEIR PROPOSALS

Have they worked on similar projects? Ask them to share case studies, costs, timescales, as well as their project process and team information. If it seems too good to be true, it just might be!

If one agency is significantly cheaper or promising an extremely quick turnaround on your project, double check that they have fully understood all of your requirements before you give the go ahead.





# THE PONY CLUB

Creating a website that looks great is one thing, but ensuring it accommodates all types of visitors can be quite challenging. This is especially true for websites with different member types, such as The Pony Club, where the online experience needs to be seamless for each group. Your marketing efforts could be top-notch, but if the user experience on your website is frustrating, you'll find yourself hard-pressed to get conversions. Come along for the ride as we revisit this ambitious UX project.



ANDREW MAISEY

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# “Spindogs’ design experience was invaluable and the regular project meetings allowed us to effectively communicate feedback and ideas.”

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## One (seamless UX) for all (member types)

The Pony Club is an international voluntary youth organisation for young people interested in ponies and riding. Tracing its history back to the 1920s, the club has been a stepping stone for a large number of equestrians and medal winners. Now with 345 branches and 480 centres in the UK alone, The Pony Club has over 110,000 members worldwide, making it the largest young riders association in the world.

The Pony Club first came to us when they realised that their website was dated and was no longer fit for purpose. With three chaotic navigation bars and many conflicting calls to action on each page, the site offered a rather confusing user journey. This made it difficult for visitors to find the content they were searching for, which in turn meant The Pony Club were losing potential new member sign-ups.

They needed us to review the user journey and use our findings to build an engaging, accessible website that offered an improved user experience for all different Pony Club member groups. Following the creation of a clear user journey and navigation for users, The Pony Club also required a new content structure which they could easily follow.

## OUR APPROACH

### Jumping through too many hoops

Before we design any website, we conduct a series of discovery workshops that help us understand how users interact with the website and what their frustrations are. The Pony Club discovery phase confirmed that the website wasn't user-friendly for new visitors. The chaotic navigation made it difficult for potential new members to sign-up and contact their local branch or centre, which resulted in a large volume of enquiries sent to The Pony Club HQ and a whole load of extra work for their staff there.

We also found the website's catalogue of content was buried in the depths of the website with poor navigation which made it difficult for visitors to find the content they wanted to see.

Following the workshops, we delivered a discovery blueprint, which set out our recommendations for the new website.

### More than a one-trick pony

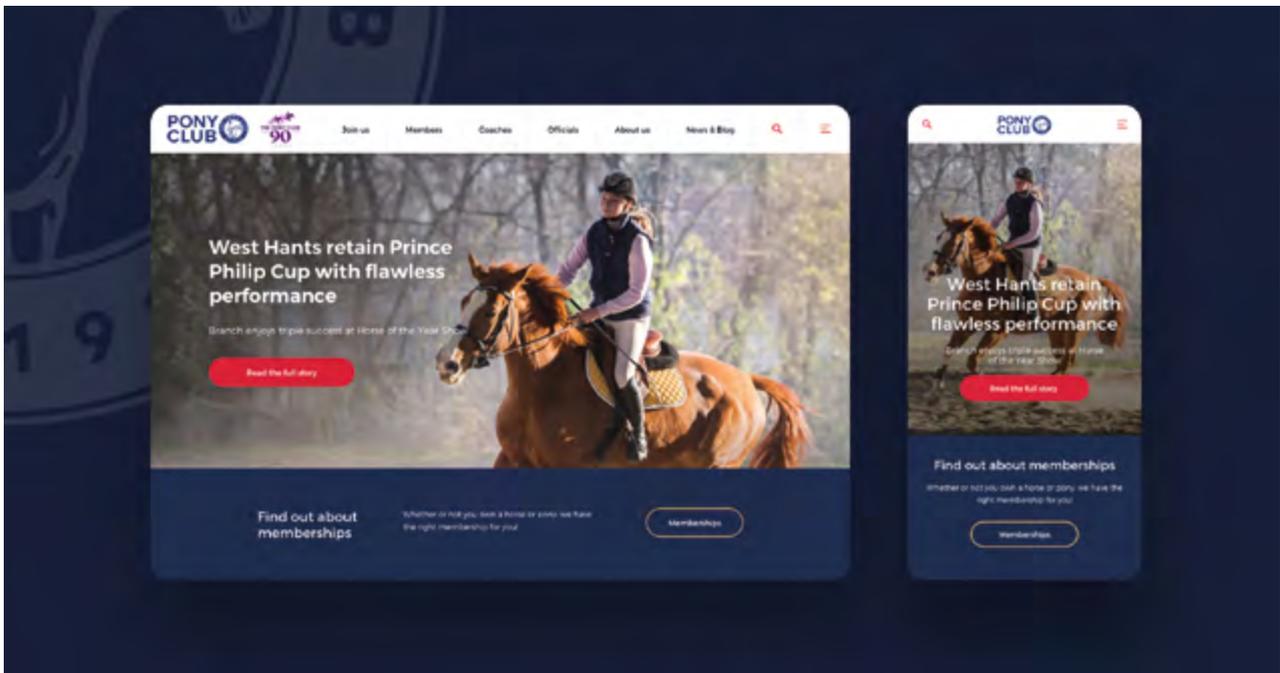
Making sure our clients have the right content management system (CMS) is an essential part of the process for any website we build, as we need to be confident that the CMS can fulfil their business objectives and aims for the future.

We worked with The Pony Club to confirm what functionality they wanted for their website from the get-go, as well as a wish list of features for later down the line. Based on their goals, we decided that Umbraco would be the best CMS for The Pony Club, as it would allow them to create microsites for individual branches and centres, should they wish to expand their website in the future.

### Creating fast track navigation

We always have our UX hats on during the design stage of a project. When we were designing the new website for The Pony Club, we did so with a clear user journey and content structure in mind, aiming to create something that would guide potential new members to the content they need and encourage them to sign up.

We started by consolidating the three navigation bars into one clear bar at the top of the page. We then created an additional burger menu, which could house any content that did not fit the categories in the main navigation.



With the help of the new CMS, The Pony Club could map content appropriately, doing away with duplicate content from their old site, which in turn helped create an easy-to-follow structure.

Faced with the challenge of enabling members to easily find membership details on the website, our designers and frontend team worked together to create a 'decision tree' on the membership types page. The drop-down form with three simple questions was designed to determine the user's membership type. Once they have answered the questions, the system highlights the most suitable membership option on the right-hand side of the page.

We also created a call to action for the page, designed to drive potential members to sign up for the correct membership. The call to action encouraged the users to enter their postcode or a specific centre/branch, and then points them to their nearest 'Pony Club'. As well as ensuring users could easily get to the relevant contact information, we also simplified the site search by adding filters to take members to their desired destination in fewer steps.

Lastly, to tackle the issue of users contacting HQ instead of their local branch, we created a dedicated 'Find a Pony Club' page. The simple layout, combined with Umbraco's sophisticated tagging functionality, enabled users to easily find the contact information for their local Pony Club without going through HQ. We used the same tagging functionality for the 'Latest News' page, so that visitors can sort news articles by sport type. In the future, we anticipate this functionality will also allow The Pony Club to tag their news content by specific centre and branch as well.

#### DESIGN HIGHLIGHTS

**New navigation and burger menu** – Consolidated the three navigation bars into one main navigation, plus a burger menu which sorts content by topic.

**Drop-down form for members** – Created a drop-down form on the membership types page to help users find the most suitable membership for them.

**Mobile responsive** – Made the new site mobile-friendly so that members could seamlessly access the website on their phones when they are out and about.

**'Find a Pony Club' page** – Designed a dedicated landing page for new members, so they can find their branch contact information without having to get in touch with the head office.

#### Dashing new website and lightning-fast UX

The end results? A mobile-friendly website with an improved content structure and seamless user experience, which enables The Pony Club members to find their membership details and local branch information with ease.

**“WE WANTED A WEBSITE WITH A MODERN STYLE THAT WOULD ENGAGE WITH PONY CLUB MEMBERS AND ALL OUR DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDER GROUPS. SPINDOGS' DESIGN EXPERIENCE WAS INVALUABLE AND THE REGULAR PROJECT MEETINGS ALLOWED US TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE FEEDBACK AND IDEAS.”**

Marty Bibby - The Pony Club

**MOST OF  
US HAVE  
EXPERIENCED  
WOW MOMENTS.  
WE JUST HAVEN'T  
TAKEN TIME TO  
THINK DEEPLY  
ABOUT THEM.**

NOT OUR WORDS, BUT THE WORDS OF [MICHAEL HYATT](#).

# BRIDGE COFFEE ROASTERS



CERI BOWER



## BREAKING NEW GROUNDS

Bridge Coffee Roasters is a B2B coffee company with a passion for good quality coffee. These coffee-lovers work to build success with their partners by creating innovative concepts designed to maximise their retailing potential. The team creates 'out of home' coffee destinations within organisations whose core business isn't coffee, by selling, leasing and loaning coffee machines, as well as additional equipment, accessories and coffee beans, to hotels, garden centres, contract caterers, leisure centres, farm shops and other business sectors across the UK.

Whether they require a full coffee shop design and fitting, or a simple coffee package, Bridge Coffee Roasters tailors its offering to suit its clients' needs. The company even provides professional barista training and comprehensive marketing support which covers brand management and quality control. Above all, the heart of the business lies in the roastery, and the majority of the company's efforts are focussed on spreading their passion for coffee.

As part its new strategic direction and rebrand of the company, we were asked to create a new website for Bridge Coffee Roasters to support its new direction and reveal the new branding that came along with it. Read on as we spill the beans on how we achieved it.



**“We’re delighted with the outcome and know our customers will be too.”**

#### **BREWING UP A STORM**

When Bridge Coffee Roasters first approached us, they needed a responsive and user-friendly website that was a go-to hub for all information related to coffee retail and would essentially generate quality leads from caterers and facilities personnel throughout the UK.

We then agreed that the new website should reflect Bridge Coffee Roasters as professional, well-established roasters who offer innovative concepts and sell coffee experiences. As well as positioning Bridge Coffee Roasters correctly in the marketplace and highlighting its unique selling points, the site needed to showcase the versatility of its previous work to prospective clients through case studies and testimonials.

Also, we wanted the website to show the company's great coffee expertise and industry knowledge through blogs, whitepapers, online tools, and infographics, and offer advice on how to retail coffee. But above all, the website needed to effectively communicate to prospective clients the benefits of working with Bridge Coffee Roasters and have the functionality for them to book appointments for consulting sessions with the sales team.

#### **OUR SOLUTION**

For this project, we teamed up with our photography partners, Magenta, to help capture the values and brand DNA of Bridge Coffee Roasters. We mixed professional photography with video to create a website that was visually appealing, engaging and image-led. Once we completed the design concepts, we then built a fully responsive WordPress site with flexible product templates that enabled Bridge Coffee Roasters to design its product pages.

We also included a HubSpot integration in the templates to enable Bridge Coffee Roasters to track enquiries made via custom styled, embedded Hubspot forms. The user-friendly functionality of the marketing hub gave full control to Bridge Coffee Roasters landing page layouts, including the placement of enquiry forms, as well as customer journey automation and a live chat facility.

#### **ESPRESSO RESULTS**

We worked seamlessly together as a team on every aspect of the project, from the photography to web development and the SEO launch, to create a professional website imbued with the unique character of Bridge Coffee Roasters, which the team is proud of.

Director Darryl Devenish praised the project outcomes, commenting: *“To align with our vision for the future, now is the perfect time to refresh our brand and reflect our new values through the website. We’re delighted with the outcome and know our customers will be too.”*

Head to the Bridge Coffee Roasters website to read their blog on what it was like to work with Spindogs and on their website project at [www.bridgecoffeeroasters.co.uk](http://www.bridgecoffeeroasters.co.uk)

*“Spindogs have been a key part of our online journey, taking on board our vision and goals and turning them into a clean, professional and user friendly website. The team are great to work with and we look forward to working with them on more projects in the near future.”*

Laura Lewis – Marketing

CASE STUDY

KENTICO

# ACTIVE NORTHUMBERLAND



ANDREW MAISEY



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# “As a Kentico Gold Partner, Spindogs could guarantee the expertise and past experience required to deliver a project within a five-month time frame.”

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## GET NORTHUMBERLAND ACTIVE

As a charity, Active Northumberland exists solely for community benefit and any profit they make is invested back into improving their services to benefit the residents of Northumberland.

Amongst the many benefits they provide for their communities is a commitment to improve health and well-being, which they realise through a series of leisure centres with a holistic approach to mental and physical health.

Nowadays most people are not as active as they should be to maintain good health and a sense of well-being, due to the many barriers modern living presents to maintaining an active, healthy lifestyle. Inactivity is sadly becoming a global problem, and the costs of treating preventable health conditions associated with it are enormous, which in turn puts immense pressure on our cherished Health and Social Care services.

At Active Northumberland their aim is to work with their partners and communities to develop new innovative ways of delivering services, so they can provide people with the support they need to be more active and lead a healthy lifestyle.

Seeing this as a challenge, Active Northumberland began their transformation process to change attitudes by updating the branding of their centres along with their social media presence. The ‘new look’ is just a small part of their Transformational Strategy, which aims to progressively develop and improve their facilities and services. Along with new branding and social media, a big part of their strategy was the development of a brand new Kentico website.

With our team of Kentico Certified marketers and developers, we welcomed the Active Northumberland project as a sign that all the hard work we put into ensuring we remain Kentico experts and Certified Gold Partners continues to pay off.

