

David
Pembroke: Hello, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome once again to InTransition, the podcast that examines the practice of content marketing in government and the public sector. My name's David Pembroke and I'm delighted that you've joined me once again this week. Now it's a different podcast this week and I'll come to the details of just exactly how we're going to put it together. The other week we did try something a bit different where we took some question and answer and we got some good feedback that that was obvious. We're deciding to change it up again this week.

Before we get to the explanation of what we're doing this week it's time for the definition. Content marketing is a repeatable, measurable, and strategic business process that relies on the creation, curation, and distribution of useful, relevant, and consistent content. The purpose is to engage and inform a specific audience in order to achieve a desired citizen and/or stakeholder action, so that is what we're talking about.

Now yeah, just a bit of a change up. It was not last Friday, but the Friday before we held as part of Innovation month here in Australia, Innovation month in the Australian government, we put together an event and it was called the Case for Content. We were very, very lucky to have three senior government communicators here in Australia to come and tell their stories about how they are using content to solve some quite specific business problems that they've got to improve policy input, to look at how they're communicating around regulation and service and program delivery as well. What we're going to do over the next couple of weeks is bring those presentations to you.

Today we will hear from Kim Ulrich who is the Assistant Secretary at the Federal Department of Communications. She's got some really good insights into how they are using content in the terms of policy development and how they take discussion papers, atomize the discussion paper, get the content out there, but I'll leave that for you for a little bit later on in terms of this podcast. What I thought I'd do is give you the intro. I'll read you the intro that I gave at the Case for Content which really just sets up the broad parameters of what we discuss here on In Transition every week around the value of content and content marketing for government in being able to explain yourselves and ourselves to the citizens and stakeholders that we need to engage with.

I thought I'd go through and read that rather than just play you my introduction because, in fact, I went back and just tidied it up a little bit because I felt it was a little bit untidy at the actual event. It was Friday the 22nd of July at the College of Business and Economics at the Australian National University here in Canberra. Interestingly, we'll have some news for you in the next little while in terms of a research partnership that we have trying to kick off with the Australian National University with the help of the federal government where we have got research funding to continue our work in terms of developing our content marketing process that we hope is going to become something of a standard for government in public sector organizations not only here in Australia, but around the world, so more about that later.

What we're going to do is I will read this intro and then we will throw to Kim Ulrich's presentation. Then off the back of that I'll pick it up and then we'll say goodbye. It should be about the same amount of time, about half an hour. Here we go, I did say, I did welcome everybody and I said hi, I'm David Pembroke, but most of you already know that. The event we've named is the Case for Content. However, I did consider an alternative, Welcome to the Revolution, but I thought arguing for the afternoon off to attend a revolutionary uprising might not have gone too well with your bosses. In my view we are in a revolution particularly as it relates to the technology and tools that we now use every day in our jobs.

When I say 'we' I don't just mean government communicators because technology has changed the way the world communicates. It's having a direct and substantial impact on every area of the operation of government and public sector organizations be it policy development, regulation, program, or service delivery. Effective communication with citizens and stakeholders is no longer just the responsibility of the communication area, it's a job for everyone. The stunning and transformational reality is that technology has democratized the factors of media production and distribution.

We all now have the technical capability to be our own 'media company' on behalf of the departments and agencies whose stories we are seeking to tell. We no longer have to buy ink in 44 gallon drums, we don't need to own transmission towers, we don't need printing presses or distribution trucks to create and distribute content that will help us to get to know and build loyal and engaged audiences for our story over time.

The era of the media monopoly is over and that capability is now in your hands. The challenge and the opportunity is how we use this gift as a way to build understanding and to create value for citizens and stakeholders. I would argue that in the past communication by and large has not been a major priority for most governments. We as government communicators have singularly failed in our efforts to establish the value of what we do and our credentials as creators of strategic business value. We've been seen as an 'end of the line' service provider delivered once the hard work and thinking of policy, program, or regulation design has been completed. Now that's as much our fault as it is anybody else because we have not effectively described nor explained the value that we can create and, therefore, we have not earned a seat at the decision making table.

