

Spin Sucks

The Fight Against Destructive Spin

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Jul 14

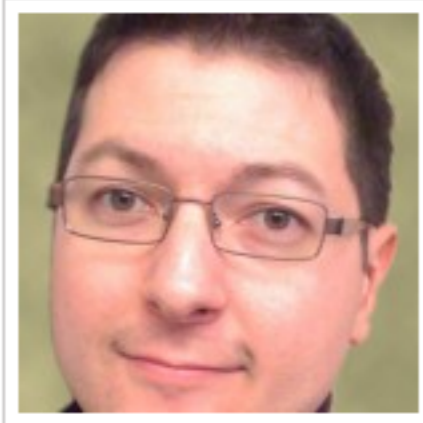


Expert Q&A: David Olson from ARANet

By Gini Dietrich | [Email](#) | [Print](#) | [No Comments](#) | [Like](#) 2

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As part of our expert Q&A series, we chatted with [David Olson](#), vice president at ARANet, about what's happening in the more traditional media relations world with the changes in our industry. We've used them for many years and have watched them change with the times, by adding links and SEO, which have been very beneficial for us and our clients. But we've been a little disappointed with the fact that they don't allow specific landing pages so we can more accurately track results to a specific campaign. We like what he has to say about all of this... see if you agree.

ARA allows links and videos within a release, but in regards to social media, what is special about your SEO reporting?

Our SEO reports are part of a new, comprehensive restructuring of our online client reporting. In addition to the standard metrics related to article placements – which, of course, benefit from our outbound social media efforts – we're very excited about rolling out the new SEO-specific metrics.

The SEO program delivers hundreds of backlinks from credible media sites to our clients' websites. We try to visually showcase these backlinks through charts that highlight the lift in results over time. Another cool feature is a pie-chart that shows the percentage of our clients' overall backlinks that were generated specifically from the ARAcontent media distribution.

Have you noticed any changes in release pick-up since incorporating social media techniques?

We're currently testing a variety of social tools to boost article pick-up. The results have been mixed, with some tactics blending more effectively with our existing online distribution channels. But one approach that's been valuable is taking advantage of Twitter to notify our editorial membership of new articles. Engaging with print and online publishers in real-time format, in addition to our traditional methods, has certainly led to more placements for our clients.

We're continuing to explore other ways of incorporating social tools into our offerings, too. To help us get smarter about what our clients want, I'd be curious to hear about the challenges you have experienced as you work to integrate social media tools into the overall content strategy for your clients. For example, do you struggle to create compelling content consistently for your social platforms (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, etc.)?

We've worked with ARA for a long time now and have noticed that when including a link in an article, we are told we're unable to do a unique URL, why is that?

Good question. It's accurate that we avoid tracking links and prefer using "clean" links for our online article distribution. It's a bit complicated to explain, but essentially there is risk when using tracking links of negatively affecting SEO results.

Search engines such as Google see the original link and the link with the promotional tracking code as separate pages because of the unique URL. But because they have the same page content the search engines may treat them as "duplicate content" and then bury the search results for the link with the tracking code.

Perhaps a better way to answer this is to assess the clients' goals. Our ARAcontent product is meant for building awareness online and increasing your organic search ranking for the search terms used in the article.

If a client is interested in tracking links, I recommend they consider our Adfusion product. Adfusion is an article-based advertising platform specifically designed to drive targeted and measurable traffic to client landing pages.

What is next in the online article distribution world?

Well, I think this space will continue to change rapidly. A significant driver of this change is the evolution of branded content. From its origin decades ago in the mat release format, branded content has come to play a significant role in SEO, social media and other digital marketing tactics. The opportunities for this content from a distribution standpoint will continue to expand – very likely in ways that we can't foresee today. The content that best delivers value for clients and publishers (as well as their readership) will have the best chance at success. As an example, I'm very bullish on expanding video offerings as a complement to an article. This is a fantastic way to add context to a brand story and deliver engagement at a deeper level. This isn't a new concept, but I think it will be improved upon and used to greater effect in the next couple of years.

Editor's note: You'll note David asks us some questions, as well, particularly in his answer to the second question. We are curious to hear your thoughts, which we'll combine with ours and send to David next week.

[David Olson](#) is vice president at [ARANet, Inc.](#), in Minneapolis, which provides feature article placements and article-based advertising platforms. For more information, visit their [website](#) or call 888-873-8863.

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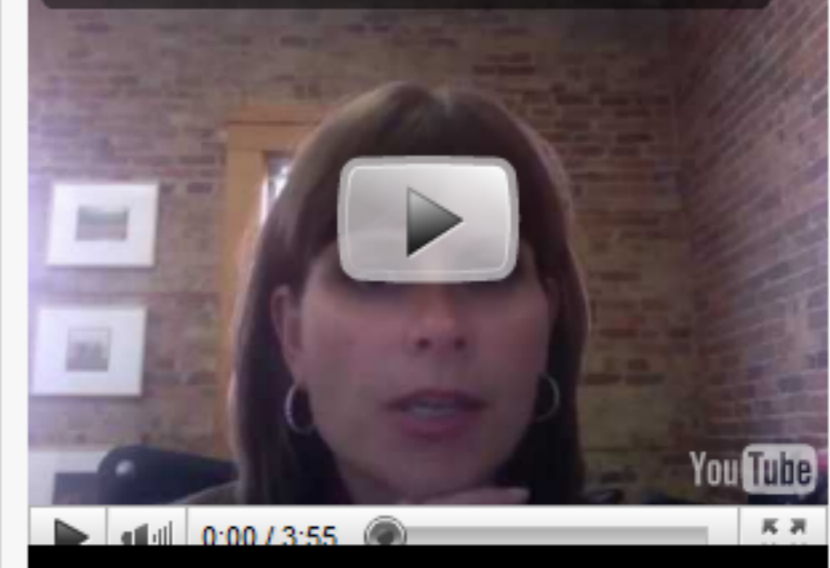
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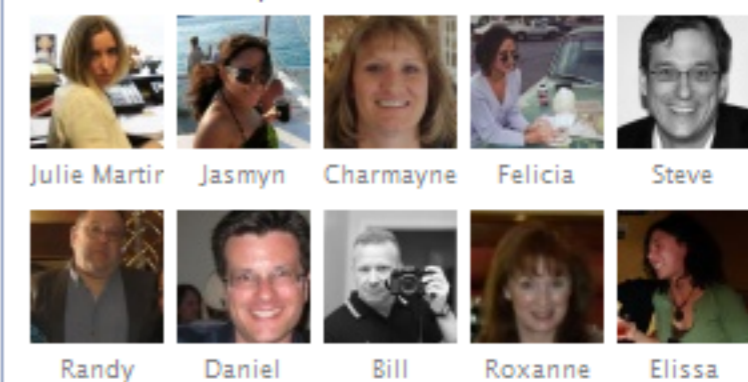
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