

#inthemoment

the secrets, pitfalls, myths and tools of real-time content

Tom Himpe & Pieter Goiris

LANNOO
CAMPUS

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**Everything is moving towards
a world of high-end or high-speed,
or ideally both in partnership.**

Richard Welsh, Bigballs

**Planning is just guessing. We have hunches.
We need to test them. No-one really knows.
You solve impossible problems through
trial and error.**

Martin Bailie, glue Isobar

**In the future, maybe half
of our efforts will take place after
a campaign starts.**

Colin Mitchell, O&M New York

THE WHY BEHIND #INTHEMOMENT

By Pieter Goiris (CEO Boondoggle)

A perfect storm is brewing.

More people than ever are beginning to think of communication as a nuisance.

In an increasingly fast-changing world, brands are struggling to be successful.

The good news is: both advertisers and advertising agencies now have the opportunity to redeem themselves and fundamentally rethink the way they communicate about their brands.

Not by resorting to big philosophies. But by continuously asking themselves the killer question: Why anyone Should Give A Shit? And going back to the very essence of what brands should be all about: being as useful and relevant as they can possibly be.

And this brings me to #inthemoment.

Because one way of being relevant is by being there when people need and want you.

People live at the pace of the web.

They are always-on. That makes it just common sense for your brand to be 'on' when they are. Not when you are ready.

And you should be 'on' a lot. Compare it to human relationships. People do not build relationships with a few heavyweight interactions alone. On the contrary, they get to know each other better and better over time, through a series of lightweight interactions.

As a brand you should behave in the same way.

And strengthen and integrate your traditional big campaign spikes by a creative campaign layer that evolves 'in the moment'.

I am not talking here about traditional functional product or service information, posted by your conversation managers. What I am talking about is a strong layer of proactive and reactive micro-

interactions, in a real-time creative canvas. Produced and distributed by a taskforce of highly skilled, analytic and creative people. Working in a very agile way. The newsroom way.

At Boondoggle, we believe that the future of brand advertising lies in this rich integration between big campaign efforts and a creative conversational flow.

To walk the talk, Boondoggle is launching Boondoggle Now.

Six people dedicated to real-time campaigning.

To be more precise, a strategic planner, a metrics specialist, two conversation managers and two predators. To start with, these people will be sitting in our offices and work together like in an actual paper's newsroom. Hooked on following your brand on TV and computer screens, monitoring your brand on social media, analysing data, producing and distributing real-time content, building your audience.

As of now.

Rethink your brand behaviour before your competitors do.

Welcome to the world of #inthemoment.

WELCOME TO A REAL-TIME WORLD

by Tom Himpe

A few years ago, I came across a quote which has intrigued and followed me ever since: “If you can make an entire newspaper in 24 hours, it shouldn’t take 9 months to make a 30 second TVC”. I can’t attribute the quote to a specific person because it’s been popping up in many different places and different variations ever since. Apart from the fact that a lot of ads are made in a lot less time, I do remember a small “aha-experience” –upon hearing this quote– on how little output the advertising industry as a whole is actually creating. The average agency probably falls short of producing enough text and visuals on a yearly basis to fill even a single newspaper or enough video content to fill a single television episode.

Advertising should be
disposable and effective,
not expensive and precious.

I’m aware that the art of condensing things into a few words or images is often a lot harder than spreading things out over a longer period of time. But putting this aside, there’s a discrepancy between an abundance in resources on the one hand and a shortcoming in output on the other. This discrepancy can be retraced to an overreliance on processes, meetings and decision-making, by both agencies and clients.

The amount of time spent on briefing, creating, discussing, producing and editing 30 seconds of content is absurd in a time where content is only as valuable as the audience it can generate around it, the momentum it captures or the connection it is able to create.

Creative agency Brooklyn Brothers states that “advertising should be disposable and effective, not expensive and precious”.¹ So the questions arise: How can advertising content become more effective but less expensive at the same time? What type of output is better suited to the social, hyperconnected times we live in? And how does this affect processes, talent and production methods?

This is where real-time enters the conversation and can start providing some of the answers. Real-time analysis, planning, creation and publication create a more dynamic approach to content. It enables us to use our limited means to maximum effect, by adapting and learning our output on the fly.

During my many discussions with Boondoggle on this topic, the idea of a book started developing, as it would allow us to dive into this real-time thing, and explore what it could mean and grow into. So I started speaking about these challenges and answers about these challenges and answers with media planners, media buyers, advertisers, creatives and production people. Even though each of them brings his own perspective to the table, together they unearth a clear and undeniable evolution towards more responsive communication, created and produced at a quicker pace and developed in real-time through data and audience insights.

