Introduction

The Internet has turned the world upside-down in less than a generation. That sentence, or some variation of it, gets repeated so often we don't even reflect on the gravity of its meaning - so take a moment to let it really sink in. Read the next sentence slowly. We have an incredible many-to-many communication medium that has fundamentally transformed human civilization in such a short amount of time that a baby born the same day as the World Wide Web is probably just now starting to enter the job market. Nowhere is this explosive revolution more apparent than in the economy. Entire industries representing millions of people are suddenly at death's door, and new ones have created millions more jobs.

But something else happened too: small, independent businesses found a platform they could use to reach a wider audience than ever in history. And it's that same group of young people the same age as the Web who are more entrepreneurial than previous generations. This is the era of the 25-year-old CEO; according to Fast Company, "[m]embers of the Millennial Generation are predisposed to start organizations and businesses, with 15% doing so right out of college, an increase of 300% from 20 years ago." (Burstein, 2013) Launching a craft beer microbrewery or one-person software development agency in one's twenties has become a viable career move in a way never before seen, because it can be fueled by the Internet's best marketing tool: social media. Three of the current most popular online social media networks are Twitter, Facebook, and Tumblr, which have one major thing in common. They specialize in "burst transmissions," which means that they are optimized for posting short-form content - a blurb of text, a single image, a link with a headline, etc.

Research question: What kinds of "burst transmissions" are populating the social media accounts of independent Gen-Y entrepreneurs? *Hypothesis-1*: messages will skew more towards personal lifestyle branding than strictly business-related, because social media is used more as a marketing channel than a "notice board" or customer service platform. *Hypothesis-2:* for the same reason, visual content (images and videos), links, and hashtags will form a high percentage of messages.

Methods

To provide longitudinal depth, rather than taking a breadth-based approach, this content analysis will be a case study using a bath and body product company called Haus of Gloi. This business was chosen because it epitomize the entrepreneurial movement described above: the two owners, a husband-and-wife team based in Gresham, Oregon, are both under 30, the company was established in 2008, making it a fairly new startup, it produces artisanal goods from scratch in small batches, and, most importantly, Haus of Gloi uses social media as their primary way to advertise and reach out to their customer base.

The collection of data proceeded as thus: a sample of messages was taken from Haus of Gloi's Twitter, Facebook, and Tumblr accounts. For each network, the most recent message was taken, then every fifth one after that, until twenty total messages from each social network were collected. That made sixty total per coder, with messages

ranging in time from January 2013 to April 2013. Two coders were used with a content overlap of approximately 33%. Thus, 100 different messages were analyzed in total.

It should be noted that although Twitter and Tumblr present a linear chronology of posts by a single author, Facebook's brand pages include a "forum" of sorts for customers to post on (which can then be replied to by others), but only posts by page administrators were examined. Otherwise, all three social networks were treated as essentially equal.

Once the data was collected, it was time to categorize it. Existing frameworks for online content marketing and social media usage were found to be inadequate for the purposes of this content analysis, but they were used as inspiration to create a new framework to analyze both file types (the textual, visual, and/or audio-based mediums used to communicate digitally) and semantic content. File type variables were as follows: text, tags (both in the metadata and in the text, as with hashtags), links, images, sound files, videos, and an "other" category. As for message content, three major categories were defined: announcements, branding messages, and customer-centric messages. Those three categories were further divided into multiple subcategories. Announcements could be news pertaining to product launches, product restocks, service or shipping-related matters, or "other." Branding messages could feature fashion, living (this was defined as "posts about fitness, food, sustainable living, home life, house style, lifestyle, entertainment media, etc."), environments (places and/or objects defined in locational terms), ingredients (including fragrances), products being offered by the company, or "other." Finally, the "customer-centric" category described any messages that were either about or directed to specific customers and their experiences.

