14 Digital Content Types You’re Probably Not Using Enough via @sejournal, @xandervalencia

Feeling tapped out when it comes to creative content ideas?

If you feel like you’ve done it all, I challenge you to explore these 14 uncommon types of content. Many marketers overlook these unconventional digital content formats, but they can be highly effective.

Slot some of these content styles into your arsenal to mix up your campaigns and see better results from your content marketing.

1. User-Generated Content (UGC)

Every brand knows to talk about the benefits of their products or services. But having real customers sing your praises? That makes a **real** impact.

User-generated content is content created by consumers – not the brand – heralding the brand’s products or services.

Examples include product reviews, testimonial videos on social media, and the like. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook are hotspots for UGC.

Identifying UGC can take some hunting, such as browsing hashtags associated with your brand on Instagram or following industry influencers on TikTok. You could also use social

listening tools to identify brand mentions.

UGC can also be inspired. For example, many brands host contests that reward users for creating great UGC, such as inspiring graphics or dynamic videos.

You might also create a custom hashtag encouraging users to share content; Coca-Cola's #ShareACoke campaign is one popular example.

UGC draws in new eyes through the user's followers and you can also repurpose UGC on your brand's social media accounts and in your campaigns.

UGC is a great form of brand advocacy and is particularly effective at driving user engagement.

In fact, according to a survey conducted by EnTribe, 84% of users are more likely to trust a brand that uses content from customers rather than paid influencers, and 77% would be more likely to purchase from a brand that shares content from real customers in its marketing.

2. Screencasts

"Talking head" videos are perhaps the most common type of video content. The speaker talks to the camera (i.e., the audience), and there might be product photos or slides thrown in.

But POV content is the next hot thing in content marketing. Instead of a talking head, the audience experiences the video from the speaker's first-person point of view, whether through a camera lens or a screencast.

Screencasting involves recording your mobile or computer screen as you narrate.

Screencasts work well for tutorials or to demonstrate your

work in action. They are an impactful format for social media and YouTube videos.

Your screencast can include a voiceover narration and/or music. You might use tools like Camtasia and Loom to make, edit, and repurpose professional screencasts for marketing campaigns.

Here’s one example of an effective screencast in a video titled “Design with me My full web design process using Figma & Squarespace.”

3. Templates

Templates are ready-made documents your audience can use to streamline tasks, organize their lives, and even get their finances in order.

Some of the most popular templates include invoice templates for business owners, social media design templates for brand managers, resume templates for job seekers, and checklists for travel or events.

People love templates because they are easy to use, helpful, and don’t require much investment (if any at all).

However, they are great tools for brands looking to build trust with potential customers and capture new email subscribers.

How does this work? Typically, you’d advertise the template on your website and social media and then deliver it to interested users via email. Users must submit their email address to get the template. Ta-da! You have a newly opted-in email subscriber.

When it comes to templates, the opportunities are truly endless, which make it easy for business owners to launch a new website in a matter of hours.

4. Worksheets

Worksheets pack tons of value because they empower people with the tools and steps they need to achieve their goals, like planning a business, creating a budget, or nurturing a more positive mindset.

So, how can brands use worksheets to inspire growth? Like templates, worksheets are a great opportunity to gain email subscribers, get re-shares on social media, and drive website traffic.

If you publish a great worksheet (like therapistaid did), people will happily share it.

Active learning tools, like worksheets, benefit users, students, business owners, and more. One study found that active learning methods like polls and chat can lead to 16 times higher rates of non-verbal engagement.

5. Illustrations

If you’re like me, you may be tired of the overly corporate, cookie-cutter graphics used in most marketing materials.

Many of these designs are sourced from the same stock image sites. Why not get a little more creative?

Custom illustrations – hand-drawn or digitally-drawn visuals – can be a great addition to your marketing materials. Designed by freelance illustrators, illustrations can add uniqueness, flair, and even quirkiness to your brand.

Illustrations are gaining in popularity as well. A study conducted by VENNGAGE reports that marketers found original graphics, like infographics and illustrations, to outperform other types of media, such as stock photos, charts, and even videos.

Illustrations add personality to your digital content, particularly when it comes to storytelling.

6. Text Messages

Short message service (SMS) campaigns – a.k.a. text message campaigns – reach consumers via their mobile devices. With so many people on the go, this is one of the most accessible ways to get users' attention.

Compared to email campaigns, SMS marketing has a much higher average click-through rate (11.19% for texting vs. 1.47% for email). This makes texting great for lead follow-ups, special offers, time-sensitive deals, appointment reminders, and customer support.

Text messaging can be enabled in many of today's client relationship management (CRM) tools, allowing you to send emails, automate text reminders, and templatize your campaigns. You can even track open rates, conversion rates, and unsubscribe rates.

7. Web Apps

If you want to level up engagement and customer retention, a web app is a good way to do it.

Web apps are interactive online tools (such as games, calculators, login portals, etc.) that make it easier for users to interact with your brand, use your services, get customer support, and so much more.

From fitness apps to mortgage calculators, web apps are everywhere, and they are elevating the user experience in so many unique ways.

