



# STONE WARD

## Reddit 101

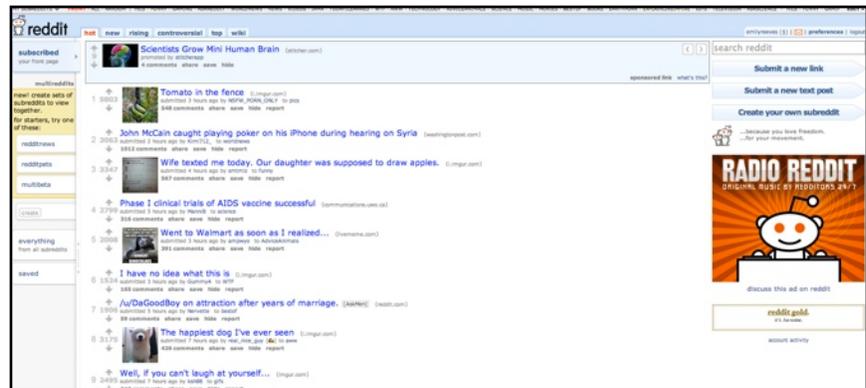
by Emily Reeves 8.2013

### Overview

More and more we are hearing about Reddit as a channel for reaching and talking with consumers. But what it is and how do you use it? And how might a marketer use it? This digital whitepaper explains Reddit and provides tips for using it.

### What is Reddit?

Reddit calls itself “The Front Page of the Internet.” Reddit is a social content sharing and news aggregator site. It is a community-regulated platform fostering discussion, research, and news dissemination. Despite a user base that may initially seem to lean toward the geeky and liberal, Reddit is actually richly varied with thousands of user-created and moderated “subreddits” that focus on a diverse range of topics, from silly "AdviceAnimal" memes to highly technical scientific discussions.



Reddit is characterized by an ultra-simple user interface that basically consists of links, thumbnail images, and a user policy that prizes anonymity and free speech. Although anonymity on any other site creates a breeding ground for spam, Reddit posts are mediated by the voting system in place and therefore there is a high integrity of submissions.



Reddit has more than thirty five million unique visitors per month. Celebrities use it to interact with the community for promotional purposes, “The Colbert Report” and “The Daily Show” have mentioned it, President Obama used it during his last campaign and it's even known for hosting the largest Secret Santa program in the world. While the community takes a strong stance

against spam and blatant promotional attempts, there are still ways that marketers can take advantage of the vibrant and dynamic Reddit community.

It's a very personal space that is made up of a large and vocal community, and they're quick to act if they feel the space is being misused. That means you can't just drop in, spam them with your content and leave. What you can do, though, is learn the lay of the land, learn what is and isn't acceptable, and figure out the best way to get involved with the massive community they've built.

Reddit offers the immediacy and vibrancy of Twitter with the intelligent conversation of Google+ and the focus of Facebook Groups. It also offers paid advertising with basic analytics to track performance (click throughs, impressions, bar charts over time, downloadable stats).

#### *Who is on Reddit?*

The idea of summing up the intricacies of a 10 million user per day community is not possible, but in general the Reddit user base as a whole could be described as trending young, skeptical, liberal, geeky and internet-literate. Many of Reddit's users are in their 20's and 30's and are using Reddit as a tool for obtaining and digesting the daily news, interesting articles and connecting with like-minded individuals.

#### *Why should marketers be interested in Reddit?*

These days publishing a blog post means far more than simply writing an essay in WordPress and hitting the publish button. As professional link builders, web marketers and search engine optimizers, we know it takes a lot of hard work to take content from nothing to something. The web is awash with articles on every subject imaginable so how do you make sure your original, quality content soars above the competition? Reddit should be considered as an engine for driving traffic or building links back to your website and other digital properties.

#### *What are some basic terms you should know before using Reddit?*

**Voting:** Users **vote up or down** on various links, original ideas, pictures, videos and any other piece of content they find share-worthy.

**Karma:** Users are given a "**link karma score**" associated with their username for each "up vote" one of their submissions receives. They're also given a separate "**comment karma score**" when one of their comments is given an "up vote." Often the top ranked comments are more popular than the article itself and that merit-based interaction is a huge part of why this community is so powerful and why the content making it to the front page is so great.

**AMA:** It can be tough building trust between a site's users and a larger brand. If that's the case, it might be appropriate for you to take part in an AMA (Ask Me Anything) where you take part in a discussion to answer users questions about your brand, your products,

or just ask for advice that's related to what you do. The key to these AMA sessions, though, is transparency and a willingness to handle the tough questions in a tactful way. Make sure that your PR team is on board before taking part, and make sure that you have a way to address the tough or inappropriate questions that might come up.