## A DIGITAL PRESENCE IN NEED OF A TRANSFORMATION

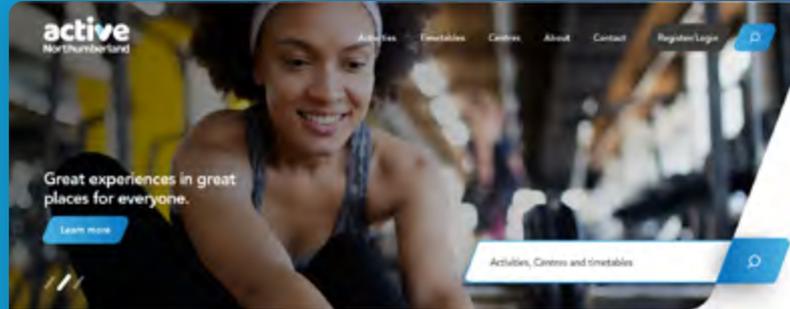
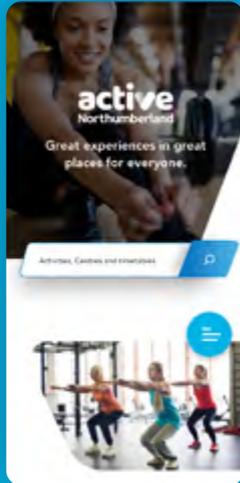
The main goal for the new Active Northumberland website was to showcase the facilities on offer at the centres through simple and intuitive user journeys which allow both existing members and newcomers to quickly find what they need. There was also an emphasis on creating a great mobile experience, using images and video to showcase activities, as well as delivering a “wow” experience. We were also tasked with integrating the existing solutions for membership, classes and timetables which were previously generated elsewhere.

## A CMS MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

As Kentico Gold Partners with certified marketers and developers we have a wealth of experience developing revolutionary Kentico websites, which put us in good stead for this project. We were able to complete a full project life-cycle from kick-off and design right through to development and testing, all within just five months. (In case you’re not versed in the world of web development, this is out of the ordinary for a project of this size, but we are always up for a challenge!)

We fully integrated both the membership and the classes and timetable data within the existing Northumberland County Council Kentico infrastructure. This included on site deployment handover in line with the Active Northumberland Transformation Strategy. As part of the implementation we used custom reusable widgets and custom connection strings to an external database, as well as a smart search index which allows users to perform faceted search.





#### Providing the best community leisure and wellness provider in the UK

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[Our mission](#) [About us](#)

#### Get inspired

4 / 2 of activities



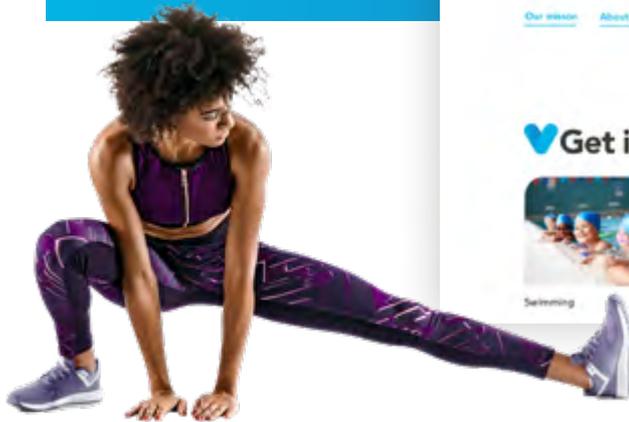
Swimming



Gym



Fitness Classes



**“WE CHALLENGED SPINDOGS TO DEVELOP A FUNCTIONAL, ATTRACTIVE AND POWERFUL PLATFORM WHICH WOULD STAND OUT IN THE DIGITAL WORLD WE ARE IN, WHICH WE CERTAINLY FEEL WE HAVE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE COLLABORATION WITH THE SPINDOGS TEAM.”**

Sam Moore – Marketing & Digital Officer

#### WHAT MADE KENTICO THE BEST SOLUTION?

The capabilities of the Kentico platform gave us the scope for building the bespoke functionalities we needed to integrate for this project. What's more, Kentico functionality supports responsive design, which meets the needs of users seamlessly across all devices (mobile, tablet and desktop)

Kentico's fully customisable .NET CMS solution is intuitive, easy-to-use and packed with a range of integrated tools designed to fulfil all your development and business requirements. Kentico can also be seamlessly integrated with online marketing tools, customer experience management systems and document management programmes to deliver exceptional functionality.

Last but not least, as a Kentico Gold Partner, Spindogs could guarantee the expertise and past experience required to make sure the project was completed within the time frame and went off without a hitch.

Since the launch of the Active Northumberland website, the project has gone on to be recognised within the Kentico community as one of the Top 10 Kentico websites for February 2020. Huge kudos to the team who worked on the project and a big thank you to Active Northumberland for their continued support.

**INSPIRATION  
IS THE MOST  
IMPORTANT  
PART OF  
OUR DIGITAL  
STRATEGY.**

**NOT OUR WORDS, BUT THE WORDS OF PAULL YOUNG.**

CASE STUDY

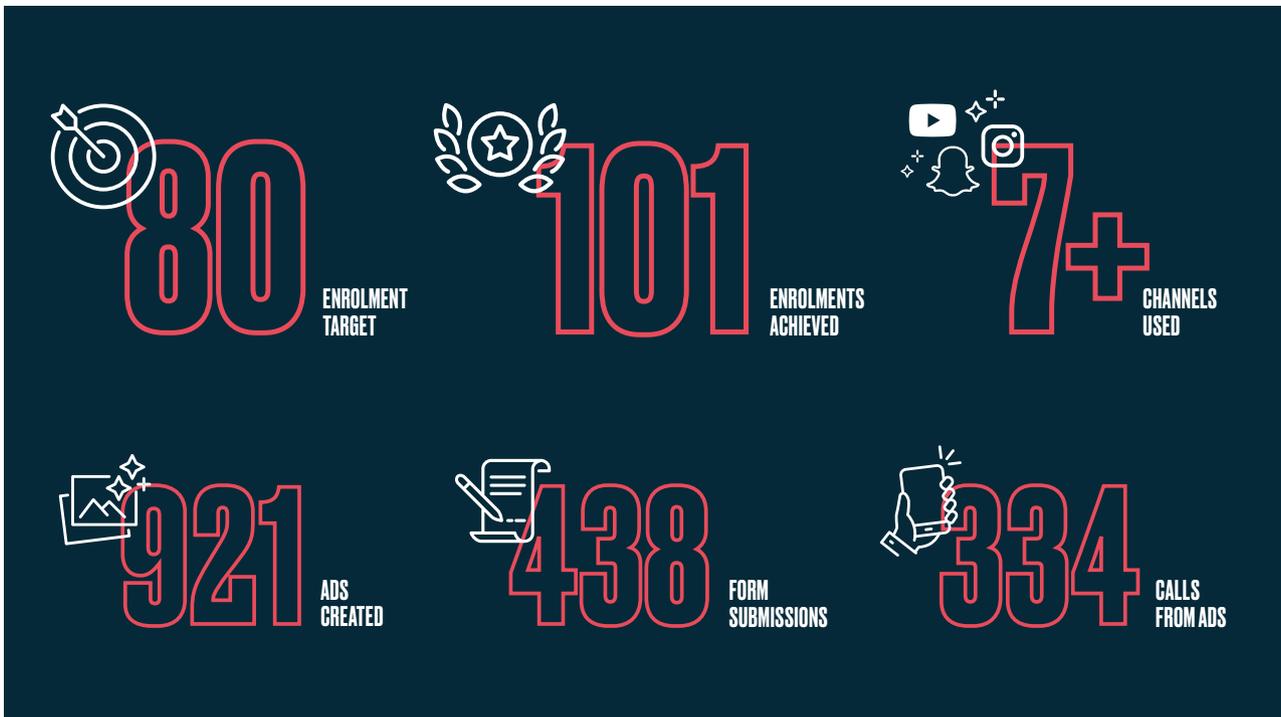
ONLINE MARKETING



# HARTPURY UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE



RHIANNON HEADLAM



### THE STARTING LINE

Ahead of the 2019/2020 academic year, we teamed up with Hartpury University and Hartpury College on a clearing campaign designed to attract undergraduates to five key areas of study.

The campaign aimed to showcase the vast array of facilities the University and College offer students, including the world's largest equine educational facility, which hosts three international equine events a year. Included in the facility is a water treadmill and a Racewood event simulator, and a Tech Centre with the latest agricultural technology.

This, alongside a range of other cutting-edge sports facilities, including a power gym, pitches and a stadium, and Hartpury's extensive animal collection, animal therapy centre and commercial farm, makes the University and College one of the UK's leading specialist education providers in agriculture, animal, equine, sport and veterinary nursing.

### SETTING THE BAR HIGH

Hartpury came to us with a clearing goal in mind. The University and College wanted to generate interest from undergraduates located within a two-hour radius of their campus, in their five target courses - animal, equine, sport, veterinary nursing & agriculture - with a total target of 80 applications.

### PLAYING THE AD PONIES

Putting our digital marketing heads together, we decided that the best approach would be to create a campaign with the message 'Do what you love' that utilised a mix of subject-level ads across a variety of paid search and social channels, including Google Ads and Display, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn and, for the first time, Snapchat.

We then split the creative into different messaging types:

- **The direct one** - straight to the point, this ad type focused on promoting specific Hartpury clearing courses and subjects
- **The supportive one** - this ad offered information and support throughout the confusing clearing process

- **The specialist one** - this was our opportunity to promote the unique facilities and specialisms Hartpury offers its students
- **The timely one** - we used a 'time is running out' message on this ad and scheduled towards the end of the campaign to highlight the need to take action before all available places were gone.

Throughout the project, we held weekly update calls with the Hartpury team to make sure we were on top of all ad performance and to identify any opportunities for amendments, which would help us to maximise the effectiveness of the campaign.

We also used a variety of ad types to compare the effectiveness of photography and video ads to determine which was the most successful medium. The result? Videos were the most effective, reaching an average of 91k users.

### BETTING ON A NEW HORSE

Our digital marketing team used Snapchat for the first time alongside Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Unsurprisingly, the Hartpury campaign (our pilot Snapchat campaign so to speak), proved to be incredibly successful, generating over 2,800 impressions from just three posts.

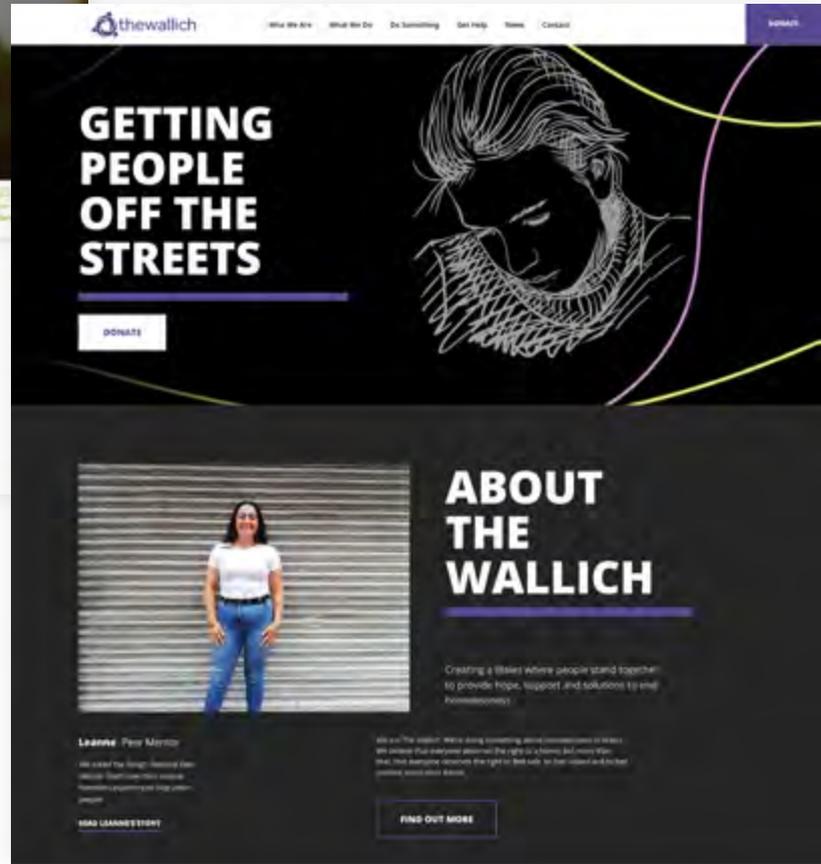
### THE RACE TO SUCCESS

Hartpury's clearing campaign clocked out at 101 applicants, which exceeded our original target of 80 enrolled students. Also, over 50% of animal and sport leads resulted in student enrolment.

Since then, we've been working with Hartpury University and College on a lot of other exciting PPC and social campaigns, so keep your eyes peeled to see how we use the power of digital marketing to get the results our client deserves.



Linc Cymru



The Wallich

# GO LIVES

Here are some of the websites we've launched for our clients in the past twelve months.



**THE BEST  
MARKETING  
DOESN'T  
FEEL LIKE  
MARKETING.**

NOT OUR WORDS, BUT THE WORDS OF TOM FISHBURNE.

# 02

## IN THIS SECTION:

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**28**

### **WHAT IS WEB ACCESSIBILITY?**

Spindogs advocate and aficionado Tegan Male explains the need to know about web accessibility.

**30**

### **WORDPRESS VS UMBRACO**

WordPress developer Ellis Fairclough and Umbraco developer Sian Simms battle it out to see which one comes out on top.

