

FIVE THINGS THE OPTIMISER DATA TELLS US ABOUT ENGAGING WITH AUDIENCES ON SOCIAL MEDIA



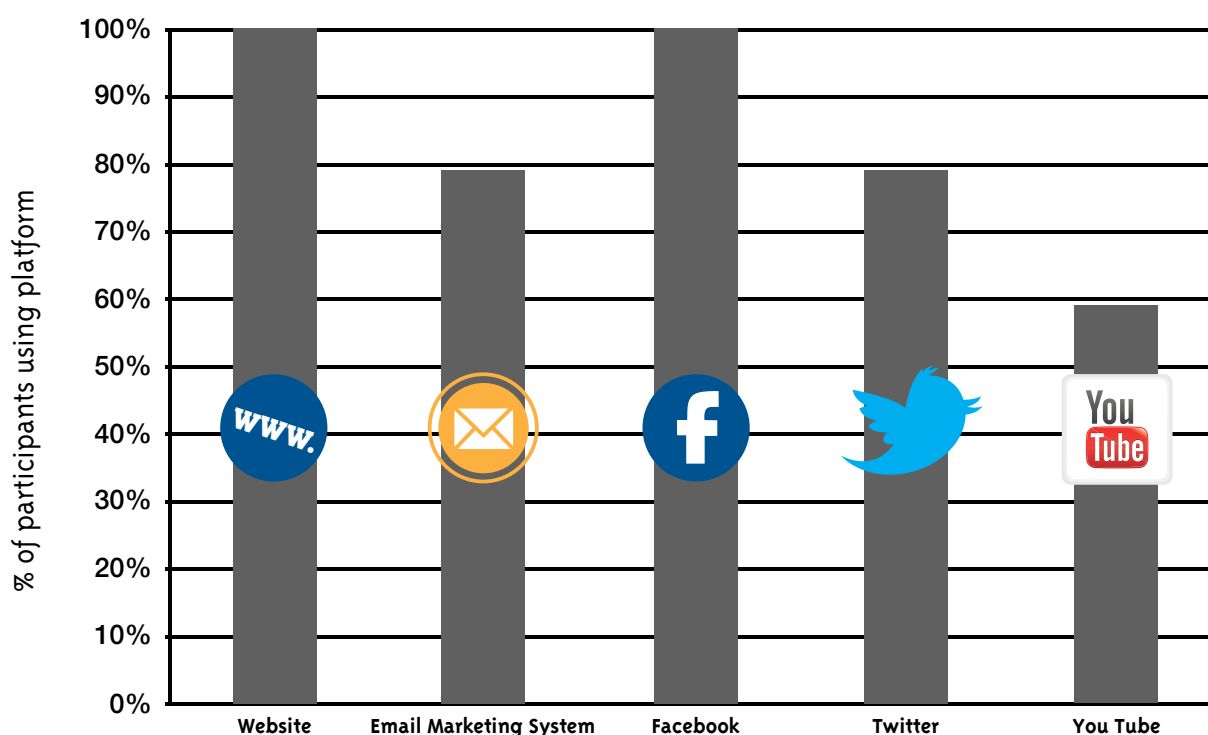
Measuring social media impact in the New Zealand arts sector

Social media has been a game-changer for the New Zealand arts sector over the last few years. Arts organisations can now talk directly with supporters, reach new audiences, capture the attention of influencers and encourage word-of-mouth communication. Increased use of mobile devices, coupled with the ease of creating and sharing digital content, has increased social media's importance and impact. New Zealand arts managers can tap into the global 'content marketing' trend to tell their stories more widely and easily.

The ability to capture and compare sector-wide social media data via the [Optimiser online marketing benchmarking programme](#)¹ has allowed us to measure the impact of social media on the New Zealand arts industry for the first time. Data from the 38 organisations in the Optimiser pilot has highlighted a number of trends related to social media engagement with audiences.

In the pilot year (1 July 2012 – 30 June 2013) we collected data from the three social media platforms most commonly used by New Zealand arts organisations – Facebook, Twitter and YouTube – as well as from websites and email marketing. We are continuing to collect a second year of data, which will be compared with the first and is enabling us to undertake mini-studies and ongoing analysis of particular trends.

