

# The Quantified Media Apparatus

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The implications of quantification and the use of the Facebook Insights platform  
on the shaping/publishing of digital cultural content by media companies

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## Summary

One billion users are using Facebook on a daily basis, and as a 'social' medium it has changed the way in which people are consuming digital cultural content. And it is therefore the first platform to go to when media companies are distributing their digital cultural content. From this perspective, the main problem of this thesis will revolve around how the use of the Facebook Insights platform by media companies might affect the way digital cultural content is being shaped. In this thesis, I will examine this problem and uncover its possible implications by analysing the Facebook Insights interface and observing the practices of the media companies VICE and Sciencedump. Eventually, it comes down to a whole range of variables that are shaping the digital cultural content. It is the interplay between the so-called perceived affordances that guide user behaviour and the appropriation/interpretation by media companies that has an affect on the way digital cultural content is produced and distributed. The major implication of how these practices are established and the Facebook Insights platform functions, is it that due to the omnipresent of metrics a quantifiable content production machine is formed. Media companies are producing digital cultural content that is informed by the engagement of Facebook users in order to make sure that people click. From this point of view, I will finally conclude that it is through the quantification that the phenomenon of the 'filter bubble' is being reinforced.

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# 1. Introduction

On average, one billion people in the world use Facebook daily (Data Center Knowledge 2016), this makes it one of the most dominant social media platforms in the world. Besides the fact that it is a place for sharing personal stuff online, it has also become one of the main channels of distributing digital cultural content – video’s, articles, memes, photo’s etcetera – produced by inter alia media companies (Southern 2016). The Facebook platform has become one of the most important gatekeepers – next to Google and YouTube – for distributing digital cultural content. These platforms are therefore determining, to a great extent, the pillars that are shaping the fabric of the web nowadays. As a result, media companies have to use these platforms for the distribution of their digital cultural content to reach their audience (Southern 2016). Furthermore, to keep these media companies informed on how their content is performing they are providing tools to gain this insight (Facebook 2017a). Metrics like demographics, the number of users reached etcetera are in this manner providing feedback to the user – content creators.

Media companies are developing different methods to make sense of the provided metrics and determine how they should adjust their content to reach a larger number of people. Companies such as VICE and Sciencedump are developing their own methods to appropriate the provided data<sup>1</sup>. For example, VICE is developing a proprietary dashboard through which they can determine how the articles of authors are performing, and Sciencedump is deploying A/B tests<sup>2</sup> to learn which parameters are causing a post to reach a broader public. In both cases, the people at those companies are trying to understand – through the metrics that Facebook is providing – how the public is reacting to their content and how it is being distributed across the platform. Thus, they are adjusting their content in such a manner that it will produce ‘better’ results – which is for example in the case of these media companies more views. It is this aspect that brings us to the main problem that I will be examining in this thesis; how the use of a technological artefact and the prescribed set of rules within this artefact are shaping user behaviour, and how this has an impact on the way cultural artefacts are being produced – which in the end has repercussions on culture as such. In other words, the problem revolves around how the Facebook platform and its use by media companies is affecting the way cultural artefacts are being produced and consumed.

## 1.1 The problem

It is the appropriation of the Facebook platform by media companies that plays an important role in how digital cultural content is shaped and consumed. By appropriation of the platform, I point to how a technology or an object is used in a different manner by the end-

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with of subjects 1-5 (Appendix)

<sup>2</sup> A/B testing is a method to show two different versions of a web page, in this case a post, and see which one is performing better.

user than it was designed to be. The latter is also known as the affordance of an object; the relationship between the characteristics of an object and the ability of a user to determine how the object should be used (Norman 2013, 11). An object like for example a chair is in the first place designed to sit on – the affordance. When you use the same object in a different way, like using the chair as a step stool to reach something high up in a cupboard. You are according to Mirko T. Schäfer (2011) and Donald Norman (2013) appropriating the object. It is through inter alia the interface of the Facebook Insights platform (Flp)<sup>3</sup> that media companies are able to appropriate the Facebook platform to a certain extent. But there is one remark, because through the affordances of the interface – in this case the interface of the Flp – the user might also be guided towards a certain way of behaving.

It is the user interface (UI) that makes it possible for a user to communicate through and perform actions with the computer. In this manner, the UI presented by software is like a mediator through which the computer and the user can communicate with each other (Johnson 1997, 14). Or as Johanna Drucker states:

If we think of interface as a *thing*, an entity, a fixed or determined structure that supports certain activities, it tends to reify in the same way a book does in traditional description. But we know that a codex book is not a *thing* but a structured set of codes that support or provoke an interpretation that is itself performative.

(Drucker 2011, 8)

Drucker aims at the way in which interfaces always require a certain interpretation; icons and metrics alike have performative traits. The interface is not merely a simple way of communicating things, but rather it is designed to guide the user to predetermined interactions. An interface is from this perspective able to establish and condition actions. The omnipresence of metrics within the Facebook interface might therefore also shape the user behaviour, from the number of likes you can gather on a post to the number of people that have seen the digital content. Most of these metrics also have repercussions on how the post is being distributed across the Facebook platform. A higher number of likes on a post, for example, will result in the fact that the post will be shown to a larger number of people. It is due to the ubiquity of metrics and their significance that it could nurture user behaviour which is aimed at an ever-growing crave for more.

From here on the problem of this thesis boils down to how the affordances of the Flp could be shaping user behaviour, and to what the implications of metrics/quantification are on the shaping of digital cultural content. In other words, the problem revolves around the question how digital culture content is being shaped through both technological artefacts

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<sup>3</sup> In the rest of this thesis I will use the abbreviation Flp, when I refer to the Facebook Insights platform.

and the social construction of these technological artefacts. This results in the following central research question:

*What are the implications of the affordances of Facebook's Insights platform and its appropriation by media companies, like Sciencedump and VICE, on the shaping of digital cultural content by these companies?*

In order to answer this central research question, I will be examining how the behaviour of users at VICE and Sciencedump is being shaped through their use of the Flp, and how the metrics that are provided by the Flp might influence how they produce popular science and news articles. The main argument of this thesis will, therefore, revolve around how certain user behaviour is triggered through the metric and quantification metaphors that are provided through the interface of the Flp, and how quantification nurtures digital cultural content production that is driven by metrics. In extent, the way content is being produced in this manner has another consequence; it might reinforce the formation of a so-called filter bubble.

In 2011 Elis Pariser argued that how digital cultural content was being distributed and curated across platforms like Facebook was causing a filter bubble to happen (Pariser 2011). The concept of this filter bubble revolved around the fact that content was becoming more personalised. By personalization, he meant the way an algorithm is trying to guess what information is relevant to the user based on their previous behaviour on the platform. In this manner, Pariser argued, are users becoming disconnected from the things that do not correspond with their view on the world. The result is that the algorithm is isolating the users in their secluded cultural and ideological bubble (ibid 2011). Although I don't fully agree with this statement because people are also satisfied with the way they are not being exposed to things they don't like. In extent, people also have the intention to flock together with people or like things that match their perspective of the world (McPherson et al. 2001, 415). Thus, whether the algorithm solely intensifies this phenomenon is arguable. In this thesis I will, therefore, try to nuance the argument about how digital cultural content is being shaped and distributed – and thus try to reflect on the shaping of culture by media companies on Facebook as such. An aspect which I'm able to achieve by studying how user behaviour can be shaped through technological artefacts and how practices in relation to these artefacts are established. It is in particular these elements that are also significant for the relevance and goal of this thesis.

## 1.2 Goal and relevance

The goal of this thesis is to shed more light onto how affordances are embedded within the Facebook platform, especially within the interface of the Flp, and how these affordances might influence the way digital cultural content is shaped. The research of this thesis will therefore consist out of an analysis of the Flp interface to understand how the Flp interface operates, and an ethnographic approach to learn how practices in relation to this interface are established. From this point of view, I will also examine how the editors and social media analysts at media companies – specifically the digital-only publishing companies VICE and Sciencedump – are appropriating the data provided through the Flp. By doing this I will ultimately try to clarify how the creation of digital cultural content might be influenced by the appropriation and affordances of a platform like Facebook. And by laying bare how digital cultural content inter alia might be co-shaped through the affordances and appropriation, I'm able to reflect in a more nuanced manner on how digital culture is produced and consumed. To this end, this thesis seeks to contribute to the way of thinking about how digital cultural content is coming into being on digital platforms like Facebook – specifically within the field of media and software studies.

As James Bridle, digital artist and writer recalls; we need to understand the underlying systems and processes before we can critically reflect upon mediated products and the implications that derive from these technological artefacts (Bridle 2013). By this, he is pointing to how without understanding a technological artefact to its core, we are not able to reflect on the things that derive from it. This concept of understanding underlying systems before we can critically reflect fits into the perspective on technological artefacts from a software studies point of view. Within this field of study researchers investigate the way in which power and control enfold itself in relation to software (Gehl 2015, 7). The subject of study within this field revolves around answering questions like; how is software being appropriated and used? Or what are the implications of a technology on daily life? Questions like these evoke us to think more critically about software and how it can influence our daily life. Like for example in the case of this thesis, the practice of how the Flp is being used to determine about what topics an author should write. Practices that also could partly reveal how phenomena like *click bait*<sup>4</sup> and *fake news*<sup>5</sup> come into being.

To critically reflect upon phenomena like these we must understand how these practices are established, and what the role of the technological artefact is. This is especially important due to how these practices also might have repercussions on the shaping of culture as such. Although the field of software studies is growing, according to Benjamin

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<sup>4</sup> The concept of *click bait* revolves around the fact that the title or image of an article is motivating the user to click on the link to the article, but the article itself isn't delivering the promised information or answers (Blom and Hansen 2015, 87).

<sup>5</sup> The concept of *fake news* is being defined as news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false, and are aimed at misleading readers (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017)

Grosser (2014) there only have been a handful of examinations about Facebook from a software studies perspective. From how Carolin Gerlitz and Anne Helmond look at the use of Facebook social buttons around the web to how Robert Gehl is using the reverse engineering metaphor to uncover the political economy of the Facebook platform (Grosser 2014). Grosser himself has therefore examined the way how Facebook metrics direct and prescribe user (inter)action (ibid), but he didn't connect this aspect to how digital cultural content is being established on the Facebook platform. Furthermore, there also has been conducted some research on for example how *click bait* is being used as a lure to make users click on an article (Blom and Hansen 2015), and to my knowledge there hasn't been conducted any research on how these kind of practices are established within media companies and how the Flp might influence these practices. It is here that I hope to contribute by examining how the Flp interface and its metrics nurture certain user behaviour, and how this ultimately might influence how digital cultural content is being produced and consumed. In extent, this thesis will from this perspective also contribute to the field of media studies and how within this field of research we need to think about the way digital cultural content is being produced, distributed and consumed through large digital platforms like Facebook and Youtube. Especially in the wake of phenomena like the *fake news* issues. It is also here where the social relevance of this thesis lies. This is due to how the issues around *fake news* not only changed the way people perceive digital cultural content on platforms like Facebook (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017), but also let Facebook and Google adjust their user interface in order to alert the user for possibly unreliable digital cultural content (Summers 2017).

### 1.3 Research structure

In short, as I already stated I will be focusing on the interface of the Flp and its appropriation by the digital only media companies VICE and Sciencedump. Through the interface of the Flp, Facebook is providing metrics that will provide digital cultural content producers of insights on how their page and content is performing. The main problem will revolve around how affordances and appropriation of the Facebook Insights interface is shaping user behaviour and the way digital cultural content is being produced. Analysing the interface of the Flp I will only cover one part of the problem, so in order cover the other part of the problem I also have to examine user practices in this thesis. I will therefore discuss in chapter 2 and 3 the theoretical framework and method that will enable me to analyse and interpret the interface and user practices. From thereon I will answer in chapter 4 the question on how affordances and symbolic handles are embedded in the interface of the Flp, and in chapter 5 I will examine how user practices and appropriation by editors and social media analysts at media companies are established in relation to the Flp.



## 2. User Behaviour and the Significance of the Interface

In the previous chapter, I argued that the issue at hand in this thesis revolves around how the behaviour of digital cultural content creators appears to be shaped by the Facebook platform and its Insights part. This aspect brings us to a fundamental question within the field of software and technology studies, whether technology is shaping cultural processes or itself is a contemplation of these processes. In the case of this thesis, each perspective would provoke a less nuanced conclusion, like for example concluding that the Facebook Insights Interface is the sole reason for the cultural change. I would therefore rather argue that you can't sufficiently explain this phenomenon of social and cultural change by merely looking at the technology as the sole harbinger. We also should incorporate and understand the social construction of a technology to provide a bit more context to the way technology is or isn't shaping cultural processes (Gitelman 2003).

One way of overcoming the dichotomy of technological determinism and social constructivism is the actor-network approach. This approach agrees with the way that sociotechnical systems are developed through the interrelations between people, institutions, and organisation. Moreover, it adds the claim that artefacts are also part of this conversation (Latour 1992, 151). As Bruno Latour argues in *Where Are the Missing Masses? The Sociology of a Few Mundane Artefacts*, it is not that machines or artefacts think like people but their behaviour or nature does often take on a quite similar role. The artefacts or technologies are pushing back on people due to its design and physical structure (ibid, 151). Although the paradigm in which people are viewing the world plays a part in how they are interpreting the precise meaning of an artefact. It is the laws of nature or in the case of the design of the Flip interface that will limit the ways in which the technological artefact can be integrated into a sociotechnical system (ibid, 151). It is here where the affordances and appropriation of a technological artefact will become visible.

### 2.1 Affordances and appropriation

In the introductory chapter, I briefly touched upon the subject of affordance and appropriation, in short it boiled down to the way how affordance and appropriation are interrelated. But this explanation isn't sufficient if we want to operationalize these terms in a more nuanced way, which is vital when we are trying to explain how affordances and appropriation shape user behaviour.

The concept of affordance was first coined by the perceptual psychologist J.J. Gibson, he used the term to describe the relationships between the world and an actor. These relationships, or affordances, exist in the world naturally and they do not have to be visible or known (Norman 1999, 39). This notion of affordance by Gibson is used by Donald Norman in 1988 as the foundation for analysing the design of everyday things and their

relation to the users(humans), in other words the interaction between human and machine. By affordance, Norman refers to the action possibilities that are readily perceivable by a user(actor) (Norman 1988). From this perspective, he later on revised the term to *perceived affordance* due to the many misuses of the term in the age of design in the virtual world (Norman 1999, 39). The revised version of the term is in particularly applicable to the issue at hand in this thesis, as Norman states:

The affordance exists independently of what is visible on the screen. Those displays are not affordances; they are visual feedback that advertise the affordances: they are the perceived affordances. The difference is important because they are independent design concepts: the affordances, the feedback, and the perceived affordances can all be manipulated independently of one another. (ibid, 40)

When we look at the subject of study of this thesis, we should acknowledge that the Flp interface with its use of metrics and icons is solely based on visual feedback. This visual feedback is not the real affordance, conform to Norman's concept they are the perceived affordances. This is because the perceived affordances are the things that are being communicated and exposed more explicitly. The real affordance, on the other hand, revolves around all the other implicit processes that are at hand when a user acts within the system. In the case of software and the Flp, the real affordances do not always have to have a visible presence (ibid, 40). Like for example the underlying hardware (servers, networks etcetera) and code that make up the Facebook platform.

The perceived affordances are determined by factors like context and culture, the user should know what to do with the object without having it seen before. Per Norman, the perceived affordances within screen-based interfaces don't have to be confused with constraints that are established through cultural conventions. For example, when you learn not to click unless you have the correct cursor form is based upon a convention that is culturally assembled. It is a form of symbolic communication that only works when the convention is understood by the user (ibid). The difference between these conventions/constraints and affordances is that the first needs to be learned and the latter is an indication of the possible relations between actors and objects (ibid, 42). Investigating and separating the perceived affordances from the conventions and constraints can be useful when we are trying to uncover the way user behaviour is being shaped and in specifically the appropriation of an artefact. It is the appropriation that emerges from the affordances of an artefact and it is this aspect that also plays an important role in the construction and functioning of a technological artefact within society.

As I mentioned in the previous section, we must take into consideration the Actor Network – a theory posed by, inter alia, Bruno Latour. As technological artefacts are shaped

through the interplay between non-human and human actors, the so-called Actor Network (Latour 1990, 103), it is among other things the appropriation that is shaping this interplay. The appropriation revolves around how a technological artefact is being used in a different way in relation to its perceived affordance by the end-user (Schäfer 2011, 19-20). The appropriation of a technology is, in fact, the ability of a user to act within its given limits, affordances without the constraints and conventions. To position this perspective on appropriation and affordances in relation to the interface of the Flp, we should examine the way an interface is being established and what its relation is to the appropriation and affordances. By examining this facet, I will be able to analyse and investigate the different aspects and affordances of the interface in relation to the shaping of user behaviour.

## 2.2 The interface effect

The etymological roots of the term 'interface' stem from the discipline of chemistry, where it represents the surface that is forming a boundary between two bodies, spaces or phases (Cramer and Fuller 2008, 149). This is comparable to how, in the domain of computing, the interface is linking software and hardware to each other. Furthermore, it is also the interface that is linking the merger of hardware and software to users or other sources of data (ibid). Per Florian Cramer and Matthew Fuller a typology of interfaces within the domain of computing involves five aspects:

1. hardware that connects users to hardware, such as the keyboard of a computer;
2. hardware that connects hardware to hardware, such as a bus system (the system that makes it possible to transfer data between different components within a system);
3. software or logic that is embedded into hardware, such as device drivers (for example software that makes it possible for a soundcard to function properly within a specific computer system configuration);
4. protocols that regulate the relations between software and software, also known as application programming interfaces (API's);
5. the symbolic handles that make software accessible to users, the user interfaces.