**32**

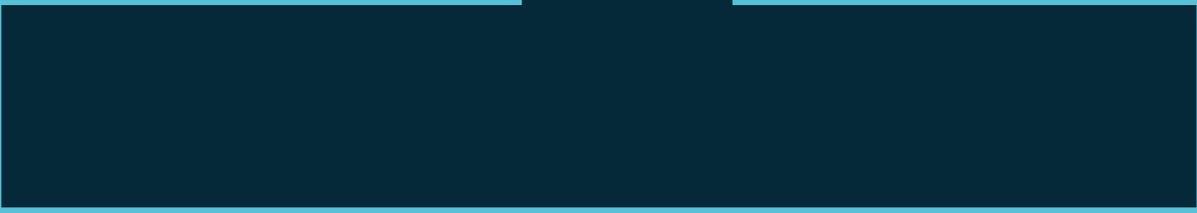
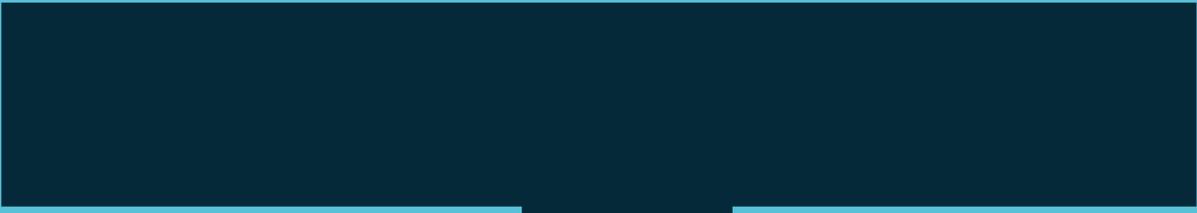
### **IS IGTV A THREAT TO YOUTUBE?**

In-house Marketing Executive, Leila King discusses the rise of video content and where you need to be to have an online presence.

**34**

### **FIFTEEN YEARS OF SPINDOGS**

As we celebrate fifteen years, we take a look at where we came from and how far we've come.



# WHAT IS WEB ACCESSIBILITY?

**Accessibility.** It's a buzz word that has been thrown around the web world quite a bit over the last few years. Some people have heard it mentioned, but many are still a little confused about what it is.



TEGAN MALE

As the accessibility advocate and aficionado in the Spindogs frontend development team, building semantic and accessible websites is my bread and butter. That's why I've taken it upon myself to shed light on the matter.

'Accessibility' is an umbrella term used to describe whether a product or service can be used by people of all abilities. In the physical world, this includes ramps to help wheelchair users get into buildings and braille print which allow the visually impaired to read. You know those bobbly paving slabs by road crossings? Those are also put in place to aid visually impaired people by alerting them where they can cross the road safely. There is a lot of accessible design already built into our physical world, which we wouldn't necessarily be aware of if we are fully-abled.

Accessible design can be built-in on the web too. We have the tools at our fingertips to create universal, inclusive experiences for everyone - all it takes is a slight shift of perspective and a little know-how!

Prior to Spindogs, I built and maintained a design system and CMS with the University of Bath, where accessibility was paramount and, by 2019, a legal obligation. I have carried out countless web accessibility audits for private and public companies, to help them evaluate what they can do to improve accessibility.

Over the past four years, I have trained myself on web accessibility by signing up to webinars and talking to other accessibility nerds on social media. That said, the most valuable training was the day I spent using the web with a screen-reader - that completely changes your perspective!

## A FOR EFFORT

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 (WCAG for short) is the world accessibility standard, written by the big dogs at the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). There are three levels of conformance: A, AA and AAA, with one A for minimum effort, and three As for maximum effort. I think Level AA is just right - it's flexible enough to allow brand personality and uniqueness, but featured enough that people with disabilities or impairments can access what they need.

The guidelines are, ironically, quite a dense, lengthy read, filled with legalese and vague wording. This has been done in an effort to maintain an official tone for regulations and legislation all around the world.

Plus, it needs to be future-proof for all the weird and wonderful things that us humans are yet to create.

In a nutshell, the guidelines cover four main principles:

- Is it **P**erceivable? - What is this supposed to be?
- Is it **O**perable? - How does this work?
- Is it **U**nderstandable? - What does this mean?
- Is it **R**obust? - Why doesn't this work?

## THE NUMBERS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

There are five types of disabilities: visual, auditory, cognitive (learning and neurological), motor/physical, and speech disability. If you don't have a disability or impairment yourself, you likely know someone who does. According to Scope's disability facts and figures, at least 1 in 5 people in the UK have a long-term illness, impairment or disability (as well as many more with a temporary disability), which can have a huge effect on how people use your product or service.

## WHAT WE CAN DO TO HELP

Here at Spindogs we have a wealth of experience creating accessible websites and applications for the public sector as well as for private organisations. Over the years, we have built up the knowledge base and toolkit required to analyse and report on a website's accessibility shortcomings. We can then confidently recommend improvements and even fix the issues for you.

As professionals who are proud of the work we do, we will work with you every step of the way to create a website that meets your desired accessibility level, whether that is A, AA or AAA. We consider accessibility a tool which encourages you to make better choices for the people that use your website. It also helps you focus on the things that really matter, like improving the web experience for everyone, regardless of their ability.

I am excited to bring my accessibility knowledge to the private sector, enlighten people and drive change from the inside. There are so many benefits to making accessibility a priority, from better SEO and broadening your audience to improving the usability for everyone and even improving a brand's public image. I do it because it makes the world a better place, one website at a time.



**“At least 1 in 5 people in the UK have a long-term illness, impairment or disability.”**

## IN THE BLUE CORNER

# WORDPRESS

ELLIS  
FAIRCLOUGH**ROUND #1: USABILITY**

The biggest selling point of WordPress is its usability. As it started as a blogging platform, it was designed for users with minimal experience in content management and website development. It has a great range of templates and plugins that can be used to create a brochure website that looks professional without the need of a web developer (depending on the functionality you need) and the hefty price that comes with one.

**ROUND #2: CUSTOMISATION & PLUGINS**

As we have already mentioned, WordPress is famous for its choice of plugins. You can find an add-on for almost anything you need, including a great selection of dedicated SEO plugins which are all Google-approved to help your site to rank more highly in search engine results.

**ROUND #3: SECURITY & UPDATES**

The flipside to the abundance of plugins is the potential security risks they pose. Whether it's half-baked updates, improper installation or poor design, plugins can make your website vulnerable to hackers. That's why we always recommend only using trusted plugins and, if you're not sure, always get a website expert to help you to install them.

## VERDICT

If you need a brochure website that's quick to set up and is easy to use, we recommend WordPress. This CMS is currently regarded as the most popular platform online, with 30% of all websites on the internet built on it. Thanks to it being widely-used and open source with a huge catalogue of plugins, it's perfect for novices looking to get a website live and up and running in no time.

When it comes to content management systems, or CMS as most of us know them, it can be a difficult decision choosing which one is best for you and your business. With so many systems on offer, and all of them offering different functionality, tools, and solutions, it's no wonder why business decision-makers lose sleep over it. Is it easy to use? Does it integrate easily? What's the scalability of the CMS? These are just some of the questions you're most probably asking web developers and other businesses alike to help decide which CMS to go for.

# THE WEIGHT IN



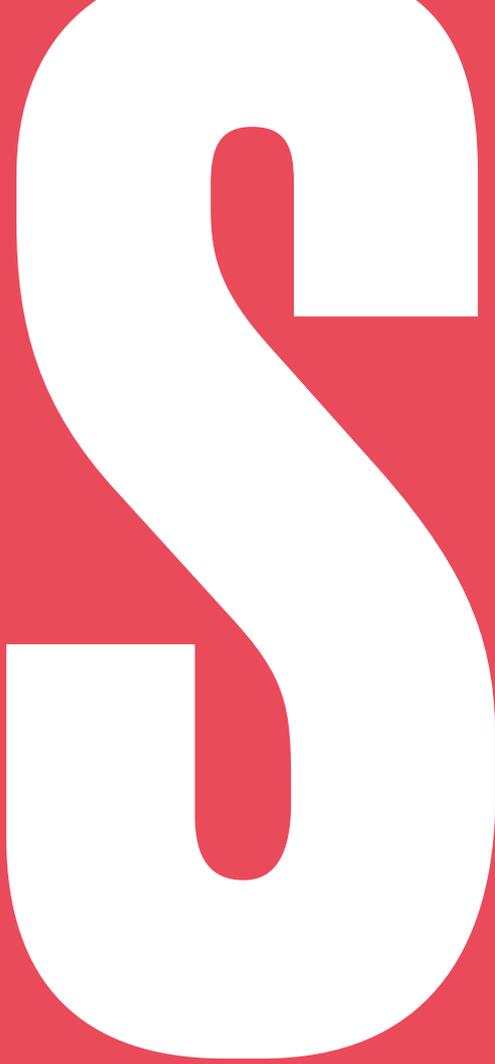
**INITIAL RELEASE**  
2003

**ACTIVE WEBSITES**  
75 Million +

**LANGUAGE**  
PHP

**PLUGINS AVAILABLE**  
50,000

**WEBSITE**  
[www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)



## IN THE RED CORNER

# UMBRACO



SIAN SIMMS

### ROUND #1: USABILITY

When it comes to usability, Umbraco is a bit more complex than WordPress. Since it was designed as a CMS for developers, Umbraco is more technical and requires some getting used to before you're fully acquainted and confident with using its templates. The great news is that once you've learned the digital ropes, there's so much you can do!

### ROUND #2: CUSTOMISATION & PLUGINS

Unlike WordPress, Umbraco's extensions are coded. Although they aren't as quick and easy as installing a plugin, it does mean that they are fully customisable and don't have the restrictions of a pre-built add-on. Provided that you have a trusted team of developers (\*cough, cough\*), you can customise the platform to perform exactly how you want it to; effectively and efficiently.

### ROUND #3: SECURITY & UPDATES

Umbraco, on the other hand, has a tight grip on security. Between developers across the globe constantly collaborating to make sure that the platform is up to scratch, and Microsoft's state-of-the-art security firm running penetration tests bi-annually, your CMS is safe and secure from cyber-attacks.

## VERDICT

If you're looking to create a website that has a lot of features and page layouts, then Umbraco is a robust CMS solution. It's based on .NET and is super user-friendly, especially on websites that have copious amounts of content, which is why a lot of companies take advantage of its customisable abilities. Umbraco is undoubtedly the champion for companies that value customisation and limitless functionalities. The proof is in the pudding – you only have to look at the big businesses like Warner Bros, Barclays, and Microsoft who are using Umbraco to build their empires.



### INITIAL RELEASE

2000

### ACTIVE SITES

502,500 +

### LANGUAGE

C#

### EXTENSIONS AVAILABLE

300

### WEBSITE

[www.umbraco.com](http://www.umbraco.com)

### CONCLUSION:

#### WHAT CMS TO USE?

If you're in the process of building a new website or changing platforms, then you have most likely heard of WordPress and Umbraco. These are two systems that are often pitted against each other, which isn't surprising considering they are both widely-used, relatively accessible and open source software.

We rallied our developers to help give an encompassing view of each of them and to determine which CMS comes out on top, but most importantly, to help you decide which one is best for you and your business.

The truth of the matter is, everybody's a winner! We proudly offer websites built on both WordPress and Umbraco, so we think both of these platforms are great. It's your specific requirements that determine which one is best for you.

**Still can't decide? Talk to us about what you're trying to achieve and we'll help you to find the best solution!**

# IS IGTV A THREAT TO YOUTUBE?

The rise of video content marketing in the world of digital has been undeniable over the past few years, and it's still on the up. Naturally, anyone who's anyone in Silicon Valley wants a piece of the pie, and the stats are there to show it's worth the investment.



LEILA KING

Since its humble beginnings in 2005, YouTube's attracted over 2 billion monthly users, who upload 500 hours of content to the platform every minute. Let that sink in for a moment.

When another platform is excelling, it's only a matter of time before a certain social media titan gets in on the action... Enter Instagram with IGTV! It reminds me of the time Snapchat introduced face filters and the user numbers exploded all over again, with people desperate to see what they'd look like as a dog, a cute rabbit or my personal favourite, a piece of bread.

Snapchat aside, we now have two of the biggest platforms competing for the top spot when it comes to video content... so who's the king of the castle?

Before we delve any deeper, it's really important to remember that YouTube has a thirteen-year advantage here and established itself as a video-only platform from the start; unlike Instagram, which was designed to offer quick snapshots of your life through photos when it emerged back in 2010.

#### **SO, IS IGTV A REAL THREAT TO YOUTUBE?**

IGTV didn't get the engagement it was aiming for when it first launched, with many of its original creators bailing after only a couple of videos and heading back to their beloved YouTube. Which left people asking what went wrong.

No matter how big the influencer, they were struggling with a couple of key factors:

#### **4. SHARING THEIR HARD WORK**

Portrait-only video made IGTV content notoriously difficult to edit and share. If you open a portrait video using an editing software (even one as simple as iMovie), it'll whack some black negative space on either side and turn it into a landscape video. Not only did this look, well... rubbish, it also meant you'd struggle to use your carefully curated content on any other platform. Unlike YouTube, you also needed to sign into Instagram to view a video, so if someone didn't have the app, you didn't get the view.

#### **SO, IGTV IS DOOMED, RIGHT?! WRONG.**

Since its lacklustre start, Instagram have listened to the complaints and massively stepped up their game.

As of May 2019, you can upload and watch videos in landscape. WIN! Your audience can watch a one-minute preview of your video with a super handy "Keep Watching in IGTV" button offered at the end. WIN! And, the analytics have got a hell of a lot better, so you can easily work out who's watching when. WIN!

While die-hard YouTubers have remained loyal to their platform, what about people new to the scene? YouTube is big, but it's so big now that your chance of getting your content seen seems to be getting smaller by the day, no matter how specific your tags are.