### *What is the one overriding rule you should abide by on Reddit?*

The culture of respect for anonymity on Reddit also plays a key role in the community. People are more honest when they know their privacy is valued and protected. Unlike Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social networks, these postings will never be tied back to a user's real name, unless they choose to identify themselves. While this is useful in many ways, the level of honesty this creates leads to more accurate and relevant postings.

### *What are subreddits and how do you use them?*

A subreddit is a user-created subsection or subforum of the main Reddit site. Anyone can create a subreddit focused on the topic of their choice, and Reddit users have certainly taken advantage of this, creating thousands of subreddits covering nearly every topic under the sun. As a marketer, you can observe a community that's part of your target demographic market, or for larger brand one that is devoted to your products.

As a marketer, the opportunity to observe a community that either fits your specific demographic segment or, in the case of larger brands, is completely devoted to your products, is extremely valuable.

For example, there are subreddits devoted to Coca Cola, Taco Bell, Ford Mustangs, Nike, and the list goes on. The feedback and opinions from Reddit users who are passionate enough to participate in a dedicated community is a great source of consumer insight that can drive research and development as well as future marketing campaigns. In fact, these subreddits often do their own research and share it publicly.

While raw and rough, Reddit has also done some immense good via its *r/charity* and *r/smartgiving* subreddits.

Get started by picking an on-topic subreddit that has enough readers (over 20,000 seems like a good minimum) who will be impressed, fascinated, or generally

**4.4 billion:** Page views/month

**62.3 million:** Unique visitors/month

**16 minutes:** Average time on site per session

**17 million:** Votes cast per day

**4,206:** Subreddits

**22:** Employees

**199 million:** Avg page views per employee per month

**165,000:** Average number of visitors on Reddit at any given time during U.S. workday

**88%:** Percentage of visitors that visit multiple times per day

**300,000:** Participants in RedditGift's Secret Santa-style gift exchanges

**78 percent:** Percentage of paying Reddit gold members who could turn off ads on site, but choose not to

engaged by the article or link you are submitting. This is where you'll have to do a bit of research if you're not familiar with Reddit's meta-sphere. Take a look at a few subreddits such as [IAMA](#), where famous and/or interesting people answer questions from the community or [TODAYILEARNED](#) where Redditors share interesting factoids with one another. You can even create your own subreddit (if you have the time to moderate a new community) or consider submitting to local subreddits such as [/r/Seattle](#) when appropriate. You're able to post to more than one subreddit but the community typically frowns upon it. You can post to multiple sections of the site by including the tag [xpost from r/nameofsubreddittheoriginalwaspostedto] and most people won't down-vote you on principal as they normally might.

Get creative and try to copy what some of the other top articles have done. Redditors appreciate wit, intelligence and humor more than anything. It also doesn't hurt if coincidentally your content directly [references the Reddit community directly](#) through the AskReddit subreddit. Many attempt to game the system by buying upvotes, reposting old content or simply spamming Reddit but even if this works once eventually you and/or your domain may be banned and the entire community is worse for it. If you consistently post honest, legitimate, contributing links to the community (with your own stuff sprinkled in) you will succeed.

### AskReddit SubReddit

This subreddit gives users the ability to ask direct questions and receive a wide range of answers from the general community. For marketers, it is essentially a focus group on steroids. The trick is asking questions that aren't necessarily all about the brand. Instead, ask things that are related to it, like a recent thread that asked fast food employees what menu items should never be ordered.

**Reddiquette** is an **informal** expression of the values of many redditors, as written by redditors themselves. Please abide by it the best you can.

## Please do

- **Remember the human.** When you communicate online, all you see is a computer screen. When talking to someone you might want to ask yourself "Would I say it to the person's face?" or "Would I get jumped if I said this to a buddy?"
- **Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life.**
- **Read the rules of a community before making a submission.** These are usually found in the sidebar.
- **Read the reddiquette.** Read it again every once in a while. Reddiquette is a living, breathing, working document which may change over time with growth.
- **Moderate based on quality, not opinion.** Well written and interesting content can be worthwhile, even if you disagree with it.
- **Use proper grammar and spelling.** Intelligent discourse requires a standard system of communication. Be open for gentle corrections.
- **Keep your submission titles factual and opinion free.** If it is an outrageous topic, share your crazy outrage in the comment section.
- **Look for the original source of content,** and submit that. Often, a blog will reference another blog, which references another, and so on and so forth through those references and submit a link to the creator, who actually deserves the traffic.
- **Post to the most appropriate community possible.** Also, consider cross posting if the contents fits more communities.
- **Vote.** If you think something contributes to conversation, upvote it. If you think it does not contribute to the subreddit it is posted in or is off topic, downvote it.
- **Search for duplicates before posting.** Redundancy posts add nothing new to previous conversations. That said, sometimes bad timing, a particularly interesting story to fail to get noticed. Feel free to post something again if you feel that the earlier posting didn't get the attention it deserved.
- **Link to the direct version of a media file** when the page it was found on doesn't add any value.