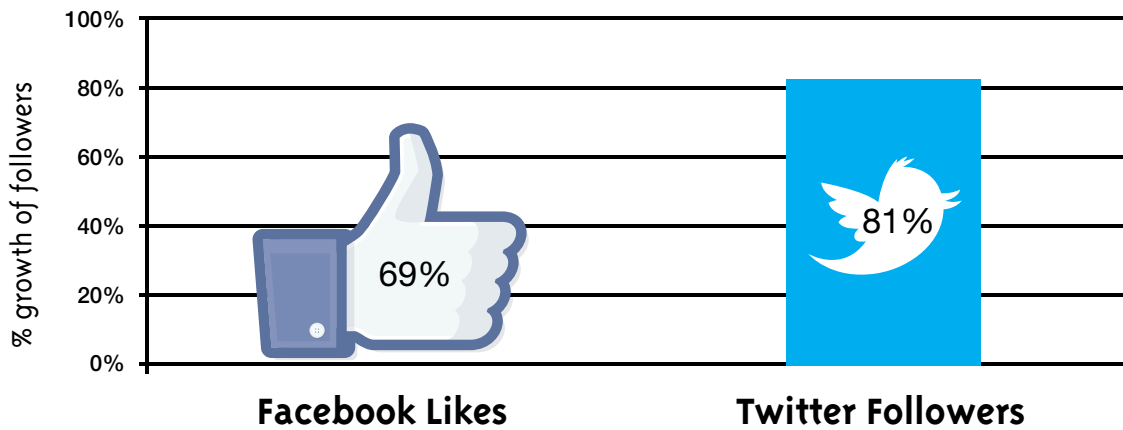
Fig 1: Online channel usage by Optimiser pilot participants



One of the first trends to emerge from the data in the pilot year was the extraordinary growth of social media use in the sector over the previous 12 months.

¹ <http://optimisernz.com/>

Fig 2: Growth of Facebook likes and Twitter followers (1 July 2012 – 30 June 2013)



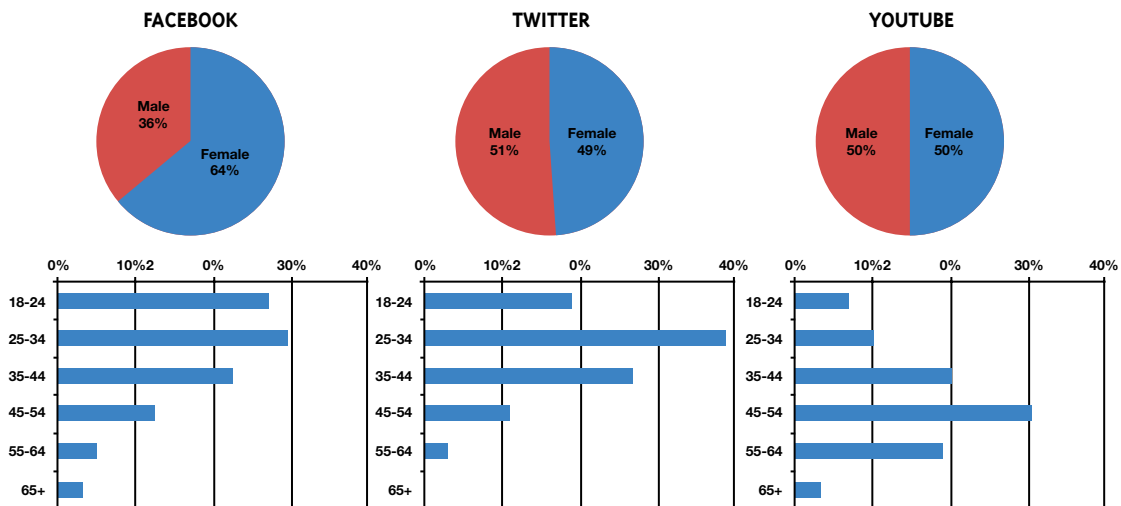
So, what is the Optimiser data telling us about the opportunities, challenges and successes of engaging with our audiences on social media?

1. Social media connects us with specific audience segments

Who's engaging with New Zealand arts organisations on social media?

Optimiser has enabled us for the first time ever to see real data about who is engaging with New Zealand arts organisations on social media.

Fig 3: Demographic breakdown of followers on Optimiser participant social media channels, as at 30 June 2013.



