

# The Internet: *not for everybody.*

Roger Pynn, APR, CPRC

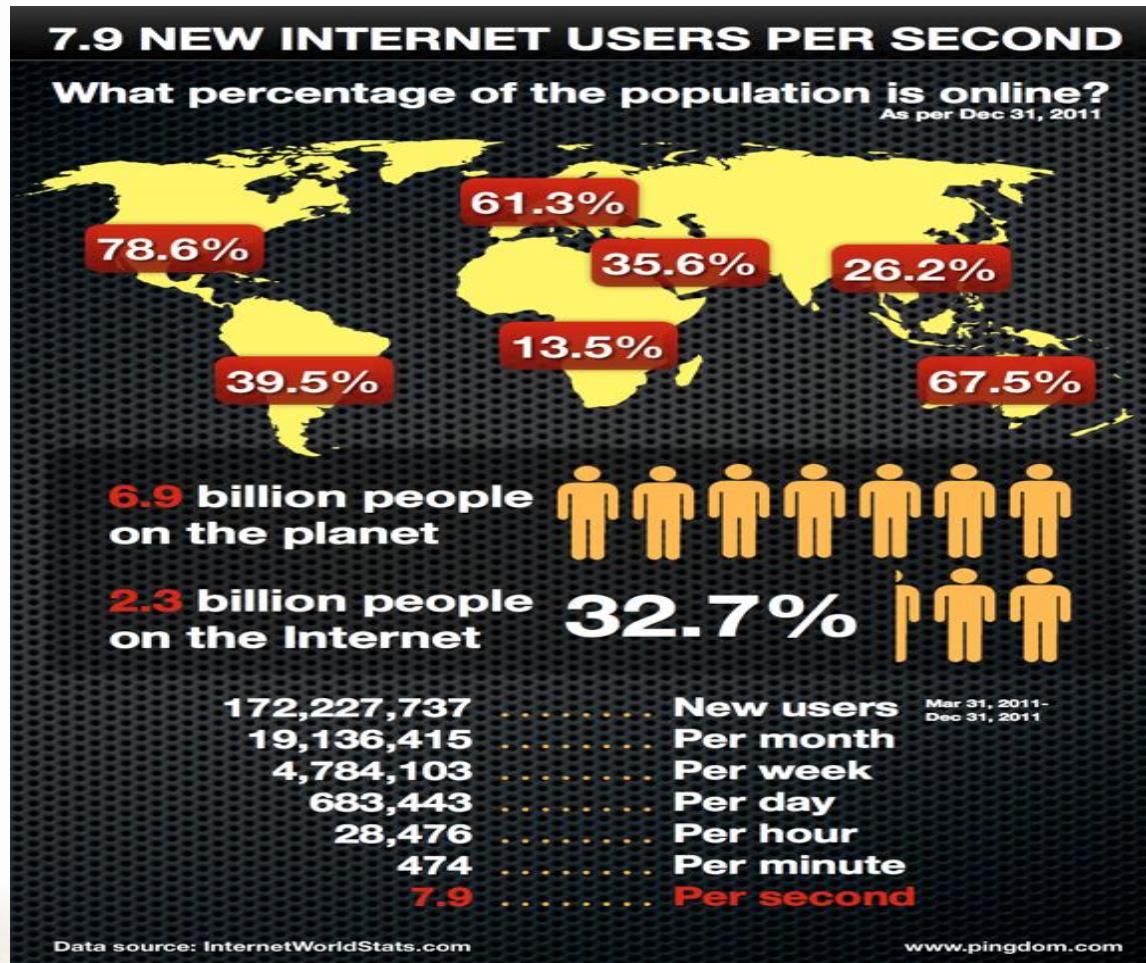


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# Not for Everybody?



# Not for Everybody?

- 273 million US users
- 2.2 billion worldwide
- 30% of US homes have broadband (ranking 23<sup>rd</sup> of the world's top 25 countries)
- 350 million websites on the Internet (6-2011)
- 152 million blogs on the Internet (2010)
- 174 million US Facebook users/845 million globally
- 107 million US Twitter users/465 million globally



# Why, “Not for Everybody”?

- Typically a mass comm tool
- Competition for attention is fierce
- Visual nature cries for costly design
- Usually takes time to build a following
- Your audience is out there ... waiting ...  
*especially in a crisis*



# But, It Could Be for Everybody ...

- In the right situation
- Using the right tools
- With the right consistency
- Providing the right content
- And with the right media mix



# A Crisis Case Study

- Crisis response for a community dependent upon a regional drive market for 90% of its business
- 82% of that market made up of repeat “loyalist” customers
- Only direct relationship with customers was between them and individual local resorts ... not the community tourist development council
- No lines of communication existed



# You Have to See Paradise ...



VISIT *South Walton*  
FIND YOUR PERFECT BEACH.