### *What should you know to get started using Reddit?*

1. **Use it as a user first.** Reddit is a very user-driven community, which gives the platform its strength. Getting familiar with Reddit's unique culture and acronyms will let you select the appropriate subreddit to use. Also, each subreddit has its own brand of the larger "Redditiquette."
2. **Know your moderator.** Unless you control the subreddit and are a moderator, you'll be dealing with one, especially if the subreddit you're targeting — or the one that deals with your brand — was created by someone other than you. Moderators have the ability to post their own content, remove links, and otherwise stymie your marketing efforts. Make sure to be on good terms with them when you post content to the targeted subreddit.
3. **Own your efforts, but remember that you are a guest.** If Twitter can be described as a highway, LinkedIn as your job, Google Communities as your after school club, and Facebook as your cluttered living room, Reddit can be described as your friend's garage. It's that place where there's all sorts of cool stuff, but it's messy and you have to remember that you're a guest.
4. **Learn Reddiquette.** Redditors (registered Reddit members) reward original, engaging content. Spam techniques won't work on Reddit, as such content will be immediately downvoted and forced off of the subreddit front page. This is different from owning a Twitter handle or a Facebook page. Community management skills are everything on Reddit, so an understanding of Redditiquette is crucial to success.
5. **Use correct grammar.** Correct usage of grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc. serves the primary purpose of avoiding invalidation of your message due to others perceiving you as being dumb. Yes, the function of written language is to get a message across, and it can still get across if you spell things incorrectly or your sentences are phrased strangely, but there are always corollary messages conveyed simultaneously.
6. **Don't plagiarize.** If you appreciate something, chances are others will, too. Honor it by crediting the source, and it may even pay off by means of residual effects — increased traffic to a site, thereby increasing ad impressions and revenue, for example. Also, people here are from all backgrounds and many, many levels of knowledge of many, many subjects. There's also a good chance someone else will have seen whatever you're passing off as your own, and they will call you out on it.
7. **In general, just care.** Think before you write or post something. This site and community are only as good as you make it. That also being said, make sure you adjust your subreddit subscriptions to accommodate your personal interests.
8. **Be open-minded.** Don't discount any particular political stances simply because of which side endorses them; judge what you see and hear for what they are.

*One final tip:*

It's no secret that journalists regularly read Reddit. You can just look at *The Huffington Post* or any other big web properties to see where they derive their inspiration. Attempting to get the Reddit community to pick up your content directly is not always the best idea, but popular questions often end up getting a broader distribution throughout the web. That may be the best approach.

*Interested in learning more?*

Contact Emily Reeves at [ereeves@stoneward.com](mailto:ereeves@stoneward.com) for help planning your brand's digital engagements.

*About Stone Ward*

Stone Ward is a full-service ad agency. Established in 1984 by Larry Stone and Millie Ward, today the agency employs 52, with capitalized billings exceeding \$40 million. The agency's offices are in Chicago and Little Rock.

*About Emily Reeves, Director of Digital Innovation & Insight Planning*

As the agency's digital champion, Emily Reeves proves that Stone Ward has the offerings, expertise and alliances to bring sound, measurable digital innovation to our clients' marketing efforts. A seasoned communications strategist with a passion for all things digital, Emily has distinguished herself as an avid blogger, social media speaker, industry observer and moderator. In her role as digital thought leader for Stone Ward, Emily collaborates with our team of agency leaders in creative, brand management, public relations, media, digital technology and video production to create relevant ways to tell our clients' stories in the digital space and to provide meaningful measurement and analytics as a tool for calculating our efforts. Emily's focus on measurement extends to her duties as the agency's research leader, where she works with Stone Ward clients to develop and execute research plans that inform integrated client marketing efforts.

*Sources*

[Reddit For Social Media Marketers: A Symbiosis](#)

[The Right and Wrong Way To Use Reddit \(For Brand Marketers\)](#)

[A Web Marketers Guide to Reddit](#)

[What Is Reddit and How Can Marketers Use It?](#)

[How Marketers Can Get The Most From Reddit](#)

[How Marketers Can Use Reddit](#)

[Reddiquette](#)

[Reddit 101](#)

[15 Facts Brands Should Know About Reddit](#)