# “Utilise the attention you already have!”

#### **1. DIRECTING PEOPLE TO THE VIDEO**

Regular users of Instagram will know that you can now show a one minute preview of your IGTV video on the grid to appear in people's feeds, however, this wasn't always the case. The trouble was, using a photo to promote a video that appeared elsewhere on the app, which you had to scroll and search for, to then be taken out of the app from contained links, made the user journey messy to say the least.

#### **2. HAVING TO LEARN A NEW SET OF AUDIENCE BEHAVIOURS**

If you thought you knew your audience and had worked out when they were most likely to engage with your content, then think again. You might have had 5,000 followers online at eleven o'clock on a Monday morning who would chuck you a cursory like over a coffee break, but they wouldn't be sticking around to watch a ten-minute video of you harping on about your favourite albums from 2008 in this short gap. Trial and error (or studying your analytics if you had a business page) was the only way to work out when this elusive bunch were using the app for the biggest chunk of time and would likely dedicate their attention to something longer.

#### **3. LONG-FORM VIDEO ON A FAST-PACED PLATFORM**

Tying into the problem above, people weren't accustomed to this new way of using Instagram. Personally, I go to Instagram for a quick hit of inspiration, updates from my friends or (if I'm being really honest) memes, but I'd head to YouTube for a tutorial or a vlog when I have time to kill or need information. Instagram is known for its instant nature, so trying something so different was always going to be a risk for them at the start.

#### **ENOUGH ABOUT INFLUENCERS, WHAT ABOUT BUSINESSES?**

You may have noticed that as a business, we're favouring IGTV at the moment, and there's a method to what might seem like our madness. Your social media pages should exist to do a few things for your business: spread brand awareness, make you accessible to clients/customers, show the heart of your business and showcase why you're the best at what you do. It's essentially your showreel.

Our aim with IGTV is to make short, informative and educational videos which let people know who we are and why they're in safe hands working with us.

At the end of the day, I'm unsure if proper long-form video on Instagram will ever overtake YouTube. That's partly due to the fact that Instagram's desktop application still leaves a lot to be desired when it comes to UX, and partly due to the fact that users are penalised for having a small following (under 10k you can only post a ten minute video, while over 10k you get up to an hour of air time).

I'll continue to post my personal long-form vlogs to YouTube, but professionally, I'd encourage businesses to explore what IGTV has to offer. Chances are, you've already got a bigger following on Instagram than YouTube, so don't direct people away from the platform they've chosen to follow you on – utilise the attention you already have!

# FIFTEEN YEARS OF SPINDOGS

**IN 2019, WE CELEBRATED 15 YEARS OF SPINDOGS, AND WHAT A JOURNEY IT'S BEEN!**

We can't quite believe how much we have achieved in the last fifteen years. It's only when we put our heads together to create this timeline that we realised quite how much we've grown and how much we've accomplished since Spindogs was first established back in 2004.

Starting with just two people in Abercynon, we have now grown to a team of nearly 60 and taken over Pascoe House in Cardiff Bay, one floor at a time. Our journey wouldn't have been possible without all the clients and friends who have worked with us over the past 15 years. So, we'd like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all of you for helping and trusting us to do what we do.

So, what's next for Spindogs? We have big ambitions for our future, and we hope you stick around to see what we have in store. Here's to the next 15!

Your digital best friend x



CLAIRE SWINDELL

## 2004



- Spindogs established in Abercynon
- First brand and website launch

## 2005



- First employee (Dave)
- Spindogs CMS launch

## 2008



- HQ moved to Pascoe House

## 2011



- Bronze 2011 IIP (Investors in People)

## 2012



- Becoming British Business Online Wales Google Partner

# 2013



- Liam awarded Young Director of the Year Wales by IOD
- Staff count up to 19
- Dedicated support team

# 2014



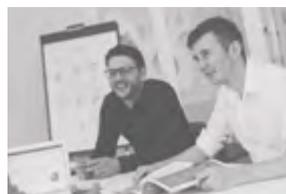
- BARK Launched
- 10k charity pledge

# 2015



- HQ extended to the top floor of Pascoe House
- Websites developed on two CMS platforms
- Staff count up to 23

# 2016



- Nuance and Fathom acquisition
- Digital Marketing team expanded (SEO, Paid Search, etc.)
- Staff count up to 28

# 2017



- Unified Digital Solutions acquisition
- HQ extended to first floor of Pascoe House
- Oxford base established
- Two new CMS platform options available
- Print design team established

# 2018



- Silver at EXA Awards for Employer of the Year
- Two Kentico website awards
- More than 50 websites launched in one year
- Liam awarded SME Director of the Year Wales by IOD
- First certified Kentico EMS Marketer in Wales (Dan)

# 2019



- HQ extended to the ground floor of Pascoe House
- Sent out our 10,000th quote
- Record-breaking summer party

# 2020



- Staff count reached 57

# 03

## IN THIS SECTION:

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**38**

### **BARK TO THE FUTURE**

Director of Client Services, Claire Swindell, takes a trip down memory lane and explains where BARK began and why it's so important to us.

**41**

### **CREATE YOUR OWN BARK COVER**

Have a go at designing your very own BARK front cover.

**42**

### **CIWW CAMPAIGN**

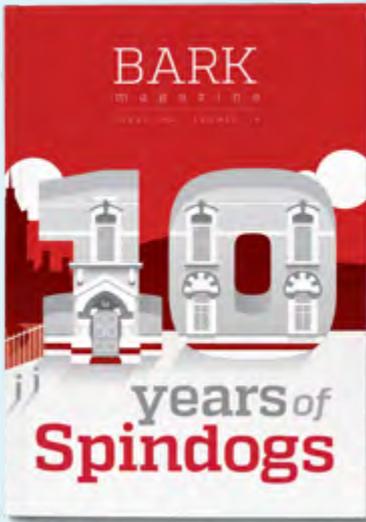
Concept creation, directed and designed. Take a look at Cardiff International White Water's campaign featured on social, outdoor and in magazines.

**44**

### **POSTCARDS**

Cut out, send to a friend or pin to wall, our favourite BARK front covers.

DESIGN  
BRAND



# BARK TO THE FUTURE

If you've been an avid reader of BARK over the years, then you may have noticed that this year we've decided to shake it up a little. As a team who loves to rock the boat, we've mixed up the format and content to give the ninth issue a refresh, and, as we've made a few changes, we thought now would be the perfect opportunity to look back on BARK through time – after all, what better way to understand how far the magazine has come than by looking back at where it all began?



CLAIRE SWINELL

## WHY DID WE START BARK?

BARK was originally intended as a one-off issue to celebrate our 10th birthday, however, the great feedback we received, plus the fact that we were really proud of it, meant that we couldn't just stop at one issue – we had to continue doing it. Releasing a magazine was also something very few in the industry were doing, so we decided to run with it, twice a year initially.

## WHAT DID IT LOOK LIKE IN THE BEGINNING?

The front cover of BARK's first issue was Pascoe House; a homage to the fact that it was all about us and what happens at HQ. Issue number one looked back on the last 10 years and what had changed in digital, and included some of the projects and campaigns we'd worked on in that time. It also featured a lot of content about our team.

## WHAT DO WE INCLUDE IN BARK (THEN VS NOW)?

We used to do two issues a year, but in the past couple of years, we've decided it's much more valuable (and manageable) to create one great issue annually.

Our recent issues have focused on knowledge sharing and thought-leadership with our clients as opposed to sharing our favourite recipes and book recommendations, which we did previously. In the latest issues, you can find case studies, interviews, hints and tips, as well as a bit more about our expertise.

We try and involve a range of people in the creation of the content; from contributors who work at Spindogs, to existing clients and industry experts, or people in our network who can add value to our readers.

Now, we have a short print run as well as a digital version, so we have it available to send to people who'd like to read a printed copy. I, personally, love a printed copy, but many people prefer to read it digitally.

## WHY IS BARK IMPORTANT TO US?

BARK has become an integral part of our annual marketing strategy. When you first meet someone, you only have a short amount of time to tell them who you are. That's why we like leaving people with something tangible that not only they can hold, but something that really epitomises us, tells people who we are and shows off what we can do. BARK is very much about us and the digital marketing industry, and the aim is to give readers a taste of what we can deliver at Spindogs.

## WHY IS BARK IMPORTANT TO OUR CLIENTS?

Over the years, we've found that our existing clients love BARK, and a big part of this is because they can read about other projects we've worked on that they might not be aware of, and discover helpful content, tips, and tricks to help them with their own marketing decisions and activity.

BARK is also great for people who haven't worked with us before but are thinking about it. The magazine gives them an understanding of the types of projects we work on and the level of expertise they can expect from working with us.



#### WHAT'S THE FUTURE OF BARK? WHERE DO WE SEE THE MAGAZINE GOING?

Time has flown by - we've gone from being 10 years old to planning the 10th issue! In the last six years, the magazine has grown alongside us, and as our team grows, we have more expertise to offer and put into each issue.

Our main objective for BARK is to create content that has longevity, so the articles in each issue offer something useful and are just as relevant today as they would be if you picked up a copy in a few months time.

Ultimately, we want to keep discussing the latest tech and trends, keep our clients informed and showcase all the amazing work we do. Historically, there were more interviews from external voices, so we're planning to bring more of this back to create a magazine that offers diverse opinions.

We're also constantly working to make BARK a more engaging proposition and evolving the format to meet the needs of our clients based on their feedback. It always has to add value, so when the readers are finished, they feel inspired, they feel like they've learned something and they feel like they know us better - we've become their digital best friend.

9  
ISSUES  
117  
TIPS  
32  
OPINIONS  
26  
CASE STUDIES  
19  
INTERVIEWS  
5  
DESIGNERS

**CREATE YOUR OWN COVER**

**TAG US**

Tag us in your Instagram story @spindogsdigital and we'll share the best creations

**CREATE YOUR OWN COVER**

Why not dig out your crayons/felts/pencils/paints and have a go at designing your own cover

**BARK**

**ISSUE 9**

TAKE LIFE BY THE HORNS. BOOK A PROPER

# STAG

CALL US TO BOOK  
**029 2082 9970**

WEBSITE [www.ciww.com](http://www.ciww.com) SOCIAL [@cardiffintww](https://twitter.com/cardiffintww)

Dwr Gwyn Rhyngwladol Caeoedd Cardiff International White Water

DALIWCH YN DYNN. TREFNWCH

# STAG

A HANNER

FFONIWCH NI I DREFNU  
**029 2082 9970**

GWEFAN [www.dgrhc.com](http://www.dgrhc.com) CYMDEITHASOL [@cardiffintww](https://twitter.com/cardiffintww)

Dwr Gwyn Rhyngwladol Caeoedd Cardiff International White Water

CLIENT: Cardiff International White Water (CIWW)

CONCEPT: Spindogs

DESIGN & ART DIRECTION: Spindogs

PHOTOGRAPHY: Magenta



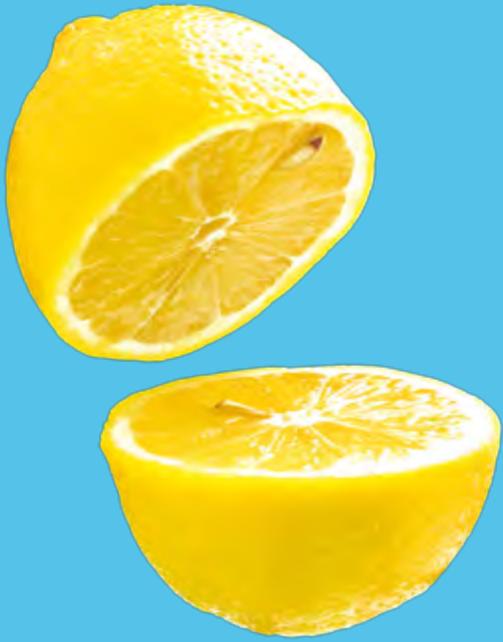
Cardiff International White Water (CIWW) annual brand awareness campaign inc. Stag & Hen, Family and Summer kids activity weeks. The artwork was produced for outdoor advertising inc. Billboards and banners along with social media posts.



# POSTCARDS

Post to a friend to say hello, share some news or hang on your wall our favourite BARK front covers.





POSTCARD

---

Four vertical lines for writing an address.

**BARK**

POSTCARD

---

Four vertical lines for writing an address.

**BARK**

POSTCARD

---

Four vertical lines for writing an address.

**BARK**

POSTCARD

---

Four vertical lines for writing an address.

**BARK**

**THE COST OF  
BEING WRONG  
IS LESS THAN  
THE COST  
OF DOING  
NOTHING.**

NOT OUR WORDS, BUT THE WORDS OF [SETH GODIN](#).

# 04

## IN THIS SECTION:

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**50**

### DIGITAL DETOX

Find out what happens when we ban three members of the Spindogs team from social media for seven whole days... challenge accepted!

**54**

### HYUNDAI SOCIAL CAMPAIGN

Concept creation and design, take a look at our recent social media campaign we created for Hyundai UK.

**56**

### E.A.T.

Spindogs' very own SEO expert, Chris Tanti, explains the key things you need to know about E-A-T.

# OMM



\*AKA ONLINE MARKETING / DIGITAL MARKETING

# DIGITAL DETOX

In light of the social media catch 22, where it's increasingly becoming both more controversial and more essential to business as well as everyday life, we challenged the Spindogs team to try a social media detox for a week.

