



Brand Tracking with Digital Data: Better Listeners Make Better Brands

As digital media data analytics and allied digital cognitive capabilities evolve, brand tracking goes live – straight from the consumer’s consciousness.

Anees Merchant

Senior Vice President, Analytics and Insights

Honey Jhala

Director, Social Media Sensing

Introduction

No brand in the digital age can afford to wait for months for a massive annual or biannual brand health survey to know if all is well with their brand and business. Even a month later is weeks away, and precious opportunities [read: customers], may be lost to a more alluring or accessible brand in that time.

More and more business organizations realize that all they need to monitor their brand health round the year – is listen. Even as data privacy concerns gain traction, consumers continue to freely air their interests, desires, judgments, complaints, and questions on social platforms, creating a steady stream of data for business on brand awareness, brand usage, and brand perception.

What do we mean by social data and how do we interpret it for brand tracking?

Social data used for brand tracking includes all text, audio, visuals, animations, videos, emojis, memes – entirely any kind of mention about you or competitor brands. This data could be gathered from a wide variety of digital forums including social media, consumer forums, review websites, blogs, intranets, and others.

Social data, combined with Web Analytics data and customer data available to an organization, provides compelling snapshot of consumer opinion, experience, and engagement with a brand.

Social data is interpreted in multiple ways:

Direct Meaning	Positive or negative words such as “brilliant” or “annoying”, when used in conjunction with a brand or brand experience provide clear and immediate feedback on consumer sentiment. Other emotions such as surprise, anxiety, awe, revulsion may also be conveyed and tapped through literal translation.
Context	The word ‘Apple’ can mean many things and so can the exclamation ‘Awesome’. Contextual clues help ensure the text or audiovisual cues are correctly interpreted.
Tone	Syntax, emotional cue words, emojis, exclamations, and context combine to provide an accurate idea of the tone and emotion of conversations around a brand.
Product/ Brand Grouping	Parallel mention of other brands and products mentioned along with a brand in a conversation reflect the perceptions and purchase considerations around the brand.
Share of Voice	The sheer volume of conversations around a topic vis-à-vis competitor brands is an important indicator of primacy and relevance of the brand.

Insights from Social Data

A strong analytics platform would enable product and marketing teams to slice and dice social data to get the precise insights they need on any parameter of brand health. At a macro level, social data can provide rich, actionable insights on —

Brand Awareness

- Share of voice
- Accuracy in understanding of brand offerings

Brand Experience

- Purchase intent
- Purchase frequency and spend
- Customer satisfaction and loyalty
- Other brands purchased
- Propensity for brand switch
- Product performance
- Instore/online shopping experience
- Response to specific campaigns

Brand Perception

- Product/service features
- Product/service quality
- Brand associations
- Price
- Differentiation
- Aspirational value

Challenges in Using Social Data

Privacy

With increasing regulations around the use of social data for profit, brands are highly wary about privacy compliance. In turn, social media and data firms have been quick to realign and standardize data acquisition practices.

At Course5, we've always been highly transparent and cautious about which data sources we use and strictly adhere to legitimate data acquisition practices. As we move to a highly regulated social data environment, privacy compliance is becoming more of an imperative than an ethical best practice.

In general, social data used for brand tracking is often publicly expressed and freely available, with some of it even intended for brand connect, for example, e.g. when a person takes to social media to talk about an unresolved issue with a brand.

Validity of Social Expression

Factors like social desirability often impact social media conversations and people may not always say what they mean or truly think. Recognition of this fact is itself the first step in avoiding misleading conclusions or interpretations. A combination of Linguistics, NLP, and contextual constructs can enable advanced algorithms to interpret data correctly and draw fairly accurate inferences. In case of doubt, a basic corroboration exercise is enough to validate the social data insights.

Sometimes important observations can be derived from an understanding of where social desirability lies and how it influences consumer choices.

Representativeness of Data

Target Population Level

Social data is not representative of the people who are not online. Also considering the limitations of publicly available data, complete demographic representation may be difficult. This factor needs to be acknowledged while using social data insights for strategic decisions.

That said, users of social media are often the more vocal and articulate representatives of larger consumer sentiment. Social data insights can therefore form a great starting point for and complement offline or physical survey research.

Individual Level

Unobtrusive (and legal) tracking of social conversations means that all data points for one individual might not be available. The results for each analysis or metric are distilled at an aggregate level. More granular studies using other methods can be used when detailed analysis of individual behavior or sentiment is required.