Findings
The following graph depicts the distribution of semantic content types:
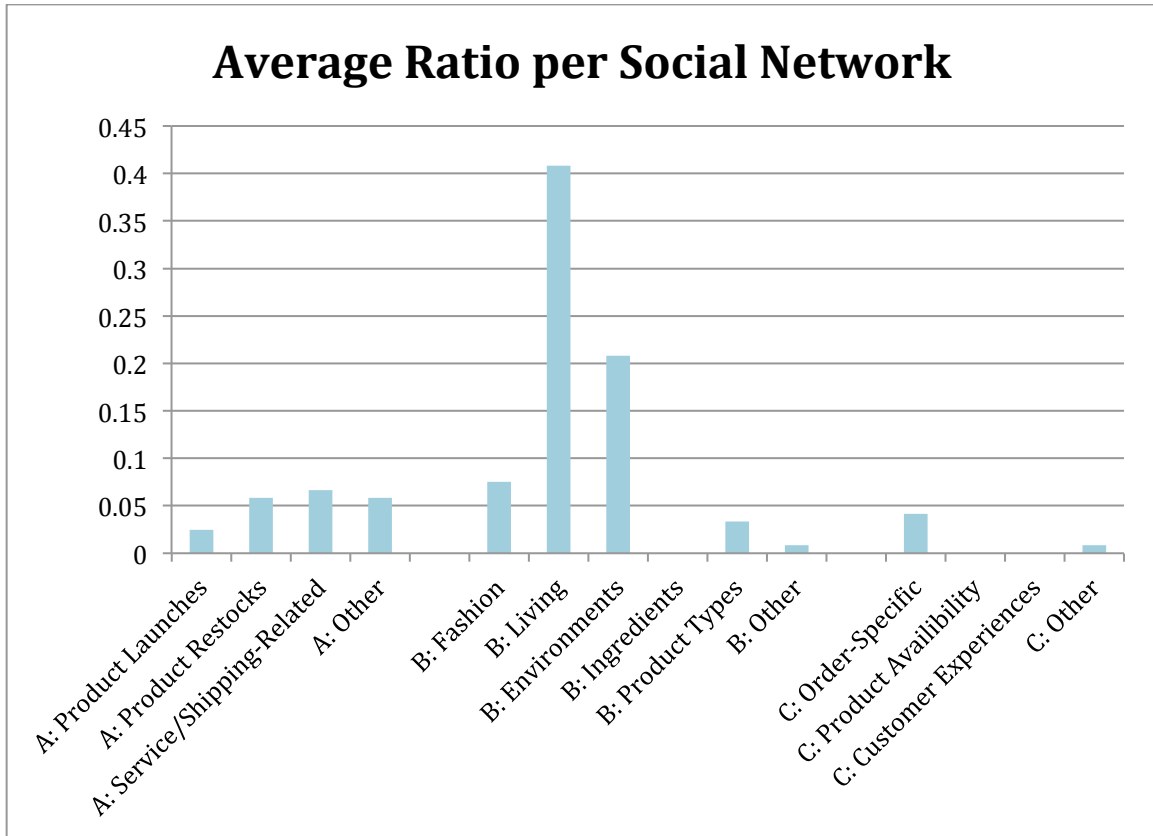
Average Ratio per Social Network