In the first chapter, “The Age of Real-time”, I outline the broader context of this book’s theme by looking at various industries affected by real-time, specifically zooming in on television and news publishing. I also describe the absolutely essential traits of real-time communication. There’s also a quick quiz to test the degree of real-time adoption in your organisation, whether you’re an advertiser, agency or production company.

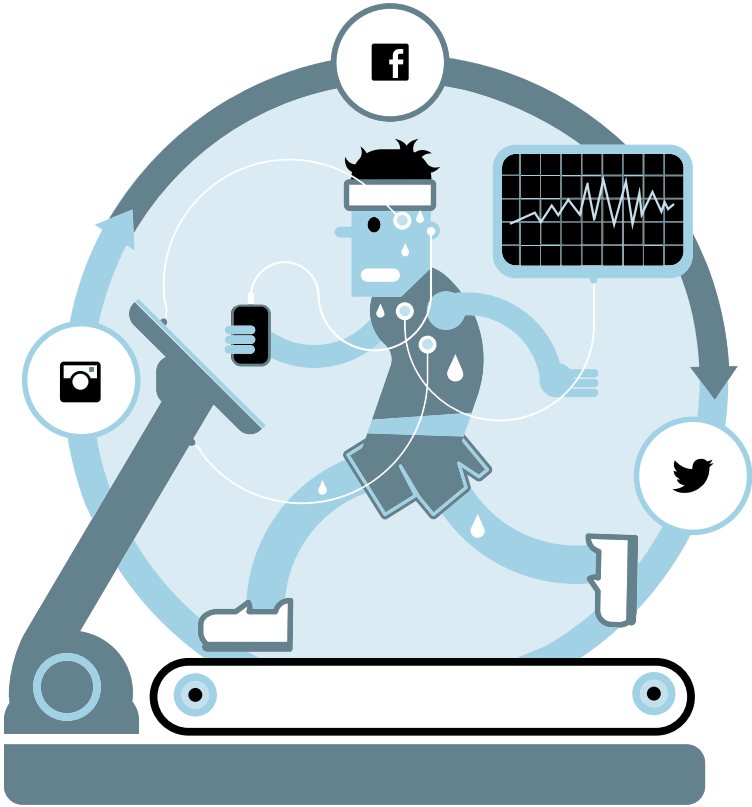
In the second chapter, “The Real-time Model”, I map out the various shades of real-time campaigns and real-time models. Following this categorization, the chapter touches on two key dimensions of real-time strategy, namely media and data, as well as two key domains where real-time proves to be most useful and relevant: crisis communication and mobile.

In the third chapter, “The Real-time Organisation”, I explore how real-time is affecting all layers of an organisation and how it is generating new tools and processes, such as newsrooms, predators and content calendars.

In the fourth chapter, “Real-time Skills”, I zoom in on the traditional agency roles –the planner, media planner, creative and producer– and how they’ve shifted in a real-time context.

In the fifth and final chapter, “Real-time Inspiration”, I highlight a very diverse series of additional cases which have demonstrated a degree of real-time thinking.

To finish the book, I list 10 “How to” tips which might help you to translate some of the thinking outlined in this book in your organisation, processes and general mindset.



1

The Age of Real-time

WHEN DID THINGS START GOING REAL-TIME?

At its heart, the evolution towards real-time content is driven by the unrelentless pace and connective tissue of the web. Anything which gets published can be shared, discussed and augmented by real people at a moment's notice. And in a world of feeds and algorithms, whatever content captures the moment best, gets shared the most or generates the most discussion. Whether it's a tweet, a post, a picture or a video, it finds itself on top of the ever-growing content pile.

This is the backdrop where we're seeing a transformation across quite a few content-related industries. And this is not only restricted to the world of advertising. Other areas such as retail, PR, print, television, film and news organisations are undergoing similar tensions and challenges. Yet as to be expected, the transition is hardest for those

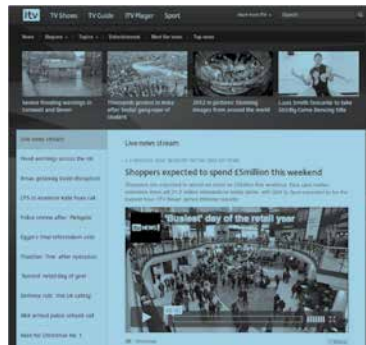
The transition is hardest for those industries with the longest content cycles and the most set ways of doing things.

industries with the longest content cycles and the most set ways of doing things. It's easier for journalists and PR people, both used to relying on external news events; slightly less so for advertising people.

Let's take the world of news as an example. Most media organisations are in the process of rethinking the way they publish news online. In 2012, ITV awakened its dormant online news offering in the UK

by turning it into a real-time news feed, and always highlighting the 12 most popular stories at any given time. It was designed as ‘a continuous stream of news that never ends’.² ITV got rid of traditional categorization and navigation, letting the present moment dictate the content stream. From the day of its redesign, the site saw a huge boost in traffic.

