

## Easter Tweets

By Chris Gledhill, Managing Director, PDMS



Easter Monday, fantastic weather again, and the deal is, get this article written and I can go out and enjoy it. We often seem to have good weather at Easter and this year it has really been helping to show the Island at its best. Friday saw a massive turnout for the 10K run in Port Erin with students from all over the UK competing with all of the usual local suspects. On Saturday some of the same lunatics and lots of other visitors 'enjoyed' spectacular views on the mountain marathon ([www.gov.im/tourism/mountainmarathon.xml](http://www.gov.im/tourism/mountainmarathon.xml)).

Not only were the mountains filled with strange creatures but the calm weather shows off our marine life,. On Saturday evening we went kayaking with Adventurous experiences (one of Digital Design's most enthusiastic customers [www.adventurousexperiences.com](http://www.adventurousexperiences.com)) and were treated to an escort of nosy seals; some so bold that they would come up and tug on the toggles at either end of the boat. Yesterday, walking along the cliffs near Bradda Head we saw a pod of dolphins close in to the shore (this was particularly exciting because we initially decided that they were killer whales).

So what exactly is the point of all this chatter? OK we had a good weekend, but why do I think you would care... And there we have it, the fundamental problem with social media for business people – we just aren't that interesting! Sorry I missed a bit out, this weekend, as well as a few country walks and a bit of sporting voyeurism, I have been experimenting with the social media phenomenon of the moment, Twitter. The idea behind Twitter is to regularly upload snippets of information, photos and web links to your 'micro blog' (i.e. twitter web page) which people can then follow to receive regular updates on your sickeningly interesting life.

Twitter has been around for a couple of years now but, as is the way with these things, has recently become big news, popularised by celebrities such as Stephen Fry (409,575 followers

as we speak). Now as far as I am concerned Mr Fry has several unfair advantages, he is famously witty and does actually have an interesting life. He also appears regularly on TV which does increase his public profile somewhat.

For the rest of us it's a bit more difficult! The very process of twittering seems to lead me to the realisation that my domestic life consists mainly of opportunities to provide transport and financial support to teenagers, whilst the most interesting aspects of my professional life should generally be treated with a degree of discretion (if I want to keep a reasonable proportion of my customers or staff).

So does that mean that social sites like Twitter have nothing to offer business? Well no, we just shouldn't expect to use them like celebrities do. Actually Twitter has some rather attractive features for business, particularly if you regard it as a notification mechanism for news and events. In effect twitter can be used in much the same way as a RSS (news) feed to publicise links to information on the company's own web site or elsewhere on the net. It can also be a cheap and effective way to publicise job vacancies or other requirements.

Also because people choose to subscribe they can be addressed directly, although this should be handled with care if we want them to stay connected! Also, unlike conventional news feeds it is possible to explore the connections of those connected to you and thereby gain a better understanding of their interests.

There are, however, a couple of things we should all remember about social media before we embark on a full scale web 2.0 charm offensive! Firstly it is social rather than professional and consequently not designed for formal communication, and like social venues in the real world very susceptible to fashion. So by all means build social media into your communications strategy but not at the expense of maintaining your own credible and effective presence on-line.

On the other hand don't be afraid to experiment a bit and don't be afraid to be boring! There is nothing wrong with using sites like Twitter to publicise what you do, so long as you don't expect to be as popular as Stephen Fry!