Data from the Optimiser participants' Facebook, Twitter and YouTube channels shows specific differences in demographic amongst followers:

- Facebook - higher numbers of female followers, with many aged under 35
- Twitter - significant proportion aged 25-34 (both male and female)
- YouTube - significant proportion aged 45-54 (both male and female)

Understanding this – as well as which demographics are following their own social media channels – can help New Zealand arts organisations match their audience development efforts and communications messages with the most appropriate platforms.

Is a potential untapped audience just one click away?

We've long understood the opportunity presented by our audience members' friends and networks. 'Friend-get-friend' campaigns were a common promotional tactic in the days of traditional marketing.

Now the word-of-mouth opportunity has been enhanced by access to the social media networks of our supporters. Compiling the Optimiser data, we discovered that the Facebook fans (or followers) of the participant organisations collectively had an enormous number of Facebook friends:

31,442,741
**Collective friends of Facebook fans across
38 Optimiser participant organisations**

The average number of 'friends per fan' across the participants at the close of the pilot was 277. This aligns with 2014 research from the [Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project](#)², which found that half of all adult Facebook users have more than 200 friends in their network.

Opportunities to find like-minded audiences

This represents an opportunity for New Zealand arts organisations to connect with potential audiences who have connections and similarities to their current supporters. Using Facebook advertising, for example, we can target friends of those who have already liked our pages and segment further using demographic and interest targeting. 'Lookalike' targeting takes this one step further by enabling an organisation to find people on Facebook with similar characteristics to their existing audience base.

Learn more about using targeted Facebook advertising and 'lookalike audiences' in the 2014 Creative New Zealand Optimise webinar [Effective use of Facebook advertising](#)³.

2. It's about engagement, not just followers

One-way road on Twitter

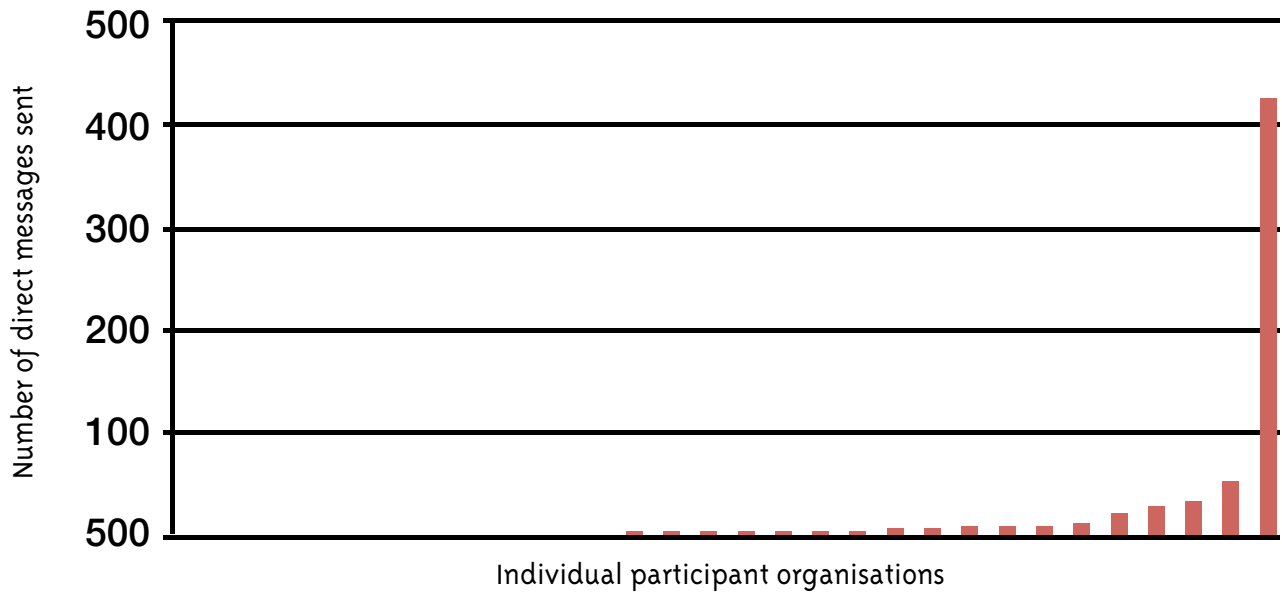
As part of the Optimiser pilot, we tracked 30 organisations using Twitter to varying degrees during the 12 months 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013. These 30 organisations generated 11,584 tweets – about 386 annually per organisation. Further, these 30 organisations sent a total of 653 'direct messages' (private messages sent to individual followers) via Twitter.