I also believe that in terms of communication government shares the behavioural characteristics of a monopolist and information is often delivered on a 'take it or leave it' basis. People are compelled to engage with us to understand the policy, program, service, or regulation detail, so we leave it up to them to do their best to find and then understand information that is often poorly explained and largely impenetrable.

This reality is changing and it's changing fast. In the age where advice to government is increasingly 'contestable' and most citizens and stakeholders carry around super computers in their pockets which gives them not only access to the world's information, but a highly effective megaphone, it's critical for us to be more understanding of the needs of our citizens and stakeholders. Citizens have now been socialized by the high

quality 'customer centric' experiences delivered by private sector businesses and brands. They now expect the same service and engagement experience from government.

As far as our political leaders are concerned, the priority and importance of clear and effective communication between governments and citizens is obvious. Here's a quote from the Australian Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, from December of last year and this is the Prime Minister speaking. "Arguably the first challenge is to get the message out, watchfully monitoring and carefully explaining that the emerging challenges posed by globalization, convergence, and rapid technological change are all forces that are not going away." Here is another quote from the Australian Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, at about the same time. "Leaders must be decision makers, but they must be above all explainers, advocates, unravelling complex issues in clear language that explains why things have to change and why the government cannot solve every problem."

Now I appreciate that the role of public servants around the world is not to advocate for policy, but our role as government communicators is most definitely to explain policy, program, services, and regulation. It's fair to say that while this transformational capability in terms of the way technology has changed communication is now in our hands, we are only at the very beginning of our understanding of how to make the most of it and how to use it effectively to build trust and confidence through content.

Now here's a quote from the Federal Reserve Bank Governor of Australia, Glenn Stevens, from his end of year interview last year with the Australian Financial Review and I think this is really telling. He said, "There is a need for a serious conversation with the electorate about the future, not to get into slogans and name calling. There is a need for nuances to be understood. Have we built a platform for the public understanding over the last 10 years? No. The legacy is that when you want people to understand there is no way of doing it."

Now when the Governor talks about a platform, in my view, he's not talking about a single destination where we would all talk about every government issue. What he's talking about are the thousands of places where government and citizens and stakeholders interact, the places where you on a daily basis are creating meaning and understanding with citizens and stakeholders. They are the places where you work every day and they are the places where you execute your mission as a government communicator.

Now this particular failing of a lack of a platform for creating understanding between citizens and government is not unique to Australia. Look no further than Donald Trump or Bernie Sanders or Brexit and our most recent federal election as an example here in Australia which are examples of where a lack of effective government communication and engagement contributes to a lack of trust and confidence not only in government, but the broader political system.

Now in an interview last week the latest cabinet minister here in Australia, Senator Matt

Canavan, said that trust was the biggest issue in the most recent federal election, that people don't trust what politicians and government say. Now in my experience there are many things that build trust, but effective communication is right at the top of the list. Trust is built over time. You build trust by doing what you say you're going to do. You build trust by standing in the shoes of the citizens and stakeholders we all seek to serve and use their perspective to create meaningful and relevant content that will explain why things are happening.

In the distracted, hyper-busy and attention deficient world in which we all live and work it takes time to earn the attention of citizens. You have to be consistent, you have to be relevant, and you have to be turning up time and time again because people now have so many choices as to where to apply that very scarce resource of theirs which is their attention. We have to be communicating in a way that is both valuable and meaningful. The challenge for those of us with responsibility to explain government policy, programs, services, and regulation to citizens and stakeholders is to communicate respectfully through multiple online and offline channels. That our communication is aligned, that it's effective and that point again that it's consistent.

Now my argument is that technology has given us the gift to be our own media company. We can now go direct to use content to build trusted relationships with audiences over time, but we have to do it reliably and effectively. To do it we need a process like content marketing. Content marketing is a measurable, strategic, and repeatable business process that relies on the curation, creation, and distribution of useful, relevant, and consistent content. The purpose is to engage and inform a specific audience in order to achieve a desired citizen and/or stakeholder action. It's a process that can over time play a role in building trust.

