The most contagious ideas of the year

MOST CONTAGIOUS
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The most contagious ideas of the year
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Welcome to the 2013 Most Contagious report, our annual review of the trends, technologies and creative innovations that have influenced brands and shaped the marketing industry over the past 12 months and will continue to evolve in 2014. This is your handy roadmap for the immediate future, so keep it safe and close to hand.

This report performs two functions. It has been printed as an exclusive and, let’s be frank, hugely attractive handbook for delegates attending the Most Contagious conferences in London and New York. It has also been unleashed into the digital solar system as exactly the kind of munificently free and shareable gift guaranteed to warm the cockles of Tim Berners-Lee’s heart.

If you’re reading this on any kind of screen and the content is making you feel inspired about the possibilities of 2014, then in the spirit of festive giving, please do pass it on.

I would like to thank FleishmanHillard, whose sponsorship and strategic partnership has been instrumental in bringing Most Contagious to life on stage. After launching the event in our hometown of London in 2012, we have quickly been able to realise our vision of taking Most Contagious across the Atlantic, giving our colleagues in New York the chance to put a distinctly American stamp on the content and speaker list. Sitting as we do at the intersection of marketing innovation, emerging technology and consumer culture, we felt obliged to share the spirit of Most Contagious thinking in the country ranked the top environment in the world for entrepreneurship (source: Ernst & Young) and which is home to 45 of the Top 100 Global Innovators (Thomson Reuters).

In our celebration of the Most Contagious work, ideas and trends of the year, we’ve seen brands further weave themselves into the fabric of consumer culture and address issues that extend beyond the realms of marketing. This has been the year of Pragmatic Purpose (p13), Crowdsourcing (p61) and Connected Experiences (p67). Above all, it’s been about interrogating the value that companies can play in the lives of real people.

So, in the spirit of practising what we preach, it is our pleasure to equip you with this report and wish you a healthy, happy and prosperous year ahead.
What’s Next?

Dave Senay
CEO and president, FleishmanHillard
Most Contagious in partnership with FleishmanHillard

We live in a world where brand and reputation are synonymous, compartmentalising is lunacy and algorithmically derived creative insights are table stakes. It’s not easy, but it is exciting. Organisations have been dragged, sometimes kicking and screaming, out of the languor of controlled conversations into a spontaneous, always-on dialogue with customers, employees, investors, governments and communities.

Above all, this new order demands an authenticity and transparency with which many organisations are not yet comfortable. Still, the connectivity of the planet and overlap of our problems and priorities require nothing less. Ask America’s NSA if it has learnt that lesson.

Can brands and businesses rise to the challenge? We all feel the waves of disruption swirling through and around our organisations. We all sense the new immediacy and intimacy our stakeholders demand. Will we seize the opportunities that convergence and virtual proximity afford?

I think we will. In 2013, the Catholic Church has embraced a higher standard of engagement. The new Pope instinctively recognised the need to connect personally and informally; he restored trust by listening and by his willingness to seek out a shared purpose, rather than imposing one. (Pope Francis’s Twitter activity via the @pontifex account prompted Forbes magazine to call him ‘the social media star’ – and not just because he posted the world’s first ‘Papal selfie’.)

Consumers no longer want to be told what companies or governments can do for them; they want to know what might be accomplished together. They want a say in the setting of priorities. Not always comfortable conversations for companies to initiate, but ones that are likely to become commonplace.

This is where companies with the right imagination and nimbleness of execution can reshape their role in their stakeholders’ lives – one based on purpose and pragmatism, utility and meaning, fairness and opportunity.

Ultimately it boils down to the greatest challenge of all – creatively discovering, or engineering, mutually beneficial solutions.

Companies that foster community, brands creating content that adds value rather than interrupts, connected products that serve a central purpose in our lives – these have become the new touchstones of the enlightened opportunism that wins in a converging world.

This is what Most Contagious is about. It’s irrigation for our brains and fuel for our imaginations. It’s about discovering truths unearthed by others and considering where else they may apply. It’s about new things coming together and wonderfully, surprisingly, making sense.
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North America / Noelle Weaver / noelle@contagious.com
MOVEMENTS / Ah, 2013. It was the best of times, it was the twerk-st of times.

