



# How To Effectively Do Curation

**WHEN YOU CREATE CONTENT**, you naturally aim to share that content through social media. But do you know what curation is and how to do it effectively? Many marketers overlook this important third part of the content cycle because they may lack the time or don't see the value. Some may believe they don't want to share material from their peers in case it costs them business: *"What if that shared article is so good that people read their blog instead of mine?"* When done correctly, however, curation can help both your content creation and outreach efforts.

Learn how to understand the curation process and the tools needed to launch a strategy within your department. You'll discover how to approach all of your marketing channels with curation in mind, not simply tucking the idea in at the last second. Curation requires more time and patience, but when done well, you can reap the benefits.

## What Is Curation?

Curation involves compiling relevant materials into one, easily digestible source. This highly sharable content lets you network with peers and establish yourself as an industry leader. After all, if you're able to work with the best blogs and sites in the business, then you must be on top as well.

As you start talking with prominent outlets in your industry and curating their content, the guarded kingdoms begin to lose their walls and opportunities for contributing or

creating content partnerships will open. Today, you might quote a blogger on Twitter or in an article, but tomorrow, you could be a guest on a weekly podcast.

The most prominent examples of curation can be found outside of your blog, on social media and aggregate news sites. The premise behind curation is that your audience doesn't always want to hear from you. They don't only watch one TV show their entire lives or only read one book, so why would they return to only one blog? Besides keeping your audience interested, curation also helps fill in the gaps in your marketing calendar. After all, if you publish only one blog post per week, then what are you going to share for the remaining six days?

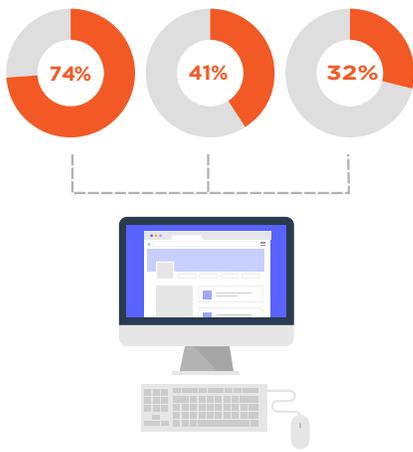
## Why Should You Curate?

Many prominent social media sites emphasize curation in 2016. Facebook recently launched the Facebook Instant Articles service that aggregates the RSS feeds of publishers within their news page. Instead of bouncing from site to site, users can read multiple articles at once in the Facebook interface. Apple [launched a similar platform](#), Apple News, with the goal of curating tailored content to the reader.

Apple and Facebook are embracing the curation trend. Consider these statistics: More than **50 percent of Americans** report consuming news online, while **30 percent** report seeing headline news on social media daily.

Outside of the news and corporate





worlds, regular Internet users are also curating. **Seventy-four percent of Americans** are on at least one social media site, while **41 percent** say they repost content, and **32 percent** do a mix of original post creation and reposting.

Curation isn't a marketing tool alone; it's a social need to interact in a natural way with your audience.

Even if you ignore the majority of people on social platforms and disregard using them to consume and curate content, you can't ignore your direct competition. **More than 80 percent** of marketers report that they curate content, and 50 percent report that curation has increased their brand visibility, thought leadership, and buyer engagement. The Internet runs on curation, so isn't it time you did too?

## How Will You Benefit from Curation?

Curating because everyone else is doing it won't get you far. If you want to reap the benefits of a well-curated blog and social media presence, then you need to invest time, resources, and patience. The good news is that these investments offer strong returns:

### CURATION REDUCES BLOGGING COST AND EFFORT

At the very least, curation will save your [content creation team time](#), energy, and brainpower. Instead of feeling the pressure to create content daily, your team can focus on creating high quality content on a reasonable schedule

for your resources. This way, your social platforms won't go dark, and your original content will shine.

Curation will also open up new opportunities to create exciting content. As your team consumes content from different industry specialists, they might think of follow-up articles that could dive deeper into a topic. They can also find content that would make for [great infographics](#) or draft a rebuttal on a debate.

### LISTENING HELPS UNDERSTAND AUDIENCE NEEDS

Smart curation requires listening. You need to pay attention to what your audience likes, finds helpful, and makes them passionate. The easiest way to do this listening is on social media.

Before you invest in creating a major project, such as a video series or interactive infographic, curate different articles and debates around the topic to see if interest exists. You need only a few seconds to share something and a few hours to decide if there's interest. A baking blog might quickly learn that an audience may not be as interested in learning how to make scones as they are with breakfast croissants.



### CURATION BRINGS YOUR AUDIENCE INTO THE FUNNEL

Curation, whether on your blog or social media pages, will bring new audiences in and familiar audiences back. By developing a community on social media, you are creating daily opportunities for potential customers to interact with your brand. Today, they might laugh at a comic that you share, and tomorrow, they'll click to your site to see what's new. As you curate on your blog and your industry peers share your mentions, their audiences will get to see what you have to offer and introduce them to your brand.