Fig. 1

The next graph depicts the distribution of different kinds of media file types in social network postings:
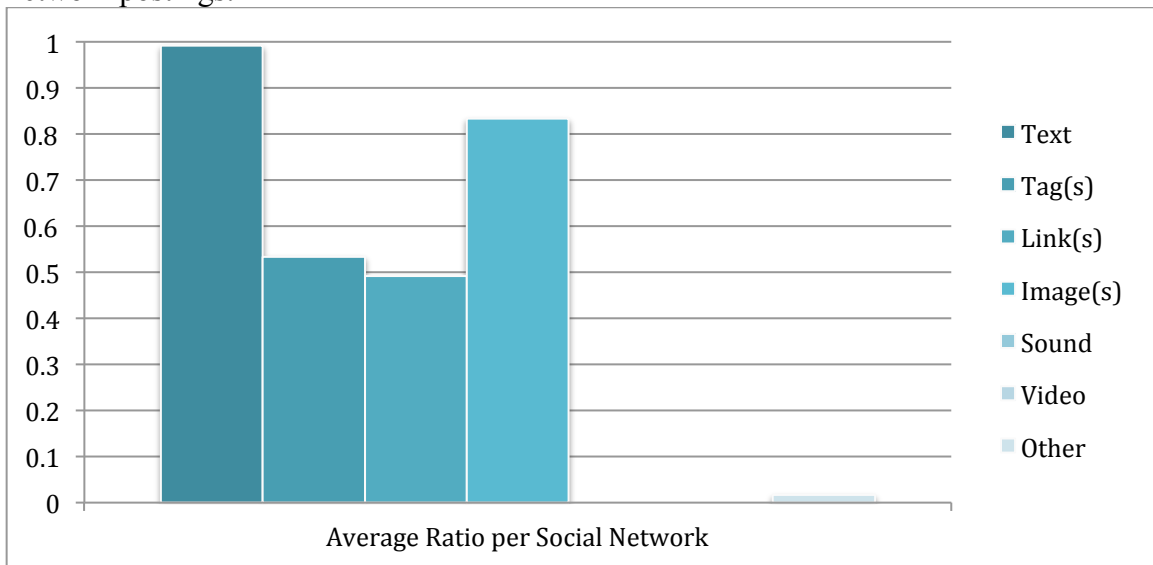

Fig. 2

Hypothesis-1 has strong support, as social media posts were overwhelmingly branding-oriented. Hypothesis-2 did not fare as well - while images, links, and tags did

feature significantly in social media posts, there were no videos, and text was the primary form of communication.

Discussion

Has entrepreneurship become a form of artistic expression and/or self-expression? Business "auteurs" who are in charge of everything from product design to order fulfillment - and everything in between - certainly have a large amount of creative control. Their social media presence will be very personal, and in a crowded marketplace, that expression of individual personality - what some call "personal branding" - will make them stand out uniquely. In this example case study, there was a heavy focus on lifestyle branding. Haus of Gloi's brand image emphasizes green practices such as veganism and sustainability as well as an aesthetic that combines dark/edgy and natural/romantic elements, because those are all values that play important roles in the owners' personal lives. It's an aspirational lifestyle that can inspire brand loyalty.

Social media is also about two-way engagement with customers. Although they was not examined for this content analysis, the Facebook page "customer forum" and the comments for each post are excellent examples of Haus of Gloi having conversations with their fans. A little bit of this is also present on their other social network accounts. In addition, social media is a very effective platform for news (in the form of short headlines), so it's no surprise that Haus of Gloi has leveraged it when they need to make important announcements now and then.

In terms of filetype content, it's pretty easy to explain the distribution. Text was the most dominant element. It exists to provide context and communicate verbally, so its heavy presence is quite logical. There was also a large amount of visual content, in the form of still images. Pictures are a very useful way to represent brands in an aesthetically pleasing and succinct way, especially when it comes to aspirational/lifestyle branding. They are also less time-consuming and resource-intensive to create than videos. That's an important factor for extremely busy entrepreneurs. Tags are an easy way for people to find you and for you to categorize yourself explicitly, but Facebook doesn't support them (yet), and they take up valuable character space in tweets. Links were automatically added in many posts, but they're still helpful for audience members who want to see or do more. Most of the links led to Haus of Gloi's store or to their Instagram profile, rather than linking to outside content. This may explain the lack of sound-based posts: they would probably be either pieces of music or podcasts, neither of which the owners create, and they generally don't link to outside content. The "other" category was populated by one @reply on Twitter, which straddles the line between metadata and a URL link. It's an example of customer interaction on social media.