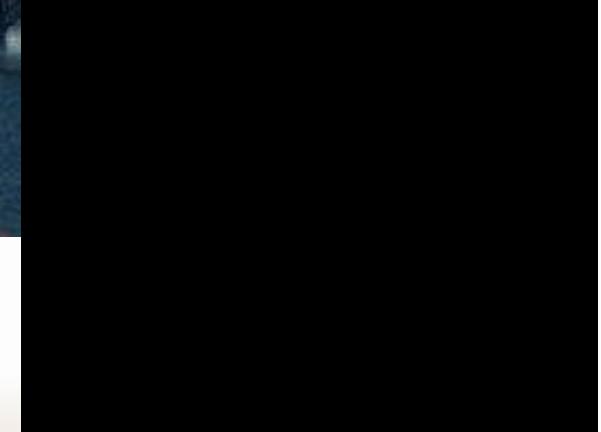
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# The Visit South Walton Story

- South Walton’s 15 beach communities about to get direct air service for first time
- Anticipating a record year and a bright future
- Open to big new markets (Nashville, Houston, Baltimore & Orlando via SWA)
- South Walton had made an “all-in” bet
- Our role was to re-launch the market

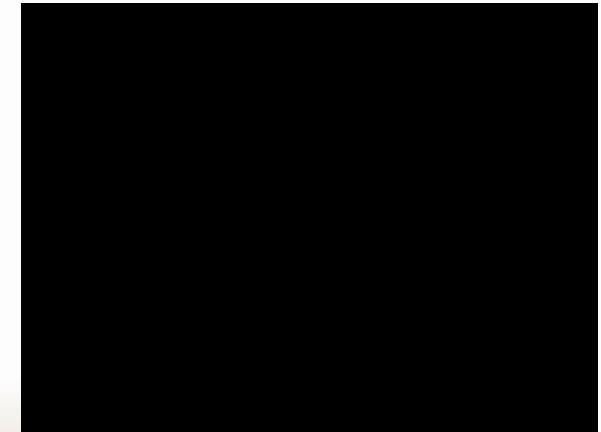


# Then This ...



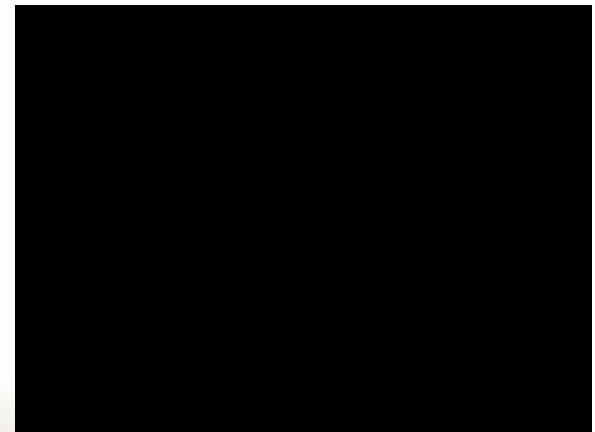
# A Crisis Never Waits ...

- When an oil rig drilling in the Gulf of Mexico explodes ... you need to drill down: fast. (pardon the pun)
- If the oil is feared to be headed for your beaches just before the summer season ... you can't wait: or depend on the news media.
- So, how do you drill down deeper on the Web?



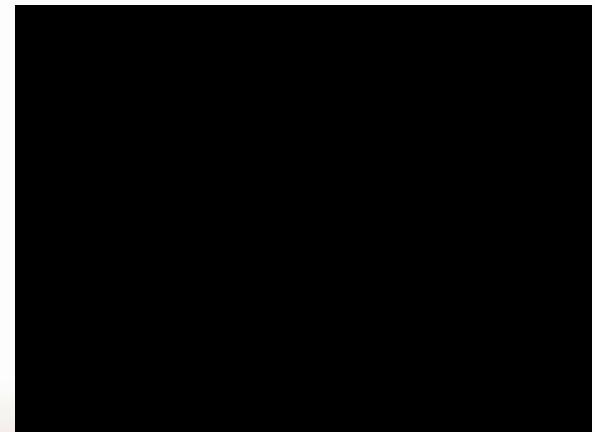
# Take a Deep Breath ... then Hurry

- ***“Make haste slowly.”*** – UCF President John Hitt
- The critical role of research
  - What is our market?
  - What is it thinking?
- The all-important need to act quickly
  - 24-hour coverage/social media are our enemy
  - Little of that coverage/discussion is accurate
- The unfortunate lack of a competitive voice
  - No budget/no existing tools/unknown
  - We’re a midget compared to the story