From here on, we can conclude that interfaces play a significant part in the way computers operate and handle user actions. But although all the described categories are meaningful to computing as a whole, it is specifically the fifth classification that is of interest in relation to the main problem of this thesis.

The interface of the Flp is in the first place a user interface that enables access to the dataflows of a Facebook page through the use of symbolic handles. It is this symbolic aspect of the user interface that is of particular interest because the user interface is always symbolic and requires linguistic and symbolic outlines for it to function (ibid, 150). This not

only implies that the Insights Interface – just like any other user interface – heavily relies on formal language, but also that the symbolic language of the interface plays a significant part in how it is being perceived and understood by the user. Due to how the user interface operates as a layer between software, hardware and the user it also accentuates the representation and re-articulation of processes that are occurring at another level (ibid). Like for example how the e-mail send-button represents the complex process of sending a digital message across the world-wide web. From this perspective, we should affirm that to understand the relation between user behaviour and the Insights interface we should focus on the semiotic language of the interface and how it is being understood by the user. It is this aspect that is essential when understanding ‘new’ media because user interfaces are on the foreground of these media as never before (Galloway 2012, 30). From ATM’s and Smartphones to making pictures with your digital camera and editing them with Instagram. It is all about the interface and the so-called user-friendliness, which is about the way processes are being mediated through symbols and language that is easily recognisable and visible. But by capturing complex underlying processes into easily recognisable and visible symbols the underlying process or affordance is being concealed. An aspect that could also be the case with the way metrics are being used as symbolic handles to represent data flows within the Facebook Insights interface.

Lev Manovich explains in his book *The Language of New Media* (2001), that to mediate is really to interface due to how an interface operates as a mediator between surfaces (Manovich 2001 75-114). But at the same time these interfaces, and in this case user interfaces, are repercussions of other things. They are depicting the story of the forces and systems that establish them and are shaped through representations of underlying systems (Galloway 2012, 10). As Alexander Galloway illustrates, “While readily evident in things like screens and surfaces, the interface is ultimately something beyond the screen” (ibid, 54). The interface is a mediation method that makes its appearance at all levels within hardware and software, as we saw earlier on. These interfaces are not necessarily interesting as a subject of analysis to explain what they are, but rather to show how it builds an interface between the subject and the world, between the surface and the source. This is why the interface is a symbolic apparatus that will help us gain insight into how culture operates and is being established in the age of information (ibid, 54). It is the effect of the interface, through real and perceived affordances, on the shaping of user behaviour that plays a crucial role. And in the case of the Flp interface, it is the excessive use of metrics that could be playing a key part in this shaping of user behaviour.

## 2.3 Metrics and their significance

Metrics within Facebook platform prescribe sociality within the social network and this prescription is rooted in the human need for personal worth. Within the boundaries of capitalism, this need for personal worth is transformed into a ravenous need for more (Grosser 2014). As Benjamin Grosser argues, business ontology enculturates a reliance on quantification due to the way this aspect is being used to evaluate whether a desire has been fulfilled (ibid). For media companies, one of these desires that is being evaluated through quantified data is how their digital cultural content is distributed across the platform. The assessment of this desire through quantified data plays an important part within media companies because it is often directly linked to their business model which is driven by for example the amount of paying subscribers or the advertisement revenue (Picard 2011, 1-4). This aspect indicates that the more people are viewing the content of these companies the more revenue is being generated. But why are metrics and quantified data so compelling?

As Theodore Porter argues in *Trust in Numbers*, it is all about the way quantification is a technology of distance and it downplays the need for profound knowledge and individual trust (Porter 1996, 32-77). Enumeration or quantification is impersonal, it indicates social quantification and objectivity to a certain degree. For example, the number of likes on Facebook content removes the individuality from the interactions (Grosser 2014). Besides the fact that the suggested objectivity of quantification makes it powerful, it is due to how capitalism functions that metrics are being considered so significant. In its core capitalism is always about growth, because growth is also the one that enables the survival of capitalism (ibid). Quantification and metrics are playing an important part within this system because they facilitate the assessment of capital progress and measurement of its growth in numerical terms. Within the modern society, it is the business ontology that is pervading every aspect of it, everything is being considered in business terms. And due to the way media companies are rooted within a capitalistic society they are also affected by it. All because of the expansion of the so-called audit culture and the use of observable measurement tools, quantification is treading well beyond its original application in financial management (ibid). It is all about growth and gaining more, and it is here where the significance of metrics lies. But how does this relate to the Facebook Insights interface, the production of media content and the shaping of user behaviour?

It is the Facebook Insights interface where metrics are playing a powerful part, metrics are within this interface an agent of the system. Per Grosser these metrics are drawing us in by focusing on the now, in order to keep the user active within the system (ibid). This is necessary because the Facebook platform doesn't exist without content that is being produced on it. It is here where the next section about software and a society of control comes into play.

## 2.4 A platform of control

As I argued in the previous section, the Facebook platform needs content and users in order to maintain its existence. To keep the platform compelling for the users, it does need some sort of mechanism to keep them within the system. As James R. Beniger argues in the book *The Control Revolution* (1986), new technologies and methods in an information economy contribute to the model of economic and political control. Beniger sees the world as one giant computer system, one that reorganises itself, or as he states:

The Control Revolution also represented the beginning of a restoration - although with increasing centralization - of the economic and political control that was lost at more local levels of society during the Industrial Revolution. Before this time, control of government and markets had depended on personal relationships and face-to-face interactions; now control came to be re-established by means of bureaucratic organisation, the new infrastructures of transportation and telecommunications, and system-wide communication via the new mass media. (Beniger 1986, 7)

By this, he points to how new technologies often contribute to the reformation and redistribution of control. However, Beniger is deploying a rather general notion of control – influencing by intention towards a predetermined goal. From this perspective, one could argue that the Flip interface is being used as an influencer towards a predetermined goal. By providing metrics that contribute to the business ontology of producing media content we could argue that it achieves the goal of keeping the users active within the system. Whether or not this is the essence of the control system that is being deployed within the Facebook platform is the real question. To answer this question, we must analyse the Facebook Insights interface and the way it likely is influencing and shaping the user behaviour. The only problem with software-like mechanisms of control is that they often are invisible and only reveal themselves when being observed closely. As Wendy Hui Kyong Chun in her book *Control and Freedom: Power and paranoia in the age of fiber optics* (2008) states:

Digital language makes control systems invisible: we no longer experience the visible yet unverifiable gaze by a network of nonvisualizable digital control (Chun 2006, 9)

Chun acknowledges that within software, that is made up out of digital language or code, there are invisible control mechanisms at work. But as I already stated these mechanisms are not entirely invisible, due to the way that they reveal themselves through user interface elements. Software produces users, without software there wouldn't be any users. Users are being shaped by gentle interactions through software interfaces that seem to establish some

sort of personal connection with the user (ibid, 21-22). This aspect suggests that software constrains the behaviour of its users from the start, or as Chun argues it is the hardware that is like our nature and software is like our nurture (ibid, 22). But I would not entirely argue with this statement because although the user interface and its underlying processes are playing a significant part in nurturing the behaviour of the user within the system, it is not entirely constraining the behaviour of the user. It is the interplay between perceived affordances as a way of control and the appropriation/interpretation that is fundamentally shaping and constructing user behaviour. To underpin this claim, I will have to look at how this interplay is being established within the Facebook platform and its Insights interface. By examining the symbolic handles that make up the Facebook Insights interface and the practices of the users I will be able to elaborate further on how this interplay in relation to the Facebook platform is being shaped.

### 3. Research method

In the previous chapter, I talked about how the interface is a mediation tool for converting complex processes into easily recognisable symbols – hence an apparatus handling symbols. The most meaningful symbols within the Flp interface are the metrics and they are so significant due to how they nurture reasoning within a business doctrine. The main argument of this thesis will revolve around how user behaviour is guided within the Flp interface and how quantifiable data is nurturing a metrics driven digital cultural content machine. To underpin this argument, I must dissect the Flp interface and the way it is being used by media companies to create and distribute digital cultural content. The research in this thesis will therefore consist of an analysis of the Flp interface, observations of the user practices of editors and social media analysts at media companies, and interviews with editors at media companies. To make the analysis these aspects feasible, I will establish in this chapter a method that involves reverse engineering metaphors, a material object analysis and an ethnographical approach to digital publishing.

#### 3.1 Reverse engineering and the material object analysis

In *Reverse Engineering Social Media* (2015) Robert W. Gehl examines the dynamics and construction of social media by deploying three engineering metaphors in his analysis of social media software. These three metaphors; software engineering, reverse engineering and heterogeneous engineering build the foundation for Gehl's methodological framework (Gehl 2015, 8).

Gehl uses the software engineering metaphor as a tool to introduce analogies and concepts from the software engineering domain in the realm of the humanities and media studies (ibid, 9-10). In this manner, Gehl is establishing a language to talk about software and study the object from a multidisciplinary perspective. Next to the software engineering analogy, he's using the heterogeneous engineering metaphor. This metaphor serves as a way to place the use and production of software into a political-economical context. It shows how society, organisations and machines are interrelated and play their own part within a complex network of various actors (ibid, 12-13). This is a view on objects which is comparable to Latour and his view on the Actor Network (Latour 1990). Alongside the software and heterogeneous engineering analogies, Gehl deploys the third analogy of the reverse engineering metaphor, which will play the most significant part in this thesis.

In this thesis, I will try to lay bare the affordances of the Flp, its appropriation by digital cultural content producers, and how these could affect the production of digital cultural content. It is here where Gehl's reverse engineering metaphor comes into play. Reverse engineering ponders on analysing the different system components within a design and how these components are interrelated. In the case of this thesis I will analyse the



different components of the Flp, which ultimately establish the affordances of the system. As Gehl argues, using reverse engineering as a metaphor will allow us to take apart a finished product and determine for example why the architecture of a software product is constructed in a certain way (Gehl 2015, 10). The use of the reverse engineering analogy for analysing software from a media studies standpoint valuable due to three factors: it creates an opportunity to examine (in)visible software processes; it establishes a way to analyse the software architecture, software requirements and its various forms of use; and in addition the metaphor shapes a method to determine how actors are embedded in the technology (ibid, 10,11). In short, the reverse engineering metaphor enables a way of talking about and analysing software from a humanities standpoint and in this thesis, it will serve as a framework for analysing the Flp interface.

But there is one remark because although the analogies of Gehl are providing us with a foundation for establishing a methodological framework there is still a gap to fill. This is because although it does provide a methodological starting point, it doesn't shape an operationalizable method for analysing software objects. To establish an operationalizable method, we have to take the material object analysis by Marianne van der Boomen into consideration. In her essay *Interfacing by Iconic Metaphors* (2008) she argues that the computer systems encapsulates a whole range of processes that are not directly visible through the graphical interfaces. The computer interface is nowadays constructed in such a way that we as users are not necessarily aware of the processes that are running beneath the surface of the interface (Boomen 2008, 34-36). The recycle bin on our desktop represents for example the process of deleting files from your computer, but most people are probably not aware of what actions the computer must take in order to delete a file. I will not go into too much detail, but in short it boils down to how the operating system<sup>6</sup> will mark the data as deleted. From there on the data will exist on your hard disk up until the moment the computer will overwrite the data that is marked as deleted with new data. The result is that when no new data is written to the hard disk, the data will remain existent (Spector 2014). With this example in mind, Van der Boomen's plea becomes more understandable, because as she argues we often neglect the fact that complex digital actions are represented through metaphors. That is, how the metaphor<sup>7</sup> is a way to translate objects/subjects into terms that were imported and transferred from elsewhere (Boomen 2014, 12-13).

This aspect raises the question whether communicating or thinking in metaphors,

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<sup>6</sup> For example, Microsoft's Windows or Apple's OSX

<sup>7</sup> The metaphor is in this thesis being understood in a similar fashion as Van de Boomen does in her book *Transcoding the Digital: How Metaphors Matter in New Media* (2014), in which she defines the metaphor in the Aristotelian way. As he wrote that a metaphor is a carrying over of a word belonging to something else (Boomen 2014, 13). And to be able to trace mechanisms of metaphorical transference, I will be using the same working definition as Van der Boomen does. The working definition she uses in her study also includes analogy, metonymy, synecdoche, and compressed simile, and therefore incorporating every idea that induces condensation, displacement, or replacement (ibid, 13).

which we do almost all the time, is a bad thing because it conceals the meaning of objects. As George Lakoff states, thinking and communicating through metaphors is neither good or bad (Lakoff 1991, 1). Abstractions and complex situations are often explained through the use of an unconscious system of metaphors. In addition, this unconscious system is used automatically and unreflectively to make complexities and abstractions understandable (ibid, 17). This is to a certain degree also the case with computer interfaces and interfaces in general, which are mainly constructed through the use of metaphors. As I have shown in the previous chapter, the interface is essentially a way to mediate processes and regulate actions. An aspect that plays an important part when analysing the Flp interface. This is because the metaphors that are being represented by computer icons are conditioning and regulating behaviour through icons. Actions are being captured and thus shaped through a visual signifier, the icon (Boomen 2008, 39). It is for that reason that the icon is also the place in the interface where the affordances reveal themselves. From this point of view, we should examine which metaphors are being represented through the icons within the interface in order to determine which affordances are shaping the Facebook Insights interface. And due to the way control mechanisms are partly being exposed by user interface elements, pointing out these metaphors will also contribute to defining how user behaviour is being shaped and controlled through the user interface.

As I discussed before, the reverse engineering metaphor is in this thesis the methodological starting point or in other words it provides a way to talk about software from a humanities perspective. In turn, the material object analysis provides a way to operationalize the reverse engineering metaphor into a method for analysing the Insights interface. The goal of the material object analysis in this thesis is to uncover the metaphorical meaning of user interface elements and by doing so exposing the not always visible affordances of the Insights interface. But since the Insights interface mainly consists out of metrics that are representing actions on the platform, I will be concentrating on how and in what way these metrics are being represented as metaphors. Further, the Insights interface is only accessible when you are an owner of a Facebook Page – formerly known as a Facebook Fan Page. Hence, I will be able to access the Flp interface through an editor account on the Sciencedump Facebook page. The advantage of this approach is that it results in a more comprehensive understanding of Sciencedump's user behaviour. The downside of this approach is that it could lead to a one-sided perspective on the subject matter. To overcome this issue, I will be comparing the Sciencedump Insights interface to that of three other Facebook pages I'm also able to access. In which two pages (HE-AS and Pauline van Dongen studio) are business pages and one (Dini Holtrop) is a public figure page. In short, by deploying the reverse engineering metaphor and the material object analysis I will be able to determine to which extent the Flp interface conditions and shapes the behaviour of its users.

But as I stated in chapter two, a technology is also partly being shaped and

constructed through the actions of users. In other words, without software there are no users but without users there also isn't software. Whereas the material object analysis will provide insight into the functioning and metaphorical meaning of user interface elements within the Flp interface, it will not provide an answer in the way it is being appropriated by the users. To examine this aspect and analyse user practices I must turn to a sociological and ethnographical approach.

### 3.2 Ethnography of digital publishing

Besides examining the metaphors within the Flp interface by using the material object analysis and establishing the way the affordances are constructed within this interface, we also should take the practices of the user into account. This is significant because without bearing this in mind, I'm not able to answer the question on how the appropriation and use of the Flp by media companies is shaping digital cultural content. But how do you record and analyse user practices from a media studies perspective?

First off, in this thesis I will be focusing on the appropriation of the Flp and the production of digital cultural content by the media companies VICE and Sciencedump. I'm limiting the corpus of this thesis to these two companies in the first place because they are using Facebook as one of their main instruments for distributing digital cultural content. In the next place, VICE is an established media brand that started out as a traditional media company and Sciencedump is rather young and was 'born' on the Facebook platform. And although there are some differences in the digital cultural content they are publishing, I will be focussing on the Motherboard and The Creators Project media-branch of VICE which produce digital cultural content that is comparable to the content of Sciencedump. By deploying an ethnographical approach and limiting the corpus to these companies, I will be able to capture the user practices of two media companies that are kind of alike but also have a distinct origin. And to gather analysable data, this approach will involve recording observations and interviews (Davis 2008, 53-54). Using this method for gathering data about the users enables me to document the practices straight from the source. This method will, therefore, decrease the level of noise on the collected data in comparison to when this data has been collected through a secondary source (ibid, 61). The change of making assumptions based upon what a secondary source argues will be limited and it will be possible to see for yourself how practices and social relations are being established. But this approach also poses a possible risk; the analysable corpus is adequate but is too small to be representative for the whole media sector. This is due to how the user practices and its social relations are being recorded on a macro level (ibid, 61). Since this thesis will be mainly an explorative one, the value will be situated in the fact that it provides a foundation for further research on how user practices and platform affordances are interrelated with how digital cultural content is shaped. In short, it boils down to that the interviews and observations that I will be

conducting are not able to provide a complete picture of the entire media industry. But the macro view of this method will offer the possibility to result in new insights due to its more hands-on approach towards the primary source.