If we take on the challenge of looking at issues through the eyes of the citizen or stakeholder the way we tell our stories will change. The focus of those stories will change, the language we use will change, the tone and the meaning we create will change. We will distribute those stories in very different ways. I'm delighted that we have had such a great response to this Innovation event here at the Australian Business and Economic School. I know we are only at the very beginning of this journey of helping government and public sector organizations to become better storytellers, to become more reliable storytellers. To tell stories that will resonate and will engage with citizens, so we can better explain ourselves and they can better understand us, so we can build those trusted relationships over time.

That was the end of my presentation that started off the whole day. Then we had Hank Jongen which we will feature in the next week or so and Trish Johnson also from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The presentation that we'll feature today is from Kim Ulrich. Now Kim is the Assistant Secretary of Digital Communications for the Department of Communications. Kim has extensive experience in the public sector. She was the Assistant Secretary of Border and Counterterrorism Policy at the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. She was the national manager of Strategy, Policy, and Stakeholder engagement for the Australian Crime Commission. She was the Assistant Secretary of Marketing and Communication for the Department of Human Services and

she has done a lot, lot more.

Now I think the great insights that Kim brings to this is the way she talks about using content marketing as a way to improving community consultation and stakeholder engagement. I'm sure you'll enjoy this presentation, so ladies and gentlemen, Kim Ulrich.

Kim Ulrich: *Thanks, David. The other bit of the resume that he didn't read out is that I'm a big nerd. It's why I work at the Department of Communications and the Arts, and hopefully my Pokémon Go notifications have been quieted for the period that I'm speaking today. We were actually going to do a Poké-walk today, but I'll get to that in the context of building internal capability in a moment. From my perspective, Hank, I actually worked with Hank, so I don't know if you want to call me a protégé, Hank, but I've worked with Hank and I've been lucky enough to do that, and I understand a little bit about the context of some of the stuff that he talked about. DHS and the context of the public sector is mammoth compared to our little minnow department. In terms of our size, we don't have the sort of interaction with the public that DHS does, so I'll talk to you about the context of what we do in content and the work of our branch in the context of supporting the business, so coming back to how do we align ourselves in terms of adding value to the business.*

The digital strategy that was mentioned at the beginning is something that was developed in the context of where we were as an organization. It was about 2013, well mid-2013, we did some online research, and out of that research we found that our departmental website, and other things we were doing, weren't really hitting the mark. People expected us to be a digital leader, and we weren't being a digital leader. They said, "You're the department that we expect to be out there doing that, and you're not."

We had a little bit of a, okay, thanks, thanks for that feedback, let's do something about it. We did develop a digital strategy, and we brought in an external consultant to help us do that because at that point we didn't feel like we had the capability to do it all on our own, but it was very much aligned at the time to where the organization was going. The organization at that point was looking at how we would make sure we're staying abreast of digital technologies. The department's role is around advising government on policy in relation to those sorts of areas, so how do we not only understand those things, but how do we as an organization also give them. That was where we came in.

I'm just going to give you a couple of case studies, and in talking about our role as a department, we do have programs, and we do run some grants, particularly in the outside, and in regional Australia in relation to Mobile Black Spots, but our primary focus is to a policy, and I think even on the arts side there will be a bit of shift more towards policy over the next three years of this current government. The Triple Zero case study is one I'm going to talk about.

When we did our digital strategy, one of the things we talked about was how we could be relevant, and how we could be responsive to people, and how we engage the community in the work that we do, and explain the policy work of the department so

everyone would know what Triple Zero is. Hopefully most people haven't had to use Triple Zero, but at some point most Australians possibly will. It's something that most Australians are quite interested in, and where we were at with Triple Zero is that it hadn't really changed in terms of the way it was being delivered for a very long time, hadn't really evolved, and if you think about the way we work now, most of us have our smart phones or other devices, we use apps, we have GPS, not just for Pokémon Go, but we have GPS and these other technologies, and Triple Zero was still primarily voice calls. How do you take that forward, what are the public looking for in terms of how they want to interact with something as important as the Triple Zero service?