What emerged was that of the total 653 direct Twitter messages, 65% were generated by one organisation. The average was 22, and in fact 50% of the organisations had sent fewer than three direct messages to followers. This indicates that Twitter has so far been used predominantly as a broadcast vehicle and not as a responsive vehicle for dialogue and service.

² [6 new facts about Facebook](#), Aaron Smith, PewResearch.org

³ <http://bit.ly/1wo1ACq>

Fig 4: Number of responses per organisation to followers using direct messages



Are we generating conversation?

We extracted data from all Optimiser participant pages over one randomly selected week in November 2013 to calculate the average 'Talking About This' (TAT) rate. TAT measures the number of individuals who have created a story about your page in the last seven days.

We found an average TAT rate of 7.07%, which appears to be relatively high when compared to other worldwide studies. (For example, 2013 data tracked by [AgoraPulse](#)⁴ showed an average TAT rate of 2% for pages with less than 10,000 'likes' across nearly 5,000 pages and 168 industries.)



Delving further into our own research, we found two common attributes amongst those pages with high 'TAT' scores (10%-plus). One or both of the following factors was in play:

- Highly frequent posting (daily or more often)
- Backdrop of a major event (fundraiser, contest final or big concert)

Similarly, those with a 'TAT' rate under 2% were consistently in a 'downtime' of activity and had dropped their Facebook activity as a result.

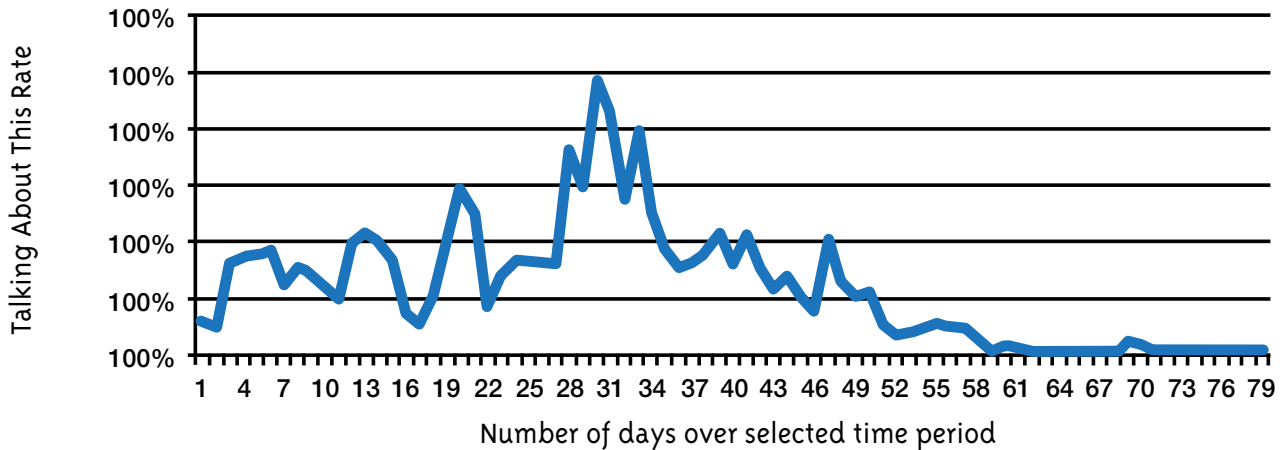
When looking at 'TAT' rates it's important to remember the impact of events and activity, high profile marketing campaigns, audience demographics and/or Facebook advertising.

⁴ [Average Facebook Engagement Metrics: How Does Your Brand Stack Up?](http://searchenginewatch.com) Jessica Lee, <http://searchenginewatch.com>

How do we maintain engagement?

The Optimiser data shows Facebook engagement typically plunging when organisations such as Festivals are in a hiatus between events. The following graph from an annual arts Festival that was part of the Optimiser pilot shows the typical pattern. The daily 'TAT' rates gradually increase until they reach a peak during the Festival event, then drop off dramatically to almost 0% when the focus on the page from both the organisation and the audiences wanes after the event has taken place.