Would the challenge improve their mental well-being? Would it increase their productivity? Or would they simply hate it? Could they even manage seven days without social media? Read on to find out their experiences:



EMILY LEWIS



CLAIRE SWINDELL



FABRIZIO CAROLLO

## THE WEEK OF ENDLESS FIDGETING

Emily Lewis, Digital Marketer

When I first accepted the challenge to go a whole week without using social media, I truly believed that it was going to be pleasant. I'm more of an Instagram lurker than a publisher on my personal accounts anyway, so how hard could it be? Bring on my new sense of productivity! I'll read more books, go to the gym, perhaps pick up a new hobby. Oh, how wrong I was!

Even without social media, I was still glued to my phone. I was just using digital in another way, namely to do a ton of online shopping. The whole week, I felt that I was wasting my time because I wasn't spending it the way I wanted.

Okay, so I would have normally binge-watched makeup videos on YouTube. Some people may think that's a waste of time, but that would have been my preferred entertainment. Instead, I watched trash TV programmes I didn't remotely care about.

I also ran into another issue when I wanted to learn how to do something. As a visual learner, I use YouTube video tutorials to learn new skills. The thought of reading a long page of instructions panics me, my eyes glaze over, and procrastination whispers, 'I'll read it after'. Even finding text-based tutorials proved difficult, as YouTube videos were often embedded within the articles.

Social media can help us learn new things, find information quicker, and it's completely personalised. My social media accounts automatically show me recommended content based on my interests. It's unique to me. Personalised content is how you can easily end up realising you should have gone to bed two hours ago.

At the end of the week, I'd made three key discoveries: social media is inextricably integrated into our lives, I use YouTube as a video-based alternative to TV, and I can definitely find other ways to put off going to the gym.

Taking my social media away isn't going to trick me into going to the gym, or motivate me to make change. But after getting YouTube back, I started to get inspiration again from the things other people are doing, or wearing, or how they live. For me, watching someone's weight loss journey on YouTube is way more inspirational, and more likely to nudge me to make a change than taking away my social media apps.

## THE NEWS BLACKOUT

Fabrizio Carollo, Graduate Digital Marketer

You could say the first few days were the hardest. Mainly because I failed two days in a row by checking my feeds first thing in the morning! However, I was determined to complete the full seven days of the challenge, so I started again and I managed to complete it this time around.

The most agitating aspect of giving up social media for me was not being able to interact with my friends as I normally would. I couldn't check out the videos or images they sent me, as these were shared from YouTube, Reddit or Imgur, and all these have a social comments section.

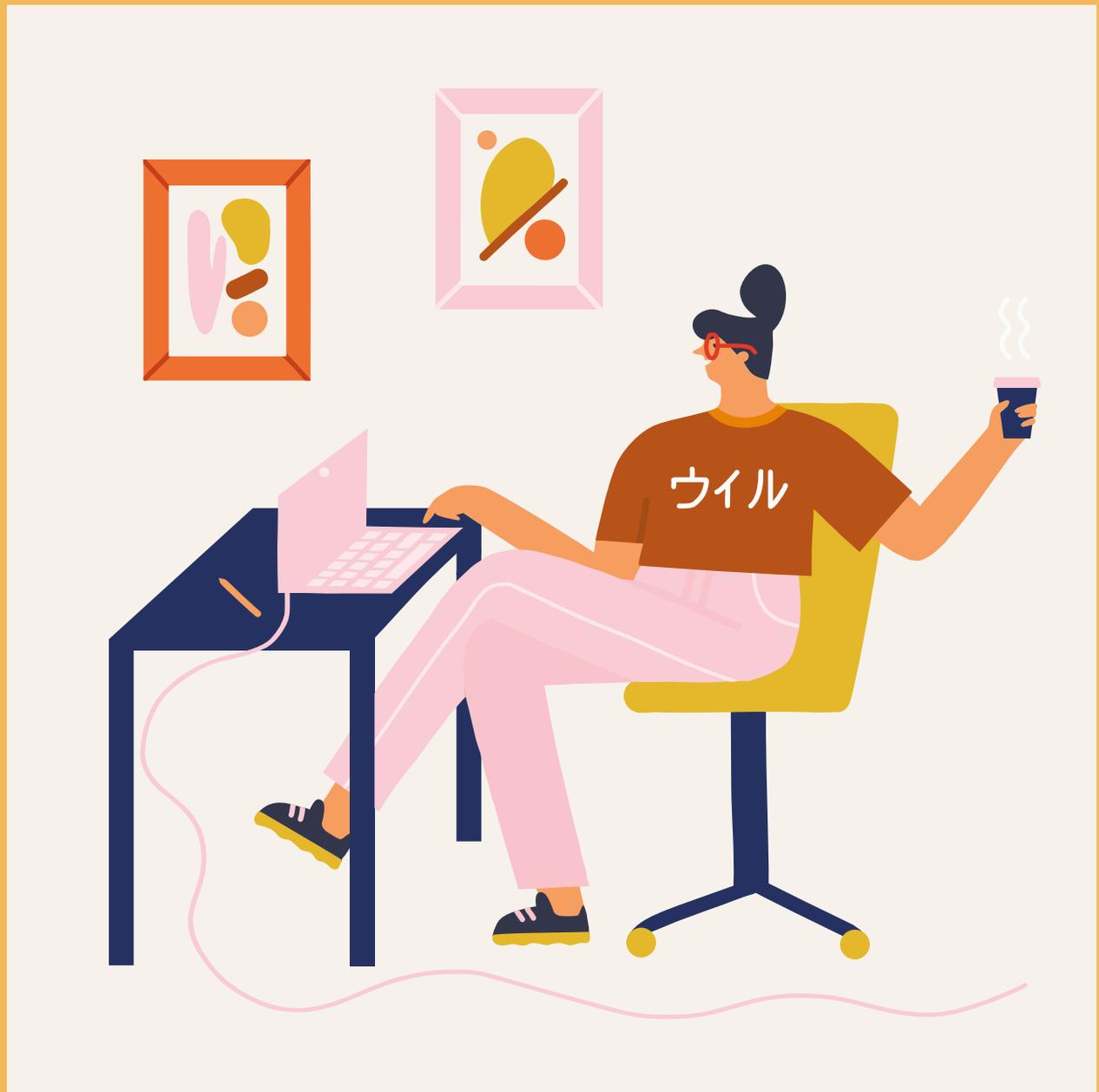
This was especially frustrating because I have many international friends that I do not get to see or hear from that often, and telling them I couldn't look at the things they sent me often killed the conversation outright.

I also felt very much out of the loop, as I use Reddit and its various subreddits as news aggregators to keep myself up to date on current affairs as well as my hobbies and interests. This meant that I had to find alternative sources of information, which was very time consuming, much more difficult and often left me unsatisfied due to the inferior quality of content.

I also use comment sections to deepen my understanding of a topic, as users often offer different points of view from the author. In comparison, reading just the article was quite unsatisfying, as I couldn't dive into the broader debate.

The main upside of this challenge was having more time to dedicate to my hobbies. As I don't really use social media for entertainment, I didn't see any negative impact – in fact, the effect was quite the opposite, with extra hours of the day freed up for offline activities.

Overall, I wouldn't class my social media detox as a positive experience or recommend it to anyone. We live in a very fast world oversaturated with content to take in; I find social media helps me cope with the speed and save time by highlighting the essential information I need to know.



**“Watching someone’s journey on YouTube is going to inspire me more to make a change than taking away my social apps.”**

**“I knew that I could be a mindless scroller in the evenings and my phone time was creeping up, so it made sense to remove anything I may be tempted to browse.”**



### THE BIG SOCIAL DECLUTTERING

Claire Swindell, Director of Client Services

Noticing my appreciation for some social media platforms was wearing thin, yet my phone usage was increasing, I leapt at the chance to do a social media detox for this piece, turning off all my social channels for at least a week. I'll admit I got a bit carried away from the moment I started deleting the little squares, and deleted most apps on my phone bar WhatsApp, my banking app and anything work related.

I knew that I could be a mindless scroller in the evenings and my phone time was creeping up, so it made sense to remove anything I may be tempted to browse, including the likes of IMDB and ASOS, as well as anything that had become a convenience crutch, such as Amazon Prime.

The majority of my productive phone use is to take photos of my daughter, so I wasn't putting my phone down any time soon, but I quickly noticed how frequently I went to click on apps such as Instagram, entirely on autopilot. I always have a long list of errands to run and taking away my means of procrastination was inevitably going to end up with those things getting done quicker. And, to be fair, more washing got done, but I'll be honest, no routine change was going to trick me into hitting the ironing pile!

There were two things I noticed in the first 24 hours:

- I have a lot of conversations with friends within the apps themselves
- I consume a lot of my news via social media

I had to make a conscious effort to seek out other news outlets and text friends, which meant my actions had more intent and I had more time to engage properly with what I was watching, reading or working on.

My main concern with turning some of the apps off completely would be the prospect of cutting off my connection to old school friends – I think it's lovely to celebrate each other's milestones through the years, even if we don't speak very often.

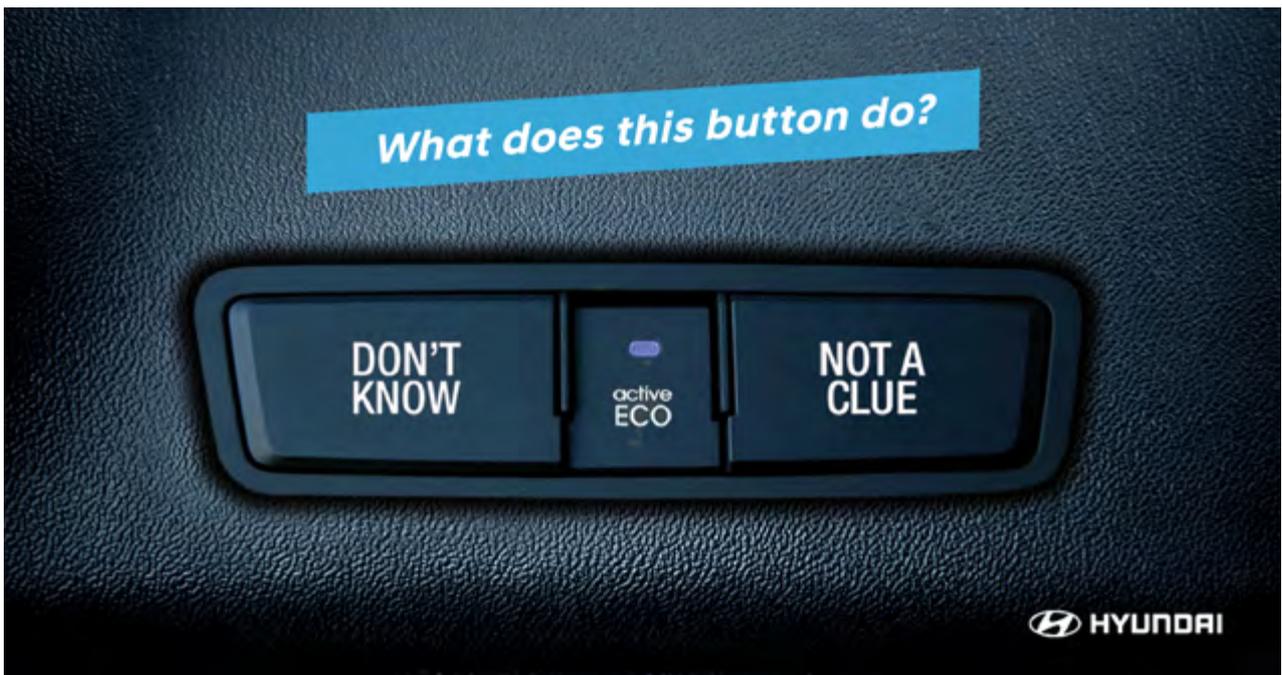
As for Instagram, my appreciation mainly revolves around my love of interiors and the inspiration I draw from accounts dedicated to home decor or interior design, so I will be reinstalling the app on my phone. There are other apps, however, that won't be returning.

I didn't feel like any social media apps were having a particularly negative impact on my life when I went into the challenge, but my phone usage time felt uncomfortably high, especially considering that not all of the content I was consuming had any added value for me. It was great to reflect on what content I really enjoy and kick some of my mindless scrolling habits!

**If this Spindogs experiment has inspired you to switch off social media, good luck! The rest of you can follow us on @spindogsdigital for all the latest team and project news.**

**TOO OFTEN,  
FEELING  
INTIMIDATED  
BECOMES  
OUR EXCUSE  
NOT TO BE  
AWESOME.**

**NOT OUR WORDS, BUT THE WORDS OF SCOTT STRATTEN.**



**CLIENT:** Hyundai

**CAMPAIGN:** Aftersales promotional social campaign

**CONCEPT:** Spindogs

**DESIGN:** Spindogs



Hyundai UK dealer social media assets for promotion of a range of campaigns, including: Half-price MOT, i30N accessories, Spring health check and a general post-sale check-in for dealer use on social channels.

# E.A.T- RESEARCH, OPTIMISE, REPEAT

Despite not having anything to do with food consumption, this delicious acronym is set to be all the rage in everybody's 2020 digital diet. Resident Google-whisperer Chris Tanti dishes on the key things you need to know about E-A-T:



CHRIS TANTI

## What is E-A-T?

Google uses the acronym E-A-T to refer to Expertise, Authority and Trust – the three key points on which Google rates content and content creators. But, why is this important?

As part of its increasing effort to improve the quality of results, Google is targeting certain sectors which it considers high risk. If your company falls into one of these sectors, we recommend you take immediate action and look into improving your perceived trust level (more on that below).

## A short history

In November 2015 Google made the unprecedented decision to release a 160+ page document called the Search Quality Raters Guideline. This move was prompted by search engine marketing news aggregator SEMPost, who leaked and analysed a copy of the guide.