Limitations: the sample may not be entirely representative because of the method that was used to collect data. It only represented social media posts from 2013, and only about 33% of them at that. Also, the Facebook customer forum and post comments were not counted, so valuable data from those sources was not analyzed. In addition, the framework used to categorize the data is completely new and as such has not been thoroughly tested.

References

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Appendix

The codebook used for this content analysis is presented in the following table:

Sampling Strategy	1. Go to http://twitter.com/hausofgloi
	    2. Go to the first post, and include it in your sample.
	    3. Select every fifth post after that to include in the sample until you have 20 total. The number corresponding to this website is 1.
	
	    4. Go to http://hausofgloi.tumblr.com
	    5. Go to the first post, and include it in your sample.
	    6. Select every fifth post after that to include in the sample until you have 20 total. The number corresponding to this website is 2.
	
	    7. Go to http://facebook.com/hausofgloi
	    8. In the dropdown that says "Highlights," select "Posts by Page." (This eliminates posts by others.)
	    9. Go to the first post, and include it in your sample.
	    10. Select every fifth post after that to include in the sample until you have 20 total. The number corresponding to this website is 3.

Coding Scheme	1. Coder name and ID number (see list at bottom of document) 2. Post ID: the ID number of the analyzed post (your coder ID followed by a decimal, the number corresponding to the origin website, another decimal, and a sequential number - ex. 3.2.4, 3.2.5, etc.) 3. Date and time of coding: presented in mm/dd/yyyy 00:00 AM/PM format.

Website-Generated Data
4. Post URL: stable URL for post
5. Date and time of post: presented in mm/dd/yyyy 00:00 AM/PM format.

Coder-Generated Data
Information in this section is based on the evaluation of the coders.

6. Content of post (check each that applies):
    A. Text
    B. Tag(s) (including hashtags)
    C. URL Link
    D. Image
    E. Sound
    F. Video
    G. Other

7. General Category (select only one)
    A. Announcements (go to question 8). This category describes posts that announce news about the company and/or their line of products.
    B. Branding (go to question 9). This category describes posts that deal with the personal and/or aspirational lifestyle associated with the brand image or other personal branding or brand image concerns.
    C. Customer-centric (go to question 10). This category describes posts that deal with specific customers, customer inquiries, or share customer stories, photos, and/or reviews.

8. Announcements Subcategories (select only one)
    A. Product Launches: posts announcing new products, new scents, seasonal launches, etc. and/or release dates.
    B. Product Restocks: posts about replenishing sold-out product stock. May include release dates.
    C. Service/Shipping-Related: posts about turnaround time, shipping time, customer service times, pricing, etc. or changes to any of the above.
    D. Other: anything not covered above but related to announcements.

9. Branding Subcategories (select only one)
    A. Fashion: posts about outfits, clothing items, makeup/cosmetics, jewelry, etc.
    B. Living: posts about fitness, food, sustainable living, home life, house style, lifestyle, entertainment media, etc.
    C. Environments: posts about places or things in nature, the city, surrounding areas, etc.
    D. Ingredients: posts about or describing fragrances, scent notes, or other scented product ingredients that are part of the brand.
    E. Product Types: posts about or describing types of products being

	offered, especially in terms of their benefits/uses.
	       F. Other: anything not covered above but related to branding.
	
	10. Customer-centric Subcategories (select only one)
	       A. Order-specific: posts about an order that a specific customer has made.
	       B. Product Availability: posts responding to a customer's inquiry about product availability.
	       C. Customer Experiences: posts sharing customer stories, photos, and/or reviews. May or may not be in the form of a reply to a customer.
	       D. Other: anything not covered above but related to specific customers.

List of Coders	Belinda Heliot (Coder ID #1) Adam Karonika (Coder ID #2)

Here is the blank version of the coding form that coders were asked to fill out:

Coder Name and ID	
Post ID	
Date and Time of Coding	
Post URL	
Date and Time of Post	
Content of Post	o Text o Tag(s) (including hashtags) o URL Link o Image o Sound o Video o Other
General Category	
Subcategory	