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[Speaking & Events](#)

[Media](#)

[Blog-At-A-Glance](#)

[Endorsements](#)

[Contact](#)

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The 5 Models Of Content Curation



Curation has always been an underrated form of creation. 210 tweets
The Getty Center in Los Angeles is one of the most [frequently visited museums](#) in America - and started as a private art collection [retweeted](#) from one man (J. Paul Getty) who had a passion for art. Aside from a few well known examples like this one, however, the term curation has rarely been used outside of the world of art ... until now.

One of the hottest trends in social media right now is content curation - thanks in no small part to the leading efforts of several thought leaders actively promoting the idea. Joe Pulizzi is a "[content marketing evangelist](#)" who speaks and writes often about content marketing publishes a [list of the best content marketing blogs across the web](#). Steve Rosenbaum just published a book called [Curation Nation](#) looking at the rise of content curation in the business world - and a recent post on the Psychology Today

blog even declared that "[content curation is the new black](#)."

What Is Content Curation?

Back in 2009 I published a blog post called the "[Manifesto For The Content Curator](#)" which predicted that this role would be one of the fastest growing and most important jobs of the future. I would stand by this prediction today, but also in the post I shared one potential definition for content curation:

Content Curation is a term that describes the act of finding, grouping, organizing or sharing the best and most relevant content on a specific issue.

It is such a powerful idea because curation does NOT focus on adding more content/noise to the chaotic information overload of social media, and instead focuses on helping any one of us to make sense of this information by bringing together what is most important.

The 5 Models Of Content Curation

Over time, the idea of content curation has felt like more and more of a catchphrase that is really encompassing many smaller activities that are adding structure and insight to the cacophony of information being published online. What if we could define not just content curation as a macro activity, but look at how curation might be applied in very specific

situations? The rest of this post shares 5 potential models for content curation as a starting point for discussion:

1. **Aggregation** - There is a flood of information online and Google can only give you a best guess at the most relevant, but there are millions and millions of pages returned for any search result. **Aggregation is the act of curating the most relevant information about a particular topic into a single location.** Often taking the form of catalog style blog posts which list "27 Great Resources For Small Business" (or similar aggregations), this is the most common form of content curation. Volume is not typically an issue when it comes to aggregation, so in this case you still may have hundreds of pieces of source material - but just the fact that it is in a single location and not millions of pieces of information has a high value for people interested in a particular topic.
2. **Distillation** - The idea behind distillation is that adding a layer of simplicity is one of the most valuable activities that someone can undertake. **Distillation is the act of curating information into a more simplistic format where only the most important or relevant ideas are shared.** As a result, there may be quite a bit of additional content that is lost for the sake of simplicity - however the value comes from the fact that anyone digesting this content no longer has to contend with a high volume of content and can instead consume a more focused view of information.
3. **Elevation** - The smaller ideas that are often shared online in 140 character bursts or pithy mobile phone images may point to a larger societal trend or shift. **Elevation refers to curation with a mission of identifying a larger trend or insight from smaller daily musings posted online.** Encompassing much of what many trend-focused websites do, this can be one of the hardest forms of content curation because it requires more expertise and analytical ability on the part of the person or organization during the curating. The benefit is that it can also be the most powerful in terms of sharing new ideas as well.
4. **Mashup** - A term often used in the context of music to describe the growing trend of taking two or more pieces of music and fusing them together - there is a wider implication for mashups in relation to information. **Mashups are unique curated juxtapositions where merging existing content is used to create a new point of view.** Taking multiple points of view on a particular issue and sharing it in a single location would be one example of this type of behaviour - and could be used to describe the sort of activity that takes place every day on Wikipedia. More broadly, mashups can offer a way of creating something new while still using content curation as a basis for it because you are building on existing content.
5. **Chronology** - One of the most interesting ways of looking at the evolution of information is over time - and how concepts or our understanding of topics has changed over time. Creating a **Chronology is a form of curation that brings together historical information organized based on time to show an evolving understanding of a particular topic.** Most useful when it comes to topics where understanding has shifted over time, this can be a powerful way of retelling history through informational artifacts that exist over time to prove how experiences and understandings have changed.

Content curation is certainly an emerging space and one where more and more thought leaders will continue to share their voices. This is simply a contribution to the curated universe of discussion on this topic - as well as an option invitation to others who have thought deeply about content curation to share their own visions for what the future may look like.

I'll look forward to eventually reading the "Chronological Curation" of this discussion one day in the future where this post may be included among many others to spark a longer and deeper conversation about a topic that has the potential to transform how each of us sees the world around us.

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