

#113 - An Alarming Digital Trend that Needs to Stop

Andrew: On today's podcast, we're talking about an alarming digital trend that needs to stop. Hey there everybody. This is Andrew McCauley. Welcome to Podcast #113. We are digging in to an alarming trend. Yes, we are concerned. Heather and I have both discussed this alarming trend in the digital space that is happening more and more and just a few emails brought it to our attention only in the last couple of days.

So we thought -- you know what? We're going to have a bit of a chat about it. Heather Porter, you are here to chat about an alarming trend. Hello.

Heather: I certainly am. It's so important that we address this and we have some great stories to share with you guys so you'll totally get it.

Andrew: Yes.

Heather: Hello Andrew.

Andrew: Hey, Heather. How you doing? What's going on? What have you been up to lately?

Heather: What have I been up to? Well... OK, I'll share something with you. I'm quite a whiz kid in this thing called Ontraport, which is the CRM system that we use in our business. Ontraport's like Infusionsoft, it's kind of like a really fancy MailChimp; basically allows you to send out emails and keep track of leads and clients.

Why I'm bringing this story up is that I have in the last couple of weeks, trained a couple of business owners on using Ontraport. The reason why I'm bring this story up I think is kind of important. I did a full training for four hours, which -- after the fact, I totally get it -- it was way too long if you're new to this space. I've been using Ontraport for six years.

Andrew, you just asked me the other day --

Andrew: Yes.

Heather: -- In a percentage, how much would you know Ontraport? And I said like, 85% or whatever. So it's taken me years to get there.

Trying to train a couple business owners in four hours how to use the thing, is a stretch; I get that that didn't seep in. But then I followed up with them. I had a follow up training for a couple of hours and in that training I tried a new approach. I was basically saying -- "Do you get this? What do you not get? Is any of this confusing?" I was saying, "Where would you go next? Right now on your screen, show me what you would do next." We had this whole

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training. What I realized is, still that didn't seep in either.

A couple things come to mind and I think this ties in nicely with the trend we're going to talk about. But saying, yes, you get something when you don't, especially as a business owner, is such a waste of your time. It's OK to not get something.

I think that more and more of us are feeling foolish and saying, "Yes, I get that" -- or -- "Yes, totally. Yeah, mm-hmm." But really, you have no idea what's going on and then you're sitting there left, stuck feeling even more embarrassed to ask the person for help or whatever. So I guess the thing I learned was that it's totally OK to say -- "Actually, I have no idea what you're talking about."

Andrew: It leads to a vicious spiral, doesn't it? If you don't get it in the first part, it's only going to get worse --

Heather: It does. Yes.

Andrew: -- as you go on, especially when you're talking techie stuff. You and I know this pretty well because we've been teaching it for a long time, is that people need time to process this stuff. We've taken six years to process it. They've taken three hours to do it. I guess the other thing to that is, the fact that they allocate time for you to train -- and I want to give this a little time as well -- they're like, "Do you think we can do it in three hours? Can we just do it in two and expect to get the results that you've got in two hours?"

Heather: Well said.

Andrew: I hear this all the time. "I've got your course. Do I have to be there for the whole two hours?" Well, no you don't. You don't have to be there for any of it. But don't expect to get any results.

The other thing is the expectations that they put on the outcome of whatever it is that they're learning. It's almost like saying, "You know what -- you're a black belt in karate. Can you teach me in the next half hour to be a black belt? And I've never done karate before." It just doesn't work, right? So I guess expectations are a big thing about that, too.

But... Ah, yes.

Heather: I take responsibility for that. But that's when I thought I'll come back and I'll totally change my perspective in how I'm doing it.

I think that the thing I'd like to leave everybody with, including myself, is don't feel stupid if you don't understand the answer. It's just like you said,

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Andrew, it's going to put you into a downward spiral where you even feel more embarrassed to say, "Actually I have no idea what you just told me."