The corpus of the ethnographic approach within this thesis will consist of three semi-structured interviews and two observation documents in which I will record the specific use of the Flp by editors and social-media analysts of VICE and Sciencedump. Furthermore, the interviews will only be conducted with the editors in chief and editors of VICE and Sciencedump due to the fact that they are the ones producing the digital cultural content. The use of a semi-structured interviewing method will allow new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a response to what the interviewee says, and this method is therefore more open. By deploying this method I'm able to approach these subjects more freely. Although the interviews are semi-structured, all will revolve around the following subjects; the process of creating digital cultural content; Facebook as a distribution platform; and the impact of Facebook on the shaping and production of digital cultural content. In short, the interviews will provide additional information to the conducted observations of digital cultural content production and distribution by VICE and Sciencedump on the Facebook platform. By combining this ethnographic approach with the results of the material object analysis, I'm able to obviate previously discussed limitations of both approaches. In addition, this approach will also allow me to establish a more complete foundation for answering the main research question of this thesis.

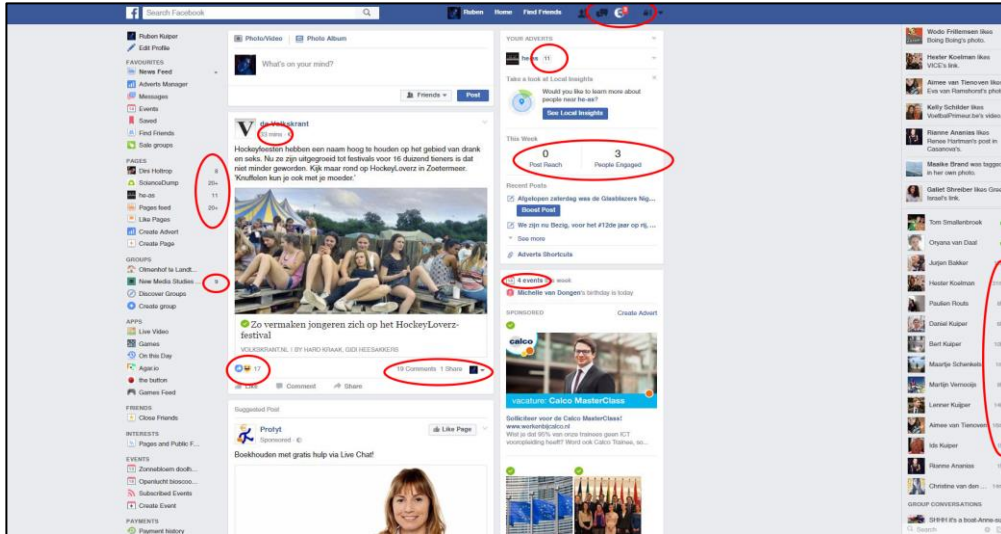
## 4. Reverse engineering the Insights interface

In chapter three I argued that to uncover the affordances of the Flp interface and the way it could shape user behaviour I must deploy the reverse engineering metaphor combined with the material object analysis. In this manner, I will be able to analyse the interrelations between the different system components of the Facebook platform – in which the Flp interface is one of those system components. But as I will argue in this chapter, the Flp is in its turn interlocked with other more hidden Facebook platform components. The goal of this chapter is to lay bare the hidden components and affordances within the Flp interface and determine whether and how it conditions and shapes user behaviour.

To reveal this aspect, we must take the Flp interface apart by deploying the material object analysis and identifying the symbolic handles that play a significant role in guiding user behaviour. By analysing the metrics, icons and underlying processes I will be able to reveal the affordances that are embedded within these elements. But before I can assert these elements within the overarching architecture of the Facebook platform, I must analyse how metrics and icons are being presented within the Flp interface and how they are established.

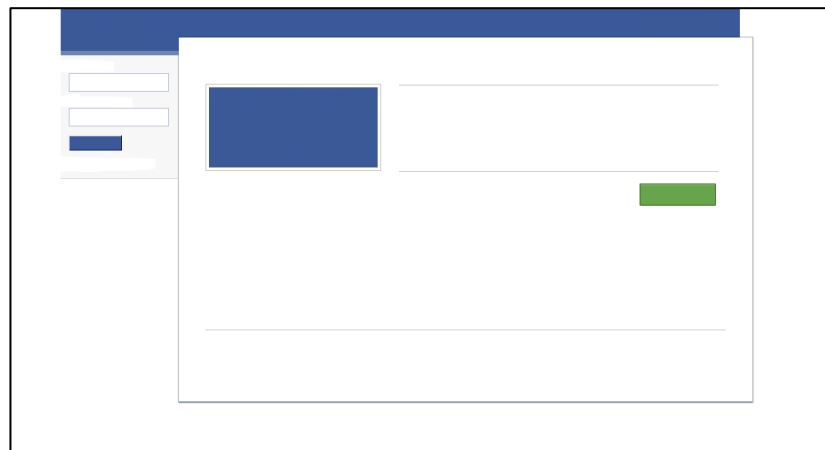
### 4.1 The ubiquitous representation of metrics

Throughout the entire Facebook interface, it is the ubiquity of metrics that is the most striking. Not only do these metrics represent a certain ‘value’ of digital cultural content through likes, comments and shares, they also can become an external motivator. For example, the number of likes, comments or shares might motivate you to find out why the content is so popular and what it is about. Furthermore, as I argued in chapter 3, the metrics within Facebook prescribe sociality within the social network. This is an aspect that is rooted in the human need for personal worth (Grosser 2014), and within the boundaries of capitalism, this aspect is being transformed into a ravenous need for more. Furthermore, almost every element within this interface is accompanied with an ‘explanatory’ metric, from time-stamps to the number of likes or shares (see figure 1). Explanatory metrics, which all provide to a certain degree a way of feedback for the Facebook user. I would, therefore, argue that the metrics are one of the most significant ‘feedback’ symbolic handles within the Facebook interface.



**Figure 1** The omnipresence of metrics within the Facebook interface, personal screenshot of the interface, 2016

When imagining a Facebook platform without the omnipresence of metrics, it would probably become a less enticing environment. This concept of a Facebook interface without metrics has been brought to life by the digital artist Benjamin Grosser. He created a browser-plugin, the Facebook Demetricator, that hides all the metrics within the interface (Fuller 2012). For example, when the text under a post displays ‘You and 8 other people like this’ the Demetricator will change it to ‘You and other people like this’. By removing the metrics, the Demetricator is changing the way the Facebook interface operates and therefore also changes user behaviour. In addition, the digital artist sumoto.iki takes this idea of removing information even further and demonstrates what the significance is of symbolic handles that guide user behaviour. In his digital art collection ‘web2diZZaster’ he removes all the content and metrics and what remains is a collection of vacant pastel-like images that consist of nothing more than bland by HTML-code made-up triangles and lines, see figure 3.



**Figure 2** sumoto.iki, “web2diZZaster” web, 2009

This image, figure 2, represents a Facebook interface without comments, video's, lists of friends, recommendations, and other metrics. Without these data, the Facebook interface is becoming a ghostly object (Gehl 2015, 2), a hollow framework without explicit symbolic handles that guide user behaviour. This example shows the significance of content as well as metrics that are being presented within the interface. They work hand in hand to establish the meaning and purpose of the platform. Although the Facebook interface does consist of a wide range of components, it is the Flp that provides media companies insights into for example how their digital cultural content is being distributed across the Facebook platform. Within the Flp interface it is the representation of quantified user actions on digital cultural content through metrics that is dominating the interface, see figure 3. These metrics are significant in the way that they provide information about for example who has seen and who has interacted with the digital cultural content provided by the Facebook page. These metrics are important for keeping the content creator active within the system and let them focus on the now, due to the way that the metrics that are being shown only represent a certain predetermined period. But what do these different metrics represent exactly and what are the most important metaphorical handles within this interface? By examining and analysing the Flp interface from a material object analysis perspective I will try to unearth exactly these elements.

### Engagement and reach as symbolic handles

At first glance, you will notice that *reach* and so-called *engagement* are the most reoccurring metrics within the Facebook Insights interface (see figure 3), which could imply that these metrics play a rather significant role. But what do these metrics exactly represent, according to Facebook? To uncover their definition, we must examine the Insights interface more

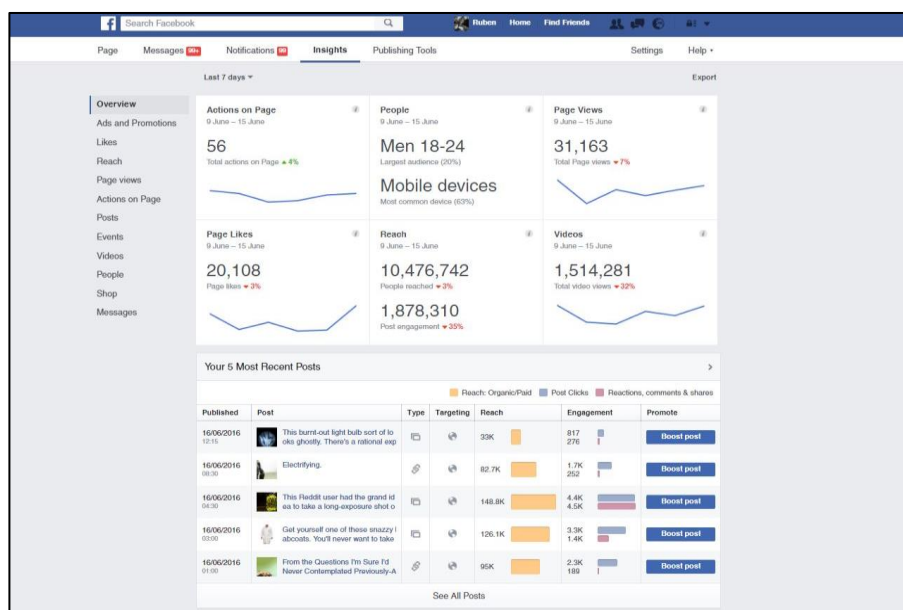


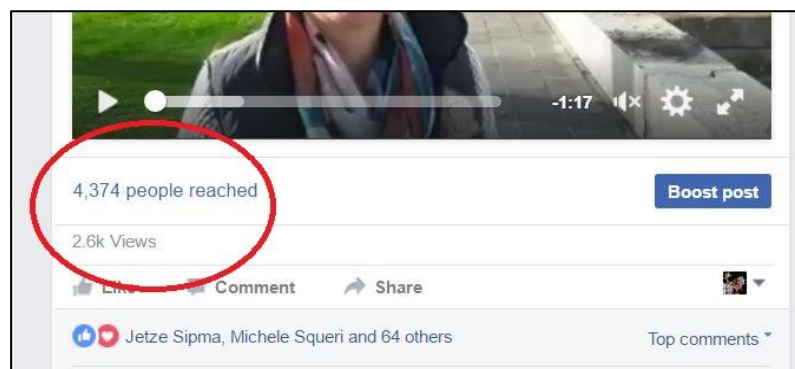
Figure 3 Overview of the Insights interface, personal screenshot, 2016

closely because the exact description of the *reach* and *engagement* metrics is well concealed. The quickest way to learn the definition of these metrics is by hovering with the mouse pointer over a small and greyed out information symbol, which is in the upper right corner of the *reach* metrics element within the Insights overview tab. The same holds up for the *engagement* metrics element, see the comparison between the two in figure 4.



**Figure 4** The concealed definition of *reach* and *engagement*, personal screenshot, 2016

Both clarifications of the corresponding metrics are quite generic and do not really specify how these metrics are established. In short it comes down to the following; the *engagement* consists out of the total number of actions (clicks on the post, shares, comments and likes); and the *reach* consists out of the number of users to whom it was shown on their Newsfeed (Facebook 2017d), although this doesn't mean that these users saw the post. A notion that is being exposed when we look at the difference between the number of views and reach on a video-post, see figure 6. According to Facebook, a view represents a user that has watched the video for at least 3 seconds (Facebook 2014). By considering that most user will see videos on Facebook auto-play (Statt 2017) and that *reach* consists out of the number of people to whom the post was shown, the expected result would be that the difference between *reach* and views is not substantial. But as figure 6 shows, the difference between *reach* and views is rather big. Based on this instance I would argue that the *reach* metric doesn't necessarily represent the number of people that truly saw the content, instead the *reach* could also be interpreted as a representation of how the Edgerank algorithm is distributing the content across the platform.



**Figure 5** The difference between views and *reach*, personal screenshot, 2016



As this example shows, by concealing or not fully explaining the definition or meaning of a symbolic handle, speculation comes into play and could therefore also result in a change in user behaviour. On the surface, the *reach* data is an analogy for the number of Facebook users a content creator probably reaches. The *engagement* is, on the other hand, a measurement for the number of users that genuinely have interacted with the content through liking, sharing, commenting or clicking on the content. By setting both metrics apart through calling the first an analogy and the other a measurement, I'm already pointing to the way in which they differ when we look beyond the surface of the interface. But before we can dive into what these metrics engender, we must examine the metaphorical and etymological roots of both elements. Examining both the metaphorical as the etymological roots will help in explaining the way both symbolic handles could be perceived by users.

The definition of *reach* according to the Oxford Dictionary when used as a noun revolves around the act of reaching out to something or someone. When applied to the case at hand, *reach* is by the Oxford Dictionary being defined as the extent or range of something's application, effect, or influence. An aspect that is being illustrated by the dictionary with the following example: the number of people who watch or listen to a particular broadcast or channel during a specific period. This example implies that *reach* represents the exact number of people that watched or have been influenced by something. This is an example which is, therefore, striking in the context of the case at hand, specifically in light of how the *reach* metaphor is being used within the Flip interface. This definition would suggest that when the *reach* metric is being perceived from this point of view, it is representing the exact number of Facebook users that have seen the digital cultural content. This is something which isn't completely accurate, because *reach* implies, as I argued before, that the digital cultural content has been shown on a Facebook users' Newsfeed and doesn't necessarily signify that the Facebook user also saw the content. This is because the Newsfeed operates as a continual feed of content, and although it could have been displayed somewhere on a users' Newsfeed he or she must scroll through the entire feed to watch all the content. It is this facet in which *reach* differs from its use within the domain of traditional media broadcasts. But although its use differs from the domain of traditional media, it is probably also the reason why *reach* has been chosen as a metaphor. The metaphor, that represents the extent or range of an application or effect, has been repurposed and modified to meet the needs of digital cultural content producers and media companies alike.

From this perspective, I would argue that the *reach* metric is partly insignificant, even though the *reach* metric plays a prominent role within the Insights interface. This is due to how this symbolic handle, that represents the underlying data of user actions, is painting an incomplete picture. The way *reach* is deployed as a metaphor within the Insights interface is comparable with the use of reach for advertisements or the print runs of newspapers and magazines. Print runs or reach of advertisements also represent an unclear number of

people that you possibly could have reached. Due to how *reach* is linked to the way the algorithm presents the content across the Facebook platform. I would suggest that it's deliberately being kept ambiguous<sup>8</sup> because it is making it harder to pinpoint what content is gaining the attention of the Facebook user – a user doesn't have to interact with the content to see it. Facebook is for example not enabling access to the underlying data like the amount of time that the user hasn't scrolled through the Newsfeed. In short, *reach* as a metaphor for influence and extent or range of something, has its roots in the measurement of traditional media broadcasts. The metaphor has been repurposed and remediated to meet the needs of digital cultural content producers. By doing so, the *reach* metaphor has become a symbolic handle and representation of an ambiguous underlying process which is way more complex than just measuring the number of people that are watching or listening to a broadcast. But does this way of use also apply to the *Engagement* metric?

*Engage* or the plural *engaging* (from which *engagement* derived) is by the Oxford Dictionary first defined in relation to an object, in which it is explained as the manner of occupying or attracting someone's interest or attention. Subsequently, when not defined in relation to an object, *engage* entails a way for someone to participate or become involved with something. The Oxford dictionary provides us with the example of establishing a meaningful contact or connection with something. When this aspect is being placed in relation to how *engagement* is deployed within the Facebook Insights interface, we could state that *engagement* signifies a measurement of meaningful relations – or as Facebooks' terms *likes, shares, comments or link clicks*. In contrast to the *reach* metaphor, the *engagement* metaphor is a more accurate representation of the underlying process, since it is about the measurement and enumeration of user actions with the digital cultural content. In this manner, *engagement* could be referred to as a more explicit symbolic handle within the Flp interface. But although this symbolic handle is more explicit, it is the way of presenting its content through graphs in which the essence is being masked.