Despite having access to the highlight condensed 2013 version of the document, which featured the term E-A-T, the 2015 Guideline gave digital marketers a rare detailed glimpse behind the curtain. Unsurprisingly, the document was quickly analysed and used as the basis for new strategies and best practices.

Google now releases relatively frequent updates to this document, the last one being on December 5th 2019 (as of the time of writing).

## How does Google use the Quality Raters Guideline?

Google uses this document to assess the accuracy and quality of search results during experimental algorithmic changes. Large teams (of possibly thousands) of quality reviewers use the Guideline to manually test a wide variety of websites in specific niches. They then report and benchmark the results, so Google can adjust the algorithms (if necessary).

One of the most intriguing tools referenced in the document is E-A-T. According to the guidelines, it serves as Google's criteria for measuring the extent to which a website or specific page offers Expertise, Authority and Trust. (How can we tell it's important? It is mentioned over 130 times in the document!)

## Google instructs its evaluators to consider:

- The expertise of the creator of the main content.
- The authoritativeness of the creator of the main content, the main content itself, and the website.
- The trustworthiness of the creator of the main content, the main content itself, and the website.

## Does this affect Google rankings?

Google recently confirmed in its Webmaster Central Blog that E-A-T has played a major role in its last few updates, which were focused on so-called Y-M-Y-L (your money your life) websites where expertise, authority and trust are paramount.

## E-A-T in detail

E-A-T can be considered a condensed evaluation of the overall value a site/page/creator has to offer.

Much more than a single ranking signal or score, E-A-T is likely a collection of micro algorithms which, when combined, can be considered E-A-T. Google's algorithms probably look at both on and off-site elements, evaluating signals associated with good and bad E-A-T results, and judging value by assessing a site as close to the way a human would as currently possible.

Not all websites require a high level of confirmed E-A-T. While medical and financial sites certainly would, a website about hobbies needs much less formal expertise. Ecommerce sites should always take E-A-T into account, regardless of their niche or the value of their products. Google always regards online shopping sites as Y-M-Y-L because of the risk associated with any monetary transactions.

The purpose of E-A-T is clear – it's a tool designed to help Google improve its results for Y-M-Y-L sites and services. What remains poorly defined is the hard measurability of E-A-T. After all, how does one measure expertise or reputation?

# “E-A-T can be considered a condensed evaluation of the overall value a site/page/creator has to offer.”



## WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Below is a simple checklist you can work through. While not all of these elements will be applicable to your website, you can still use them as guidance on how to improve your existing content and structure to better underline its E-A-T credentials, along with any offsite resources that add E-A-T to your site.

### General Points to check:

- Do you display your real company name and details on the site?
- Does it match what appears in your Google My Business listing?
- Do they include the correct contact details (such as email address, telephone number and geographic address)?
- Do you have an About Us page that contains up-to-date team and ownership information?
- Do you have a Team page with up-to-date images and bios?
- Do you have a dedicated page/section for client testimonials or ratings?
- Are awards or accreditations clearly displayed?
- Do you have links to active social media profiles? Are these regularly updated?
- Do you have a Privacy Policy page (that's easily accessible)?
- Do you have a Cookie Policy and GDPR compliance page?
- Do you have a Complaints/Customer Service>Returns page?
- Is your sales process clear and secure? (where applicable)
- Is your content well-written, grammatically correct, and suitable in length? Does it have a strong and clear purpose?
- Do you have distracting and obtrusive adverts (eg. interstitials)?
- Does the site have a clear separation between advertising and the content? (where applicable)
- Does your content link to unrelated sites? This could be considered negatively (eg. affiliates)
- Is your content frequently updated? (does it contain up-to-date information, when was the last blog article created, does the site appear to be 'abandoned'?)
- Do you link your content to other supporting, related and helpful content (supplementary content)?

### Author check:

- Do they have any expertise in the primary subject area?
- Do they have a biography page? (Include a link back from any applicable content)
- Do they mention experience and qualifications in their bio?
- Do they have a short bio summary at the end of the content (if a profile page isn't available)?
- Do they link to other published content on other authority websites?
- Do they link to a social account or other related websites?
- Has the content been reviewed or approved by an expert?

### Technical Considerations:

- Do you have links between your strongest related articles?
- Do you have organisation and author schema?
- Do authoritative sites on related subjects have links to your content?
- Broken 404 pages are kept to a minimum and managed
- Do the main target pages have internal links pointing users to them? (easily accessible)
- Is the site easily accessible on mobile devices?

### Wrapping up

E-A-T is here to stay. Even though the subject of its interpretation and application is still developing, it seems wise to take a proactive approach and create “high-quality” content that both users and Google algorithms view as trustworthy.

With Google search algorithms constantly changing to keep pace with user expectations and the digital information landscape, staying on top of updates is the best way to ensure your site remains relevant and competitive.

# 05

## IN THIS SECTION:

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**60**

### **INTERVIEW - RICHARD COOK MONZO**

The neon coral card that's taking over the banking world. Check out our interview with Social Media Manager Richard Cook for the inside scoop on Monzo.

**62**

### **INTERVIEW - SHELLEY PHILLIPS - RSPCA CYMRU**

We met up with Campaigns Manager, Shelley Phillips from RSPCA Cymru to interview her on their most recent campaigns, how they use data from their campaigns and how they plan future campaigns.

**64**

### **INTERVIEW - DAWN WALTER - MUNDY & ANSON**

Understanding your consumers is a key step in designing and marketing a successful offering. Check out our interview with Dawn Walter from Mundy & Anson on where to begin.

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MONZO

# RICHARD COOK



EMILY HARRIS

**Small but mighty: the hot coral card that's taking over the banking world. App-based banking has disrupted the banking industry and changed the way we manage our finances for the better.**

Think back to how you were banking five years ago, and it's most likely completely different from how you manage your finances now. We no longer need to step inside a local branch to transfer money or set up a standing order, we can do it all via our phone – and that's all thanks to app-based banks like Monzo.

If you haven't heard of Monzo, then you've probably seen its hot coral card on bus advertisements or in the wallet pockets of your friends and family. Set up in 2015, Monzo is a smart banking solution that lets you manage and run your account through an app without needing to visit a branch. With more than three million customers to date, Monzo is a global success. So, what's the secret?

Marketing Manager Emily, caught up with Richard Cook, Social Media Manager at Monzo, to discuss why more of us are ditching our traditional bank in favour of Monzo – the bank that 'makes life easier, not harder' – and how it's keeping up with the demands of consumer behaviour.

## **E: HI RICHARD, CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR ROLE AT MONZO AND WHAT YOU WERE DOING PREVIOUSLY?**

**R:** I'm Richard, and I've been working at Monzo for just over two years. My job mostly involves creating content to engage our community of passionate Monzo fans. Every day is different, so I might find myself working on some fun engagement posts one morning (we love memes), then an exciting big company announcement in the afternoon.

Before Monzo, I was at Spotify for six and a half years, where I started in customer service roles before moving more into marketing. It might not seem obvious, but there are lots of parallels between Spotify and Monzo. For a start, they're both high-growth tech start-ups with a loyal fanbase, so it's been great to apply my experience and transfer my skills to my role at Monzo.

## **E: MONZO IS PAVING THE WAY FOR THE FUTURE OF BANKING. WAS THERE A PARTICULAR CATALYST TO MONZO BECOMING SUCH A GLOBAL SUCCESS?**

**R:** It's always hard to pinpoint the reason why Monzo has been so successful, but I'd say that we did benefit a lot in the early days from word-of-mouth. People were telling their friends about Monzo and getting

them onto the waiting-list, or even jumping the list with our special 'golden tickets'. The Monzo app just works better if your friends use it too, so there's a strong incentive for you to share it with your friends, which is great marketing for us.

Also, we've always listened to our customers to make sure we're building something that they want to use. We still give folks early access to new features in exchange for feedback, so our product is always developing and evolving because we're always acting on feedback.

Our hot coral bank card helped a lot too, but I wouldn't pin everything on that!

## **E: WHAT WERE THE THOUGHTS BEHIND THE HOT CORAL CARD?**

**R:** Ultimately, we thought, why should your bank card be boring? There are lots of Monzo myths and legends about how we came up with the card, so I won't add to those, but it's just one of those little touches that (hopefully) delights our customers whenever they see it.

## **E: WHAT ARE MONZO'S BRAND VALUES AND HOW DO YOU DISTILL THEM THROUGH YOUR TEAM?**

**R:** As a company we've set out values that all teams share, and we try to naturally align these with our work. For example, one of our values is to default to transparency, which means that we're transparent in everything that we do. We're open with each other about what we're working on (we have very few private channels in our company messaging tool) and why we're making various decisions. It applies to other areas too, like how we're transparent with our customers about the fees we charge, or when we admit on our blog when things haven't worked out the way we wanted them to.

## **E: WHAT MAKES MONZO DIFFERENT FROM OTHER APP-BASED BANKS?**

**R:** One thing that makes us stand out is that we focus on building features to make your day-to-day banking easier. While other banking apps might be working on cryptocurrency or foreign exchange, we want to make a great everyday current account with powerful features like round-ups and pots for your money. But, we do support the work that all the new digital banks are doing, and we're constantly impressed by how innovative the



industry is, so, we're never competing with other banks to be the best app-based bank out there. Instead, we're competing to get the attention of those who haven't thought about switching to an app-based bank and getting them to switch to Monzo.

**E: IS MONZO AIMED AT A NEW GENERATION OF ACCOUNT HOLDERS, AND IF SO, HOW DOES IT REACH THEM? WHO ELSE ARE YOU TARGETING?**

**R:** Our mission is to 'make money work for everyone', which means we want everyone who has a bank account to switch to us. While we appeal to more of the younger market because of the app and the card (we've even seen people dress up as our card for Halloween!), we would love to see people who've had the same bank account for twenty or thirty years give us a shot. That's why we make it super easy for people to switch to us and provide them with benefits like getting paid a day early, paying your bills from specific pots and automatically sorting your salary when it's paid.

We're also keen to make banking available to people who are turned down by the big banks. Sadly, a lot of people fall into the 'unbanked' category, which means they're denied access to financial services. For example, recent migrants to the UK often struggle to set up a bank account because they haven't got proof of address, so we make it easy for anyone to open a bank account without a fixed address. We also work with organisations around the country to help people get to grips with the UK's banking system by providing advice and resources via our 'Banking 101' sessions.

**E: ARE THERE ANY TRENDS IN RETAIL BEHAVIOUR THAT INFLUENCE CHANGES YOU MAKE TO THE APP?**

**R:** Not only are people going cashless, but they're also going cardless too. The beauty of Monzo is that it works with Google Pay and Apple Pay, which means you can do most of your spending using your phone.

**E: BANKING HAS COME A LONG WAY IN THE PAST FEW YEARS WITH MORE PEOPLE THAN EVER TURNING TO A 'BRANCHLESS BANK', BUT WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE THE BIGGEST CHANGE IN USER BEHAVIOUR IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?**

**R:** One of our bets at Monzo is that people want to manage their financial lives all in one place, so we're trying to work towards a marketplace model where you could, for instance, see your credit score, manage your bills, renew your insurance, keep an eye on your savings, all through an app. With the recent open banking initiative – the practice of sharing financial information electronically and securely – we should also see more companies build exciting apps that integrate with your bank account in interesting ways. Some great examples include, Flux, which lets you get digital receipts and see them in Monzo, or Tail, which offers cash-back on certain purchases.

**E: FINALLY, WHAT'S THE FUTURE FOR MONZO?**

**R:** We're still growing super-fast in the UK (we recently passed 3.5m customers) and our goals for 2020 are to grow out our business banking and launch a paid Monzo account. Our US team is also hard at work bringing Monzo to a whole new market, which is super exciting for us - the sky is the limit!



RSPCA CYMRU

# SHELLEY PHILLIPS

Every year thousands of animals suffer from neglect, cruelty and abuse. The RSPCA relies on voluntary fundraising and donations to carry out their vital work, but how does RSPCA Cymru continue to create engaging campaigns, capture the attention of the public, raise awareness and generate income to help these animals in need?



EMILY HARRIS

Working on the front line to prevent cruelty and rescue animals in need, RSPCA Cymru rescue, rehabilitate, investigate and advocate. Producing engaging and effective campaigns, RSPCA Cymru aims to raise awareness of animal rights issues and enable supporters to make a difference and end needless suffering. The RSPCA is the leading (and oldest) animal welfare charity around, comprised of their fearless inspectors and field staff, dedicated rescue and rehoming centres and branches, and support teams. In the words of Shelley Phillips “We are animal lovers on a mission to facilitate change”.

We chat with Shelley Phillips, Campaign Manager at RSPCA Cymru, who sheds the light on the campaigns they create to keep audiences engaged year after year.

**E: TELL US ABOUT YOUR ROLE AT RSPCA CYMRU.**

**S:** As Campaign Manager for RSPCA Cymru, I manage our campaign development and delivery in Wales. Filled with thought-provoking campaign topics and sometimes devastating case studies, my job requires plenty of empathy, patience and agility.

My role is both politically powered and emotionally charged, which makes it as equally challenging as it is rewarding. The External Relations Wales team is fortunate enough to be based with our local inspectorate group, and the stories we hear are a daily reminder of the bigger picture, and of our purpose.

**E: WHAT CAMPAIGNS AND INITIATIVES ARE RSPCA CYMRU CURRENTLY WORKING ON AND WHAT CAN WE SEE FOR THE FUTURE?**

**S:** With a bursting portfolio of campaigning issues, we are always working on multiple areas at any given time. This year, we'll be doing one last push of our long-standing campaign to end the use of wild animals in circuses, as we inch closer to the legislation coming into force in 2020. We'll also be formally launching a new dog welfare campaign at our annual Big Walkies LIVE event, which we're really excited to introduce to people.