Andrew: We come across this. A couple years ago when we were dealing with some different cultures when we were outsourcing some of our work to different cultures. Some of the cultural background is that they will not... To save face they'll say yes all the time; they don't want to be appearing to not know what's happening. So they'll often say yes even though they don't know what's going on.

I remember going through this and making it super simple that they had to almost pass some tests before we'd go on, which would tell me -- without them saying they don't understand, it would clearly tell me in the tests whether they would actually know what we're doing. Because otherwise... You are four hours into a training and you should have stopped an hour after you started because they didn't speak up and say, "Hey, I'm not sure where you are going with this."

Heather: Brilliant. Love it. And what about you? Anything interesting happening?

Andrew: You know what? Yes. I was due to speak three times in the last seven days. Two of the events that I was going to speak at both were canceled. Another one that I was connected with -- so the fourth event that I was connected with -- I wasn't actually going to speak but some of my friends were speaking at it; theirs got canceled as well.

I found it interesting and people say, "Why did it get canceled?" and someone offered up a lame excuse saying, "Oh, I've run so busy right now." I'm like -- that's crap. I've never heard more crap about that. I think the problem is that the topics or the -- and this goes back to our last episode of our podcast and if you haven't heard it with Bret Thomson, go and check it out -- it goes back to enticing people with a strong call to action or a strong headline. I think the people that were in charge of putting out the marketing and attracting people to the event really don't have that down pat.

The topics themselves were not attention-grabbing. People didn't get the reasons why they should be going to those events. I wasn't talking about Facebook; I think I was talking about marketing automation and also live streaming and why you should need it for your business. The calls to action and the copy around the marketing for these events was pretty lame, I've got to say -- it wasn't up to me.

So therefore, I think the problem is, you really do need a strong call to action. It doesn't matter whether it's an email, whether it's a live event, whether it's a podcast. You and I just before this podcast, we were spending time coming up with a name for this podcast because it's got to be a good name otherwise

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it will not do its job.

Heather: Yes. Because if we were to just tell you guys that the biggest problem in the online space is actually lack of respect, you might not have wanted to tune in -- which is exactly what we're about to talk about, but hang in there with us because you're actually going to like the angle that we're coming from.

Andrew: We hope. [laughs] So let's dig into today's topic. We called it an alarming digital trend that needs to stop. Why did we come up with this little topic today, H?

Heather: Well, we got an email that came in that we were both laughing at and it sort of triggered this whole, I guess, brainstorm-braindump between you and I about things that we are experiencing.

Before I go into that -- I equate it to the whole metaphor of road rage, where you get into car and suddenly... You're driving in your car and a lot of people change. They're in this box of metal and they suddenly feel invincible and they get aggressive and they get angry if somebody cuts them off and they completely become another person and that is exactly what we are seeing. Not only have we witnessed it but all of our colleagues and peers are witnessing it as well is, the fact that people change when they are on their devices and they become very disrespectful and a truly different person.

Andrew: It's fascinating to see that. Sometimes we call it trolls and we'll dig into these types of people soon too, but I think it's the fact that they're hiding behind a screen that they're not there in person. I really don't think these people would say this. Like road rage, if you're walking down the street you wouldn't be doing what you do in the confines of your car.

Heather: No.

Andrew: Same with this. People are feeling like they're safe behind a terminal or a phone screen that they can do what they please. Realistically, it's getting out of control. It's just getting worse and worse and it really does have to stop.

Heather: That's why we're doing this episode, guys. It's more an awareness. We want you guys, if you're feeling this, if this is something you're seeing, let's use this platform together as a way of making change. It does. It has to stop.

Do you want to just start to go into some examples and stories and things we've witnessed?

Andrew: Yes. Let's do it.

Heather: OK, cool.

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The first thing is -- actually, I'm going to have you pull up our mate -- Laura's -- email there. I love this. The first thing is on email unsubscribes.

To set the frame around this, when you as an individual sign up for somebody's email list, nowadays with spam laws and everything, it's quite difficult to get on a list unless you opt in, unless you're signing up for the list. So you would have signed up originally.