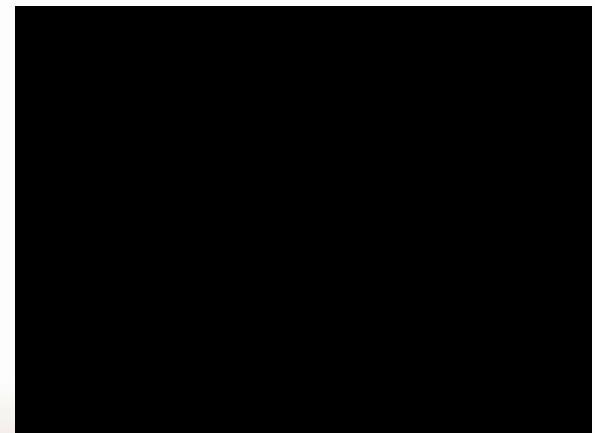
# What Research Revealed

- 62% of loyalists believed oil would reach us
- 58% of '09 visitors would then cancel
- 12% more would “wait and see”
- 83% were relying on cable news ... home to our “spill cam”
  - So important that media talked the govt into upgrading to HD
- Show us “proof”



# So, What to Do?

- Media was showing the spewing pipe, oiled birds and beaches and paying no attention
- “Citizen Journalists” (the greatest oxymoron of our time) empowered by the likes of CNN
- We had to create our own media ... if no one else would show our loyalists proof, we had to
- Enter BSWUpdate.com ... an easily updatable blog that became **THE SOURCE FOR LOYALISTS**





Our community is committed to preparedness and open communication. We are proud to report our beaches are just as beautiful as ever; and with reports indicating the threat of oil coming ashore is virtually eliminated, they are likely to stay that way.

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[Visit Beaches of South Walton](#)

May 4, 2010 - 12 p.m. Beach Communities Unaffected --

## A Community Prepared

Posted on May 3, 2010 by [South Walton Update](#)

The Gulf of Mexico Transocean Drilling Incident leak has not affected Beaches of South Walton communities and visitors are enjoying and welcome to all of our beach communities. Our beautiful white sand beaches are open and here to be enjoyed.

A 24-hour information line has been established by the Walton County Sheriff's Office to provide updates and information concerning the spill. That number is (850) 267-2000.

If any of our communities are impacted, this website will be updated to reflect that and provide the latest possible information.

**Official Source of Information ...** The U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of the Interior and BP have established [this site](#) as official source of information on this incident. Here you will find regular news updates, projections of the path of the spill, photos and video and useful links.

This entry was posted in [Uncategorized](#) and tagged [Beach Cleanup](#), [Beaches of South Walton](#), [Community Preparedness](#), [Effects of Oil Leak](#), [Oil Transocean Drilling Incident](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

May 4, 2010 - 12 p.m. Beach Communities Unaffected --



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### Recent Posts

- February 20, 4 p.m. - Algae reported; officials confirm it is not oil
- February 14, 4:45 p.m. - All Beaches Open
- January 7, 12:30 p.m. - Happy New Year
- December 21, 2 p.m. - Holidays at the Beach
- December 9, 1 p.m. - Come Enjoy Our Beaches

### For More Information

- [Additional Resources](#)

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## Leave a Reply

Your email address will not be published.



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*Visit Beaches of South Walton*

## Enjoy our Beaches, Enjoy our Water

Posted on October 1, 2010 by South Walton Update

You can enjoy all 26 miles of our coastline and all 15 of our beach communities without hesitation.

While we did receive some impact to our coastline, we are fortunate the scattered tar balls that washed ashore were usually cleaned up very quickly. And we're grateful the Florida Department of Environmental Protection consistently checked the water along the coast for several months and not once found a threat related to the spill, even in areas where tar balls washed ashore.

During Gulf cleanup efforts, this website served as a source of information on the latest beach conditions relating to the spill with daily reports. With no more oil flowing into the Gulf and all observable surface oil cleared, that need no longer exists.

Therefore, this site will now be a place for photos and videos of people enjoying the best of what Beaches of South Walton has to offer. While we have been told there may still be isolated incidences of tar balls on the beach, they will be cleaned up as soon as officials receive word of their existence. If impacts become more prevalent, this site will be updated to reflect that. In the meantime, enjoy these images, enjoy our beaches and enjoy our water.

