MASSIVE-SCALE ONLINE CONVERSATIONS

Final Presentation

Mentor: Ryanne Dolan, RJI
Leanne Butkovic
Brent Davidson
Nicole Thompson

Monday, May 7, 12
THE NEXT 40:

✦ State of commenting
✦ The UI & scary-looking back end
✦ For the good of journalism
✦ What’s next
✦ We had to get SOMETHING out of this...
STATE OF COMMENTING

- Research
  - VLcs
  - Analytics in the newsroom
  - Anonymity
  - Data-Viz
- Similar conversation platforms
  - Disqus, LiveFyre, etc.
STATE OF COMMENTING: THE GOOD

✦ New York Times
✦ Intense moderation - ‘T PICKS’
✦ But can wade through unfiltered
✦ Large volume of highly thoughtful comments

✦ Problems:
✦ Real-timeness
✦ Still a selfish act - not encouraging conversation
✦ Automatic filtering of subgroups
STATE OF COMMENTING: THE BAD

✦ CBS News
  ✦ Engaged users
  ✦ Conventional

✦ Problems
  ✦ Dissociation from article
  ✦ You mean...I have to read through all of that?
Final Presentation:

STATE OF COMMENTING: THE BAD

✦ CBS News
✦ Engaged users
✦ Conventional
✦ Problems
✦ Dissociation from article
✦ You mean...I have to read through all of that?
STATE OF COMMENTING: THE UGLY

- Wisconsin State Journal
- Where to begin...
STATE OF COMMENTING: THE UGLY

✦ Wisconsin State Journal
✦ Where to begin...

City Council votes down extension for Occupy Madison

Most Commented
• Walker reinstates bonuses despite budget shortfall (312) Comments
• State loses 4,500 jobs in March, mostly private-sector (236) Comments
• In conservative circles, Scott Walker greeted as rock star (223) Comments
• Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin plans to end medication-induced abortions (213) Comments
• Madison360: Walker more ‘Nixonian’ than Nixon, says John Dean (165) Comments
• Election officials vote to allow fake Dems on recall ballots (108) Comments
• Van Hollen says he’s concerned about voter fraud in recall elections (88) Comments
• City Council votes down extension for Occupy Madison (64) Comments

More Latest Comments
STATE OF COMMENTING

- What in the heck’s a comment?
  - Useful
  - Additive
  - Measurable
  - Relationship

- Best way to capture these things
  - Fast
  - Easy
  - Compelling
SURVEY RESULTS: EDITORS

GOAL: What is most useful for newsrooms?

What do you believe discourages readers from commenting on a news story on your organization's website?

- Can’t figure out how: 47.8%
- Feel that their comment doesn’t matter: 13.0%
- Lack of interest in comments: 26.1%
- Lack of interest in article: 17.4%
- Takes too much time: 43.5%
- I don’t believe anything discourages my readers from commenting: 8.7%
- Other: 30.4%

Does your organization use a commercial commenting client on its website? If so, which one?

- No commercial commenting client: 53.8%
- Facebook: 15.4%
- Disqus: 11.5%
- Pluck: 7.7%
- Direct comments to Wordpress blogs: 3.8%
- Mixture of own site and Disqus: 3.8%
- Echo: 3.8%
- LiveFyre: 0.0%
GOAL: What is most useful for newsrooms?

SURVEY RESULTS: EDITORS

How much would your organization benefit from more commenters?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (not at all)</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (very much)</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do you believe would encourage readers to comment more often on your organization's website?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Encouragement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responding directly to other commenters</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing what topics are popular among other commenters</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate posting of comments</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associating a comment with a specific phrase or point in the article</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How valuable to your organization is online commenting?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Percentage</th>
<th>30%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance Level</td>
<td>1 not important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How open would your organization be to moving the location of the comments section to a different position on the page if it would increase the number of comments?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Openness Level</th>
<th>35%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance Level</td>
<td>1 not important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What type of analytics would you be most interested in having on your site that you do not already have?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytics Type</th>
<th>35%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Page views</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on page</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of comments</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of commenters</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location from which visitors are visiting</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location from which commenters are visiting</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final Presentation:

SURVEY RESULTS: COMMENTERS

GOAL: How can we better engage readers on news sites?

In a typical week, how many news stories do you view online?

- Many: 55.3%
- Several: 34.2%
- Few: 13.2%
- None: 6.9%

In a typical week, how many comments do you write on online news stories?