That's not an invitation for you to then go back and abuse the person who's sending you emails because you asked to be on their list. So there's some interesting ways around... One story I want to quickly bring to mind that happened to us is that this guy emailed us back... We send out just, we just literally emailed out our list and we said, "Hey, here's our latest podcast. We told a little story about it. We weren't selling anything. We're like, here's our stuff -- and it's from Andrew and me and this same guy opted in to get an audio book from Andrew and me literally less than 30 days before, so within a month of the time we sent out his email. He's emailing us back, "Why are you emailing me? How do I know you? Do you know me?"

It's interesting. The thing I wanted to bring up with that is number one, pay attention to the list that you're going on and if people are emailing you, you don't have to be rude in exchange. You can simply opt out.

Andrew I want you to talk about this cool little way of illustrating opting out.

Andrew: This is from our friend Laura Francis -- and a big shout out to Laura, who's got some great stuff as well. Her Laura Francis Kick-Ass Online Content Marketing. Go and check her out.

She sends out emails all the time. This little piece at the bottom I just love because this is her to a tee. She says, "Click on the link below if you can't handle how often I email. If you think I'm too outspoken or swear too much, that I'm not professional enough or you just simply don't love me and what I'm all about. You shouldn't have anything into your inbox that doesn't make you happy. So by unsubscribing to this email, you will unsubscribe from all of my emails, including from paid program emails and it also means that you will no longer get the really cool free stuff and ass-kicking messages I share about business and life. Consider this your warning."

And then she says -- "Oh, and yeah, you need to do the unsubscribing yourself. Don't waste your time or mine asking me to do the work for you. If you want out, it's all up to you sugar. Click here to unsubscribe."

She puts it in a way to say stop being lazy. Don't just hit the reply button and say "unsubscribe me." This is why these emails have the ability for you to

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unsubscribe. Not only that, it's just disrespectful. It will take you one click to do it from there. But for us to unsubscribe you from an email, it doesn't mean we just click on that link, we have to go into the back end often and go through where you are, who you are or find you and then go and do it that way, which really is -- to be honest with you, it's a waste of time doing that. This is exactly why we put the unsubscribe there in those emails. You can do it from one click from your email right then and there. It's probably quicker for you to do that than write us an email to say -- unsubscribe me from your emails.

Heather: Love it. Yep. Unsubscribe. Also for those of you are intrigued now by Laura's opt-out message. Absolutely a lot of email programs, you can create and craft your own. You should if you want to; if that sounds fun to you then go ahead and use your personality and create one of your own. Very cool.

Andrew: Definitely.

The other thing I want to add to that, too, by the way, is that we've got our Digital Traffic Institute which some of you are members and we will have people who sign up and we might give away a free month here and there. They'll sign up for the free month and we'll let them know that we're about to charge them when their free month is up. We get this all the time. People will get up... They'll sign up for it and then they'll get our emails and they'll unsubscribe -- but they won't know because they'll unsubscribe from everything -- they'll unsubscribe from the email that says, "Hey you're about to get charged; if you don't want to get charged click here." We give that email out three times at least, because we don't want people to be unhappy. Yet, because they've unsubscribed from our emails because they didn't listen or read the information in the first place then they're getting billed. They're like, "Oh, this is ridiculous. I'm getting billed for something I don't even know about." But you did know about it. You clicked on the button that said "I agree to all the terms and conditions and I understand what I'm signing up for." Then we've got to go through a charge-back scenario through PayPal because that's our payment gateway.

But you have another story about a payment processor which we read recently too. H, you ought to share that one.

Heather: Yes. We're going to give a big shout out to a guy named Ryan Lee who wrote this email. I applaud him for doing so because this charge back issue that we're talking about is a problem. It's a problem because if you get enough of them as a business then your whole payment gateway can get shut down. That means you can't transact or collect money.