### **Graphs as 'visual proof' of growth or decline**

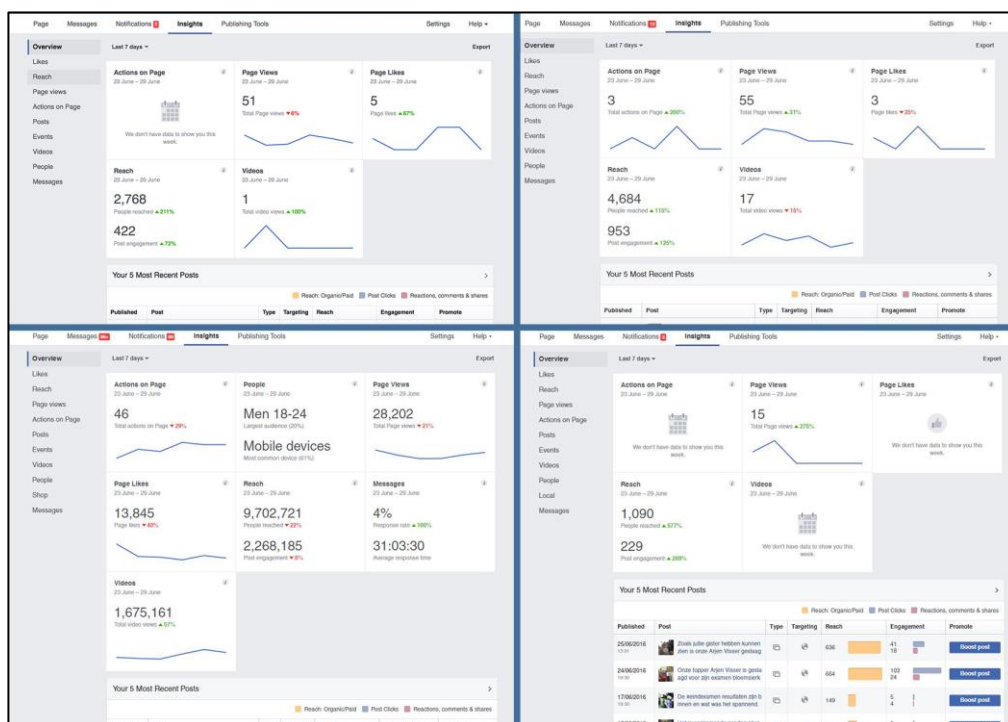
As I argued in the second chapter, it is the enumeration or quantification that is making Facebook actions impersonal and it indicates social quantification and objectivity to a certain degree. The same goes for graphs and how they represent a certain objectivity, but to which extent are they objective? The way data is displayed in a graph and in relation to what plays an important role in determining how the graph came into being and what story it tells. A graph is just like all other ways of displaying data, established through a mediation process in which there is being determined what to show and what not. Although this process is similar

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<sup>8</sup> By deploying trackers it's would be possible to determine whether a user saw the content. Trackers are invisible pieces of code hiding within tracking pixels, in this manner it's possible to track the behaviour of a user on a webpage.

as in that in data some things get communicated while others get lost, it is the way of displaying the data that differs from presenting data through metrics. This is due to how, within a graph, there are more visual signifiers at hand – an aspect that is being exploited in the Flp interface.

When we look at different Insights overview pages of a few content creators we see data deliberately being left out, see figure 7. The graphs, for example, don't have any axes and when metrics are going up or down the interface will show a percentage on how much they have gone up or down – but without showing the number upon which it's based. Furthermore, when the Flp determines when within a given period there is growth or a decline it will transform the appearance of the metric to a corresponding colour. In the case of a decline, the corresponding colour will be red and by growth the colour will be green.



**Figure 6** Overview of Insights interfaces for different pages, personal screenshot, 2016.

By using colours as metaphors for a 'positive' or 'negative' occurrence, the focus is being drawn away from how the data has been established. The Flp determines whether the occurrence was positive or not, instead of letting the user define whether the development was positive or negative. It is here where the interface effect is becoming visible, and where user-friendliness prevails. The underlying processes that determine whether something is positive or negative are being mediated through symbols and language that are easily recognisable and visible. By doing so these symbolic handles are guiding user behaviour in a certain direction; an aspect that proves Chun's point about how users are being shaped by gentle interactions through software interfaces. This would also suggest that software

indeed constrains the behaviour of users from the start. But although user behaviour is being guided in a certain manner, the obscuring of data in such fashion also forces the user to rely on its own interpretation of the metrics. This is a way of obscuring 'objective' metrics that plays an important part in the shaping of user behaviour, which I will discuss in more depth in the next chapter. In short, it is not solely the *reach* metric that represents an incomplete picture. As I have shown, the same goes for the representation of graphs within the Flp interface. Hence, it is therefore here where the point of Korinna Patelis becomes clear. She argues that it is the political economic part of a social media platform that plays a central role in how the interface operates (Patelis 2013, 119-125). It is the thing that constitutes power and control over user actions. This is due to its pervasive nature, but also because it is the only point of feedback. These are the perceived affordances that operate as a way of control and shape the mediation process that takes place within the Insights interface. This is an aspect which I will now examine further in the next section.

## 4.2 Facebook Insights and data mediating API's

The interpretation of the symbolic handles only cover one aspect of how they guide user behaviour. As I proposed in the previous chapter we also should look at the processes that are generating this data and how it is being mediated. By doing this I will be able to uncover how the symbolic handles, which I discussed in the previous section, are being established by the Flp.

### **The mediation of metrics**

The metrics that are presented within the Flp interface are generated by the Graph API. From this point of view, I would argue that the metrics that are shown within the Insights interface merely scratch the surface. The Graph API originates from the concept of a 'social graph' and is a representation of the information on the Facebook platform (Facebook 2017b). This information consists of three components: nodes, edges, and fields. The nodes are objects like for example the users, a picture, a page or a comment. The edges are the connections between these objects, for example a comment on a picture. In addition, these edges are being used by the Edgerank algorithm to calculate and determine how 'strong' the connection between the nodes is. By calculating the strength of the connection, the algorithm is able to determine whether certain content is 'relevant' for a Facebook user. By 'relevant' Facebook is pointing to the likelihood of a Facebook user actively engaging with the digital cultural content.

When we look from this perspective at the *reach* metric, I would plea that these are established through on the one hand actions by Facebook users and on the other hand as a result of an interpretation and calculation process by an algorithm. Furthermore, the way the Edgerank algorithm distributes the digital cultural content could influence how people will

engage with this content, in this manner it also informs the number that is being represented within the *engagement* metric. This would imply that when people engage more with certain digital cultural content it will also result in that this type of content is being produced more often. When you extrapolate this process even further and take the guiding of user behaviour into account, it could suggest that a content creator can ultimately get caught up in a vicious circle of producing digital cultural content that will result in even more engagement. This phenomenon could result in more similar digital cultural content to being produced and served to Facebook users. It is due to this process that metrics are becoming significant and therefore result in an ever-growing crave for more. It is for that reason that here the effect of the interface becomes visible, and how the interface eventually boils down to a way to mediate and guide user behaviour.

### **To interface is to mediate and the interface effect**

The extensive process of mediating data and how user behaviour is being guided by symbolic handles shows that the user interface is indeed operating as a layer between the user and the underlying systems. The Flp interface is rearticulating and representing the data that has been generated by the underlying processes in a way that it is easily understood by the user. It is presenting the data in such a manner that the user is nudged to an ever-growing crave for more and stimulated to produce even more digital cultural content for the Facebook platform. In other words, it is the effect of the interface that could change and guide the behaviour of the user in a particular direction. The result is that by obscuring or simplifying data, Facebook is deliberately restricting the access and is therefore to a certain degree controlling the way it is being used and how the user behaves. Although I examined only three significant elements within the Facebook, it shows that the processing and presenting of data within a user-friendly environment could influence the way the user behaves. Furthermore, it is the process of mediation that is being used as a tool of control, in other words control through mediation. From this perspective, I have to agree with Manovich's argument that to interface is, in the end, a way of mediating. It is therefore here where the affordances, that shape Facebook Insights, reveal themselves. The computer icons and in this case the compelling metrics and symbolic handles that are representing the underlying data are able to condition the behaviour of the user. Likewise, when we look at this aspect from Van der Boomen's view on how actions are captured within a visual signifier (Boomen 2008, 39). We can see that, within the Insights interface, the metrics and the symbolic handles that represent these metrics are in fact the computer icons that shape and capture actions through visual signifiers.

### 4.3 Guiding user behaviour within Facebook Insights

As I have shown in the previous two paragraphs, statistical metaphors like *reach*, *engagement* and graphs are being used as, what seem to appear, 'objective' symbolic handles to provide content creators easily understandable insights. But when we examined these symbolic handles more closely, cracks in the carefully established representation are starting to appear. Metrics and what they represent are deliberately being kept unclear, but due to their ubiquity and 'objective' appearance they play a major role in guiding user behaviour. This aspect reveals that the metrics are playing a very powerful part, they are an agent of the underlying system which is aimed at keeping the user within the system. Moreover, these metrics are the only way of feedback so content creators must rely on them. The statistical metaphors are in this case being used as a way of providing 'objective' information and provoke active user behaviour. It is therefore here where the aspect of control over user behaviour reveals itself and the effect of the interface comes into play. But user behaviour is not only guided towards a way of playing along with the system because due to how data is being kept vague it also stimulates experimental behaviour.

As with the collection of all data, people have to rely on their own interpretation and knowledge of the subject matter to make sense of it. But in the case of Facebook Insights, users also have to deal with another layer of mediation. This is due to the way data is being mediated and presented through metaphors, which keep up the appearance of an user-friendly interface or dashboard that is providing merely objective data. In this manner, users are on the one hand being guided through mediated symbolic handles and on the other hand being left in the dark. The result of this process is that it also shapes the behaviour of users and how the software is being appropriated. In the next chapter, I will explore what happens to the behaviour of the users, or content creators, and how it is being shaped by this phenomenon.

## 5. The Promise of the Quantified

In the previous chapter, I showed how the affordances are embedded within the Facebook platform and how metaphors, that guide user behaviour, are shaped. This foundation will now enable me to focus on how user practices in relation to Facebook Insights are established. In particular, the practices of users – editors and social media analysts at media companies – that revolve around the appropriation of the Insights platform and the implications of this appropriation might have on the creation of digital cultural content. By concentrating on the appropriation/interpretation of Facebook metric data by VICE and Sciencedump, I am trying to lay bare how the use of this data might have an implication on the way digital cultural content is being produced. In addition, clarifying this aspect will enable me to show how the ubiquity of ‘real-time’ metrics might provoke the rise of a content production machine driven by the quantifiable.

But to gain this insight, I will have to examine and analyse the user practices of the editors and social media analysts at both companies, VICE and Sciencedump, in more detail. Due to how both companies have a different approach to appropriating/interpreting data provided through the Flp, I will examine their practices separately – starting with the data appropriation by VICE and its editors.

### 5.1 The use of the Insights platform by VICE

VICE started out in 1994 as a magazine and made the transition to the web in 1996. VICE started out with just their own website<sup>9</sup> in the early days of the World Wide Web to spread their content, is now using a wide range of online platforms to distribute their content. From Facebook to Snapchat and Youtube, various kinds of platforms are being used to reach the largest audience possible. But it is specifically the Facebook platform, that they use as one of their main channels for distributing content. Although VICE doesn’t earn the gist of their profit through ‘normal’ internet ads, they do generate revenue through advertorials<sup>10</sup> or branded channels like The Creators Project<sup>11</sup>. Partly due to this business model, the focus is put on increasing the amount of traffic to the different website branches of the VICE. Hence, the bottleneck is that people need to click on the links to the articles – which are hosted on the websites of VICE – and do not linger on the Facebook platform. This aspect is part of the origin of why the metrics that are provided by Facebook Insights are vital to the editors and social media analysts at VICE. Moreover, it is this facet that also informs the way how these editors and analysts are interpreting and appropriating the metrics that are being provided through the Flp interface.

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<sup>9</sup> VICE as a media company, consists nowadays out of different media brands among which are Motherboard, Creators, I-D, VICE News and others.

<sup>10</sup> Articles that are sponsored by certain brands.

<sup>11</sup> Creators is for example an Intel branded channel.

## The uncovering of invisible data

One of the ways how social media analysts at VICE are appropriating the data, provided through Flp, is by developing a method to uncover hidden data. Or in other words, reverse engineering the Flp to gain access to data that is no longer provided by Facebook within the Flp interface<sup>12</sup>. This metric was available up until two years ago and is called the *viral reach* (Smitha 2013). The *viral reach* consists out of the number of users to whom the content has been shown by means of a *like*, *share* or *comment* on the content post by a Facebook friend of the user (ibid). This metric has been incorporated into the *organic reach*, and Facebook argues that it has combined both datasets to make the data easier to understand (Ernout 2014). Even though this dataset has become part of the *organic reach* within the Insights interface, VICE still would like to have access to this particular dataset. This is due to that it can help them understand what the impact of boosting content is. By boosting a post VICE is paying a certain amount of money to Facebook in order to promote the content to a preselected audience, see figure 7.

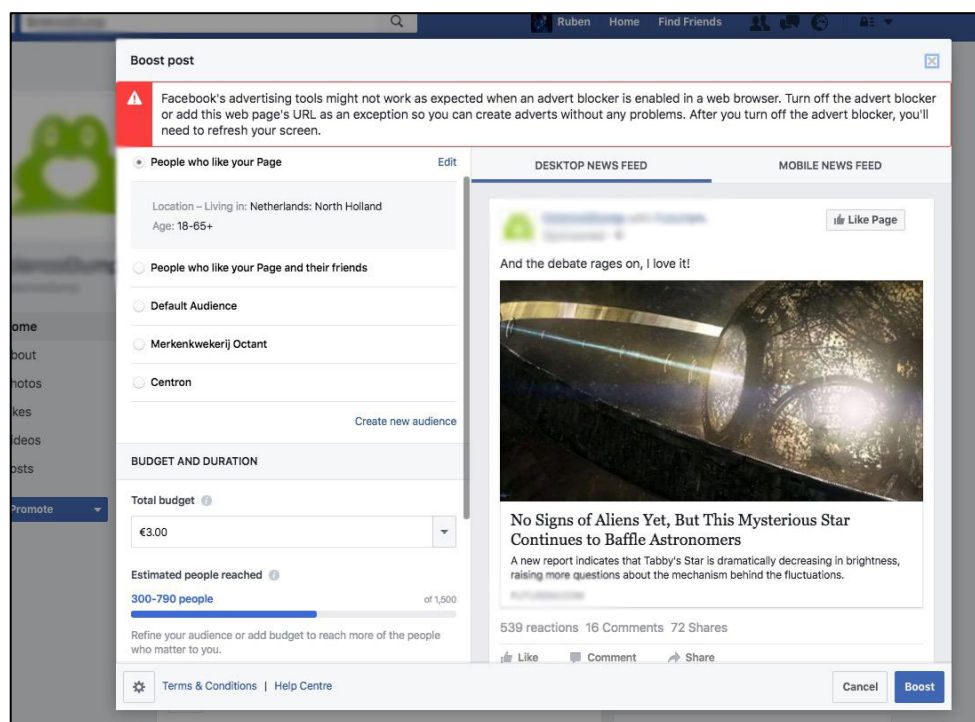


Figure 7 An example of boosting content to a preselected audience, personal screenshot, 2016.

When the content is boosted a different metric is established, the so-called *paid reach*. This metric doesn't include the *viral reach* and only shows the amount of *paid reach*, which consists of users to whom the content has been shown as a promoted post on their

<sup>12</sup> A method that is similar to the manner in which I examined the Facebook Insights elements in chapter 4, by deploying the material object analysis.



Newsfeed (Facebook 2017e). To fully understand the impact of paying for distributing content, VICE has developed a method to gain access to the *viral reach*.

The social media analyst<sup>13</sup> of VICE told me that to uncover the *viral reach*, they would *boost* an old Facebook content post from which the growth of *organic reach* had completely come to a stop. The newly gained *reach*, that is presented within the Insights interface, will therefore only consists out of *paid reach*. He then showed me that when exporting Flp data of a post in the old template format, the *viral reach* will be still visible, see figure 8.

	A	B	C	D
Lifetime Post Total Reach	Lifetime Post organic reach	Lifetime Post Paid Reach	Lifetime Post viral reach	
Lifetime The total number of people your Page post was served to.	(Un) Lifetime The number of people who saw	Lifetime The number of people your ad	Lifetime The number of people who saw	
283	252	0	37	
4391	669	0	3789	
1877	533	0	1311	
3867	878	0	3058	
898	357	0	521	
12657	4283	0	8455	
1200	423	0	766	
4003	324	2726	1086	
2711	503	0	2199	
854	461	0	403	

**Figure 8** An export of Flp data with the viral reach still visible, personal screenshot, 2017.

Within the Insights data export the *reach* data is broken down into four segments: *total-organic- paid- and viral reach*. And by keeping in mind that within the Insights interface *viral reach* is, according to Facebook, only incorporated within the *organic reach* one would expect that the *viral reach* would not have increased. But on the contrary, the social media analyst showed me that within the Insights data export the *viral reach* had increased and within the Insights interface the *organic reach* hadn't. And when he compiled the *organic, paid and viral reach* from the Insights data export, it resulted in a higher amount of *total reach* than that is being displayed within the Insights interface. By subtracting the *total reach*, that is being shown within the Insights interface, with the one that has been established through compiling the *reach* data from the Insights export, the social media analyst is able to create a new metric – the so-called *viral reach* of boosted content. Besides the fact that the *total reach* that is presented within the Flp interface doesn't add up, there is also another metric that is being shown incorrectly. The social media analyst showed me that, when a content post is boosted, the number of link clicks presented within the Flp interface did not correspond with the new number of page views that were being provided through Google Analytics. The number of page views within Google Analytics was way higher than the number of link clicks presented within the Insights interface. This uncovering of data by VICE social media analysts, not only shows how Facebook is obscuring and leaving out data within the Flp interface but also how appropriation practices by social media analysts are established.

<sup>13</sup> Interview and observation of subject 4(Appendix)

By deploying a reverse engineering like method to uncover and interpreted data, VICE and its social media analysts are trying to break down the analogy of the *reach* metric and make sense of it. Or in terms of Van den Boomen (2008), VICE and its analysts are trying to reveal the processes that are hiding beneath the analogy of the metric that determines whether content is “popular”. A practice that is being established firstly because it has repercussions on the revenue VICE is making, and secondly, because the metrics that are being provided through the Insights platform are often the only way of feedback. I would, therefore, argue that by displaying a metric in a prominent manner on the one hand and obscuring and leaving out data on the other out data on the other hand, it will inform the way the Flp is being appropriated by users. This is because by presenting a symbolic handle, like the *reach* metric, in a prominent way it automatically makes it more meaningful. Even though the symbolic handle is rather insignificant and misleading when being examined from up close. It is this aspect of providing symbolic handles that seem to appear ‘objective’, that also informs the digital publishing strategy of VICE in their development of data appropriation software.