- Many: 80%
- Several: 78.9%
- Few: 60.5%
- None: 21.1%

In general, what discourages you from commenting on a news story?

- Can’t figure out how: 5.3%
- Feel that my comment doesn’t matter: 34.2%
- Lack of interest in comments: 52.6%
- Lack of interest in article: 13.2%
- Takes too much time: 60.5%
- Other: 21.1%
GOAL: How can we better engage readers on news sites?

SURVEY RESULTS: COMMENTERS

What would encourage you to comment more often?
- Responding directly to other users: 48.6%
- Know what topics are popular among other commenters: 8.6%
- Immediate posting of comments: 34.3%
- Associating your comment with a specific phrase or point in the article: 37.1%
- Other: 28.6%

How much does the customary location of comments at the end of the article affect your desire to comment?
- Greatly encourages me to comment: 0.0%
- Somewhat encourages me to comment: 13.2%
- Neutral: 78.9%
- Somewhat discourages me to comment: 7.9%
- Greatly discourages me to comment: 0.0%
USER INTERFACE

http://www.ryannedolan.com/thepacific/mock.htm

- The process
- Design challenges
- What worked (and really didn’t)
Final Presentation:

THE BACK END

Mapped relationships show:

✦ Positive/negative relationships
✦ Content preferences
✦ Data possibilities


Monday, May 7, 12
PUTTING THE UI TO WORK

- User experience testing
- 6 people, 3 tasks:
  - Read and interact with article
  - Pin a sentence or paragraph
  - Interact with another user

Final Presentation:

Monday, May 7, 12
Final Presentation:

USER EXPERIENCE TESTING: FEEDBACK

On a scale of 1 - 10, 1 being the easiest, how difficult was this system to use?

1    2    3    4    5.67    6    7    8    9    10

JW said... I wish I could pin something and comment on my own pin.

Rob said... @jw Agree, I’d like to pin something and comment on it.

Rob said... I’d like to pin something and comment on it, but I also wonder if that would really be different than copy and pasting part of the article into a comment, as many people do. Thoughts?

Andrew said... Someone might’ve already said this, but I wish the comment box didn’t automatically scroll down all the way when someone makes new comments. I was looking at earlier stuff but then it forced me back down to the nearest comment.

Qia said... There are so many tweets that making me hard to track, a little bit lost.
Final Presentation:

USER EXPERIENCE TESTING: FEEDBACK

On a scale of 1 - 10, 1 being the easiest, how difficult was this system to use?

1  2  3  4  5.67  6  7  8  9  10

JW said... I wish I could pin something and comment on my own pin.

Rob said... @jw Agree, I'd like to pin something and comment on it.

Rob said... I'd like to pin something and comment on it, but I also wonder if that would really be different than copy and pasting part of the article into a comment, as many people do. Thoughts?

Andrew said... Someone might've already said this, but I wish the comment box didn't automatically scroll down all the way when someone makes new comments. I was looking at earlier stuff but then it forced me back down to the nearest comment.

Qia said... There are so many tweets that making me hard to track, a little bit lost.

Monday, May 7, 12
Final Presentation:

USER EXPERIENCE TESTING: FEEDBACK

On a scale of 1 - 10, 1 being the easiest, how difficult was this system to use?

5.67

JW said... I wish I could pin something and comment on my own pin.

Rob said... @jw Agree, I’d like to pin something and comment on it.

Rob said... I’d like to pin something and comment on it, but I also wonder if that would really be different than copy and pasting part of the article into a comment, as many people do. Thoughts?

Andrew said... Someone might’ve already said this, but I wish the comment box didn’t automatically scroll down all the way when someone makes new comments. I was looking at earlier stuff but then it forced me back down to the nearest comment.

Qia said... There are so many tweets that making me hard to track, a little bit lost.
On a scale of 1 - 10, 1 being the easiest, how difficult was this system to use?

5.67

JW said... I wish I could pin something and comment on my own pin.

Rob said... Agree, I'd like to pin something and comment on it.

Rob said... I'd like to pin something and comment on it, but I also wonder if that would really be different than copy and pasting part of the article into a comment, as many people do. Thoughts?

Andrew said... Someone might've already said this, but I wish the comment box didn't automatically scroll down all the way when someone makes new comments. I was looking at earlier stuff but then it forced me back down to the nearest comment.