I think long are the days passed when there's a lot of scam artists on line; there still are but not like there used to be. We're genuine business owners

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that are working really hard to deliver good content. So when we get somebody that -- again, back to this disrespect space -- basically, instead of emailing you back and saying "hey" -- or looking through their statement or trying to find you another way -- saying, "Hey I noticed this charge. I don't know where it came from, can you shed some light on this?" Instead of doing that polite thing that you would do if you were face to face with a human being, they get into their road rage box and then they basically go to PayPal or eWay or Authorize.net -- "I didn't authorize this charge." -- not thinking about the repercussions that's happening to the business owner by doing it that way. They're the person that signed up in the first place. So Ryan, here, sent out an email and the subject line is "I'm Naming Names. Seriously." The first sentence which sucked me in was "There's a famous saying -- the customer is always right," and then he proceeds to talk about how after 17 years of becoming an expert, working really, really hard at growing his business, he went out of his way to give this guy a payment plan. Because the guy came to him and said "I really want to sign up for your training and I just can't afford it," and then Ryan bent over backwards to give this guy a payment plan. So he went into his own payment processor and set up a --

Andrew: A one-off.

Heather: Yes. A one-off. Which could take like an hour in some cases. It takes a while.

-- to give this guy... Bend over backwards and then this guy is emailing him all the time and he's answering all his emails -- we've experienced this too, Andrew --

Andrew: All the time.

Heather: -- where we will do our absolute best to help somebody and they go to do the charge-back thing. We're like, "What?"

Anyway, so... Same thing happened to him and so he actually ends up naming this guy. Puts a post on Facebook and then he links to his Facebook posts from this email.

Andrew: -- but before that... I think you missed an important part. So this guy pays two payments of \$97.00. He paid the first payment. Yep. No problem. Then pays the second payment and then he decides to opt-out and not only does he just say, hey look, I'm not going to pay any more," he actually puts a charge-back -- because he gets all the help that he needs -- he actually puts a charge-back in with PayPal to say, "I want my money back from all of the money that I've spent," which is the two lots of \$97.

The other thing that is really annoying is not just the charge back. PayPal charge now, \$10.00 on top of the money you've got to pay back every

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transaction you have to refund. So now, Ryan Lee not only bent over backwards to make this payment plan for this particular person because he had a hard-luck story about why it wasn't going to work and why he couldn't pay the one-off fee that everybody else was paying, but now Ryan had to put out \$20 from his own pocket and pay PayPal in order to pay this guy back on top of the two lots of \$97. So it's just rude that...

We bend over backwards and, as you say, we are all business owners. We're trying to make an honest living; we're trying to do our best; we're creating content; we're spending a lot of time, money, learning this stuff. You and I spend hours and hours and hours every week, learning what's going on so that we can share our knowledge with people that are out there and asking for our advice. We spend a lot of time learning a lot of stuff so you people don't have to -- I'm not saying "you people" but... In this case, Ryan spent all this time and effort trying to help this guy because he genuinely wants to help him and he goes back and puts this charge-back on there. It's just ridiculous how the small mentality is all about "them." -- this person, this client -- let's call him a client -- it was all about them, not thinking one second that Ryan spent a lot of time doing work for this guy just to make him accommodate his needs.

Heather: I think it's great that he took a stand and just... I'm going to do a quick sort of parallel looking at schools for example, right now. My partner has two teenage boys. I know you have two boys. I found something that's very disturbing in schools around -- at least in the Western countries that I come across -- a lot of parents now actually think it's the responsibility of the school to teach their children manners. It's literally known and said and then if teachers teach the wrong value or the wrong manner then the parents sue. It's gone out of control --

Andrew: Really?