Thank you.



Miner's Beach - October 2

### Recent Posts

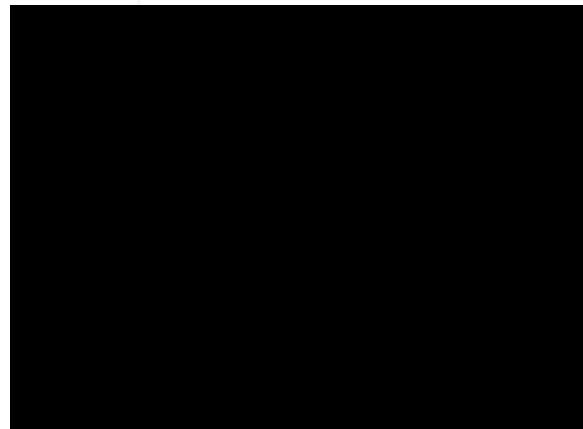
- [Enjoy our Beaches, Enjoy our Water](#)
- [Sept. 29, 11:40 p.m. – All Beaches Open; No Tar Ball Reports](#)
- [September 29, 11:40 p.m. – All Beaches Open Under Suny Skies](#)
- [Sept. 28, 11:40 a.m. – All Beaches Open; Suny Skies](#)
- [Sept. 27, 11:00 p.m. – All Beaches Open; Moderate Surf](#)

### For More Information

- [Additional Resources](#)

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Our community is committed to preparedness and open communication. We are proud to report our beaches are just as beautiful as ever; and with reports indicating the threat of oil coming ashore is virtually eliminated, they are likely to stay that way.

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[Visit Beaches of South Walton](#)

## February 14, 4:45 p.m. – All Beaches Open

Posted on February 13, 2011 by [South Walton Update](#)

All 15 of our beaches are as beautiful as ever and open for travelers to enjoy.

Though we occasionally see tar balls, they are very small in size (no larger than a pea or marble at most) and are removed quickly. Crews respond quickly to any tar ball sightings to keep our beaches clean for your enjoyment.

State and federal agencies also continue to monitor water and air quality, and report no concerns.

Visit [www.BeachesofSouthWalton.com](http://www.BeachesofSouthWalton.com) to learn more about the destination and "Like" us on [Facebook](#), where you can connect with other Beaches of South Walton fans.

### Recent Posts

- February 14, 4:45 p.m. – All Beaches Open
- January 7, 1:30 p.m. – Happy New Year
- December 21, 12 p.m. – Holidays at the Beach
- December 9, 3 p.m. – Come Enjoy Our Beaches
- November 22, 12 p.m. – All Beaches Open Throughout Thanksgiving Week

### For More Information

- [Additional Resources](#)

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- June 15, 7:20 a.m. - No OIL Report

June 15, 11 a.m. - No Oil on Beaches of South Walton -

**June 15, 4 p.m. – Beaches Open to Visitors**

Posted on June 15, 2010 by South Walton Update

Our entire 26-mile coastline remains unaffected, and our beaches are open for enjoyment.

The pictures below were taken today at Blue Mountain Beach.

For more information on Beaches of South Walton, visit [www.beachestofsouthwalton.com](http://www.beachestofsouthwalton.com).



[Search](#)

Schmitz

## Recent Posts

- February 20, 4 p.m. - Algae reported; officials confirm it is not oil.
  - February 24, 4:45 p.m. - All Beaches Open
  - January 7, 2:30 p.m. - Happy New Year
  - December 21, 2 p.m. - Holidays at the Beach
  - December 1, 2 p.m. - Come Enjoy Our Beaches