### **Insights data and its influence on digital publishing**

To determine which content is ‘popular’ and why, VICE is also developing a proprietary dashboard that shows the number of *likes*, *shares* and *comments* by channel within an overview. The social media analyst to whom I spoke at VICE also showed me that this dashboard not only displays the number of *likes*, *shares* and *comments* by channel, but can also be linked to specific authors. He explained that VICE is in this way able to determine how ‘well’ articles and authors are performing on Facebook. Although the dashboard was still in development and not in use during that time<sup>14</sup>, one can imagine how this dashboard could be used to measure and rate the performance of editors.

A practice like this can have an impact on the way editors are producing digital cultural content, an aspect we already see happening in how metrics are being interpreted and used by editors at this moment. Although the metrics don’t necessarily determine the subjects or themes of articles, it does determine how the final article is being positioned and presented on for example the Facebook platform. As the editor in chief of The Creators Project<sup>15</sup> argues: “Within a Facebook post you need to overcome some sort curiosity gap, it is a thin line between providing not too much information but also not too little...and in time I have developed a kind of sense for which approach is successful and which isn’t “. A practice that informs part of digital publishing strategy and the way content is being positioned on the Facebook platform. As the editor in chief of Motherboard<sup>16</sup> confirms “it is probably the

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<sup>14</sup> The interview and observation of subject 4 was conducted in 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Interview of subject 1(Appendix)

<sup>16</sup> Interview of subject 2(Appendix)

combination of an engaging image, a cool title, the subject and a funny anecdote or joke that triggers people to engage with the post, but I'm not really sure". As this shows, it is, in the end, all but a guessing game because they do not have the 'perfect' formula for making a post successful. The reason for this is partly because to determine whether their strategy worked out, is by the feedback the Facebook platform provides through link clicks, *shares*, *comments*, *likes* and the *reach* data. Metrics that are not always the most reliable source of information due to, as I argued in chapter 4, how they are often being kept obscure. But another reason why they are still searching for the 'perfect' formula, is due to how the Facebook Edgerank algorithm determines how the digital cultural content is being distributed. As the editor in chief of The Creators Project explains: "the way Facebook distributes content is quite like the tides of the ocean. So when you are in a period of a rising tide, even content that usually wouldn't perform well is now doing great. But when you are in a period of a falling tide, you will need a massive hit to regain traction". This way of thinking arises from how the *reach* metric of their posts shows, according to him, unexplainable alterations. In addition, the use of the tides as a metaphor for his experience is compelling, because it shows that the Edgerank algorithm is believed to behave as a fluid object which makes it even less predictable. An experience which will result in putting a heavy emphasis on producing 'popular' digital cultural content in order to continue to ride the wave.

In short, the reason why digital cultural content does or doesn't perform 'well' has to do with a whole range of variables. And the metrics that are being provided through the Insights interface only tell one part of the story. In the end, this might be the biggest implication of these metrics. It is due to how 'objective' metrics, that play a significant role on the Facebook platform, are the only way of feedback that the content creator receives from the platform. The feedback that in the end might also determine to a certain degree how and what kind of digital cultural content is being created. Although, in the case of VICE, this feedback isn't automatically determining the subject of the digital cultural content but merely how it is being positioned and framed. However, with the development of a proprietary dashboard in which the metrics that are being provided by Facebook play a significant role in measuring and rating editors, the determining effect of the Facebook data might become an issue. This is because how digital cultural content will be created and published would, even more, be informed by metrics, which eventually could result in producing only content that has for example the largest number of reach. An element which is also linked to Facebook's notion of control, which is based upon their desire to keep users within the eco-system. It is this aspect that also plays, as I have shown, an inherent part in how the digital publishing strategy is being shaped by VICE editors. In addition, it is also this facet that is vital to how Sciencedump is appropriating the Flp.

## 5.2 Appropriation of Facebook Insights by Sciencedump

Sciencedump was born as a website that used Social Media as their primary way of distributing their message. Or as the founder of Sciencedump states: “We are born on social media”. Sciencedump is just like VICE heavily relying on Facebook for traffic to their website, but Sciencedump approaches the platform from a whole different angle. Where VICE is searching for different methods to distribute their content, Sciencedump is solely focusing on the Facebook platform to distribute their content. Furthermore, unlike VICE they are taken the data that is provided through the Insights platform for what it is and are not trying to uncover hidden data. Even though they are taking the provided data for what it is, they are still trying to find out ways how they can understand the distribution process of the Edgerank algorithm better. By gaining more insight into how digital cultural content is being distributed through the Facebook platform, they hope to increase the traffic to their website and the reach of their content. It is in particular this aspect that informs how Sciencedump is appropriating and interpreting the data provided by the Insights platform.

### ‘Hacking’ the algorithm

As the founder of Sciencedump<sup>17</sup> points out: “We are continuously trying to hack the Facebook algorithm”. Although the term hacking is in this case used to exaggerate, they are continuously trying to find out what works ‘well’ within in a post on Facebook and what doesn’t. From experimenting which image or title leads to more engagement to using videos in order to gain a larger number of *reach*. By using an A/B test<sup>18</sup>, they are trying to track which of these variables will lead to more traffic and reach. The way Sciencedump is deploying these tests is by posting the same article with a different title and image at the exact same time, but only to two distinct demographics, see figure 10.

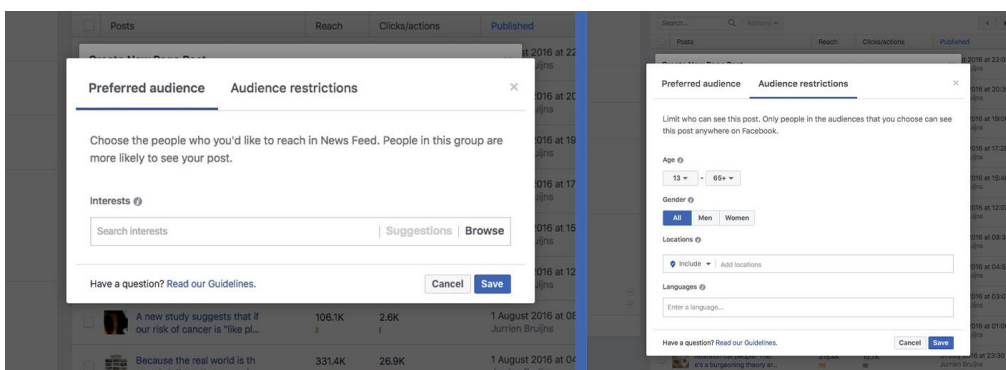


Figure 10 Possibility of distributing to a custom audience, personal screenshot, 2016.

<sup>17</sup> Interview and observation of subject 5(Appendix)

<sup>18</sup> A/B testing is a method to show two different versions of a web page, in this case a post, and see which one is performing better.

From thereon they are monitoring the alleged *click-through-rate*, the average of the *reach* in relation to the total of people who clicked on the link. The post is being removed from Facebook when the *click-through-rate* drops after an hour under the one percentage mark. By deploying this method Sciencedump is attempting, as its founder states: “to get grip on the vagaries” of the Facebook Edgerank algorithm. By vagaries, he is pointing to how he thinks the Facebook algorithm is acting weirdly. It is remarkable that this belief corresponds with how the editors of VICE think about the algorithm, whom believe that the algorithm appears to be distributing the content in waves. What is even more striking, Sciencedump also uses a reverse engineering method to get a grip of an intangible phenomenon. The use of A/B tests, to discover trends in how the algorithm is distributing content shows that the omnipresent of quantified symbolic handles is linked to how users behave. This is because these symbolic handles cultivate the search for an exemplary benchmark or perfect formula for ‘successful’ digital cultural content. A search which is primarily driven by the ever growing crave for more and the ambition of making a business flourish.

Since Sciencedump is primarily measuring their growth through the metrics that are provided by the Flp, the most important indicators of ‘success’ have become the *reach* metric and the number of link clicks. But unlike VICE, Sciencedump is not trying to dissect and demystify these metrics to gain a greater understanding of what the Flp is presenting. Sciencedump is instead ascribing a lot of power to the algorithm and highly values the metrics that Facebook is providing them. As the founder vigorously argues: “we are Facebooks’ bitch and we better embrace it”. This not only implies that they will do everything in their power to create content that is fitting for the Facebook platform, but also that they believe Facebook dictates what content to produce. An example that emphasises this belief is when the option to create Instant Articles<sup>19</sup> became available they were one of the first to participate. Even though they had to give up a part of their agency because by hosting articles on the Facebook platform Facebook is able to determine to a greater extent when content is suitable for the platform (Facebook 2017c). In addition, Facebook also receives a cut of the ad revenue that has been made through the advertisements on Instant Articles (Facebook 2017c).

Another aspect that shows how Facebook determines their content creation process is by how they deploy their *click-through-rate* metric. This mediated form of data has become an important parameter to determine the topics and themes of the digital cultural content Sciencedump editors are producing. As the founder of Sciencedump states: “when the click-through-rate drops beneath the 1% an hour after the moment of publishing, the post will be deleted from Facebook”. This illustrates that the appropriated metric is

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<sup>19</sup> Instant Articles is a way to create articles that are hosted on the Facebook platform itself.

in fact determining about what themes or topics an editor should write and informs how the digital publishing strategy of Sciencedump is being shaped.

### **The shaping of a digital publishing strategy**

The reason why the digital publishing strategy of Sciencedump is mainly focused on the production of 'popular' content is twofold. It is on the one hand due to how the metrics within the interface of the Insights platform stimulate user behaviour that is concentrated at growth, as I have shown in chapter 4. But on the other hand, it has also to do with how Sciencedumps' business model is solely based upon ad revenue gained through page views. Since Sciencedump is only distributing their content through the Facebook platform, the result will be that the amount of revenue made is directly linked to how 'well' their content is being distributed on the Facebook platform. Another element that is related to this way of making revenue is how Sciencedump is compensating its editors for their labour. Editors are being compensated for their effort based upon the number of views on the articles they have written. A phenomenon like this ensures that within the publishing strategy the focus only will lie on accumulating as much page views as possible. The implication that this could have is that the editors at Sciencedump will only produce digital cultural content that will be 'popular'. In other words, content that will be distributed across the Facebook platform most effectively and will result in the most page views.

In short, the digital cultural content and the practices of Sciencedump are shaped through the interrelations between their own business model and the way the Facebook platform operates. It is also therefore that the metrics, that are being provided by the Insights platform, are playing such a prominent role in the way the digital publishing strategy is being determined. Even more important, the strong connection between Sciencedumps' business model and the distribution process of Facebook explains why they are ascribing a lot of power to the algorithm.

### **5.3 A quantifiable production machine**

As I have shown, there are various elements that determine how the Flp is being used and appropriated by the users at VICE and Sciencedump. From the business model that partly dictates how authors are being compensated to the omnipresence of the *reach* metric that informs user behaviour. It is not only the ubiquity of 'real-time' and 'objective' metrics within the interface of the Flp that evokes user behaviour but also the way the business model of a media company is constructed. An aspect that proves Picards' point that the desire for quantified data is being established through how the business model of media companies is often directly linked to this data (Picard 2011, 1-4). This is because quantification and metrics facilitate a way of assessing and measuring growth in numerical terms.

As I argued in chapter 2, quantification or enumeration makes these processes impersonal and it indicates objectivity to a certain degree.

It is due to these aspects that metrics, that are provided through the Flp, are being perceived as significant by the editors and social media analysts at VICE and Sciencedump. And by presenting metrics in relation to growth, as I have shown in chapter 4, in such a prominent way it fulfils the desire of these media companies. But there is also one remark because as I have shown in the previous sections, due to how the Flp interface and its metrics are established it is provoking experimental behaviour. It is this behaviour in combination with the significance of metrics that informs how the digital cultural content and the digital publishing strategy are shaped. The experimental behaviour, or appropriation, is established through the perceived affordances of the Flp. From practices like trying to uncover concealed metrics, that are able to inform to a greater extent how content is performing, to the use A/B test in order to figure out which parameters in a content post are causing an increase in *reach*.

Practices like these have one thing in common, they are all aimed at the growth of their audience. It is this behaviour which in the end is stimulated through how the Flp interface operates. As I have shown, the metrics that are provided through the Flp are often the only way of feedback and Facebook is in this manner also able to control and guide user behaviour. I would, therefore, argue that the experimental behaviour of these users strengthens the position of the Facebook platform because by trying to figure out how to use the platform more effectively they are also using the platform more intensive. A practice that illustrates this, is how the users at VICE and Sciencedump are tended to believe that there is a 'perfect' formula for reaching their audience most effectively. A belief that has been established due to how the metrics that are being provided through the Flp make the distribution process partly visible. Although, both companies haven't discovered the 'perfect' formula they are both adjusting the image, title or content of their digital cultural content in such a way that it will reach the largest audience possible. These practices are informed and stimulated by the quantifiable, a phenomenon which could result in a kind of quantified production machine. By this, I'm pointing to how the quantified provokes a way digital cultural content production that is primarily driven by metrics and growth of the business. Even though the topics of the digital cultural content are not always determined by these metrics, the digital publishing strategy is.

In short, I would argue from this perspective that this might be the biggest implication of interrelation between the shaping, publishing and distributing of digital cultural content on the Facebook platform. Because due to how the Flp metrics are often used as an important indicator for how digital cultural content should be shaped, it also contributes to maintaining and probably intensifying the *filter bubble* phenomenon. As I argued in chapter 1, the *filter bubble* revolves around how users on for example Facebook

see relatively only content that is 'relevant' to them. In return, the digital cultural content that media companies produce is informed by metrics, like *reach*, that also consists out of these same users. In this manner the *filter bubble* might become a threefold issue, because it is being reinforced by the users, media companies and the platform itself.



## 6. Conclusion

We're now able to return to the central problem of this thesis. As I stated in chapter 1 we have to understand the interplay between how the Flp is constructed and the use/appropriation of the Flp by media companies, in order to reveal what implications this might have on the shaping/consuming of digital cultural content. The reverse engineering of the Flp interface and the observations of VICE and Sciencedump [practices](#) has shown how perceived affordances are embedded within the Flp and that these can have a determining influence. With one important remark, as I have shown the degree of determination depends also on a whole range of other variables. From the way in which the *reach* metric is deliberately being kept obscure to how the business model of a media company is constructed and linked to publishing on the Facebook platform. But even though a whole range of knots and bolts is shaping the digital cultural content, it is the way how the Flp is constructed and how the Facebook platform operates that is playing a major part. As I have shown, this construction of the Flp resulted in various ways of appropriating and interpreting the metrics that are provided through the interface of this platform. In this manner, it is the interplay between perceived affordances as a way to guide user behaviour and the appropriation/interpretation that is fundamentally shaping and constructing user behaviour.

### **The process of shaping digital cultural content and the 'Filter Bubble'**

Although the analysis of the Insights interface, the observations of the media company practices and the interviews with editors are providing a new insight. It's not providing a closing answer for all media companies in general, due to how this research was conducted on a micro level. This thesis is therefore only a small step in the direction of uncovering whether and how the Facebook platform might have a determining impact on the shaping of culture. The analysis of the Flp interface showed for example how metrics are represented through statistical metaphors, but how these symbolic handles are established through the Graph API was only partly revealed. The inner workings and mediation processes that underlie the Facebook platform will remain for the most part shrouded in mystery. But even though it is hard to open Facebooks' black box, it is still important to partly lay bare how it operates and critically reflect on its position in the shaping of culture.

Within in the Facebook platform, it's the Flp interface that nurtures and establishes the interplay between Facebook and the media companies VICE and Sciencedump. The Flp interface and the underlying processes are like the white layer between the two black parts of an Oreo cookie – to use the metaphor of N. Katherine Hayles (Lehmann 2012, 180). Within this analogy, I would argue that one black part is the platform itself and the other black part is the user. The white gooey stuff is in this case like the glue that keeps the user engaged with the Facebook platform – in other words, keep media companies producing digital cultural content for the platform. From this perspective, it is the Flp interface and the

manner in which it provides metrics and guides user behaviour that is one of the control mechanisms of the platform. It is through the ubiquity of metrics on the platform and how it exploits the desire of media companies for quantified information, that primarily shapes the user behaviour. As I have shown in chapter 4 and 5, these kinds of practices are established because on the one hand the FIp stimulates this behaviour. And on the other hand are the way the business models of media companies are shaped also playing a major part in nurturing this kind of habits.

Furthermore, it is due inter alia the way in which *engagement* and *reach* play a prominent role in the FIp interface, which plays an important part in the shaping of digital cultural content. Although these metrics are merely analogies and do not automatically reveal why the digital cultural content is performing well. The result of obscuring the real meaning is that media companies are forming their own interpretation or appropriate the data in a different way. The interpretation or appropriation influences thereupon the way digital cultural content is being shaped. This is why the manner how the FIp interface is designed and the Facebook platform operates is forming a major implication in relation to use the platform by media companies. This is due to how the Facebook platform is not only distributing and curating digital cultural content, it also is informing how this content is being shaped. It is this processes, as I stated in chapter 5, that could intensify the phenomenon of the *filter bubble*. This is because how people – or Facebook users – engage with the digital cultural content of media companies, like VICE or Sciencedump, also informs how this content is being shaped. In this manner, digital cultural content is partly being shaped in a way that it matches the perspective of these users. It is for this reason that the *filter bubble* is not only established by the actions of users but also to how media companies using these actions to create digital cultural content that fits the perspective of the user. In the end, these practices could eventually result eventually in a vicious cycle which reinforces the phenomenon of the *filter bubble*.