Heather: Yes. I've heard loads of stories about this. Because of the breakdown I think, of how we as a society are raising children, especially with double working parents. There's no blame there, it's just highlighting an issue that this sort of lack of respect is now more widely accepted rather than people there taking a stand and saying -- no, it's got to stop.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Heather: I think with this whole online space... The online space, e-commerce, online selling, is going to increase. It's already increasing. it's not going anywhere. So we've got to work together, guys, and if you're getting charged and you're not happy about the charges, instead of doing a pay-back, go to the person or find out who is doing that and -- be a human. Have manners. Go to them and say, "Hey, guys, I see you charged me, what's this for?" Find out. Go

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about it the real way.

If you guys as business owners are getting these charge backs then take a stand. It's not cool that this is happening, especially if you have legitimately had terms and conditions and people are buying through your site because if we keep allowing stuff like this to happen it's just an ugly trend.

Andrew: Do you think... Let me ask you a question. Do you think that this trend has come from dealing with no-face or nameless big-box sort of stores. You go to a bank, especially in Australia, you go to a bank and you don't know who the bank manager is; you'll probably never know who it is because it's just a faceless organization and you go and call up somebody on the phone these days and you've got to go through seven hours of waiting and pushing the right buttons to get to the right department only to be cut off and do it all again. Sometimes...

I guess people look at organizations like ours, that are small business owners and they probably think, "these people aren't going to answer the phone. It's probably easier for me to just put in a charge back or a complaint some other way," rather than actually getting on the phone and calling the business and saying, "Is that the owner? Wow. That's different. Maybe I can speak to you." Because most of the time -- 99.9% of the time there's humans behind all these businesses that can deal with your situation. It's funny that we are actually getting surprised with good customer service.

Heather: Yes.

Andrew: I tell people about good customer service and I'm surprised about it these days. I shouldn't be because it should be the norm. But it's... I'm not saying good customer service is not the norm. I'm saying that we're getting surprised that we're getting good customer service which is funny.

Heather: Yes. Kind of sad, isn't it?

Andrew: Yes, really.

Heather: I think you brought up a good point. That whole thing of the digital era has put up... you're talking to a computer screen. You forget that there's a human being that's actually typed that email that's sitting behind that chat box that's there, that has real life problems, they're real, they're there. Having that screen in the way between the two of you allows that rudeness I think to come up in that same way of road rage.

Andrew: Yes. Definitely.

Heather: Speaking of rudeness... Trolls and online bullying and these incessant rude

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comments are huge and are scary and are bad and happen everywhere on line, from blog posts to YouTube channels to social media to Instagram, you name it.

Andrew: Yes.

Heather: What's your take on that? Have you seen anything interesting? I think you were telling me a story about some guy that was being abused or abusing somebody else?

Andrew: I think that whole abuse stuff is... It's completely different... If people had to do that in real life, they wouldn't be doing it. If you were... There's consequences. If you were in a situation where you disagree with somebody in real life there's potential consequences to escalating that disagreement into a confrontation or some sort of personal insults. You wouldn't be... You could be sitting there going, well if I confront that person there, I might get my ass kicked, or I could get thrown out of a venue or I could get embarrassed in front of all my peers if I carried on like I would on line.

There's stories, lots of stories around the Internet where things like, one guy, a young kid called this lady -- a female professor -- an old dirty so-n-so and then suddenly he went back and apologized and everyone is like what happened there? The Internet found out who his mother was and they sent all... everyone sent the same tweet or whatever it was that he sent to this professor, to his mother. So he suddenly had to deal with his mother, because it was a real life situation. There was a consequence, a social consequence.

There's a guy... There was a boxer who didn't do too well in a fight and this guy was just hassling the crap out of this poor boxer and the boxer turned around and said I've just found out where you live and published the guy's address on line. He said, I know where you live. Here's your address. Expect to see me soon. And suddenly, "Oh, I'm very sorry. I didn't really mean that." This guy was full-on harassing this boxer who didn't do very well. But this poor boxer, that's his life he spent a lot of time training and then he had to cop this troll. But as soon as the situation turned to be something where you can't hide behind your computer screen any more, then it suddenly becomes a different story.