#### **For More Information**

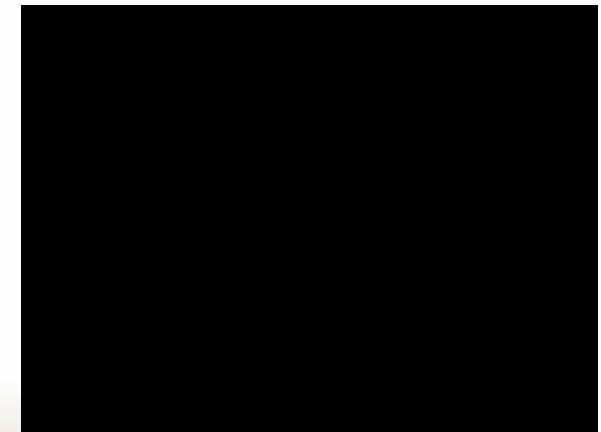
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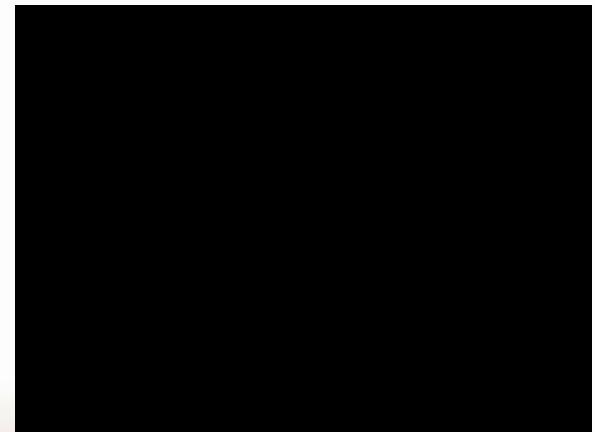
# As With Everything ...

- Content was King
  - At least one of each day's 2-3 posts included beach photos
  - BSWUpdate.com aggregated links to every “official” website dealing with the spill, from state agencies to the Coast Guard’s site that covered the entire Gulf spill zone
  - What it did not include was our marketing site!
    - Why?



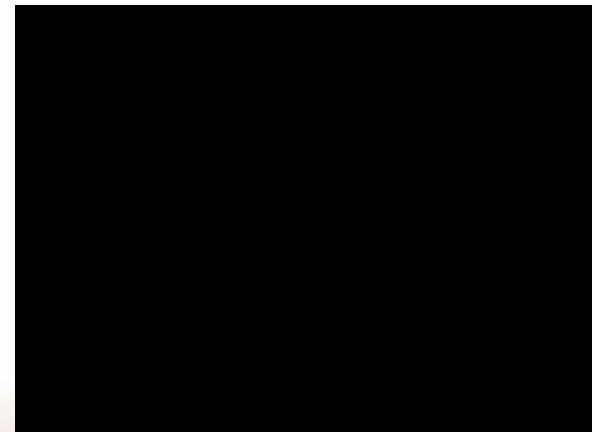
# Driving Traffic ...

- Direct pitching to media locally, regionally and nationally
- Heavy social media promotion
- Coordinating with community partners
  - 1,000+ resort properties
  - Individual promotional alliances
- BSWUpdate.com became a key message/sound bite in all interviews



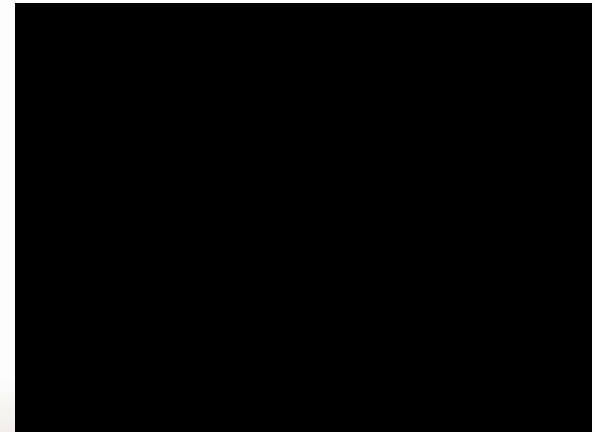
# How Did We Fare?

- During the 100-day crisis
  - 692,000 visits to the blog
  - BSWUpdate became a key media source
  - Media drove our traffic:
    - 2,300 average visitors daily after one month
    - 13,000 daily views in June
    - 27,542 views on a single day
    - Wordpress Blog-Health-o-Meter: “Wow” rating
  - 242 update posts / 345 original images



# How Did We Fare?

- Visit South Walton beat the odds
  - 13% drop vs. projected 70% loss
  - Bed tax collections dropped by less than 30%
    - Includes obvious impact of discounting
  - Sustained key holidays
    - Memorial Day
    - 4<sup>th</sup> of July
    - Labor Day
    - It's about the spend!



# More Importantly ...

- How did we do the following year?
  - Biggest year in South Walton History
  - Bed tax collections up more than 40%
- How are we doing this year?
  - Already have bed tax collectors reporting sell-outs
  - Successfully launched our new brand



# What We've Learned ...

- The Internet is waiting to be customized
- It can be a direct comm vs. mass comm tool
- In the absence of factual information it can allow you to be come the **Go-To Source**
- Don't succumb to the urge to be interactive
- In a crisis, the Web is your fastest option
  - We'd never have reached so many so fast
  - We were updating as fast as we could type