In short, it is in particular aspects like these that can have far-reaching consequences on the daily act of producing and consuming digital cultural content. I would argue that this way of producing digital cultural content informed by the FIp and its metrics shows for example how phenomena like ‘fake news’ could come into being on online platforms like Facebook. By experimenting with publishing various types of digital cultural content, one could discover a way to create content that is ‘fake’ but establishes engagement of users whereby this type of content is distributed across the platform more effectively. And it is in the end, it is this type of behaviour that might become a problem in the future.

### **Reflection on approach and future research**

It is from this perspective, that I would suggest that future research in this field of work is needed in order to fully understand how digital cultural content is being shaped through

inter alia the platform it is being published and distributed on. This is because, in retrospect, I would argue that the use of a method like the material object analysis and the reverse engineering analogy can only reveal certain parts of how the software operates. This is due to how this method doesn't provide access to how the Facebook platform is exactly establishing the metrics within the Flp. But by combining this method with an ethnographical approach I was able to show how digital cultural content is being shaped through a complex interrelation between different actors. From how the use of the Flp by media companies influences the shaping of digital cultural content to how the desire for quantification is connected to the business models of these media companies. Furthermore, the combination of the two different methods also revealed the implications of interpretation/appropriation in relation to the shaping of digital cultural content. But because the analysis and research were conducted on a micro level, I can't make an overarching conclusion about how digital cultural content is shaped by media companies in general. It is this element that would be critical for future research because the practices of **other** media companies in relation to the Facebook platform also have to be examined, in order to establish a more comprehensive depiction of this phenomenon. Furthermore, I would also suggest that for future research a media archaeological aspect has to be taken into account. This aspect has to be considered in order to determine whether the way these practices are established, are unique to how online platforms like Facebook operate and haven't occurred before.

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# Appendix

## 1. Interview subject 1 – eindredacteur The Creators Project

***Interviewer: Het gaat eigenlijk voornamelijk over de manier waar op je content produceert en hoe je dat eigenlijk vormgeeft. Want hoe zie jij de rol van Facebook bij het produceren en verspreiden van content? Wat vindt jij van die rol van Facebook dat die zo centraal is geworden vooral bij jullie heel erg?***

**Geïnterviewde subject 1:** Ehm ja het is een beetje de belangrijkste manier om iets de wereld in te brengen voor ons. Naast natuurlijk de homepage en de andere kanalen zoals Twitter en doorplaatsingen op Vice en dat soort dingen. Maar volgens mij komt iets van 75 procent of misschien wel meer van alle traffic via Facebook binnen.

Dus het is aan de ene kant een soort van uitdaging om daar optimaal mee rekening te houden.

In de zin dat je weet dat je titel goed overkomt als je er langs scrolt in een tijdlijn. Dat je niet te veel informatie moet geven, maar ook weer niet te weinig. Een soort curiosity gap achtig idee. Maar aan de andere kant moet je ook niet een soort van Facebook ehm een soort van soul Facebook medium worden. Want dan wordt alles buzz feed en dan verlies je de journalistieke integriteit ehm ten bate van click geiligheid.

***Hmm ja en hoe doe je dat dan?***

Ja hoe ik dat doe is dat sommige onderwerpen zich beter lenen voor all out gaan qua optimalisatie voor Facebook denk ik. En andere verhalen breng ik gewoon meer ehm als een soort van merk bouwen voor The Creators Project zelf.

Dus ik kan op een dag een lang interview hebben met een kunstenaar inhoudelijk goed uitgewerkt en dat is ja dat is dan gewoon iets inhoudelijker en informatiever en belangrijker ook voor degene die je er dan mee bereikt.

Dus waardevoller voor degene die je er wel mee bereikt en dan haal je er maar wat minder clicks mee binnen. Maar die engagement is belangrijker voor ons maar ook voor terugkerende bezoekers dus uiteindelijk ook in je bezoekers aantallen.

Maar dat is een beetje een soort van slow growth tegenover gewoon ehm snel ehm moment van de dag actualiteit je likes binnen harken.

***Daar komt het in principe wel op neer natuurlijk. Want op welke wijze is die rol van Facebook eigenlijk voor jou de laatste jaren veranderd met betrekking tot het maken van content? Is dat veranderd of eigenlijk sinds dat je hier werkt of is het eigenlijk hetzelfde gebleven?***

Nou ja eigenlijk sinds ik hier werk is dat wel hetzelfde gebleven. Kijk ik werk hier nu bijna twee jaar en twee jaar geleden was Facebook ook al het belangrijkste medium.

***Hmhm maar merk je er ook wat van iedere keer wordt het algoritme een beetje aangepast van Facebook. Dus dat je***

Ehm ja dat merk je wel en maar of **wij daar nou per se op inspelen weet ik niet zo goed** ook omdat ik niet zo goed kijk het algoritme van Facebook is toch een soort van black box ofzo. Pandora's box.

Ehm en je probeert wat en het werkt en je probeert wat en het werkt niet. Je zult dus misschien wel een soort van onbewuste ehm voelspriet hebben voor wat werkt. Maar het is best wel moeilijk om dat in woorden uit te leggen.

***Ja tuurlijk.***

Dus ik zou niet kunnen zeggen van oh ja toen hebben we onze strategie echt veranderd.

Maar persoonlijk probeer ik wel, heb ik wel gemerkt dat ik maar dat is meer dat ik er zelf beter in wordt is dat je niet per se alles dicht hoeft te timmeren in een Facebook post. Maar dat je best wel gewoon een soort van ruimte mag laten voor ehm.

***Voor een bepaalde interpretatie?***

Ehm nee niet voor een bepaalde interpretatie maar meer gewoon ruimte voor wat het kan betekenen. Dus misschien wel interpretatie maar meer een soort van nieuwsgierigheid opwekken tegenover alles maar vertellen.

Kijk als jij alles vertelt in de titel en de facebook tekst en de preview er onder. Dat heb ik zelf ook als ik langs shit scroll en ik zie gewoon al zeg maar ik haal het nieuws al binnen vanuit Facebook dan heb je het niet goed gedaan.



**<Want ik wij verdienen geen geld met langs gescrolled worden op Facebook wij verdienen geld met mensen naar onze website halen.>**

***Klopt dus puur nieuwsgierig maken***

Ja ja met het gevaar wat natuurlijk op de loer ligt dus dat je dan een soort van clickbait wordt. Dus dat is wel een beetje de strijd, de uitdaging.

***Hmhm ja want er naast is het ook zo in ieder geval dat heb ik bij Alejandro ook al gezien dat die cijfers van Chartbeat hij de hele tijd in de gaten houdt. Maar spelen die ook een bepaalde rol in het kiezen van de onderwerpen? Of speelt het uberhaupt een rol bij het kiezen van onderwerpen of is het echt een meer dat je wel je vrijheid daarin behoudt?***

Nou voor vertalingen wel natuurlijk voor eigen onderwerpen nou dat staat natuurlijk nog niet op chartbeat voor dat je het er opzet ehm maar ja je houdt natuurlijk altijd rekening mee of het interessant kan zijn voor je lezers en als je op een andere website het ziet dat het het goed heeft gedaan. En zeker met een website die lezers hebben die vergelijkbaar zijn met die op die van jou lijken. Dan is een like of weet ik veel een actie onder het artikel is natuurlijk wel een goede graadmeter om te weten wat het bij jou gaat doen. Ik zie sploid eigenlijk als onze grootste concurrent voor onze Nederlandse Creators Project. Dus het is eigenlijk gewoon die goed in de gaten houden, ook hou zij hun titels aanpakken en hoe zij shit brengen. En niet dat ik daar op ga lijken maar meer gewoon dat ik iets weet van oke alles jullie links staan dan is er rechts nog een gat.

***En daarnaast hoe zie je dit dan met zelf bedachte content vanuit Nederland. Is het dan dat je daar ook een beetje op probeert te laten lijken? Of is het gewoon iets wat jij zelf interessant vindt van nou***

Ja het is toch ik vind het heel mijn belangrijkste criterium is eigenlijk zou ik het zelf willen lezen. En ehm dat weet je als er een vette kunstenaar in het stedelijk iets doet dan wil ik dat wel lezen. Dus dan stuur ik Tony er heen om die gast te interviewen of ik ga er zelf heen. Ehm ja dus dat is eigenlijk het criterium en niet van ik ga hun na doen. Ik ga niet kijken hoe zij er naar kijken en dan ook toepassen hier want wij zijn een Nederlandse blog en ook Nederlands nieuws brengen.

***En op welke wijze bepaal je dan die strategie voor The Creators Project?***

Nou ja dus ehm lokaal is belangrijk. Dat kan zijn iemand die in Nederland iets maakt het kan ook zijn een Nederlander die juist ergens anders iets maakt. Die twee ingrediënten zijn wel belangrijk. Alhoewel het niet per se ehm cruciaal is ofzo Ehm en ja kijk sommige dingen zijn gewoon heel ehm iets wat over Utah gaat in Amerika dat vinden wij niet zo interessant maar

iets algemeen in Amerika kan net zo hard gaan hier. Ik weet niet of dat precies is wat je bedoeld met je vraag?

***Nou het is gewoon meer hoe je eigenlijk die sociale media strategie bepaald maar dat is misschien ook iets dat Laurens nu meer mee bezig is denk ik?***

Ja dat klopt.

***Ehm nou dat heb je eigenlijk al gezegd hoe je de Facebook tekst bepaald ligt meer aan wat misschien zou kunnen werken. En ehm en hoe groot is. Want als je naar Facebook gaat heb je het organische en betaalde reach. Hou je dat ook veel in de gaten of is dat iets wat ook meer subject 4 doet?***

Ehm ja dat is subject 4's werk gewoon om dat echt live te volgen. Maar ik hou het ook zelf in de gaten omdat ik gewoon wil weten hoe goed het nu met mijn website gaat.

Maar het is wel kijk het is wel een beetje reactionair want als iets online staat en het is niet goed. Oke nou ja dan heb je iets online staan dat niet goed is en als er iets online staat dat wel heel goed is heb je iets online staan dat wel heel erg goed is.

Kijk het informeert zeg maar niet wat je de rest van de dag gaat doen. Maar misschien wat je de volgende week nog een keer opnieuw wil proberen ofzo.

Ehm maar het is meer subject 4 die dan gaat denken nou goed misschien kunnen we dit nog bij het parool uitzetten of misschien kunnen zij het door plaatsten of misschien kunnen we er geld op zetten. Of targetten. Dat is zeg maar content die al live is dus zo optimaal mogelijk uitzetten maar voor mij als redacteur is het meer oke ik kan daar een les uit trekken en die kan ik misschien nog een keer toepassen.

***Dat is inderdaad hoe je dan zelf het platform verder ontwikkeld.***

Ja ja

***Want ehm heb je eigenlijk ook soms het gevoel dat de manier waarop dus content wordt verspreid op Facebook te strikt wordt en je daardoor een beetje meer de nadruk wordt gelegd op geld inleggen waardoor er een groter publiek wordt bereikt. Of dat niet zo zeer of komt het dat het algoritme soms zo hard wordt aangepast dat heel erg dat je in een keer veel minder mensen bereikt.***

Ja nou ja dat hebben we dus vorige of nee twee weken geleden meegemaakt. Toen lag dus Facebook eruit alleen voor bepaalde pages en daar waren wij er een van.

En dan merk je gewoon heel erg dat als je na twee dagen wel weer kunt posten dan sta je helemaal onder aan de ladder. En niet zo zeer omdat Facebook jou eigen pagina zo iets heeft van nou ja die zijn slecht ofzo maar omdat al je concurrenten wel hebben kunnen posten. En wel interactie hebben gehad en daardoor meer worden getoond aan dezelfde lezers die jij ook probeert te bereiken.

Ehm dus ja je zit continu op een soort eb en vloed van Facebook en als je dan lekker in een flow zit dan kan middelmatige content het heel goed doen. Maar als je ehm net even gewoon in de luwte zit en een slechte week hebt dan heb je echt een knaller nodig om daar boven op te komen.

***En wat vindt je van de rol dat ze er zo mee kunnen fucken zeg maar?***

Ja ja het is eigenlijk een beetje een haat liefde verhouding. Kijk het zorgt er ook voor dat ik mijn baan heb eigenlijk ehm ik weet niet of we zoveel mensen zouden bereiken via gewoon organisch naar een website gaan. Aan de andere kant is het wel gek dat je bestaat bij de gratie van een andere bedrijf waar je in principe niks mee te maken hebt.

***Ja inderdaad want het heeft wel behoorlijk met elkaar te maken natuurlijk. En ze zijn natuurlijk veel met elkaar vermengd.***

Ja ja we zijn in principe gewoon een soort Facebook publishers.

***Ja in principe komt het daar inderdaad op neer ook al zou je dat niet altijd willen zijn.***

Nee nou ja het zou wel interessant zijn, want dat hadden we ook toen het er helemaal uitlag, zo van wat zou er gebeuren als het gewoon echt een keer als het echt zou gebeuren. Kan dat nog dat we terug gaan naar een tijd waar we en ik denk dus dat we niet dat dat kan. Ik denk dat dan een soort van feedly het overneemt. Die ook weer een business model uitzetten. Dus ja aandacht is nu gemonitized en het gaat nooit meer terug naar het zelf bepalen waar je aandacht aanbesteed.

***Nee nee het is echt gewoon het zijn eigenlijk centrale portalen waar mensen altijd op kijken en niet verder gaan dan dat. Oke interessant want ehm op welke wijze speelt dan de verspreiding van content een rol in je creatieve vrijheid?***

Ehm ja dat is lastig

***Want het is natuurlijk soms een beetje onderbewust natuurlijk omdat je er op een of andere manier er toch rekening mee houdt.***

Nou ja ehm er zijn twee manieren van hoe je creativiteit kan opvatten ik kan heel ik kan super excentriek gaan lopen doen en dan begrijpt niemand me dat werkt niet. Dat is een creativiteit die niet werkt dus dan zou je zeggen dan wordt het allemaal heel algemeen. Maar terwijl je ook kan denken binnen de parameters die je van Facebook krijgt kun je wel super creatief daar binnen die beperkingen gaan doen. En mensen die binnen die beperkingen creatief zijn zullen het meest succesvol zijn.

Dus ik denk er liever over na in die tweede zin dan zo van ooh jaa je zet iets op Facebook dus dan doe je mee met iedereen.

***Nee natuurlijk het is ook zoals vroeger als je voor een bepaalde krant schreef dat je ook een bepaald publiek daar mee aanspreekt.***

Ja ja en het blijft zich ook altijd wel evolueren het is niet zo dat het vast staat en dat we nu met zijn allen dat altijd blijven doen. Je kunt ook acht enters tussen je eerste en je tweede zin zetten in je Facebook post weet je als je dat wil.

***Want ehm met die traffic ook en de manier waarop de onderwerpen bepaald worden. Ehm de afgelopen twee weken dat Facebook eigenlijk fucked up was hoe lossen jullie dat dan op? Om dan toch wel, want je zit dan eigenlijk gewoon zo van jou help we kunnen.***

Nou ja Subject 4 heeft er dan geld opgezet op bepaalde dingen. En hij heeft er geld op gezet en wij waren gewoon niks aan het posten en een pijplijn aan het maken voor als alles weer goed zou gaan. Dus wij hadden in eens twee dagen dat we vooruit konden werken. Nou ja we hebben gewoon meer gepost op de dagen dat het weer aanstond.

***Ja ja want is het zo dat je merk je dan inderdaad een beetje een soort hulpeloos eigenlijk bent. Maar aan de andere kant ook weer van ehm op welke manier zou je en eigenlijk komt het terug op dat verhaal van dat je Facebook of een ander portal niet meer weg te denken is. En ehm hoe zou je het zien als dat wel weg zou zijn is dat op een andere manier te vertalen of niet? Zeg maar, dat je omdat het zo'n centrale rol speelt voor je traffic krijgen jullie dan ook op een andere manier wel traffic binnen of helemaal niet.***

Naast Facebook

***In die twee dagen.***

Oowh zo nou ja het valt wel dood, maar er is altijd wel traffic. Ja want dat zijn, en je hebt ook gewoon je hebt natuurlijk die long tail. Dus als ik vorige week ehm iets heel goeds heb gepost dan zullen er nu nog altijd mensen zijn die het lezen. Je hebt namelijk altijd mensen die later op Facebook komen of die nog een keer het hebben gebookmarked. Weet ik veel die komen nog daarna. Ehm dus ja het gaat altijd wel door.

***Maar hoe zie jij eigenlijk die engagement met je publiek dan? Dat is natuurlijk vooral via Facebook aan de hand van de parameters voor de mensen die het te zien krijgen maar ook de mensen die je pagina hebben geliked. Het is natuurlijk meer dat je ook mensen hebt die ook jou pagina weer gaan liken maar hoe zou je dat zien?***

Nou ja je hebt published, ik heb ongeveer 20 duizend page likes op Facebook. Maar mijn unique visitors is ongeveer 150 duizend. Dus die 20 duizend zijn echt mijn core mensen die bereik je zeg maar altijd wel. Ehm maar de uitdaging is dat je dus ehm content kunt maken die je sowieso voor hun interessant is maar die zelfs zo interessant is dat je buiten hun bubbel ook wordt verspreidt. Dus nog meer mensen binnen harkt. En zo steeds die groei die er is zeg maar kernpubliek als het ware. Die op die organische manier steeds verder uitbreidt.