I think that's what's happening. We're building up this ivory tower, this fortress inside our computers and our phones where we think we can hurl abuse and be safe from it. You wouldn't act that way if it wasn't the case, if you were doing this in real life.

Heather: No. Exactly. We just said, I think -- a couple episodes ago I was telling a story about how in social media it kind of goes to another direction as well. It

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comes from just trying to get business from people. People are now getting accustomed to finding you on LinkedIn or Facebook and sending a message and saying, "Hey, do you want to do business with me?" There's no relationship there. It's kind of the same way. It's just the flip side of the coin. It's forgetting the fact that there's a human being there and the fact is that you need to build a relationship and if you're dealing with a real person -- like you're saying -- with confrontation, normally, you have a confrontation and it stops, whereas online, you can keep bullying and bullying and bullying, because it's not a direct face to face.

Andrew: I saw this funny quote the other day. "Normal person + anonymity + audience = total dickhead." [laughs] People can be a normal person but you add the ability to be anonymous in front of an audience and you can be a real jerk. I thought that's pretty clever because that's how some people really are.

Heather: On a quick, other little story about that, what you were just saying, there's also the help desk that is online. This is another one I wanted to bring up. You guys would have seen it, there is chat boxes if you go to a website and it's like, "Hey, how can I help you?" Or a help desk, so if you click on "get help" and you file a ticket. Yes there are human beings that answer those.

I have to bring up a story because I am somehow connected to an old client email. You know how when you set up an email address and it forwards on to multiple emails from there. I'm still getting the forwards from an old client that we haven't worked with in years. They use this particular email address that I still see when they do their help chats with a specific software company and I am blown away at the rudeness that they... for this poor help person.

Andrew: Oh, really.

Heather: They do. And I know this is not a one-time-only case.

Whenever I talk to help desk people on line and I'm just, "Hey, can you help me with this?" I will always, at the end of it, say, Thank you so much. Or, How's your day? Or, "Hope you have a great evening." And I've had some of these people come back and say, "I can't tell you how much that means that you've just said that to me."

Andrew: Once you're on the other side of it, you can see how important that is.

Heather: Yes. Guys, I know some of you might be guilty of being a bit naughty and hopefully we've gotten you to think a little bit about how you can engage and interact online a bit more polite. For those of you that are on the flip side and have copped the abuse, then don't cop it. Stand up and say something about it. I love what Laura puts in her emails; I love what Ryan had said in his email. That's why we're doing this podcast. We want to... For those of us that

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are legitimately in business working really hard to bring in a buck, it's worth standing up and saying something about it.

Andrew: Yes. Definitely. Let's recap on what we spoke about. We spoke about email unsubscribes. If you're going to unsubscribe do it through the system, the right channels. Don't bother writing an email back to someone with a nasty -- why are you sending me this stuff? If you're going to do a charge back, maybe ring the company and say who are you and why are you charging me this sort of stuff; I'm not sure where I got this charge from? You'll probably find a human at the end of the line that can actually explain it to you, rather than business through hell going through charge backs.

Heather: Love that.

Andrew: Don't be a tool -- or a troll, I should say, or both. A tool-ey troll.

Heather: Both.

Andrew: It get's you no where. Realistically if you are dealing with people that are in the help space, just be nice to them. Be nice; they're doing a job. They probably didn't want the person that put the wrong button on the wrong place where you didn't want it, they're just there to help you. So don't abuse them and be nice to them. Anything else you want to add to this?

Heather: No. I just think, hopefully this little morsel of about 30 minutes that we've just shared with you helps you think a little bit differently at the very next transaction that you're going to be doing online.

Andrew: If you want to share a story about how you've seen a nasty troll or a disrespectful person online, share it in the comments at the bottom of this podcast. This is #113 and you can find it at autopilotyourbusiness.com. You look for the podcast tab and you can find us there.

Heather, I think that's a wrap.

Heather: That's a wrap you guys. We'll see you online.

Andrew: OK, everyone. See you later.

Heather: Bye.

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