Fig 5: Optimiser pilot data from annual arts festival showing typical pattern of TAT rate



Optimiser participant, [Southern Lakes Festival of Colour](http://www.festivalofcolour.co.nz/)⁵ has specifically addressed this issue developed using 'content buckets', as described by General Manager Lindsey Schofield in this [Optimise Coaching Case Study](http://bit.ly/iwolt9S)⁶.

3. Image posts are trumping text posts

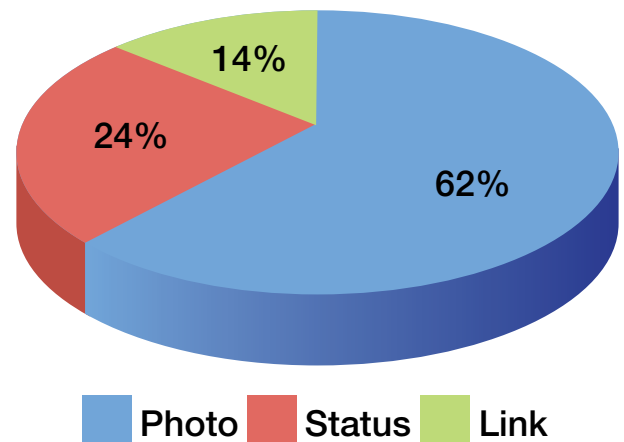
Image posts are getting more engagement on Facebook

According to March 2014 research published by [eMarketer](http://www.emarketer.com/)⁷ photos are the most engaging type of content on Facebook. They account for 75% of content posted by Facebook pages worldwide.

This month we looked at data from a cross-section of five Facebook pages from the continuing Optimiser participant pool and identified the 10 posts for each that had scored the highest for engagement (likes, comments, shares and clicks) between March and June.

Of the total 50 posts with the highest engagement 62% were photos, compared with 24% that were (text) statuses and 14% that were links.

Fig 6: Breakdown of 50 high-performing Facebook posts by post type



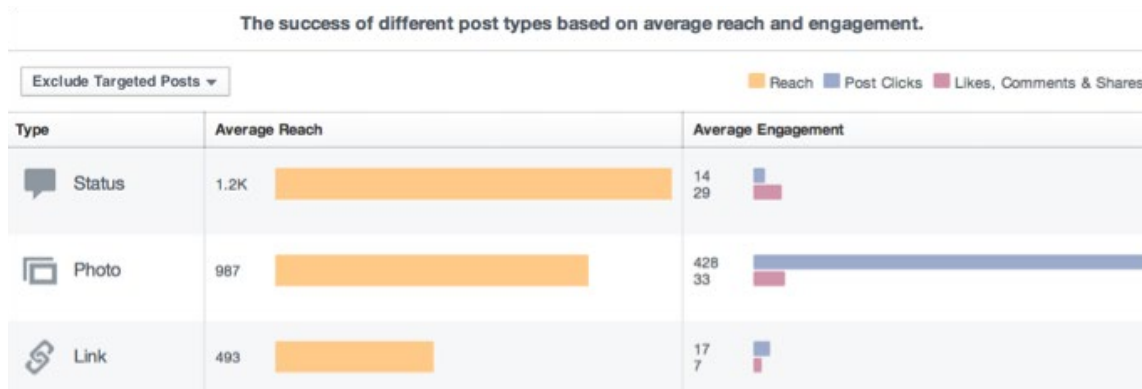
⁵ <http://www.festivalofcolour.co.nz/>

⁶ <http://bit.ly/iwolt9S>

⁷ Social Photos Generate More Engagement, Patricia Redsicker, www.socialmediaexaminer.com

The example below from one of our ongoing Optimiser participants, which we sourced this month, shows photos achieved the highest engagement level of all types of posts between March and June 2014.

Fig 7: Data from selected Optimiser participant showing success of different post types



Tweets with images have more impact

From external data we also know that images are receiving more engagement on Twitter. [HubSpot](#) research from November 2013⁸ shows that tweets with images have a 36% increase in clicks and a 41% increase in re-tweets.

Savvy international arts organisations, such as San Francisco Ballet, are filling their Twitter feeds with engaging images.