Qia said... There are so many tweets that making me hard to track, a little bit lost.
Final Presentation:

USER EXPERIENCE TESTING: FEEDBACK

On a scale of 1 - 10, 1 being the easiest, how difficult was this system to use?

1 2 3 4 5.67 6 7 8 9 10

+ JW said... I wish I could pin something and comment on my own pin.
+ Rob said... @jw Agree, I’d like to pin something and comment on it.
+ Rob said... I’d like to pin something and comment on it, but I also wonder if that would really be different than copy and pasting part of the article into a comment, as many people do. Thoughts?
+ Andrew said... Someone might’ve already said this, but I wish the comment box didn’t automatically scroll down all the way when someone makes new comments. I was looking at earlier stuff but then it forced me back down to the nearest comment.
+ Qia said... There are so many tweets that making me hard to track, a little bit lost.
Final Presentation:

USER EXPERIENCE TESTING: FEEDBACK

On a scale of 1 - 10, 1 being the easiest, how difficult was this system to use?

1  2  3  4  5.67  6  7  8  9  10

+ JW said... I wish I could pin something and comment on my own pin.
+ Rob said... @jw Agree, I'd like to pin something and comment on it.
+ Rob said... I'd like to pin something and comment on it, but I also wonder if that would really be different than copy and pasting part of the article into a comment, as many people do. Thoughts?
+ Andrew said... Someone might’ve already said this, but I wish the comment box didn’t automatically scroll down all the way when someone makes new comments. I was looking at earlier stuff but then it forced me back down to the nearest comment.
+ Qia said... There are so many tweets that making me hard to track, a little bit lost.
Final Presentation:

USER EXPERIENCE TESTING: FEEDBACK

Such a system would be very helpful for semantic processing.
Content based search, text/natural language processing from computer science point of view

I would try to tweak the code so that a new comment doesn’t automatically scroll to the entire comment window to the bottom. This can be annoying when you’re trying to read earlier pins/comments.

While on the one hand I really liked the real time aspect, I’m a little concerned that if they are unmoderated, side-arguments would spin out of control, even more so than they do on ordinary systems.

Doing this on the iPad was difficult because the pin interface requires/makes use of a hover state, which doesn’t work with touch devices. I like the concept but some threading of conversations would help me see who’s talking to whom.

This is really interesting! I like the idea of being able to highlight/share specific parts of stories that interest me. It would be cool if it linked to Facebook/Twitter and I could tweet a pin with a link to the story.
Final Presentation:

USER EXPERIENCE TESTING: FEEDBACK

+ Such a system would be very helpful for semantic processing. Content based search, text/natural language processing from computer science point of view

I would try to tweak the code so that a new comment doesn’t automatically scroll to the entire comment window to the bottom. This can be annoying when you’re trying to read earlier pins/comments.

While on the one hand I really liked the real time aspect, I’m a little concerned that if they are unmoderated, side-arguments would spin out of control, even more so than they do on ordinary systems.

This is really interesting! I like the idea of being able to highlight/share specific parts of stories that interest me. It would be cool if it linked to Facebook/Twitter and I could tweet a pin with a link to the story.

Doing this on the iPad was difficult because the pin interface requires/makes use of a hover state, which doesn’t work with touch devices. I like the concept but some threading of conversations would help me see who’s talking to whom.
Final Presentation:

USER EXPERIENCE TESTING: FEEDBACK

+ Such a system would be very helpful for semantic processing. 
Content based search, text/natural language processing from computer science point of view

+ I would try to tweak the code so that a new comment doesn’t automatically scroll to the entire comment window to the bottom. This can be annoying when you’re trying to read earlier pins/comments.

While on the one hand I really liked the real time aspect, I’m a little concerned that if they are unmoderated, side-arguments would spin out of control, even more so than they do on ordinary systems.

Doing this on the iPad was difficult because the pin interface requires/makes use of a hover state, which doesn’t work with touch devices. I like the concept but some threading of conversations would help me see who’s talking to whom.

This is really interesting! I like the idea of being able to highlight/share specific parts of stories that interest me. It would be cool if it linked to Facebook/Twitter and I could tweet a pin with a link to the story.
Final Presentation:

USER EXPERIENCE TESTING: FEEDBACK

+ Such a system would be very helpful for semantic processing. Content based search, text/natural language processing from computer science point of view

+ I would try to tweak the code so that a new comment doesn’t automatically scroll to the entire comment window to the bottom. This can be annoying when you’re trying to read earlier pins/comments.