Social Media a replacement to Primary Research

Organizations are leveraging social media data but feel it can completely replace the Primary or other types of research. At Course5 based on our experience and different variety of large-scale programs and business specific questions have a recommended Data approach in leveraging social media data in the integrated approach to the broader research program:

Types of Market Research Studies	Social Media Research Contribution*
Market Assessment / Market Opportunity Analysis	●
Market Entry, Market Expansion	●
Competitive Intelligence	●
Habits and Practices / Needs and Wants Assessment	●
Concept Value Testing	○
Segmentation	●
Messaging & Positioning	●
Pricing Studies	●
Audience Measurement (Attitudes, Perceptions, Awareness)	●
Ad Tracking / Copy Testing	○
Campaign / Advertisement Efficacy	●
UX Research, Usability Testing	○
Brand Tracking	●
PSAT (Product Usage and Satisfaction)	●
CSAT (Customer Satisfaction)	●

Case Study – Large Technology Firm

Course5 helped a US-based multinational technology company develop an end-to-end analytics platform that could:

- Enhance Brand Measurement Program by integrating social media data at different stages of the program
- Integrate structured and unstructured data from disparate sources
- Draw insights using a combination of quantitative, qualitative, and analytical methodologies

Client Requirement

The client wanted to develop a system to integrate data from disparate sources like social media aggregators, blogs, forums, and review sites; internal systems like CRM and Salesforce; and third-party data from social media sources.

The objective of the exercise was to:

- Use advanced analytics with qualitative studies to produce insights and reports to inform business strategies on a near real-time basis
- Set up customizable insights as per “user role” so that each user could monitor and track the metrics of their interest on their respective homepages

Course5 Approach

Course5 helped the client set up an enhanced brand measurement program in a phased manner:

PHASE 1 (EXPERIMENT)

- Identified the relevant sources and metrics to be tracked
- Integrated and pre-processed data from multiple sources using APIs, third-party data aggregators, and internal data streams
- Maintained Data Lakes for daily data integration and leveraged the client’s cloud for storing aggregated data
- Integrated the client’s intelligence portal with the database to provide customized visualization
- Provided basic filtering and analytics capabilities for the pilot phase