We sat down with the relevant line area and we said, "What have you got?", and as usual they had developed a fantastic issues discussion paper that they wanted to put out to the community and out to their stakeholders, and they've done a lot of stakeholder consultation. The one thing their department is very good at is in terms of its key stakeholders. They're very good at that consultation, but they often don't think about, to be honest, going beyond that key set of stakeholders, so we sort of said, "Well, look from our perspective, there is a real interest in this as an issue in the broader community. Rather than you're already talking to your key stakeholders, and that's fantastic, and that's really important, but why don't we have a look at what some of these issues are, and let's push that out to the community for their view?" so that's what we did.

This was something that the department was a little bit nervous about at first, I'll be honest, but what we did is my team sat down with that line area, and they went through that big paper, and they identified the content gems. That what I will call them. There were things in there, like, again around GPS, around smart phones, apps, and various other things, and we said, okay, they're the things that we'll put into a little short survey, and we'll say to people, "Are these the sort of things you would like in terms of how you want to interact with Triple Zero?" Normally we would we would get anywhere between sort of, well, depending on what the consultation is, anywhere up to and around a hundred to two hundred responses to a call for consultation around a policy issue. We got over two thousand five hundred responses.

Now how we did that was apart from identifying those gems of content and working that up into a short survey, we then developed content to support that. You heard Hank talk about social content, we developed up really great little packages of social content and we pushed that out through our channels, but we also pushed it out through stakeholders. We worked with the line area and we said, "Who are the key stakeholders?" and they're fairly obvious ones. Their police and emergency services are your key ones, and they have phenomenal reach, so much better than us in terms of their networks, and we went, okay, let's see what we can package up for them. Let's send something out that they can package up out for us to get more people to come to that webpage and fill in that survey, and that's where we landed. It was our first foray into really much more of a digital engagement in terms of policy, and it was prior to us developing our communications website.

It was happening sort of at the same time as our communications.gov.au website redevelopment, which has a specific policy consultation section, so it was our first foray,

we were able to go back to our executive and say, look, we did this, this has actually been a really great way to get a much broader and inclusive view on these issues from the community. That report at the moment, unfortunately, it was ready to go to the minister just when Caretaker hit, so it's, hopefully, going to be coming out in terms of the response to all of that feedback from the community, which is fantastic.

The next one I just want to quickly talk about is the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review. As a department, we have a focus on telecommunications, not just for metro and urban areas, but across the whole country, and every few years we're required to undertake an independent review, so that is an independent committee, which is supported by a secretary within the department. Now that review, as you can imagine, it's pretty ... There's a lot of people in regional Australia who are pretty interested in that work. Again, what we did is, even that was an independent review, we worked with the line area, looked at what was in the discussion paper, again the line area had developed up a discussion paper with the review committee, and we said, "Okay, what, again, can we get out of that that we can put into a sort of a short survey, and push that out, and seek views?"

We all know as ourselves, people are time poor. Again, they're not going to necessarily read a hundred and twenty pages of a discussion paper. They want it made simple for them, so pull out, again, the gems in the content, make it easy, encourage them to go to that, give them the call of action through the social content, which we did, and we used the independent heads of the committee to actually push it out through their networks, and we sent it out through various regional networks as well who were key stakeholders, so we asked them to use their networks again, so again, it's that almost on-selling of the message.

For us, again, that was a very specific review, it had a very short time period, but we got over four hundred responses to that, and quite a few through that survey. That was fantastic, and we're really happy about that. Now, that report was tabled in late October last year, and the government released its response in February this year, and what we did do was push back our communications. This is something that I'm also quite passionate about in that you can't just push something out there and say, tell us what you think, and then don't tell them what happens with it.

You're welcome to go have a look at communications.gov.au. This is the top of the Have your say page, so you can see up the top here we have the Have your say, you click on that, and you get a little thing of, yeah, this is what we're about, we want to know what you think about particular issues. If you go to the website and scroll down, you'll see a whole lot of consultations that we've undertaken, go to the communications site you'll also see in each of the key parts of the site, there's little short videos, so talking about engaging people and the work that you do.

One of the take-outs for us from the research I mentioned that we did in 2013 was that most people didn't understand what the department did, people don't even understand, actually, what policy means, what does policy mean, so we did these little one-minute videos for each of the key areas of work across the department, and with the Have your

say, we did a little animation as well, which consists about why we're doing this, why we want to hear from you, and how we're going to work with you. I won't go into that, but I encourage you to go and have a look at that tonight.