### CASE STUDY: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL

If you like a show from the National Geographic Channel on Facebook, then you'll quickly notice how they curate

content from different shows under their umbrella. “Brain Games” will share a puzzle about “Wicked Tuna,” and “The Great Human Race” will share a photo from “Ice



Road Truckers.” These curations serve as suggestions for more shows that the viewer might enjoy, but also stand on their own as engaging content.

Image via [National Geographic Channel](#)

### CASE STUDY: THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

The New York Public Library also has multiple blogs and channels that communicate together on Twitter. If you enjoy looking at their digitized archives, then you might also enjoy some new historical fiction that their recommendations account shares. These outlets all have original content, but they showcase tweets and blog posts that other accounts’ followers might enjoy.



Image via [@NYPL](#)

## How to Curate Effectively

In order to reap any of the benefits discussed above, brands need to dedicate a similar level of commitment

to a curation plan as their original content plan. In many ways, your curation strategy will follow a similar ideation, execution, and evaluation format.

### CALL TOGETHER AN IDEATION SESSION

Pull your team together and grab a whiteboard; it’s time to create a list of potential curation opportunities. The best way to curate your content is to break out industry publishers into three different sections. During our ideation sessions, we each research different blogs and websites, and then break them into three categories:

- + Publishers with whom we have existing relationships
- + Publishers with whom we would like to have relationships
- + Publishers we are not familiar with, but ones we would like to get to know better

If each person brings 5 to 10 publishers to the table, then you’ll have a month’s worth of curation possibilities within the first few minutes.

### INCLUDE CURATION IN YOUR MARKETING CALENDAR

As we discussed earlier, curation is a great tool if you’re not able to create your own content daily. If you’re going to use curation as a replacement for original content, then you need to add curated content into your marketing calendar. Create a separate line below your content schedule to plan for what curation opportunities you want to include. This way, you’re able to stay on a structured theme and can plan your outreach around your blogging schedule.

For example, the content you post around Shark Week is likely different from most content delivered in other weeks. By planning ahead, you can find great content about sharks and start preparing to reach out to the bloggers to share your mention with them. Be sure to leave a few miscellaneous spaces for content that you find on your own. You never know who’s going to have an amazing post on Shark Week that takes curation priority over all content.

## CHOOSE CONTENT THAT ALLOWS YOU TO CONTACT THE CREATOR

If you plan to reach out to various publishers to let them know you've shared their work, try to choose articles, videos, and graphics that the original publisher would care about sharing. A blogger may be more excited and more likely to reshare your mention if you choose work that was recently published. Sharing an article from 2013 — no matter how relevant it is — won't elicit the same excitement as sharing an e-book that the writer dedicated a month to create.

Also, remember that your goal is to build digital relationships with industry publishers. You're more than welcome to curate Pew Research studies, but what's the likelihood that you build a long-term relationship with them? Make sure most of the content you share is created by an industry professional or has enough sharing power to make up for the lost outreach opportunity.

## SET ASIDE TIME TO LISTEN AND RESPOND

Once you've shared the curated content, set aside time to respond to comments and engage with users that like or share the content. Use this time to explain why certain pieces jumped out at you and why you decided to share them. This approach adds a personal touch and will also endear you to the original creator.

If you simply broadcast other publishers' content, then you're going to face the same problems as when you broadcasted yours. Internet users aren't looking to be talked at all day. Instead, they want to engage with content that's interesting and discuss it.

## Top Sites for Curated Content in 2016

Now that you have a list of what you want to curate and when, you need to discuss where you want to curate. The easy answer is to go where your audience appears, but the realistic answer is more complex.

## START WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media platforms are the easiest sites for brand curation, and many pages exist solely to curate brands that they enjoy. Since no firm rules exist for picking one site over another, test out different markets and see where you get a good response. Pinterest might seem like a female-dominant medium for decorating with mason jars, but a few marketing boards flourish there. Meanwhile, even tattoo artists build LinkedIn profiles and use LinkedIn to show off their portfolios.

We recommend knowing your audience before diving into a new social platform. Listen and learn before you start broadcasting your content or you might end up ignored or mocked.

## CASE STUDY: KATIE COURIC ON TUMBLR

[Yahoo hired Katie Couric](#) in 2013 as the new face of their brand. Her goal was to breathe life into the struggling company and make them seem more relevant. Judging by her Tumblr, she didn't get far.

For the most part, she shared photos similar to those seen on her Facebook or Instagram page, and when she did curate other posts, they were mostly bland phrases that anyone could create. Remember, Tumblr is the same social network where users think [hams sneaking up on people](#) are hilarious, so its users aren't going to be impressed with Live, Laugh, Love.

You can avoid a platform if you don't know how to tackle it. Even if you do, you might not have the resources to juggle that platform among other social media sites. Start with one, make it great, and move on to the next challenge.



