Social Media Archaeology 101

"Listening comprehension is an inferencial process. Linguistic knowledge and world knowledge interact as listeners create a mental representation of what they hear. Bottom up and top down processes are applied to get to this mental representation and achieve comprehension" (Rost 2002).

Of all the benefits of social media for business, the greatest come from listening. Listening is unobtrusive – no one knows when digital listening is happening. It is an archaeological dig for information relating to human behavior. And as compared to traditional building block method of data gathering, digital listening is organic.

Josh Bernhoff from the Forrester Consumer Forum says that by definition, Digital Listening is "[l]earning from what your customers are saying and tapping into the conversation." In his book co-written with Charlene Li, *Groundswell,* that listening has always been a part of market research, like surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc., because they are all designed to answer questions. IN fact, Digital Listening is like having a focus group at your fingertips.

A social media listener becomes, by the very nature of the act, an observer of human behavior and behavioral trends as evidenced through consumer's words or tone, called sentiments in the industry. Becoming immersed in consumer's conversation virtually or not, a listener gleans the nuances of personal experiences.

Allison Fine in her book *Momentum* admits that gathering information is only part of the process. Once data is extracted, what happens to it? How is it to be used?

Digital Listening records millions of conversations taking place via social media. With these conversations it is important to understand what is being said, how much is being said, and the context of what is being said so that trends can be monitored and then acted upon.

Analysis is key and interpretation necessary for the information to be of use. Many companies use a computer tool to help in collection of data. One such example is Radian6.

Radian6 conducts social media monitoring of the most relevant conversations related to our client on the various social channels. Radian6 helps in aggregating several data points from web chat, agent feedback, call listening, post call IVR Customer Satisfaction surveys, and to provide business insights to the cilent by identifying ways to improve the consumer experience with the contact center and healthcare.gov. In essence, Radian6 boils it down to two entities: the communities targeted and the listening tools, which are key words and other sets of criteria to refine search results.

By incorporating these additional data points Digital Listening is a platform that is able to provide "real-time" tracking and trending that provides an intrinsic value to the client.

Not part of the article but best practices suggest that to mitigate negative sentiment online is to have a method of addressing it – to "engineer" a presence for the client by addressing negative comments/posts. The justification for this is that often negative comments are the result of miscommunication or mishandled interactions. Should we rework into best practices? Would you like me to talk to Jeremy and Katie about writing a White Paper?