The other part of all of that is we're focusing around all of that, we've also done, as part of the digital strategy, our social media playbook, and for most of you, you know what that means, but essentially it's our operational guide for how we're going to do social, and we're just over six months in from releasing that, and we've made some really great headway in terms of our social content. We're really lucky talking about having been a bit subversive, and having a little bit of personality. We like to do that. If you look at our Twitter account, you'll see that we've had some really interesting little tweets in there. One of them, not that long ago, I think it might've been last week or the week before, was in relation to Pokémon Go, and the game got classified. We have classification as part of the department, so we had a little Pokémon sitting on a desktop with the Department of Comms in the background on the screen, and it said, "Pokémon Go has been classified PG."

Then when Star Wars: The Force Awakens, again, yes, I went to see that, when that came out, we did manage to get a Star Wars image, and we had, "This is the rating you've been looking for" and that was the tweet that we went with. We like to try and have a little bit of fun with what we do while still showing that we're government and we are trustworthy. We do have a little bit of personality.

The other bit I just want to talk about is building capability internally. The other part of the work around the digital strategy was all this external work that we've been doing, but then it was building up the internal capability, and we define digital literacy in three ways. Being digitally curious, being digitally effective, and being digitally confident, and what we mean by that is that we want our staff to be able to be curious about trying new things and, for example, it might sound bizarre, but yes, we do do things like Instawalks and Poké-walks at lunch time. It might sound crazy but we do it. We do sessions lunchtime, brown bag sessions where we take people through Twitter and Facebook, and we show them TweetDeck, and all sorts of interesting things. We want them to be curious about those things, we want them to be effective, we want them to then know how to use those platforms, and we want them to be confident about it.

This was, when I talk about it, I'm talking mainly about the social/digital external engagement, but the digital literacy program also picked up our internal business systems, so things like our finance systems and our parliamentary systems, and things that, so do people know, rather than just picking up the phone and ringing the person in that line area, and saying, "How do I do this? How do I do that?", we did little bespoke videos, we did lots of kits, we did lots of lunchtime sessions. That's just you making sure that staff know how to use those things. That sounds simple but it's actually really powerful.

That's where we were going with that one. When we were developing the digital strategy, and we were looking at internal capability, one thing we did do was talk to the ABC and SBS. We're very fortunate they're part of our portfolio, and if you think about

digital disruption, they're two agencies that have really had to tackle that, and have put in place some really fantastic digital products. We had Angela Clark come and talk to us last week or the week before, in the department as part of Innovation Month as well, and she heads up the digital network at ABC, and if you ever get the chance to go and hear Angela talk, I highly recommend it. She's just fantastic.

We took some cues out of work that they'd done, and one of the things that ABC did on their digital literacy was reverse mentoring, so they actually matched up people who were digitally more savvy with some of the journos and others in the organization who were a little bit more resistant to the new technology, and I went, that's a great idea, I'm going to steal that and flog it across our department, and then go for it. We did that, and we had, so in 2014 we had launched the digital literacy training program, was launched by our previous secretary, Drew Clark, and Drew was one of the people who was mentored by one of our graduates.

They set up a time, they went and spoke, and they found out what Drew likes, both professionally and in his personal life, what things interested him, and then they showed him how to set up lists and do all sorts of stuff, so he was like, "Ah, okay," you know, how even to build your LinkedIn profiles and stuff like that. That's the sort of stuff that we talk to our executive about, and I think that had a really positive impact on the rest of the organization because they could see that our own executive are willing to be mentored around those issues, and there are never any dumb questions.

That was one part of it. We also had a company come in and help us do a quick digital skills assessment. If you're thinking about doing something like this, I recommend doing something like that as well, just to get a bit of a feel for what is the level of competency, confidence, and effectiveness of the people within your organization to the digital leaders, and out of the back of that, we identified a program, which we developed, and put in place. As I said, while our focus within my branch is primarily on that sort of external digital and social stuff, we did also look at the internal platforms. We looked at calls to our IT help desk as well, what were most people calling them about, and they were calling about things like video conferencing, and our electronic management system, information system. We did those things, we also had innovation labs, so we held innovation labs, and we brought in people to talk about Google Glasses, and all those sorts of cool, funky things.