We'll continue our efforts to change fireworks regulations for the better with our #BangOutOfOrder campaign, evolve our new project for businesses, the Animal Welfare Charter, and we'll also be hard at work collaborating with other leading organisations in our bid to end breed-specific legislation with a brand new campaign in 2021.

**E: HOW ARE PRIORITIES PLANNED AND HOW DO YOU SPLIT YOUR EFFORTS BETWEEN CAMPAIGNS?**

**S:** We plan our work pretty far ahead, anticipating any political movement and working within our organisational goals, while weaving our calendar of in-house events. This means we need to start thinking about the year ahead in early Autumn, and put together rough timelines and goals for the upcoming year. We also have seasonal campaigns which ebb and flow throughout the year, such as Dogs Die In Hot Cars - these are issues we know we'll be working on, so those are the easiest to plan for as activities peak at certain times.

It's also worth saying that there is also a great deal of decision-making that is naturally reactive, aligning with political shifts. We're realistic about the fact that it's not always possible to anticipate how and when things are going to happen!

**E: HAS THERE BEEN A SHIFT IN THE TYPES OF CAMPAIGNS THAT ARE CREATED BY RSPCA CYMRU OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS?**

**S:** At our core, our work is about preventing cruelty and creating an environment that respects and treats animals with kindness. Naturally, our campaigns fall in line with our mission by identifying areas or issues in Wales where progress can be made.

Over the last decade, the campaigners who have worked at the organisation have led on key welfare issues such as wild animals in circuses and third party sales of puppies and kittens but there has also been a gradual evolution into behavioural change campaigning too. I think this is due to the understanding that while our lawmakers hold the keys to enforcing change, that influencing and motivating human behaviour is equally as important.

**E: WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVOURITE CAMPAIGN AT RSPCA CYMRU?**

**S:** While every issue is worthy of attention, it's hard not to get attached to particular campaigns. My personal favourite is #EndBSL, which is our campaign to end breed-specific legislation in England and Wales. In a nutshell, BSL is a law that unjustly sentences countless dogs to death, just because of how they look. This is a campaign that tries to save the lives of innocent dogs, end discrimination and encourage education around responsible dog ownership.

The stakes are really high with this one, and last year saw some rewarding campaigning work for the cause, including our mini digital campaign for the legislative anniversary, and our discrimination themed "Do we look dangerous to you?" selfie frame at Pride Cymru. It's also my favourite to work on as it is undergoing a big Cinderella moment, with a new campaign launching in 2021.

**E: HOW DO YOU MEASURE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR CAMPAIGNS AND HOW DO YOU USE THIS INFORMATION TO DEVELOP FUTURE CAMPAIGNS ?**

**S:** Like any organisation, we need insight to develop our campaigns. It's within my nature to try to have the answers, but I'm completely realistic and honest that I can't always get them by myself. I need to do the work and the research. While I absolutely loathe numbers, this is where they're invaluable.

We're also fans of testing the water. Sometimes, it's absolutely necessary to trial a campaign before it is fully formed. A strategic soft launch can help us identify current public attitudes, tactics and how much budget should be allocated.

Measurement can take place in many ways, but it really depends on the campaign itself. If there is a supporter action such as a petition or a letter, we can look at the number of actions taken and the political interest. If it's behavioural change, we may need polling and some deep diving into social media engagement to pinpoint attitudes.

**E: WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE MAIN CHALLENGES IN TERMS OF WELFARE AND RAISING AWARENESS AND HOW DO YOU OVERCOME THESE IN THE CAMPAIGNS YOU CREATE?**

**S:** I think as a charity, we face the same challenges that so many other third sector organisations face.

Like many others, we rely heavily on the generosity of the public pocket, and I think the major challenge we face is being able to meet expectations of both our supporters and our critics, especially in a social media echo chamber, which can be quite critical.

When it comes to campaigning, I firmly believe that creating human campaigns with emotional marketing that respects our audience helps people understand what we do, and sometimes this means tapping into new markets. Of course, our regional and national press and social media teams are also overcoming these challenges daily with brilliant reactive work and distributing heartfelt, crucial animal welfare stories to the public.

**E: WHAT TOP TIPS WOULD YOU GIVE FOR CREATING AN EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN?**

**S:** I say this a lot but bravery is such an underrated (and little talked about) trait in campaigners. It can be very easy to rely on the tried and tested approach, and there certainly is a time and a place for that. Don't be afraid of ditching the predictable and tapping into emotion, getting more creative with concepts and taking a well calculated risk. The stories we tell are different each time, but the way we tell them shouldn't be textbook. Be brave, not bored.

With any kind of strategic comms, we're taught early on that timing is everything. While timing does matter, deadlines aren't everything and sometimes moving dates around is the smarter option. With budgeting, always pay your bills first. Always aim to deliver your campaigns slightly under budget and use the leftovers for additional social media spend and spare merch.

All campaigns require an element of plate spinning, and sometimes, something has to give. Hiccups will happen, and it's okay when they do.

MUNDY &amp; ANSON

# DAWN WALTER

Understanding your consumers is a key step to designing and marketing a successful offering. Luckily, digital technology is making understanding customer behaviour online easier. But how do we get better insights into offline customers?



EMILY HARRIS



Surveys and focus groups can give us sufficient data to create personas but they are not enough to truly understand consumer behaviour, pain-points, and needs. The answer? User and consumer research.

Designed to help businesses see their customers from a different perspective, this type of research is the bread and butter of Mundy & Anson, a Bristol-based research studio dedicated to helping businesses get to know their customers and stay one step ahead of their competitors. Dawn Walter, social anthropologist and Managing Director of Mundy & Anson, lets us in on the secrets to understanding consumers behaviour and the ways consumer research benefits business strategy.

#### **E: WHO IS MUNDY & ANSON AND HOW DO YOU HELP BUSINESSES?**

**D:** Mundy & Anson are a research studio based in Bristol. We help businesses get closer to their customers through qualitative research called ethnography. By making sense of people, we enable businesses to design, brand, and market products and services their customers genuinely need.

We're a bit different from most consumer research companies. The user and consumer research we do is grounded in ethnography and social anthropology. *Anthropologists seek to understand human social behaviour. As trained social anthropologists, we know that consumer social behaviour is largely invisible to untrained eyes, and as such it often gets overlooked, meaning businesses miss key opportunities to engage with their consumers. However, so much of our lives are dictated by social behaviours and practices without us even realising, which makes them really important.*

We explore and uncover how your customers experience the world. Once we understand your customers' world – the meanings people attribute to things, their beliefs and values, their ways of doing things – we can help you to use that knowledge to design a successful offering. When you understand why people do (or don't do) certain things – rather than

focusing on what they say they do – you can tailor your products and services, as well as your marketing campaigns, to support those behaviours.

#### **E: CAN YOU EXPLAIN A BIT MORE ABOUT ETHNOGRAPHY?**

**D:** Ethnography is a qualitative research method that seeks to understand people's behaviour. Not simply what they do, but why. The 'why' is key! In short, ethnography is about immersing yourself in a person's environment and asking questions. We observe, shadow, and listen carefully without judgement or assumptions, then analyse the data we've collected to make sense of it.

Data analysis is an essential part of ethnography, as it helps us to understand why people do things. That's my special sauce, that's where my training as a social anthropologist comes in – otherwise, you just end up with a bunch of observations, which is great, but can only get you so far.

Ethnography is a specialised research method that people are trained to do, and we're keen to teach people about it. It's become a buzzword, with companies saying they do ethnographic research when, in fact, they know very little about it. This ends up undermining the method and putting people off using it when they don't get the deep insights they expected, which is a real shame!

We offer companies ethnographic training for staff members, which includes a one-day introductory course and a hands-on three-day course during which you conduct a mini ethnographic project.

#### **E: WHAT PERCENTAGE OF BUSINESSES ARE LOOKING AT CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR OFFLINE?**

**D:** Not enough, which makes me wonder how many businesses use consumer research to understand how wider issues influence the lives of their consumers. You can't understand behaviour in isolation – there's always a bigger picture.

Consider, for example, the rise of veganism in the last few years. What was once seen as a niche lifestyle choice is now taking society by storm as a response to climate change and a greater awareness of our impact on the planet.

Businesses should be asking, what's the wider context in which particular consumers are operating? How does that shape their behaviour? How can you respond in a way that keeps you relevant and ahead of competitors?

#### **E: HOW DO YOU ESTABLISH TRENDS IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR?**

**D:** Consumer research should be an ongoing effort instead of something you do now and then. Developing a more nuanced, long-term view of your consumers' lives will enable you to spot changes in consumer behaviour (trends) before your competitors do. For those who consider ongoing consumer research outside of their budget, we offer co-research projects which build capability rather than dependency.

#### **E: IS WOKE ADVERTISING STILL EFFECTIVE? HAVE WE BECOME DESENSITISED TO THE WAY ADVERTISERS TRY TO MANIPULATE OUR BUYING BEHAVIOUR?**

**D:** I think woke advertising is still effective, but only if a company genuinely supports a particular cause or social issue. If they are doing it just to increase sales, consumers will soon catch on. You have to get it right - any missteps or hints of hypocrisy will cause a negative consumer response on social media, which can do real damage to your brand.

#### **#2 Learn to look**

Get into the habit of observing with an open mind. Sit quietly somewhere, just watching and listening to people. This could be in a café, in the supermarket, or during your morning commute. Wherever you choose to do it, remember - it's about really seeing, and not assuming.

Listening and observing with an open mind, as well as being able to analyse what you've discovered, are the key skills you need to truly understand your consumers. During the first run of our workshop, Learning to Look, which took place in a pub, a team uncovered numerous challenges, as well as opportunities to turn the pub around and increase turnover significantly. And all this after just 30 minutes of observation.

#### **#3 Do a co-research project with us**

Co-research projects enable us to work with our clients and teach them how to do the research themselves. We take teams through our process step-by-step, so that in the future they can be mostly independent. The only thing we do ourselves is the data analysis - after all, the magic of revealing invisible social behaviour is our 'secret sauce'!

Our unique approach demonstrates the value of quality consumer research in practice, upskill your team and guides your business strategy. It also gets you closer to your customers - quite literally. We bring you along to field research in your customer's living room, office, or wherever they happen to be.

## **“You can't truly understand the world of your customers from behind your desk.”**

#### **E: HOW ESSENTIAL IS CONSUMER RESEARCH WHEN PLANNING CAMPAIGNS?**

**D:** The more you know about your consumers, the better. We analysed a marketing campaign by a leading supermarket and found that it didn't really speak to consumers. There was a real disconnect between the supermarket's magazine, which tapped into the issue of social anxiety, and the direct marketing campaign, which didn't.

Not addressing the social anxiety was a missed opportunity, and brands can't afford to miss opportunities, especially in the current retail environment. For me, quality consumer research should drive your overall business strategy, instead of just individual campaigns. We always advise a coherent approach to campaign planning.

#### **E: WHAT ARE YOUR TOP TIPS FOR ANYONE DOING CONSUMER RESEARCH?**

##### **D: #1 Get out of your office**

I can't stress enough how important it is to get out of the office and spend time with your customers in their environment. You can't truly understand the world of your customers from behind your desk.

Ask to shadow them, observe their behaviours and make note of what you see. Keep an open mind. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Anthropologists ask lots of questions because we want to understand why people do things. If you're not sure where to start, we can help.

For us, consumer research is about really understanding your customers, so you can offer products and services that meet their needs. Consumers don't always articulate their needs, often learning to work around them. If you unearth these needs, you'll be able to come up with solutions that your competitors may have missed.

#### **E: MUCH OF YOUR WORK IS HELPING BUSINESSES RE-ESTABLISH THEIR POSITION OFFLINE. HOW DOES THAT THEN TRANSLATE ONLINE?**

**D:** This ties back to using consumer research to guide your overall business strategy. The insights we gather should filter through the organisation, informing everything from product design and marketing to digital presence. Once you understand how your customers behave (distinguishing that from how they say they behave), you can use these insights to tailor your offering both offline and online.

Talking to people is great, but quality research looks beneath the surface for customer problems which need solving. This requires immersing yourself in your customers' environment and looking for clues. Once you understand why people are behaving a certain way, you can come up with innovative offline and online solutions that your competitors have overlooked.

Understanding how your consumers behave online and offline can help you to connect the dots and provide a cohesive multichannel experience. After all, nothing helps a business thrive like giving people what they want!

# 06

## IN THIS SECTION:

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**68**

### **INTERVIEW WITH AN UMBRACO MVP**

We chatted with Spindogs' Nik Rimington to find out what being an MVP means and why he's still as interested and invested as ever in the Umbraco community.

**70**

### **BEST OF INSTAGRAM**

Take a look at nine of our most inspirational Instagram posts and accounts from the Spindogs team.

**72**

### **SPINDOGS CHARITY WORK**

In honour of our 15th birthday, we set out to find fifteen charities and devote them our time, effort and appreciation. Read about what we did and how we set about the challenge.

**73**

### **NOTES PAGE**

After reading BARK 9 you may be feeling inspired, use this notes section to write down your ideas, things you like, plans for future campaigns or maybe just a few doodles.

ES



## UMBRACO MVP

# NIK RIMINGTON

In April 2019, we were lucky enough to welcome senior .Net developer, Nik Rimington, to the team. Nik has .Net development experience spanning over a decade, specialising in web development and Umbraco. In fact he was crowned one of Umbraco's Most Valuable People (MVP) for the second year running at Umbraco's annual Codegarden event in 2019.

We grabbed five with Nik to find out a little more about what he does at Spindogs, what being an MVP means and why he's still as interested and invested as ever in the Umbraco community.