Fig 8: Tweets with images are getting greater engagement.



⁸ A/B Test Finds 55% Increase in Leads When Images Added to Tweets, Brittany Leaning, HubSpot

4. Social is going mobile

Growth in mobile visits arts organisation websites

One of the most startling findings from the Optimiser pilot was the growth of visits to participant websites using mobile devices (mobile visits).

On average, visits by via mobile phone increased by 40.17% and via tablet by 55.24%.

Fig 9: Average growth in website visits per device between July 2012 and July 2013.

| 38 Organisations | Desktop | Mobile | Tablet |
|----------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|
| Average growth in website visits | -15.35% | 40.17% | 55.24% |

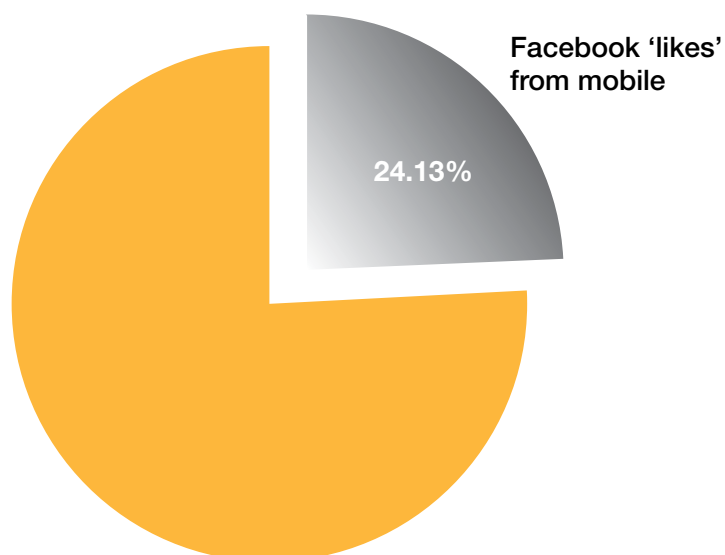
It's not just web visits; it's social too

We were able to see from the pilot data that mobile visits to social media are also growing at a rapid rate.

Of all new 'likes' on Optimiser participant Facebook pages in the pilot year, 24.13% came from mobile devices, which was an increase of 19.90% over the previous year

Across the 17 YouTube channels belonging to Optimiser participants, the percentage of videos being played on mobile devices ranged from 4.10% - 35%.

Fig 10: % of Facebook 'likes' sourced from a mobile device 1 July 2012 – 30 June 2013



5. Video – an opportunity waiting?

According to [Adcorp](#), 2.5 million New Zealanders (55.76% of total NZ population) accessed YouTube video in November 2013⁹. Yet, only 21/38 Optimiser participants have an active YouTube channel and on average only 1.19 videos per week are being uploaded to participant YouTube channels.

⁹ Social Media Statistics – November 2013, Adcorp NZ

Our Optimiser data demonstrates low use of video to engage audiences. This contrasts with evidence from Cisco¹⁰ showing that video will soon account for 69% of all consumer Internet traffic.

New Zealand Comedy Festival and Chamber Music New Zealand are two Optimiser participants successfully using video to increase social media engagement. They share their case studies in the 2013 Creative New Zealand Optimise webinar [Creating digital content on a shoestring](#)¹¹.

What is Optimiser?

Optimiser is a pilot project in the Creative New Zealand Optimise online marketing capability building programme, led by senior arts marketing consultant Vicki Allpress Hill of The Audience Connection. Online marketing data is collected and benchmarks developed so arts marketers can compare their results against those of other similar New Zealand arts organisations.

The Optimiser Benchmarking Programme is a really important part of the puzzle for us, it is vital for giving us context to our online results”

Lauren Whitney - Associate Director New Zealand Comedy Trust & NZ International Comedy Festival.

The Optimiser pilot commenced early in 2012 and first results were published late 2013.

We acknowledge with gratitude our Optimiser project partner Tim Robert of ARTS Australia who made a major contribution to this work during the pilot phase. Tim sadly passed away in April 2014 and is very much missed.

Read more about Optimiser at <http://optimisernz.com/>

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¹⁰ Cisco Visual Networking Index: Forecast and Methodology, 2013-2018

¹¹ <http://bit.ly/iwoHYfW>