***Ja want heb je dat dan ook zien groeien de afgelopen tijd of is het dat je?***

Ja natuurlijk want we begonnen met 5 duizend facebook likes en 30 duizend unieke bezoekers in de eerste maand. En nu is dat dus 20 duizend en 150 duizend uniek een jaar later. Dus ja het groeit wel en we moeten nog harder groeien.

***Maar van die 150 duizend zijn natuurlijk unieke bezoekers maar weet je ook ongeveer hoeveel daarvan je harde kern is gegroeid. Dat gaat wel langzamer aan dan de groei van je unieke bezoekers of niet?***

Nou ja dat is eigenlijk relatief want 5 naar 20 is keer vier en 30 naar 150 is keer 5 dus dat gaat eigenlijk wel een beetje hand in hand. En dat is natuurlijk ook wel logisch want iedereen die je bij Facebook erbij hebt is weer een knot in een netwerk waardoor je misschien weer een paar mensen extra er bij krijgt. Ik denk dat je unieke bereik altijd iets hoger en sneller zal groeien ofzo. Want volgens mij heeft Motherboard iets van 25 duizend page likes en die zitten wel op 400 duizend unieke bezoekers per maand. Dus die conversie die kan nog veel groter zijn.

***Ja ja want het is wel jou bepaalde doel dat door het feit dat je op een andere manier.***

Ja de vraag de uitdaging zal zijn is om wel gewoon jonge en toffe mensen te bereiken en niet alleen maar beppies die zeggen van he truus dit is ook mooi want ze zijn hier met water aan het spelen.

***Ja want merk je dan ook niet dat steeds meer jonge mensen beginnen weg te trekken van Facebook?***

Nou ja dat weet ik niet zo goed. Want is het echt zo, want je hebt tieners die weg trekken van Facebook. En nou ja ik heb er zelf tot nu toe niet zoveel van gemerkt omdat onze doelgroep toch wel 20 tot 30 is. En dat is gewoon onze generatie en die zitten gewoon nog wel op Facebook. En die zal er ook niet zo snel meer weg gaan denk ik. Ehm maar ik weet niet hoe dat over vijf jaar is, omdat onze doelgroep dan ook weer 5 jaar ouder is. Of dat die tieners toch wel weer terug komen ofzo.

***Ja dat weet je natuurlijk nooit of uberhaupt op die manier Facebook door gaat zetten. Want bij ehm Motherboard hebben ze sinds kort ook die like button weg gehaald. En op the creators project hebben jullie dat eigenlijk nooit gedaan behalve de share button. En wat je eigenlijk het afgelopen jaar steeds meer ziet is dat steeds meer mensen andere mensen noemen in de comments en dat ze op die manier een hele andere manier de content verspreid wordt. Dus veel gericht aan bepaalde mensen.***

Ja en dat is natuurlijk ook een veel waardevoller interactie dan een like.

***Ja want wordt die share button eigenlijk veel gebruikt bij jullie?***

Ehm nou kijk goede artikelen worden gewoon geshared als facebook post.

Maar ehm ik zie het een beetje als een soort van hierachische model. Kijk een like is leuk omdat het een soort credit geeft. Een soort van owh er zijn andere mensen die het ook leuk vinden dus het is niet super kut. Of als het echt heel veel zijn dit is echt super leuk. En dan heb je een tag dat is nog veel waardevoller omdat het en persoonlijk is tussen twee mensen maar ook omdat het ehm een comment is onder je post waardoor hij weer meer wordt getoond. Dus die werkt zeg maar twee kanten op. En een share is gewoon het meest waardevolle, omdat je dan hele nieuwe netwerken kunt krijgen.

***Ja inderdaad. Want een like knop zelf zeg maar is wanneer je door je Newsfeed heen scrolt zie je die ook bijna geen enkele geliked post. Ze komen bijna niet meer terug in je Newsfeed en daarom is het natuurlijk ook zo dat de share en de comment veel waardevoller zijn geworden.***

Ja en ik zou subject 4 nog even vragen want die is nu aan het experimenteren met een whatsapp knop. Dus als we het hebben over of Facebook altijd zo dominant zal blijven

misschien wordt het wel meer een soort van telefoon based ding en dan zou de concurrentie ook wel weer over kunnen slaan.

***Ja inderdaad omdat het dan nog gericht wordt en de meeste mensen kijken natuurlijk altijd al op hun telefoon naar de artikelen. Heb je dat eigenlijk ook gezien dat mensen meestal op hun mobiel kijken?***

Het is bij ons ongeveer 50/50, maar mobiel is wel toegenomen. Dus het lijkt me dat over een tijdje het meer mobiel wordt.

## 2. Interview subject 2 – eindredacteur Motherboard

***Interviewer:*** *Wat is de reden voor het platgaan van de pagina via Facebook geweest weet jij dat?*

***Geïnterviewde subject 2:*** Het was een bug in Facebook, ja de geotargeting was kapot. En de meeste pagina's hebben ook gewoon, die posten gewoon openbaar. En wij zijn daar een beetje een uitzondering mee.

***Ja en daarom hebben ze het zeker wel zo snel mogelijk opgelost.***

Ja. Ja want ehm volgens mij is er toen een team op gezet ofzo. Het duurde ongeveer drie dagen dus het was nogal een behoorlijk groot probleem.

***Ja want ik hoorde ook net van laurens dat jullie ook precies in die week de like button hadden weggehaald van de pagina.***

Ja klopt. Maar daarnaast hadden we wel het best gelezen artikel van de maand, van die kut yoghurt.

***Ehm wat ik vooral wil weten is hoe jullie content produceren en eigenlijk gewoon een beetje ik ben nu bezig met ja er wordt heel vaak gezegd die politics van Facebook worden heel erg opgelegd enzo maar eigenlijk is het een hele ingewikkelde wisselwerking dat constant heen en weer loopt tussen de content makers en de facebook maar ook weer de gebruikers. En dat je op een of andere manier daar super afhankelijk daarvan bent. Maar andere dingen zoals Subject 4 daar mee bezig is om bepaalde data toch uit Facebook te krijgen die is eigenlijk niet direct beschikbaar is maar die er wel is. Maar die niet meer door Facebook wordt weergegeven. En op deze manier worden er toch bepaalde praktijken ontwikkeld door content makers en in dit geval Vice. En ik ben dus heel benieuwd naar die rol van jullie als eind redacteur en het hele proces.***

Ehm nou ja ik denk dat het bij mij misschien een beetje een uitzondering is. Want ik ben begonnen toen het nog heel klein was en toen er nog geen yarons en perres waren. Dat ik zeg maar gewoon zelf aan de slag ben gegaan met analytics en ehm Facebook om te kijken hoe het beste is gegaan. En chartbeat en dat soort shit. En dat heb ik gewoon een soort van doorgezet, maar ehm in principe speelt het zeg maar best wel een grote rol ofzo.

Het is niet per se dat je er heel veel rekening mee houdt, maar dat je merkt dus bijvoorbeeld ehm ik weet niet dat bepaalde trends zijn die een aantal maanden duren. Van dingen die ehm het internet doet.



En dat zit dan meestal eigenlijk in het idee dat wordt uitgedragen of ehm ja heel cru gezegd in de titel die je gebruikt voor een stuk. En ehm wat daar dan achter zit ofzo.

Ja ik weet niet heb je dat ding gezien van die Ann lee newitch van zeg maar dat dal van wat wel en niet werkt. En ik denk dat dat zeg maar altijd algemeen geldig is en dan zijn er gewoon dingen zoals bij dat misifonie stuk ofzo dat je merkt van mensen vinden willen bepaalde dingen dan weten en dan ontstaat er een nieuwe trend waarin mensen elkaar gaan taggen. Waarin je iemand dus ergens in herkend en dan ga je die dus taggen. En op die manier share dan zo'n artikel ineens heel veel.

***Ja klopt, want het grappige is dat ongeveer een half jaar geleden of daar voor stond er in het NRC ook een stuk over misifonie. In ieder geval dat had ik gezien want die hadden ook iets dergelijks over misifonie geschreven.***

Ja maar ik denk dat dat is nog nooit op dezelfde manier gedaan. Het is dan niet voor het internet geschreven.

***Nee voor de krant natuurlijk. En is dat volgens jou een andere manier van schrijven? Wat is het verschil daar tussen?***

Ehm nou sowieso is het een krant dus is het gewoon pure journalistiek en in principe zit er geen ik in. En ehm maar het onderwerp kan boeiend zijn, maar de schrijfstijl blijft gewoon altijd sec de structuur van een journalistiek artikel aanhouden. Dus daar zit sowieso het eerste verschil in en ik denk op zich dat we die structuur ook wel gebruiken. Zoals in dat template artikel dat ik heb geschreven. Ehm maar dat we daar om heen dus wel meer een soort grapjes en persoonlijke ehm ja ik weet niet een soort persoonlijkheid er in kunnen stoppen. Ehm en hierdoor kunnen mensen zich er aan spiegelen ofzo. En ik denk dat dat het aller meeste bijdraagt van ja ehm als je dan iemand een vriend van je ooit iets hebt horen zeggen dan herken je daar iemand in en dan ga het automatisch delen. En dat is veel minder sterk aanwezig bij een journalistiek artikel.

***Ja inderdaad dat is zeker een groot verschil en heel belangrijk bij Vice natuurlijk. Het ik bleef etc wat daar heel centraal is. Want ehm hoe zie jij dan de rol van Facebook bij het produceren en verspreiden van content? Hoe zie jij dit? Is die veranderd in de afgelopen jaren of is die hetzelfde gebleven?***

Ja op zich wel in de afgelopen drie jaar is het van ehm ik weet de percentages niet maar de percentages traffic die nu van Facebook komen is zo ongelofelijk hoog dat je nergens meer bent zonder. En ehm dat is gek want ehm blijktbaar is het internet zoveel veranderd dat de mensen niet meer naar webpagina's gaan maar alles beleven vanuit een centraal punt. Namelijk hun sociale netwerk. En nou ja Facebook is dan veruit de belangrijkste, want Twitter doet gewoon niet zo veel. Het is te veel geworden volgens mij en voor de meeste mensen.

***Nee inderdaad en het is ook een andere manier van communiceren geworden natuurlijk. En dat het niet meer iets is waar je artikelen via verspreidt. Ik denk dat ook wel het verschil is met Facebook dat het eigenlijk een veredelde RSS feed soms is geworden.***

En ja Twitter is dat in principe ook maar een artikel gaat pas iets doen op twitter als er een discussie rondom ontstaat. En dat is eigenlijk waar twitter heel goed in is en in het spuien van meningen. En als dat op gang begint te komen dan kunnen zeg maar meer mensen zich daar mee gaan bemoeien. Twitter is gewoon een platform voor het je ergens mee bemoeien. En dan gaat het daar over en Facebook is er bestaan veel meer mogelijkheden om shit te verspreiden en artikelen te verspreiden.

***Hmhm en ja want he dat is het afgelopen jaren wel steeds meer centraler geworden en eigenlijk gewoon het portal geworden naast je youtube en je Google. En wat ik ook wel begreep van ehm Laurens is dat jullie geen chartbeat meer hebben.***

Ja nee op zich wel. We hebben het nog wel maar het is dat gewoon iedereen op een gegeven moment op dezelfde account zat. En toen dacht chartbeat ook op een gegeven moment van ja dat is niet echt de bedoeling. Je kan niet duizend mensen op dezelfde inlog hebben.

***Nee snap ik. Want spelen die cijfers van charbeat of van google analytics ook een rol bij de onderwerpen die je kiest of is dat je ze meer uit eigen interesse ze kiest? Hoe bepaal je dat?***

Nou op zich komt het er eigenlijk uiteindelijk altijd op eigen interesse neer. Maar die valt wel te sturen door bijvoorbeeld ja bepaalde ideeën of dingen waarvan je ziet dat mensen ze heel snel oppakken. Ehm ja dus daar speelt het wel in mee in principe.

Als je ziet dat bijvoorbeeld twee artikelen over zeg maar een algemene psychologische aandoening het goed doen dan weet je dat je dat in principe nog een keer zou kunnen doen. Natuurlijk gaat het elke keer iets minder goed ofzo, maar het zijn meestal wel dingen met een staart.

***Ja inderdaad, het is ook wat Leander ook al noemde een soort long tail dat ja altijd wel een weder op keer daarvan hebt. Want ehm de meeste traffic krijg je dus ook binnen via Facebook en eigenlijk gewoon veel minder via de website zelf. Maar vindt je dat die rol te belangrijk wordt? Of is het zo van het is niet anders dus we moeten daar aan geloven? Hoe sta je daar tegenover?***

Ja ik ehm tsja ja weet je het is eigenlijk best wel moeilijk dat Facebook zeg maar nu zoveel zoiets van macht eigenlijk bij Facebook ligt. Alleen het probleem is dat er niet echt alternatieven bestaan die net zo groot zijn.

En ehm ik denk niet dat het super lang gaat duren want ik bedoel ehm wat je bijvoorbeeld de afgelopen ander half jaar hebt gezien is dat er een totale verschuiving heeft plaats gevonden van desktop naar mobiel.

En dat de ervaring van het lezen van artikelen via Facebook op mobiel best wel kut is. En volgens mij proberen ze daar iets aan te doen bij Facebook want ze willen content zeg zelf op Facebook gaan hosten. Dus dat ze het dan zelf vorm kunnen gaan geven.

En DAT zou ik echt gevaarlijk vinden, want als dat gebeurt als uitgevers gaan toezeggen aan Facebook dat ehm de artikelen direct op Facebook gaan posten. Dat ehm ja dat dat er dan iets van vrijheid in het geding komt want wat je de afgelopen tijd ziet bij zowel Google als Facebook als Instagram alle grote internet bedrijven en Tumbler.

Dat ze ja best wel strikte censuur kunnen uitvoeren op de content die er geplaatst wordt. Terwijl het wordt gepresenteerd als een open medium maar uiteindelijk is dat gewoon niet zo. Als wij een artikel over kut yoghurt willen maken, maar Facebook wil dat niet hebben en Facebook is het platform dan kun je dat niet meer publiceren. En dat vind ik wel een eng idee.

***Ja het is inderdaad op dit moment nog niet zo. Het is natuurlijk ook vooral met dat Facebook eigenlijk denkt dat we moeten een family friendly platform hebben. In ieder geval dat is natuurlijk een typische Amerikaanse gedachte.***

Ja, nee en dat vind ik dus een eng idee. Je ziet bijvoorbeeld nu al dat buzzfeed die maken dus content alleen voor Facebook. Die maken gewoon content voor verschillende platformen. Dus voor snapchat maar weet ik veel.

***En hoe doen jullie dat anders dan? Want doen het dan niet op een buzzfeed achtige manier. Want jullie proberen dan wel mensen te trekken naar jullie website. Dus dat ze wel door klikken zeg maar en niet op Facebook blijven hangen en daar even kort een berichtje lezen en op de like knop klikken.***

Ehm door een leuk plaatje te hebben en een goede titel en een grapje er boven. Ja ik weet het niet. Ehm ja omdat die ervaring op mobiel nog achter loopt eigenlijk. Dus dat gaat nog best wel lastig, want je wil gewoon natuurlijk dat mensen op de site blijven en als mensen via een andere site op die van jou komen dan blijven ze vaak niet voor nog een artikel. Dus ehm daar zou nog iets op moeten worden verzonnen.

***Want hoeveel mensen komen dan via mobiel? Is dat 50/50 of meer?***

Nee het is wel meer, het is nu 75/25 ongeveer.

**Ah ja dat is echt heel veel. Dat is echt een heel groot verschil met wat het voorheen eigenlijk natuurlijk.**

Ja dat is het nu eigenlijk ook het zit ook in die verschuiving van mensen die je homepage bezoeken naar de mensen die een soort van casual bezoekers ofzo. Ik denk dat dat wel de trend is dat dat niet ophoudt. Ehm dat eigenlijk content wordt een soort van platform agnostisch. Het maakt niet meer uit of je de zoveelste viral site bent of de new york times. Als je content goed is dan wordt het gedeeld en gelezen.

**Ja inderdaad, en dat is wat ik ook al zei van die likes niet echt door wordt verspreidt. Het geeft een bepaalde credit aan de content. Maar het wordt niet als je ook in de Newsfeed ook kijkt dan zie je eigenlijk de geliked artikelen bijna nauwelijks terug komen, maar juist meer degene waar juist op gecommeneerd wordt en die worden geshared. En ehm nu jullie die like button hebben weg gehaald merk je daar ook iets van? Of het anders gaat werken bij jullie?**

Nee er is eigenlijk weinig veranderd. Tenminste nu ehm de traffic weer een soort van normaal is geworden halen we eigenlijk nog steeds dezelfde cijfers. Want aan de ene kant had ik wel een soort van vermoeden want ehm ja een soort share is ongeveer 10 likes waard.

En als je dan 100 likes hebt ehm dat dat wel werkt alleen wat ik dus wel denk is dat ehm de interactie op een pagina, namelijk de Facebook interactie op een pagina, een externe pagina. Dat dat wel meespeelt in de of het algoritme ehm je shit aan meer mensen laat zien. Dus ik denk dat het elkaar in balans houdt, maar ik denk wel dat als we met die like knop erbij sneller bij meer mensen te zien bent.

