

Future Foundation reveals latest research in media and communications insights

'Downtime' becomes ever-redefined as consumers use 'leisure moments' as real-time records of achievement

Future Foundation, the leading international consumer futures business has released new findings from their latest emerging media trends, *Performative Leisure* and *Smart Boredom*.

Just how is smart and social technology driving a culture of play and display? What are the influences that are encouraging consumers to share their moments of leisure in order to show that they are keeping up with the e-Joneses? And what has brought about this need?

Furthermore, as we begin to manage our time more effectively, converting otherwise unproductive moments of the day into activity – worthwhile or otherwise – how is this too fuelling the change in what we previously understood as 'downtime'?

Performative Leisure

Once upon a time, the whole process of leisure gratification occurred in stages; we embraced our chosen pursuits for the feelings of escapism, indulgence and unbridled enjoyment they could deliver and then shared details with friends only once the concert had finished, the waiter had cleared away the plates, the party was, as it were, very much over. In the 10s, however, leisure is undergoing a real-time revolution, one in which acquiring social capital has become an instant, *on-the-go* affair. No longer are we willing to wait until the credits roll, we use *smart* and *social* technology to showcase our views as the drama unfolds; no more will we delay broadcasting our presence at the trendy restaurant or holiday destination when a live stream of updates will allow us to seize the social zeitgeist. And thus has the strategic "tweet" become key to status enhancement.

The result is what we might term **performative leisure** - the consumer's growing willingness (and ever improving ability) to use leisure moments as real-time records of achievement. As we define it here, this is a trend which will exert an ever more powerful impact on how we manage and present our online lives.

This will be the decade in which leisure becomes much *smarter* and, in a sense, *active*. Will we simply spectate when we can use real-time services to facilitate a more pro-active form of participation? Will we tolerate any type of delay when apps such as SocialCam permit us to upload videos to social networks *while they are still being recorded*? We rather think not. Of course, we recognise that there will always be those who use leisure time to actively *switch off*. But more of us will maintain our social CV while *on-the-go*; more consumers will use leisure to earn instant social status.

Smart Boredom

Parallel to the development of an ever-diversifying leisure market, consumer attitudes towards downtime (ie those moments / minutes in the day when there is no pressure on us to do anything in particular) are evolving. Taking time to chill-out, relax or reflect would be considered worthwhile in itself, enabling us to restore energy levels and manage stress, readying us to involve ourselves in new tasks and activities. Indeed, for many individuals, the notion of downtime is associated with a sense of emotional luxury and indulgence. This is not to say that actual boredom or laziness is something that is becoming more socially revered. Indeed, consumers often use quiet time *constructively* by undertaking low-

level activities that continue to add value to their lives in some way. Nowadays, dead time is rarely completely vacant at all but occupied by passive but ultimately rewarding / useful activities such as surfing the web, using a mobile phone app to check a bank balance or chatting on Skype while watching TV.

Thus our **smart boredom** trend has been massively facilitated by digital innovations that enable us to live in a constantly connected world, continuously providing us with ever more convenient solutions for so many daily tasks. Indeed, consumers connected to the mobile web can accomplish several activities with minimum effort. Mobile social networking, online banking, shopping on-the-go all invite the consumer to enrich any spare moment with purposeful activity.

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Note to editors

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We equip our clients with invaluable know-how to plot the likely impact of the ever-evolving changing consumer environment on their market, brands and products.

For the 200 brands and agencies that rely on our robust trend research, data and creative futures work, we act as a genuine partner; ready to support and help deliver their next pitch.

We have worked extensively with media agencies, owners and strategists and as such focus on the latest media and communications trends and consumer attitudes through our global proprietary research programme; nVision. We also offer strategic consultancy services; from creative futures & innovation to thought leadership & tactical planning.

To find out more about our consumer insight services please visit
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