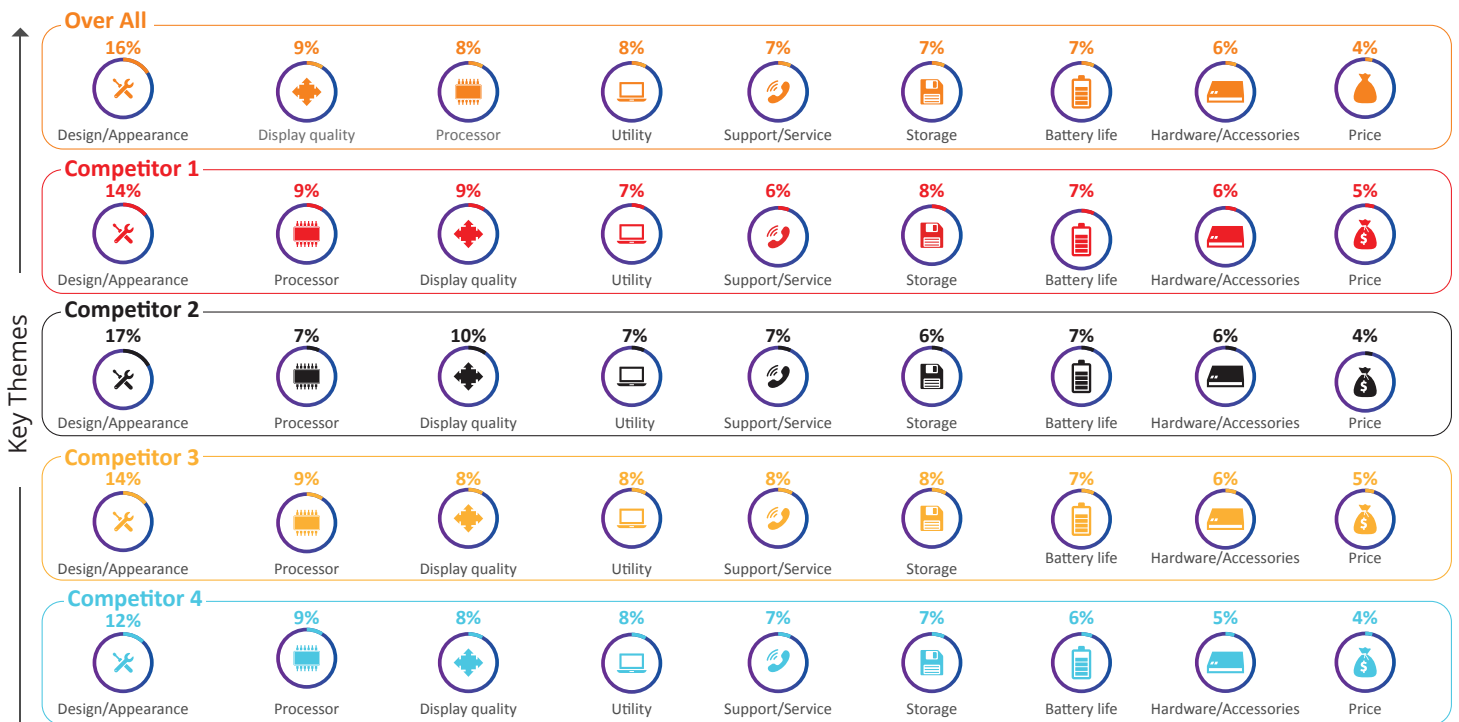
OUTCOMES OF PHASE 1

- Search Engine based on User portfolio
- Ability to display graphical visualization of data with around 5 Views
- Ability to Filter Data by:
 - Time period
 - Keywords
 - Boolean Logic
 - Demographics
- Real-time feed from some data sources like news websites

PHASE 2 - OUTCOMES ENABLED:

- Data integration from data aggregators
- Requirement based historical data aggregation
- Complex analytics capabilities like:
 - Natural Language Processing (NLP)
 - Sentiment Analysis
 - Behavioral Forecasting
 - Purchase Intent Score calculation from social data and Correlation with Primary Research constructs
 - Share of Voice and Competitor Tracking
- Hybrid Analysis (Quantitative + Qualitative + Analytics) including Brand Tracking using Social Data, Customer Profiling, and Price Tracking – with a customizable front-end specific to User role

Course5's Integrated Solution for Quick Deployment and Business Relevance using Social data



Brand Tracking: Laptop - Purchase Consideration Factors in the US

Can We Rely on Social Data Analytics for Brand Tracking?

We definitely can, so long as we fully understand the strengths and constraints of the medium and are clear about what we expect from it. Many concerns around reliability of social data analytics and insights are valid, and it is only when we recognize the pitfalls that we will find ways to circumvent or close them.

When the reliability of a small data set is suspect, larger data sets and diversification of data sources can increase validation. Deep industry knowledge, advanced linguistics, and sophisticated NLP algorithms can continually refine query building for evolved interpretation. Custom research can fine tune the parameters of data aggregation and analysis for highly precise data collection, derivation of insights, and visualization.

Eventually social data analytics will provide business leaders of tomorrow with a continuous, affordable, largely reliable, and actionable means of brand tracking.

Anees Merchant

Anees Merchant is Global Business Head at Course5. Course5 is a research and analytics firm that enables digital transformation for global Fortune 500 and other companies through Analytics, Insights, and Artificial Intelligence. Course5 uses proprietary tools and frameworks to help organizations leverage evolving digital capabilities for cutting-edge market research.

Honey Jhala

Honey Jhala leads the Digital Research and Social Media Sensing Solution at Course5. Her team executes projects which fall at the intersection of primary, secondary and social media research and deliver actionable insights to enable the client's digital transformation journey.

About Course5 Intelligence

Course5 Intelligence enables organizations to make the most effective strategic and tactical moves relating to their customers, markets, and competition at the rapid pace that the digital business world demands. We do this by driving digital transformation through analytics, insights, and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Our clients experience higher top line and bottom line results with improved customer satisfaction and business agility. As we solve today's problems for our clients, we also enable them to reshape their businesses to meet and actualize the future.

Rapid advances in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning technology have enabled us to create disruptive technologies and accelerators under our Course5 Intelligence suites that combine analytics, digital, and research solutions to provide significant and long-term value to our clients.

Course5 Intelligence creates value for businesses through synthesis of a variety of data and information sources in a 360-degree approach, solution toolkits and frameworks for specific business questions, deep industry and domain expertise, Digital Suite and Research AI to accelerate solutions, application of state-of-the-art AI and next-generation technologies for cognitive automation and enhanced knowledge discovery, and a focus on actionable insight.



Visit : www.course5i.com