**Ja ja want hoe meer mensen het liken hoe meer en hoe vaker hij wordt getoond natuurlijk. Als je artikelen in de Newsfeed voorbij ziet komen die geliked zijn dan zijn dat ook vooral degene die heel veel geliked zijn. En niet zo zeer de tien likes.**

Maar dat is gewoon allemaal Facebook black box achtige dingen.

**Ja klopt dat weet je nooit precies en kun je altijd alleen maar naar gissen. Het is niet dat je daar ooit achter gaat komen maar het is wel dat je bepaalde praktijken daar aan aanpast.**

Het is wel gek hoor dat het een soort gevoelsding is geworden ofzo. **Je hebt namelijk een bedrijf dat een heel strak algoritme heeft in principe en die weten precies hoe dat werkt.** Terwijl het voor uitgevers wat het in principe altijd al is geweest maar gewoon een soort van ehm ja wat doet de maatschappij wat doen de mensen. En dat zal ook wel altijd, bij een krant was het natuurlijk minder te checken maar daar was het net zo goed dat.

***Klopt dat is het ook zeker, maar het vreemde is natuurlijk dat de data is er wel maar daar heb je niet zo heel veel toegang tot. En dat is natuurlijk best wel het rare dat het wordt eigenlijk een soort van afgesloten voor jou als uitgever terwijl de gegevens er wel zijn maar je hebt er geen toegang tot. En op die manier hebben zij er meer macht over. Ehm weet jij ook ongeveer hoe van de meeste posts is het organische deel vaak groter dan het betaalde deel?***

Ja want ehm het betalen heeft in principe alleen maar zin als iets al een beetje loopt. Want dan is het ook ehm kosteffectief om dat te doen. Want als iets al goed loopt dan kan je het een extra push geven door er voor te betalen maar uiteindelijk komt het wel neer op organisch bereik.

***Ja inderdaad want dat is veel effectiever. Want ehm dat vroeg ik ook al aan Leander hoeveel likes heeft jullie pagina zelf? Is het rond de 40 duizend zo iets?***

Ja ik geloof zo iets inderdaad.

***En hoe groot is het bereik van jullie? Met unieke bezoekers?***

Ja ja we zitten nu op iets van 500 duizend ofzo.

***Ehm en op welke wijze speelt de verspreiding van content een rol in je creatieve vrijheid?***

Hmm ja het is heel leuk als je artikelen heel veel gelezen worden. Dus op de een of andere manier ga je daar wel een beetje naar schrijven of zo. Ik bedoel alleen al het feit dat bijvoorbeeld ehm die soort regel die ik heb dat in de inleiding alles moet staan en niks achter moet houden. Dat is dat moet er in zitten. Ik weet alleen niet of dat een beperking is op je creatieve vrijheid of een aanpassing op het medium waarop je publiceert. Maar ehm dat denk ik niet. We publiceren namelijk nog steeds lange stukken die geen hond leest. Ja die ik wel belangrijk vindt, die gewoon een verhaal vertellen die andere mensen niet vertellen. Of die een ander standpunt innemen wat een ander medium niet heeft. En daarin wordt ik niet beperkt maar aan de andere kant denk ik wel van ja maar ik kan in een half uur een stukje typen over zeg maar een lollig stukje over een wetenschappelijk onderzoek en dan wordt dat tien keer zoveel gelezen of honderd keer zoveel gelezen als iets waar ik twee weken aan tijd in heb gestoken. En ehm hart en liefde en dat soort dingen, maar soms is het ook weer andersom ik bedoel soms is het zo'n stukje dat doet dan helemaal niks en iets met heel veel werk doet het wel ineens heel goed. Dus het is allemaal een beetje onpeilbaar, maar het speelt natuurlijk wel mee. Je wil gewoon dat mensen je shit lezen want anders zou ik het niet doen.

***Nee inderdaad want dan zou je net zo goed iets anders kunnen gaan doen.***

Ja dan zou ik een blog hebben of een schrift

***Hmhm of een blog inderdaad. Ehm nog een laatste vraag op welke manier bepaal je eigenlijk wat in Laurens zijn onderzoek ook al naar voren komt is dat lokale content goed werkt. Ik had het met Laurens er ook over vertaling dat er ook nog een beetje de ziel er uit halen.***

Nou ik weet niet of het zo zeer de ziel er uit

***Want wat is het dat jij denkt dat daar de reden voor is dan precies?***

Ik denk eerder dat het een cultuur verschil is. Want zeg maar artikelen die het heel goed doen in Amerika die doen bij ons het medium ofzo. Tenzij het echt iets super extreems is. Maar ik denk vooral dat het een cultureel ding is. Het komt omdat Amerikanen veel meer zijn vooral veel meer geneigd om voorzichtiger te zijn en ehm serieuzer. Maar waardoor er ook zeg maar iets meer diepgang in zit dan in sommige verhalen die wij maken. Maar dat wordt dan wel heel veel gelezen en ik weet niet op zich zouden wij dat ook wel kunnen doen maar ik denk dat de niche van mensen hier veel kleiner is die dat op die manier leuk vinden. En dat het effectiever is om iets leukere stukken te schrijven die dan in sommige gevallen iets minder te maken hebben met de Amerikaanse stukken maar wel ehm wel hetzelfde soort gedachtegoed uitstralen. Van oke dit is iets interessants en wij maken het interessanter zodat jij het wil lezen.

***Ja inderdaad want dat is gewoon dat het natuurlijk het zou een cultuur verschil kunnen zijn ehm en dat is eigenlijk wat je altijd al ziet want Motherboard US heeft natuurlijk altijd best wel een serieuze kant. Ehm maar op welke manier bepaal je dan welke onderwerpen het wel of niet goed zouden kunnen doen in Nederland? Tijdens redactie vergaderingen denk je dan nou dit zou goed kunnen werken of dit niet.***

Ehm ja ik denk dat dat net zoals bij Vice is het feit dat je bij ons in de redactievergadering zit dat je ideeën hebt en zowel affiniteit hebt met het onderwerp. Dus eigenlijk het verspreiden van kennis, en of dit nu wetenschappelijk of technologisch is dat maakt niet uit. Maar het gaat me vooral om dat degene die het schrijft het echt leuk vindt. En het echt interessant vindt. Want dat is het enige dat je echt terug leest is of iemand er net dat extra beetje zelf in heeft gelegd. Om het tot iets te maken waarvan je wat je met plezier leest ten opzichte van ehm een moetje. Dat is het vooral want als jij het boeiend vindt dan kunnen we altijd wel een hoek vinden waardoor het past bij Motherboard.

***Ja inderdaad dat het toch een soort van alsof iemand het echt zelf enthousiast vertelt over bepaalde dingen en dat het op die manier juist goed aansluit bij de Facebook generatie en eigenlijk hen wel aanspreekt om toch door te klikken. Want mensen zijn geïnteresseerd in bepaalde verhalen. En ehm die artikelen die jezelf schrijft heeft natuurlijk ook vooral met je eigen interesse te maken. Ehm want ik had het net met Laurens er net ook nog over dat op welke manier je bepaald je de strategie voor Facebook? Is dat iets wat subject 4 echt***

***vooral doet of is dat ook iets waarbij jij als eindredacteur op een bepaalde manier rekening mee houdt?***

Nou het is wel het begint gewoon bij tekst dus in principe zijn wij er gewoon verantwoordelijk voor het gene dat wel of niet werkt op Facebook.

Ik denk dat nou ja na ongeveer 4 jaar dit doen ehm dat we zeg maar wel een aardig gevoel hebben van wat wel en niet werkt. Maar wel een combinatie van weet ik veel een vraag en antwoord iets geven en iets achterhouden wat wel en niet werkt.

Ik denk dat de lijn best wel fijn is tussen het ehm hoe heet het ehm ja het moedwillig achterhouden van informatie waarvan je weet dat het niet zo interessant is en of de keuze om dat dus wel te geven. Maar dan een ander aspect te belichten wat interessanter is.

***Nee inderdaad en dat het niet een soort van clickbait achtig iets wordt maar wel dat is vaak wel het risico als je een leuke titel verzint en je klikt en dat je dan denkt van ja oke en waar gaat dit nu over.***

Maar het is in ieder geval het komt uit zou ik er zelf op klikken.





### **3. Interview subject 3 – content manager VICE**

**Geïnterviewde subject 3:** Ehm 8 uur 's avonds en 11 uur 's ochtends. En oja om 2 uur 's middags.

***Interviewer: Ja en dat zijn wel dingen die je in de gaten houdt wanneer je content plaatst enzo?***

Ja nou ja het natuurlijk het is sowieso heel lastig want ik heb niet echt volledig grip op de analyse hiervan. Kijk dit zijn gewoon clicks, ja dit is wanneer iemand er op klikt maar ook per ongeluk dan telt het ook al mee. En dit is google analytics maar die werkt nu alleen nog maar voor Motherboard en ehm.

***En kijk je dan ook een beetje naar hoe lang de tijd mensen op een artikel zitten?***

Ja ehm dat kan ik wel zien, maar hiervoor hadden we chartbeat en daar kon je alles heel makkelijk in zien. En ik heb dat heel lang gebruikt en dat snapte ik heel goed.

***Maar dat gebruiken jullie nu niet meer?***

Ehm nee want we zaten met te veel mensen op 1 account. Want iedereen van heel vice internationaal zat er op.

***Oowh echt.***

En dat waren echt 200 mensen ofzo die op een account zaten. En ze zijn bij Chartbeat daar achter gekomen en dat vonden ze niet zo leuk. Dus toen hebben ze het account afgesloten. En er moeten dus eigenlijk heel veel meer nieuwe accounts komen maar dat gaat natuurlijk waarschijnlijk niet gebeuren. En daarom gebruiken we nu google analytics.

***Nee inderdaad het was natuurlijk ook de manier waarop chartbeat was vormgegeven dat het ook zo makkelijk maakte. En google analytics is dan misschien toch wat minder overzichtelijk in het eerste opzicht.***

Ja voor mij nog wel maar ik denk dat het vast ook meer mogelijkheden biedt.

***Ja inderdaad het is natuurlijk ook wat vrijer.***

Ja maar ik moet er nog even aan zitten om het onder de knie te krijgen.

#### 4. Noties van gesprek met subject 4 – social media analyst VICE

- Viral reach -> twee jaar geleden was dit wel inzichtelijk  
<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/facebook-reach-guide/>
- Interessante hieraan is dat vanuit VICE wordt gezocht naar een manier om dit toch dingen inzichtelijk te maken die oorspronkelijk niet in de FB interface zitten.
- Ze zijn nu aan het uitzoeken hoe ze dit inzichtelijk kunnen maken -> oude originele FB post met 0 organic reach wordt opnieuw een bedrag ingelegd. De nieuwe reach is alleen betaalde pageviews, het feit is alleen dat via Google Analytics is te zien dat er veel meer pageviews zijn. Dit is de zogenaamde Viral reach.
- Verder zijn ze binnen VICE bezig om zelf een platform te bouwen om alle likes, shares en comments in één keer inzichtelijk te maken per vertical en zelfs per persoon. Op deze manier is gelijk te zien welk artikel het goed heeft gedaan en hoe goed een artikel van een bepaalde schrijver het doet. -> Dit is interessant omdat ook hier weer VICE een eigen methode probeert te ontwikkelen om zelf de data te presenteren, alleen dan wel op basis van de direct beschikbare Facebook data. In dit geval wordt dus wel het betekenisgeving van Facebook gevolgd en volgen ze het bepalende script van Facebook. Je ontkomt dus niet volledig aan de betekenisgeving van Facebook, dit is niet vreemd omdat shares, likes en comments de meest belangrijke metaforen zijn van het Facebook platform voor de verspreiding van content. -> verteld subject 4
- Het is interessant aan beide processen dat de relatie tussen VICE en Facebook erg met elkaar verweven is. Het is een constant proces van script naar anti-script. Dit is bijvoorbeeld goed terug te zien in het feit dat Facebook bijvoorbeeld de weergave van Viral reach heeft weggehaald. Om dit toch inzichtelijk te krijgen wordt er door VICE een soort anti-script ontwikkeld.

## 5. Facebook messenger gesprek en observatie subject 5 – Eigenaar Sciencedump

- All, we gaan wat meer leren/sturen op de clickthrough rate van FB website posts

Heb nu met Rowdy het volgende afgesproken



- 

2:45pm

### Jurrien Bruijns

1. Introduceren/Leren van 2 A/B tests. (Tegelijkertijd posten en hidden van de slechtst lopende) 2. Monitoren en sturen op de clickthrough rate van FB internet posts (Rowdy) 3. Hidden van FB Internet posts als de clickthrough onder de 1% zit na een uur (Michiel, Jur helpen hierbij) 4. Analyseren waarom het zo laag was. Eventueel later reposten met andere titel/plaatje/aankeiler 5. Reposten als de clickthrough rate boven de 3% is (Rowdy)

- 

2:45pm

### Jurrien Bruijns

kort samengevat kan het dus zijn dat je post na een uur word gehide op FB als ie niet goed loopt

vat dit niet persoonlijk op maar meer iets wat we samen moeten optimaliseren

dit kan liggen aan de aankeiler/titel/foto/onderwerp

min of meer gaan we dus veel meer A/B achtige tests doen zowel paralell (1ste om 19.00) als serieel als ie niet goed heeft gelopen

als voorbeeld is de post vannochtend heel erg goed



- 

2:49pm

### Jurrien Bruijns



•

2:50pm

[Jurrien Bruijns](#)

Clickthrough rate  $8557 / 239541 = 3.5\%$ !

die van daarvoor van heb ik gehide



•

2:51pm

[Jurrien Bruijns](#)



•

2:51pm

[Jurrien Bruijns](#)

Hier zie je dat de clickthrough rate onder de 1% zit

Nu moeten we analyseren waarom

foto/titel/aankeiler/onderwerp

gebaseerd daarop evt reposten

ik stuur dit ook nog even naar jullie persoonlijk want belangrijk omdat even goed te lezen/te missen in deze thread. Laat me weten of jullie hier vragen tips over hebben

---

• Today



•

6:11pm

[Jurrien Bruijns](#)

Om 19.00 gaat de 1ste FB A/B test live met de blondjes evolutie post van Desiree. Woowoop ben benieuwd!!



•

7:05pm

[Jurrien Bruijns](#)

Test is live mensen

en ik zie na een paar minuten al verschil



•

7:20pm

[Jurrien Bruijns](#)

net de winnaar gekozen

wat mij betreft is het experiment nu al geslaagd

laten we later op de avond/morgen bekijken hoe hij verder gaat

als dat goed is dan zeg ik hoppa we gaan dit veel vaker doen smile emoticon

click through nu op 2,5%

zijn nog kleine getallen maar goed

---

• proberen we eigenlijk continue

haha



•

9:02pm

[Ruben Kuiper](#)

Haha ja klopt

Maar nu nog een stapje verder



•

10/27, 9:03pm

Jurrien Bruijns

ik zie ook dat ze met een soort emoticons komen



9:03pm

Ruben Kuiper

Ja klopt, dat hebben ze begin deze maand eerst in de UK uitgerold als test



10/27, 9:03pm

Jurrien Bruijns

aha



9:04pm

Ruben Kuiper

Vandaar dat je bij de insights ook nog maar heel weinig ziet staan



10/27, 9:04pm

Jurrien Bruijns

true

hoest verder?

ook met je studie?



9:04pm

Ruben Kuiper

Ja goed, deze week mijn draft inleveren van mn thesis



•

10/27, 9:04pm

[Jurrien Bruijns](#)

spannend of niet?



•

9:05pm

[Ruben Kuiper](#)

En die gaat dus onder andere of deze strijd en wrijving tussen contentmakers en Facebook als platform



•

10/27, 9:05pm

[Jurrien Bruijns](#)

gaaf man

en ook bruikbaar



•

9:06pm

[Ruben Kuiper](#)

Ja dat zeker smile emoticon heb SD ook meegenomen als case



•

10/27, 9:06pm

[Jurrien Bruijns](#)

ps ik zie het niet zozeer als een strijd

smile emoticon

omdat wij min of meer born in FB zijn



•

9:06pm

[Ruben Kuiper](#)

Ja inderdaad



•

10/27, 9:06pm

[Jurrien Bruijns](#)

maar snap je punt zeker toen we en nog steeds verkeer en monetization via de website hebben

zodra ze echt ook een contentplatform worden voor publishers springen we daar gelijk in

nu zijn we afhankelijk vd grillen van google

en de mensen met hun adblockers smile emoticon

en de grillen van FB die weinig verkeer doorlaat

mooie uitspraak



•

9:08pm

[Ruben Kuiper](#)

Ja eigenlijk gewoon afhankelijk van twee ontzettend belangrijke poortbewarkers smile emoticon



•

10/27, 9:08pm

[Jurrien Bruijns](#)

we zijn de bitch van FB en we better embrace it smile emoticon



•



9:09pm

[Ruben Kuiper](#)

haha ja, dat is inderdaad de mentaliteit van de born on FB generatie

Maar juist die generatie ervoor ervaart het heel erg als strijd



•

10/27, 9:09pm

[Jurrien Bruijns](#)

mijn inschatting is dan ook dat als we zo doorgroeien dat veel content makers naar ons gaan toekomen

als publish platform

op FB

ps iets anders



•

9:10pm

[Ruben Kuiper](#)

ahja