We do digital listens. Every week we do a digital listen, and that used to go through our email. We've since launched our new Intranet, and it goes out onto the Intranet, so up on the Intranet, and they're all kept within our learning hub, so the whole program, the digital literacy program was developed in our branch. We ran it for six months, did a trial, tested it, got the evidence, went back to our executive, and said, "There is merit in continuing this," and they said, "Absolutely, keep going," but it's now being run through HR as part of L&D, so we all got happy, just sort of get it going, and hand that on in the right way.

In terms of success, and David and I actually had a conversation about this the other day, do we think we're having an impact in terms of the organization and whether people do

feel like they are achieving these sorts of goals. I would say we're still on a journey, but we've definitely made some progress. For example, when my guys go and sit with a line area and talk to them about content, and what we can do around content, and social content, it's not sort of like, "Why would you be doing that?" which is what we had very early on in the piece. It's now about, oh, okay, well, maybe we could also do this, so we're starting to get more buy-in engagement within our line areas, which is really positive. Staff are really engaging in looking and trying different things.

One of the ways we've done that is through our new Intranet, so I know DHS, for example, had Yammer and things like that for some time. We, without Intranet, put in place an internal social network within it, which is similar to sort of Facebook and Twitter, and all of that. You can see that I had a question about innovation we're doing. We're doing innovation strategy in my branch as well at the moment, and running a call for ideas through it on live platform put to the Intranet. Someone sent me a message saying, talk about the ideas that are published, and that's my response, which is just from yesterday, I think it was yesterday. I just did a quick snapshot of that just to show you.

That's been really important because we're talking to people about all the stuff that we're doing, we're holding training with them, we're using our own stuff, by the way, to do all those face-to-face training. I haven't used any external providers. It's all been our internal champions and experts in the department that we've used for that, so I've run the digital literacy training program for about five grand.

This gave staff then the safe playground to practice what they've been learning, and I think that's also really important, so one of the things we did find though is that when we delivered this Intranet, and it was in July last year, so it's been going for about twelve months now, we had our executive saying, "Anyone can post, anyone can comment, anyone can do that stuff?" and we said, "Yes," and they were like, "whoa!" and we've had not one problem because, as you can see, my face, my name, my handle is there, so if I want to go rogue and say whatever, it's @KUlrick, okay, career limiting move, let's come and have a chat! We've had no issues with that, and I think it really has been a positive thing for the organization, and we have been talking to a range of other agencies about sharing the code behind that with others, and we're always willing to do that as well.

That's probably enough from me. I'm conscious of time, but I just wanted to give you the focus in terms of the external work and then what we're doing internally as well, so I'll leave it there.

David
Pembroke:

There you go, ladies and gentlemen, I promised you and it delivered. That was a great presentation by Kim Ulrich and I love the two examples that she used about the discussion paper, about the triple zero number and also the discussion paper about the regional Telecommunications Act and going out and trying to find people's views. Taking that journalism focus of those big discussion papers and finding the nuggets that she referred to and distributing those. Also, the way that the department used third-party distribution channels and third-party influences to try to get the story out wider than the normal suspects, the usual suspects that we hear from in terms of feedback to discussion papers and policy positioning papers.

There you go, fantastic. I really enjoyed that, so thanks very much. It was really a great event and so yeah, the next couple of weeks we'll be bringing you more from the Case for Content. Thanks again for joining us this week. I really do appreciate everything that you do. If you do have time to jump onto iTunes or Stitcher and give us a review that would be much appreciated. I know it's a bit of a hassle. I tend not to do it, but there you go, I thought I'd ask anyway.

The other thing is just to jump online. We're continuing to produce, I believe, some really high-quality content in this space. If you jump online and give us your email subscription, give us your email, we'll continue to walk in service of your needs as we try to turn government communicators into media companies, so as that we can actually solve this problem of getting out there and building trust as we explain the policy, services, programs, and regulations we're involved in. There you go, thanks again, speak to you next week.