Image via [Gizmodo](#)

## MOVE INTO THE WORLD OF RSS FEEDS

Along with social media, strong curators will give attention to their RSS feeds and news aggregation sites. By spending time on Feedly, Scoop.it, Pulse, and Spundge, brands are able to surround themselves with relevant content.

Not only will a strong presence on these sites prove that you're a thought leader in your industry, but they'll also create a resource library for your staff. Now you can easily share your boards with co-workers if they want to cover a particular topic for a client or increase their knowledge base.

Most of these sites will share your content on their own as long as you have a working RSS feed, but the best brands will personalize the content to their audience and actively engage on the platform. Like social media, follow the path of your RSS feeds and choose a few to start engaging with your content. You don't have to work with all of them at once, but you need to understand where your audience comes from through the feeds.

## Advanced Curation Strategies in Popular Brands

Once you have a basic curation campaign running, you can start approaching it with a more advanced strategy. The following are a few great brands that we think do curation well, plus ways you can mimic their success or use their achievements to inspire your own efforts.

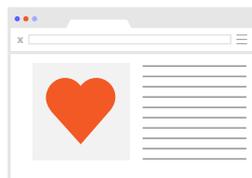
### NPR'S POP CULTURE HAPPY HOUR

The bulk of NPR's "[Pop Culture Happy Hour](#)" is content creation. For an hour, a group of diverse panelists approach a topic popular with the masses from multiple angles. These panelists argue whether that topic is good, bad, or boring. At the end, panelists get a chance to share what's making them happy this week. By the end of

this 10- to 15-minute curation segment, the audience is left with books to read, podcast recommendations, or a funny story from one of the hosts.

Curation can be as simple as listing what you think is good that day.

[Seventy percent of people](#) have expressed an interest in podcasting, and 30 percent of people have listened to a podcast in the past 30 days. Both video media and podcasting are easily consumable and easy to create. If you want to produce a podcast, but you worry about the pressure to constantly create new content, consider inviting three or four industry leaders to curate one together. The topic can be simple, such as "X scary trends in Y business," and you can treat the podcast more like a roundtable. In the end, you'll have curated ideas that the audience can learn from.



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### DEZEEN'S BEST READER COMMENTS OF THE WEEK

Everyone knows the best part of the post is the comments. The writer might try to be smart, but the audience can — and will — come up with better one-liners.

DeZeen, an [architecture and design magazine](#), has embraced this idea by creating a "Best Reader Comments of the Week" recap. They feature the stories that received the most comments and how the audience reacted. What makes this article great is that the author responds with follow-up reactions. In this way, articles act as discussions that start with the original post.

Even if you don't get many comments, you can create a recap article about the previous week's content. You can offer follow-up news if a story is breaking or summarize the content for a "in case you missed it" series. Plus, if your readers know they might get featured, they might be more inclined to comment.

### L.L. BEAN ON PINTEREST

If you look at [L.L. Bean's Pinterest board](#), they have no problem going off-topic as long as they stay on-brand.

In fact, L.L. Bean has a board dedicated to man's best friend, with pictures of dogs and puppies. The company doesn't go off-topic because people like puppies; rather, the company stays on-brand to create a lifestyle.

If you manage a hyper-niche blog, such as marketing, baking, or fashion, then curation is a great tool to branch out and share different types of content. A baking blog could easily share a soup recipe that a friend published, especially if the blog curator pairs the soup recipe with a fresh bread recipe to create a meal. A smart curator will use social media platforms and cross-channel promotions to show off personality and let audiences meet the brand on a more intimate level.

This advice isn't for individual bloggers only. The Internet likes to know who is behind the account, so don't be afraid to peek out from behind the curtain and share the occasional baby animal video.

### THE COUNTRY OF SWEDEN ON TWITTER

In 2011, when most brands were beginning to sign up for Twitter, a few marketers in Sweden had an idea. They handed their Twitter account to a new Swede every week, curating the voices of the Swedish people one week at a time. [The Next Web](#) dubbed this approach "either genius



It takes one person to create, but a village to curate.

or insanity," as the people behind the account weren't required or encouraged to stick to pro-Sweden, PR-approved phrases.

This approach led to a lot of sex jokes, news about dying relatives, and possibly some drunk tweeting.

We can debate all day whether this account was a success or failure, but in the end, the concept was a win because of the brand's willingness to take a risk. Curation will require countless amounts of experimentation, and you're going to have to get used to falling on your face. As long as you keep trying and sharing — and perhaps

keep a prewritten apology handy — then, eventually, you'll have more wins than losses.

As you start to invest in curation, you will find that the three stages of the content life cycle blend into one. You will reach out to connections to create curated content and vice versa. The more creative you get with your curation strategy, the more you're going to use your relationships and internal resources. Imagine what can happen when the rest of the office takes an interest in what you're doing.

It takes one person to create, but a village to curate.

## COPYPRESS

CopyPress is a full service content marketing company with over 5 years of experience creating and promoting digital content.