ABIGAIL PHILLIPS

### **A: WHEN DID YOUR INTEREST IN UMBRACO BEGIN?**

**N:** So, my interest in Umbraco began almost five years ago when I moved to Cardiff to start a new role as a senior developer. At the time, I hadn't heard of Umbraco but the company I was working at had just started to use it, so I had to quickly get my head around it. The company sent me on two training courses and I did a lot of research and investigation into the surrounding community and was immediately hooked. The rest, as they say, is history!

### **A: WHAT EXACTLY IS AN UMBRACO MVP?**

**N:** MVP in Umbraco terms refers to Most Valuable People, or person. Umbraco Headquarters (HQ) describes MVP's as "hardworking pillars of the Umbraco community". Essentially, they are people who Umbraco recognise as great contributors to Umbraco and its community.

**A: HOW DOES ONE BECOME AN MVP?**

**N:** In short, you are selected. Over the years the selection process has changed but these days the decision comes from the HQ, as far as I'm aware. It's a fairly 'secret' process, in that no one talks about it and, if you are anything like me, you won't necessarily know how you were selected. My first time getting this award came as a complete shock (second time did as well, to be fair!), and it wasn't until after Codegarden 2018 that I found out I was awarded it for my contributions to the Umbraco help & guidance forum.

**A: YOU'VE BEEN AWARDED THIS FOR THE SECOND TIME NOW - HOW MANY ARE CHOSEN EACH YEAR?**

**N:** It varies. In 2019, there were 14 new MVP's and 32 renewals awarded, and the year before that, there were 16 new MVP's and 18 renewals. I highly recommend getting to know as many as you can, as they are all great people who have a wealth of knowledge to share!

**A: TELL US THREE THINGS YOU LOVE ABOUT UMBRACO...**

**N:** Community, community, community. Yes, I know that is a cheating answer, but if it wasn't for the welcoming community, I don't think I would be as interested. Being part of something welcoming, that doesn't belittle new people but instead helps them to learn, grow, and adapt is such a rewarding experience. It's great when you can give back to it, too. If you want to get involved in the community, and I highly recommend you do, there are various ways you can do so. The quickest and easiest way to do it is to join the community space on Umbraco.com. The space is full of great information and resources, including a forum where you can ask questions, link to meet-ups, and other associated communities.

and is based around the 'open circle initiative', which allows attendees to run their own mini-talks/discussions and then feedback at the end of the day. This can be the most rewarding part of the event as there are often unexpected and very interesting topics discussed. On one of the nights, there is the infamous Umbraco bingo. That is all that can be said about it as quite frankly, words can't describe it - you need to attend it to understand it!

**A: MOVING ON TO TALK MORE ABOUT YOUR WORK AT SPINDOGS. WHAT DOES A TYPICAL DAY LOOK LIKE FOR YOU DURING THE WORKING WEEK?**

**N:** There is no such thing as a typical day at Spindogs, and that is what makes it a great place to work. As a remote worker, my day always starts with a daily conference call with the rest of the remote team. This is a stand-up where we discuss the previous day and today's tasks. After that, it's a case of cracking on with it.

My day can then involve more calls, but generally, it will be either project work, or amends and support. Project work will, as the name suggests, be time dedicated to working on a specific project. This can consist of working on a new build for a website, or it could be a large block of work, such as a new feature for an existing site. If it's amends and support, then it's working on completing the support tickets that clients have requested, or making small amends to existing sites. This year, we've introduced R&D time, which is a time for us developers to transform our ideas into prototypes. Maybe some of these prototypes will lead to talking ideas with our clients!

**“It doesn't belittle new people but instead helps them to learn, grow, and adapt is such a rewarding experience.”**

**A: YOU HAVE NOW STARTED SPEAKING AT UMBRACO EVENTS AS AN MVP, TELL US ABOUT THE KIND OF EVENTS YOU HAVE SPOKEN AT AND WHAT ARE THE KEY TOPICS THE UMBRACO COMMUNITY WANT TO HEAR ABOUT?**

**N:** Speaking at events is very new to me. Public speaking, in general, isn't something I'm comfortable with! However, as I've been part of the community for a few years now, I've made the decision it's something I need to do more of. So, on the face of that, I did my first talk earlier this year at the relaunch of Thames Valley Umbraco User Group (TVUUG) in Reading. It was an interesting experience and thankfully, it was well-received. Here's to more talks in 2020! The Umbraco community wants to hear about anything and everything. It's a wonderfully knowledge-thirsty community. I have lots of ideas for what I would talk about next; some code based and some more theoretical, but I need to take some time to plan them and decide what format they best suit. I think I'll probably edge more towards the theoretical but I may look to do a couple of small code talks around better practice and project structure as they seem to be commonly-debated topics.

**A: TELL US ABOUT CODEGARDEN, WHAT GOES ON?**

**N:** Codegarden is the annual Umbraco conference run by Umbraco HQ. It is currently held in Odense, Denmark, and is an exhilarating experience. Like most conferences, it's an intense experience full of knowledge-sharing, talks, workshops, and networking. It also provides an opportunity for general chats with other attendees; breakout spaces for when the intensity gets too much, and wonderful food. The final day is structured differently

**A: IF YOU COULD OFFER A NEW MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY ONE BIT OF ADVICE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?**

**N:** If you are new to the Umbraco community, my biggest advice is to get involved - don't sit in the background and watch, try and participate. This could be asking questions, answering questions, or attending meet-ups/conferences. The Umbraco community is one of my greatest discoveries since becoming a developer - there's something about it that's pretty inspiring.

**A: WHAT DO YOU THINK THE FUTURE FOR UMBRACO IS?**

**N:** The future of Umbraco is an interesting one. Of course, I see it continuing to evolve and grow, but where I see it going, I'm not sure. Umbraco is working on a .Net Core version of the content management system (CMS), which, I believe, will greatly influence others to adopt it as it will expose it to other hosting environments. It's recently launched Umbraco Heartcore, a headless version of the CMS, which isn't targeted at existing Umbraco users but instead, at those who build alternative apps/sites and require a central store for their content. The product is Umbraco's second venture into software as a service (SAAS) - the first being Umbraco Cloud - and with this comes improved stability for the HQ to support the Open Source CMS that powers both of these. With community engagement and the HQ working closely together, I see a very positive future for Umbraco and I'm excited to be a part of it!



# BEST OF INSTAGRAM

We asked the team at Spindogs to share their favourite Instagram accounts. From cats to 19th century paintings, there's a world of inspiration at our fingertips. We share some of what we've been scrolling through. Tag us @spindogsdigital in your top Instagram accounts.



**1. JAMES WILKINS - @DRONESHARKAPP** content creators using a drone to film marine life off the Australian coast – highlight is Alex the Seal – never fails to bring a smile. **2. EMILY HARRIS - @ACCIDENTALLYWESANDERSON** an Instagram account compiling places from around the world that look like they've been plucked right out of a Wes Anderson movie. **3. RUTH LALLIANKIMI - @BEN.ARFUR** The ever prolific self-taught graphic designer Ben Arfur. **4. CLARE TREVERROW - @MRSEAVES101** an Australian artist known for her bold super-graphics, illustrative lettering and hand-painted murals. **5. LEILA KING - @THESCRANLINE** To put simply, it's psychedelic cake porn. **6. MATT GADD - @TEDPIM** Modern street art take on 19th Century classical style. **7. LUKE CARDY - @BESTOFFPACKAGING** I love the creative and sleek product/package designs set to simple block colour background and it introduces me to cool new brands and products. **8. CHELSEA BROWNHILL - @THEHAPPYNEWSPAPER** Amy introduced me to this and it's so lovely reading about positive things every day instead of only negative news. **9. TARA PETERS @MERLINRAGDOLL** am a crazy cat lady... so it's no surprise that I have chosen a grumpy looking cat for my favourite account.

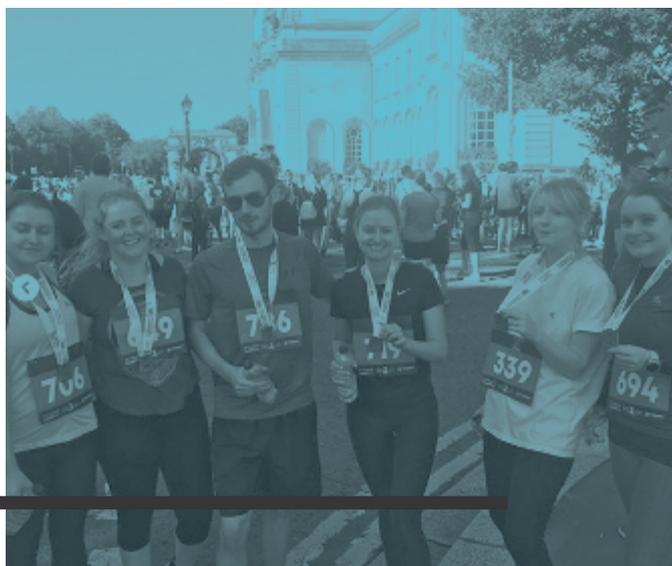
# FIVE WAYS TO GET YOUR TEAM GIVING



AMY O'FARRELL



HANNAH WILLIAMS



Here at Spindogs, we believe in paying it forward and celebrating our success by helping others succeed. So, in honour of our 15th birthday, we set out to help 15 charities and devote them our time, effort and appreciation.

We put choosing these charities into the hands of the Spindogs family, so that our team would have the chance to support organisations that have real meaning to them. It was a pleasant surprise to find out how many incredible charities play a huge part in the lives of our team members. This personal connection gave our Culture Club team the extra push to think outside the box and come up with the best ways to get everyone involved in our charitable efforts.

Here's our top five ways to get your team to give back:

## 1. SPREAD THE LOVE

The reason we give to charity is pretty simple: we care about the cause! Yet a lot of the time giving to charity can feel quite disconnected. Throwing a few pennies in a pot doesn't really give you an understanding of the help you've provided. This is why making the effort to really connect with the charity can make a world of difference. You can do this through small gestures, such as recognising the times when your chosen charity might need the support the most.

One of the charities on our list is the Penarth Live at Home Scheme, an organisation which helps the elderly get some much-needed socialisation while living independently. This past festive season, we showed them our love by getting the team together to write Christmas cards full of well-wishes for the attendees. Each card contained a personal message from a team member and no two were alike, so every person from the scheme would feel as though they'd received something special!

## 2. SHOW UP

Giving to charity isn't always about cold, hard cash – your time is just as valuable as any monetary donation. One of the core Spindogs values is to 'show you care', and giving up some of our free time is the perfect way to do this.

Since August, we have volunteered our time to support numerous events for our charities, including cheering on the Motor Neurone Disease Association at the Cardiff Half Marathon, cleaning up Barry beach on behalf of Friends of Barry Beaches, and organising 'Walk With Me', a night walk to raise awareness of the National Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and for Women's Aid.

## 3. BE A SOCIAL BUTTERFLY

Nearly everyone on the planet uses some form of social media – from your little sister posting selfies on the 'gram' to your nan's letter-style statuses on Facebook – and its visibility in our daily life is only increasing. That's why using your social platforms to dabble in altruism is the perfect way to raise awareness of causes close to your heart.

Sharing info about a specific charity or plugging fundraising events can really help make a difference. It could lead to a boost in donations, aid you in recruiting more volunteers, or even help someone in need to reach out. Head over to our Instagram to take a look at what we've been doing to make use of our following and raise awareness of our chosen charities. Whether it's meeting with the team at Kidney Wales, shouting about International Alopecia Day, or promoting our walk for Women's Aid, we've made sure to spread the word about our charities.

## 4. GIVE WHAT YOU'VE ALREADY GOT

When you're rallying your team to come up with the next big charity idea, it's easy to forget that your team members are an asset in themselves. No matter what your business is, you will have something worthwhile to offer. Using the resources you already have is an easy way to be charitable without really trying!

As a digital agency, we offer in-house training for a number of different aspects of online marketing. We knew that many of our 15 charities either didn't have the know-how, or could use a little refresher on how to make the most of their digital platforms, so we invited them to come along to some of our training courses, fully subsidised. This way, we've taken our skills and helped enhance theirs – something you can do whether you're a butcher, a baker or a website maker.

## 5. MAKE IT WORTH THEIR WHILE

Getting everyone in the office to empty their pockets can be a hard sell, even if it is for a good cause, so why not make it a fair trade? This year we've done a Rugby World Cup sweepstake and a weekly Great Spindogs Bake Off – combining our competitive side with our famous adoration for cake. This way, as well as making your team happy – seriously, Sian's millionaire shortbread can make anyone smile! – you raise a few pounds towards your chosen charity, hassle-free. Win, win!



# CONTACT US



## ABOUT SPINDOGS

A full-service digital agency, we love delivering great website design & development, marketing and brand solutions for our clients, so whether you're looking to drive more value from your digital marketing budget or bring your business to life with a visually stunning website, we have the full package to take your online presence to the next level. That's how we've built successful, results-driven relationships with clients for over fifteen years.

## WEBSITES

- Web Design & Development
- Ecommerce
- Multiple CMS platforms including WordPress, Umbraco and Kentico
- Intranets & Extranets

## CREATIVE

- Brand Consultancy
- Logo Design
- Graphic Design
- UX
- Website Design
- Print
- Branding

## MARKETING

- Outsourced Digital Marketing
- SEO
- PPC
- Social Media Advertising
- Analytics
- Conversion Rate Optimisation
- Email Marketing
- Training & Workshops
- Content Creation

## GET IN TOUCH

To learn more about partnering with Spindogs get in touch with our Business Development Team:

E: [info@spindogs.com](mailto:info@spindogs.com) | T: 02920 480 720



**BARK**

Until next time...



**BARK**