ITV is not the only one making a move towards real-time news publishing. The Guardian did a liveblogging study in November 2012. It revealed that liveblogs at Guardian.co.uk are getting 300% more views and 233% more visitors than conventional online news articles on the same subject. This might explain why liveblogging is becoming the default format for covering major breaking news stories, sports events, and scheduled news – like the US presidential election – on the web. At Guardian.co.uk a typical liveblog lasts for six hours, is updated 40 times and has two authors/contributors in the office and one part-time contributor out in the field. What this means, on average, is that each journalist involved has to research and write a new update every 20 minutes for six hours.³ For now, these blogging formats tend to be experiments on the side and authoritative newspapers need to maintain a careful balancing act between getting it first and getting it right (as demonstrated by The Times when they reported on the shooting massacre in Connecticut and got a lot of the details wrong). But as we move forward, real-time will grow to dominate the way we access news.





In very similar ways, television broadcasters are experimenting with the opportunities offered by the second screen. They are looking to enable, embrace and embed real-time interactions around their programs. Bravo recently started overlaying its new programming with its homegrown “Play Live” technology which enables viewers to see polls, contests and other interactive games and graphics that pop up on-screen throughout the show. They’re able to participate in real-time, via a web browser, and the on-screen results change based on viewers’ input. Similar experiments are being conducted by broadcasters all over the world. Like for example, HBO Connect in the US, a “second screen” experience by HBO that aims to increase the social experience surrounding shows like “True Blood,” “Game of Thrones” and “Entourage”. Or the very popular Zeebox, a free app for iOS, Android and also on the web created by Anthony Rose, the man behind BBC iPlayer, which brings a customized TV guide, live chat, social network sharing and remote control features to the TV experience.

Whether it’s advertising, news, television, print, PR or retail, the pace of the conversation is set by the consumer and organisations are forced to adapt themselves accordingly. This entails faster response times and adapting production and publication processes to a real-time environment. ◆

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Q&A with George Lopez

July 10, 2012, 2PM EST
Live Q&A with George Lopez

Join live Q&A

3 5 : 2 8

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3 5 : 2 8

Live Q&A with Amir Khan

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Join a live Q&A with British professional boxer Amir Khan.

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BUZZ AUDIENCE 11

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Nelson Van Alden
Federal Prohibition Agent

Nucky Thompson
King of the Boardwalk

REAL-TIME IN A NUTSHELL

Real-time conjures up related words such as responsive, dynamic, reactive, live and adaptable. To summarize this in some sort of definition, real-time communication is any communication which unfolds to some minor or major degree in response to real-time data, audience conversations or external events and is created, produced and published in a leaner and meaner way. So let's break this down a bit further. Real-time can be brought back to a few essential traits: informed by data, unfolding through improvisation, and 'lean & mean' in processes.

Real-Time can be brought back to a few essential traits: informed by data, unfolding through improvisation, and lean & mean in processes.

1 Informed by data

The importance of and reliance on data is a recurring factor in the debate about real-time. What it boils down to is that content should generate data, which in turn should provide insights and creativity. This ongoing feedback loop is what generates an increasing amount of insight into an audience, and into whatever makes them tick. In the words of AMV BBDO's Craig Mawdsley, "It's about looking at the data a campaign generates and then reacting to it within the campaign, rather than waiting until a full campaign evaluation has taken

place.” In this sense, real-time can only exist to the extent that creative agencies are willing and able to engage with data.⁴

2 **Unfolding through improvisation**

The second recurring feature of a real-time approach is a stronger use of improvisation and experimentation in the creative, planning and media processes, precisely because access to real-time data allows more room for calculated experiments. Improvisation is defined as ‘to perform or make quickly from materials and sources available, without previous planning’. In other words being resourceful on the spot with the elements at your disposal. Improvisation in the context of real-time communications doesn’t imply there’s no broader or long-term framework. It simply means that once a narrative, a strategic framework or a media plan has been established, you continue to adapt on the fly. That requires a dose of improvisation, as you get smarter about what works and what doesn’t.

3 **Lean & mean in processes**

The third aspect of real-time comes down to processes. In order to embrace data and improvisation, organisations need to become leaner and meaner. This doesn’t imply less people, but mainly a leaner, less linear and more flexible way of working. When organisations adopt real-time, information flows more openly through the company. Teams and departments work with each other rather than alongside each other, intermediaries are cut out where possible, processes become less linear and decision making is less burdensome.

The shorter the content cycles, the more applicable these three traits are. For highly responsive models with very short cycles, data will be all the more critical, improvisation all the more important and processes all the more lean and mean. ◆