+ While on the one hand I really liked the real time aspect, I’m a little concerned that if they are unmoderated, side-arguments would spin out of control, even more so than they do on ordinary systems.

This is really interesting! I like the idea of being able to highlight/share specific parts of stories that interest me. It would be cool if it linked to Facebook/Twitter and I could tweet a pin with a link to the story.

Doing this on the iPad was difficult because the pin interface requires/makes use of a hover state, which doesn’t work with touch devices. I like the concept but some threading of conversations would help me see who’s talking to whom.
Final Presentation:

USER EXPERIENCE TESTING: FEEDBACK

+ Such a system would be very helpful for semantic processing. Content based search, text/natural language processing from computer science point of view

+ I would try to tweak the code so that a new comment doesn’t automatically scroll to the entire comment window to the bottom. This can be annoying when you’re trying to read earlier pins/comments.

+ While on the one hand I really liked the real time aspect, I’m a little concerned that if they are unmoderated, side-arguments would spin out of control, even more so than they do on ordinary systems.

+ This is really interesting! I like the idea of being able to highlight/share specific parts of stories that interest me. It would be cool if it linked to Facebook/Twitter and I could tweet a pin with a link to the story.

Doing this on the iPad was difficult because the pin interface requires/makes use of a hover state, which doesn’t work with touch devices. I like the concept but some threading of conversations would help me see who’s talking to whom.
Final Presentation:

USER EXPERIENCE TESTING: FEEDBACK

+ Such a system would be very helpful for semantic processing. Content based search, text/natural language processing from computer science point of view

+ I would try to tweak the code so that a new comment doesn’t automatically scroll to the entire comment window to the bottom. This can be annoying when you’re trying to read earlier pins/comments.

+ While on the one hand I really liked the real time aspect, I’m a little concerned that if they are unmoderated, side-arguments would spin out of control, even more so than they do on ordinary systems.

+ This is really interesting! I like the idea of being able to highlight/share specific parts of stories that interest me. It would be cool if it linked to Facebook/Twitter and I could tweet a pin with a link to the story.

+ Doing this on the iPad was difficult because the pin interface requires/makes use of a hover state, which doesn’t work with touch devices. I like the concept but some threading of conversations would help me see who’s talking to whom.
Final Presentation:

USER EXPERIENCE TESTING: FINDINGS

FOUR users said this would encourage them to comment more often.

The other TWO said it wouldn’t change the amount they commented.

NOCBODY complained about the new position of comments.
Final Presentation:

USER EXPERIENCE TESTING: FINDINGS

+ **FOUR** users said this would encourage them to comment more often.

The other **TWO** said it wouldn’t change the amount they commented.

**NOBODY** complained about the new position of comments.
USER EXPERIENCE TESTING: FINDINGS

+ **FOUR** users said this would encourage them to comment more often.

+ The other **TWO** said it wouldn’t change the amount they commented.

**NOBODY** complained about the new position of comments.
Final Presentation:

**USER EXPERIENCE TESTING: FINDINGS**

+ **FOUR** users said this would encourage them to comment more often.

+ **N O B O D Y** complained about the new position of comments.

+ The other **T W O** said it wouldn’t change the amount they commented.
USER EXPERIENCE TESTING: UI CHANGES

- @user - improving the interactive experience
  - Notification menu
- Control of the scroll bar
- Social media integration
- Things to consider:
  - Nesting?
  - Pinning clarity
WHAT’S IN IT FOR JOURNALISTS?

✦ Everything in its right place
  ✦ Engaging readers, who become users
  ✦ Optimizing crowdsourcing
  ✦ Determine what the readers want
  ✦ Getting the most out of live events

✦ Useful, relationship-driven analytics
WHAT’S NEXT

✦ Refine current UI
✦ Data visualization
✦ Multimedia and live event integration
✦ Take it mobile
✦ Dashboard development

✦ Eventually...
✦ Massive scalability
✦ Localizing
✦ Branding & marketing
✦ Alpha/beta implementation
WHAT WE LEARNED

- Commenting, in general
- UI development process
- Teamwork!
- Learning CS-speak
- Enhance news industry innovation

- Interpreting an abstract concept for journalistic output
- Critical thinking
- Coding skillz
- And LOTS more...
THX 4 A GR8 SEMESTER!

QUESTIONS?
COMMENTS?