Want to utilize this digital content type? Here are some potential app ideas:

- Travel itinerary planner.
- Appointment booking.
- Interactive quiz.
- Budget calculator.
- Fitness tracker.
- Recipe generator.
- Customer portal.
- Virtual try-on experiences.
- Event planning tools.
- E-learning platform.
- Gamified rewards.
- Customer service chat.

8. Animations

Have you ventured into the world of motion graphics? If you haven’t, this might be a creative content type to try. And trust me, it’s not as labor-intensive or expensive as you might think.

You can find many reputable and affordable animators online, able to create everything from animated logos to social media ads and product demos.

Of course, if you are launching a major campaign with multiple elements, you might want to invest in a more premium service.

There are many ways to use animations, such as in explainer videos, infographics, GIFs, short clips for social, and more.

Transform static graphics into moving, grooving animations to catch viewers’ attention and get people talking about your brand.

9. Op-Eds

We’ve talked a lot about visual content thus far, but what about good ol’ written content? While most are familiar with

the standard blog post or traditional press release, less common is the controversial op-ed.

Well, op-eds don’t have to be controversial, but they are opinion-based. Rather than purely instructive, they share the writer’s unique take on a particular subject. This can be interesting reading material to publish on your website.

If your brand usually publishes how-to content, perhaps mix it up with opinion pieces.

Get an industry leader’s POV on a trending topic or an editorial writer’s hot take on a common misconception in your industry. There are many ways to spin it.

Publishing different content types can drum up more engagement and shares.

10. Live Video

With all of today’s streaming technology, live video has become an effective medium for brands and thought leaders.

Not only does live video require less planning and editing than pre-recorded video, but it’s also a great way to engage with viewers in real time.

The most prominent live video options are Facebook Live, Instagram Live, YouTube Live, and TikTok Live. All allow you to share a title or caption for your video topic, stream to an audience, and field messages from viewers.

Live video is particularly useful for Q&A sessions, interviews, brand takeovers, and company updates. Even Mark Zuckerberg himself went live to provide a recent update about Meta’s “fact-checking” policy.

If you have a bit of digital stage fright and need some convincing, just know that 51% of consumers are eager for more

live content on streaming services. This is not a content medium to be sleeping on.

11. Slides

When it comes to this digital content type, I'm talking about expertly designed presentation slides (as you might make in Slides or PowerPoint) to accompany videos, emails, and other marketing materials.

Tools like SlideShare have risen in popularity as brands have started providing more readable assets to accompany their services, presentations, and products.

For example, many fitness brands now share workout plans and meal prep guides in slide format, making it easy for clients to access the materials, follow along, and share the content digitally.

You'll also see slides used during live videos, webinars, and in pre-recorded YouTube videos. They are simple and instructional, keep viewers engaged, and show your brand to be a valuable resource in your space!

12. Timelines

As a legal marketing specialist, I often look for creative ways to showcase content for law firms while maintaining a level of professionalism. Timelines often strike that balance.

Say you run a law firm in the area of class action lawsuits. You might want to demonstrate the history of your case, key milestones or accomplishments in your case, how new policies have affected the trial, and so on. A simple timeline on a landing page is a smart way to capture all of these details.

Timelines don't have to be so corporate, though. For instance, maybe you are a digital nomad documenting your travels across

Southeast Asia. A timeline on your website or within a blog post is a great way for readers to keep up with your journey.

Overall, timelines are engaging, visual displays or chronological events. They help your audience understand context, progressions, and stories, making your brand more transparent and relatable.

13. Gamified Content

“Gamification” might seem like a buzzword often thrown around in the world of marketing. But it’s gaining traction for good reason.

Users want content fast, and they want to be entertained. And gamification proves that marketing doesn’t have to be boring – it should be fun!

Gamified content engages users with game mechanics like virtual stories, points, rewards, or leaderboards. Duolingo is a great example of this. Their app boasts users’ language “streaks,” implementing a point system that unlocks special materials and chapters. It’s also just fun to use.

Fitbit is another brand that uses gamified content. The associated app hosts activity challenges, step competitions, and achievement badges, motivating users to keep moving. This encourages people to keep using the tool and to reach their fitness goals.

You can implement gamified content through a web app (if you have one), via email marketing campaigns, and through social media features like surveys and polls.

14. Immersive VR

We can’t talk about the evolution of digital content without mentioning virtual reality (VR). This technology has blown up

in the last few years, making its way into games, social media platforms, and even in-person experiences.

To be clear, VR involves technology that virtually transports users into an interactive, 3D environment. This is ideal for video games, of course, but also virtual tours (e.g., virtual real estate walkthroughs) and product sales (e.g., virtual try-ons).

The VR market is projected to reach $18 billion by 2025. While it can take some effort and investment to pull off a VR app, it may be well worth it when it comes to growing your audience and sales.

Shake Up Your Marketing Campaigns With Uncommon Content Formats

There are so many creative ways to showcase your content. Break outside the traditional blog post or ebook once in a while and try out some of these methods.

From gamified content to live video and web apps to templates, try something new to grow your audience and drive sales.

More Resources:

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https://www.searchenginejournal.com/digital-content-types-not-using-enough/538132/