**Ned May**
VP Analytic Operations

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**A recent survey of enterprise knowledge workers indicates a significant increase in the velocity of content, highlighting the changing nature of information markets and how information providers might respond.**

**Important Details:**

Outsell's recently completed Content Consumption survey points to a dramatic increase in the amount of information being shared across professional environments today. On average, respondents indicated sharing work-related content at least once a day (5.9 times per week), and when they did, they shared it with an average of 21 people. Considering that 45% of that content is sourced from external or third-party providers, a sobering statistic emerges: the potential that every employee is violating someone's copyright 56 times per week. This "velocity of content" is more than three times higher than it was in a similar survey we completed in 2016 and reverses a trend of decline we'd witnessed since 2013.

In a study for Copyright Clearance Center (CCC), Outsell surveyed 350 professionals evenly split across seven industries: Chemicals & Fuels, Computers & Electronic Components, Consulting & Professional Services, Energy, Finance & Insurance, Law Firms, and Life Sciences. Respondents were US based and worked full time in companies with 1,000 or more employees. The research updated a series of surveys we have conducted for CCC since 2003 that tracks how professionals think and behave around content and information.

This year's study modified the language of one question in a meaningful way. Instead of asking how often respondents "forwarded" information, we asked them how often they "shared" content. The change likely accounts for some of the rise in the level of activity since 2016. Yet, while statistically speaking it might not be an entirely accurate comparison to make, there are times when statistics miss the point. This is one of them because the increase in sharing in this study highlights a critical trend: the changing nature of how content and information now moves inside and outside our organizations.

**Why This Matters**

Thanks to new digital tools, sharing is on the rise. But, as recent studies indicate, increases in the velocity of content can have negative effects. In one recent example, clearly unedited video circulated among millions and appeared to portray a public interaction that in truth unfolded in quite a different way. That incident exposed just how elusive trust can be even when high-quality content is involved.

To ensure trust, the context and source of content need to be clear. That may seem obvious, but it is often overlooked by those embracing the expediency of digital tools. There are signs, however, that even if this behavior isn't changing, awareness among some individuals as to the problems it can cause is on the rise — signs that support our meta-theme of 2019: "Trust is the New Algorithm."

Recent research by a global communications marketing firm highlights a growing disparity in trust levels between the general population and those that are "informed." Furthermore, the same study identifies that individuals seeking trust look to their employers for this more than they look to any other entity — including the media and even NGOs. Putting all this together indicates that not only is the volume of content rising in the enterprise, but the importance of ensuring that it is high-quality content from a trusted source is rising as well.

Despite this, corporate intranets operating on the likes of Microsoft's Sharepoint and internal collaboration tools such as Slack and Asana do not always distinguish between the content types being shared, nor do they limit audiences to those inside a particular organization. Add to this an employee's activity on LinkedIn, Twitter — and yes, Facebook — and any underlying premise of trust can disappear, to say nothing of the nightmare it poses for enterprise risk professionals.

This creates an opportunity for information providers who can capitalize on trust in profitable ways. While much attention is rightfully directed at the platform opportunity to serve as the central clearinghouse of information while meeting the needs of a professional's workflow, there is also an opportunity for content originators to be at this table as well. Very few can win at the platform game, but all are incented to ensure that the authority and legitimacy of content are assured and known.

To benefit from the increased content sharing, information providers must take steps to ensure readers remain copyright compliant and properly informed. Some of these are relatively simple: for example, provide sharing tools that keep the reader on a compliant site. Educate both actively and passively by using the likes of unobtrusive popups and simple footers that remind a reader that your content is meant to be shared. Crafting compliance messages that address the sharing behavior (and its pitfalls) on social media is an important step in the education process.

Some of the steps to take are more complex: one size doesn't fit all. As we have in the past, Outsell continues to stress that different industry sectors, roles, and company sizes all require awareness campaigns that take into account the variables, behaviors, and nuances of each organization when it comes to messaging. A CEO who wants to share important legal information with her board, even if she unwittingly violates copyright, requires a different message than an individual contributor in a biology lab who wants to make his colleague aware of a recent journal article in their area of expertise.

These differences require more comprehensive strategies for certifying information literacy across the various enterprise roles and enlisting the assistance of information management (IM) professionals along the way. In companies where IM roles remain actively engaged, this group provides a critical partner in ensuring compliance. Most importantly, regardless of where engagement occurs, it must be easy to secure access, allowing broader licensing agreements, enabling single sign, and offering terms that align with everyone's unique workflow.

In an era where trust in news and information is at an all-time low, enabling an individual's ability to share high-quality content is not just good in an altruistic sense — it can also be good for the bottom line. Indeed, this is the year that Trust is the New Algorithm.

## About Insights



## About Outsell

Outsell is the only research and advisory firm serving information industry CEOs and their teams, and investors in media, tech, data and information. Our solutions are built from the ground up leveraging a unique set of assets: proprietary data, industry leading analysts, world class events, and a thriving and growing peer-to-peer community. Through deep industry relationships, we ensure our clients make great decisions for their businesses on a wide spectrum of topics, including competition and markets, operating and sales performance, M&A and due diligence, and critical trends. We stand by our work 100% and guarantee results. That’s how fanatical we are about our clients’ success.

Outsell inc.
Email: contact_us@outsellinc.com
Telephone: +1 650-342-6060