In the months it’s taken our tiny home to hurtle around the sun we’ve seen all manner of culture, high and low, emerge from the hearts and minds of our fascinating species. But, despite lots of grand ambition in 2013, it felt like no one quite managed to land a 'moonshot', to borrow a term that infatuated marketers and those interested in advancing humanity in other large-scale ways.

If, as the great sci-fi author William Gibson declared, ‘the future is here, it’s just not evenly distributed’, 2013 felt like a year when the most interesting things of the last few years began spreading further away from trendsetters at the global centres and into the lives of everyday people. Technology clashed against entrenched institutions and attitudes this year, bringing focus to the role of governments in a digital society, transparency inside those massive institutions, new shades of rebellious behaviour and projects destined to send waves of disruption even further.
GRAND GESTURES

Geologists know the next big earthquake has already begun to happen, but it will be a long time before we feel the shaking. It was the same, in 2013, with grand gestures that have been made, but are still far from fruition. Our best and brightest unveiled ambitious, broad plans to revamp transit, food, natural resources and entrenched conventions in society. That these efforts tend to stem from entrepreneurs who’ve built successful web businesses is no surprise: having conquered the quotidian, they’ve turned their sights upwards and outwards.

Elon Musk’s SpaceX and Tesla successes have made him a household name, but in August the billionaire again caught the world’s attention when he unveiled his ambitions for Hyperloop. This pod-based rapid-transit programme will whisk passengers between San Francisco and Los Angeles in 35 minutes, at a projected cost of $6bn and with a development phase of at least seven years. A few days before the Hyperloop concept was unveiled, the first synthetic beef burger had been sampled in London, part of a series of experiments by Dr. Mark Post of Maastricht University and bankrolled by Google’s Sergey Brin. Racking up at €25,000 ($33,600) a bite, that’s not the only outrageous iron the search titan has in the fire. His asteroid-mining Planetary Resources venture, which welcomed Sir Richard Branson to the investor circle (along with Larry Page and Hollywood’s James Cameron), unveiled its tiny ARKYD 100 space telescope, which will prospect for resource-rich asteroids. The funding was raised partly on Kickstarter, with a ‘Space Selfie’ – your chosen image against a stellar background – as a low-level reward.

Brands, inspired by all this geeky aspiration, looked to space, with Axe promoting its new Apollo scent by enlisting astro-hero Buzz Aldrin as a pitchman and promising to send 23 lucky guys into (suborbital) space on a XCOR Lynx vehicle (when, eventually, it’s developed). Dutch airline KLM also got caught up in the space race started by Red Bull’s Stratos. By guessing the highest altitude a balloon could climb, people could register to win a trip, also on the Lynx spacecraft.

Not all of the biggest gestures have been mere blueprints or prototypes: the UK’s Government Digital Service showed what a successful service environment could be for a state (and, rightly, has become a beacon for other countries). By contrast, the US’ continued problems with healthcare.gov stand in stark relief as the programme lurches toward infamy as the loudest failure in ecommerce history, with reckless overspending and terrible functionality preventing thousands from arranging their newly mandated health insurance.
ENDANGERED SECRETS

Despite big sci-fi dreams, the reality of the erosion of privacy has been a much greater pragmatic concern for many, and is by far the largest story of the year.

The Edward Snowden saga began in June when the National Security Agency (NSA) contractor-turned-whistleblower fled to Hong Kong and began releasing documents to British newspaper The Guardian. They confirmed extensive data collection by the US government and what many had long-feared: most digital communications are, or can be, monitored by spy agencies. This includes backdoors created for the NSA by all the major tech companies and, in some cases, interceptions that happen at high-level interchanges, before secure servers, without company approval. The extent of the revelations is far from known: some estimates place the number of documents passed by Snowden to journalists at more than 50,000.

Have the revelations impacted people’s views on privacy? It seems so. A Harris Poll conducted on behalf of software vendor ESET showed that more than half of the 2,089 respondents had made changes to their web privacy settings in the last six months, with 89% of those surveyed between the ages of 18 and 44 making privacy changes.

Temporal destruction, so embodied by Snapchat (which spurned a $3bn cash offer from Facebook and hinted at charging users to pay for the service) became a theme. Applications such as Twitter Spirit (append a hashtag, #30m for example, to tell the app to destroy your tweet after that allotted time), Whisper, a sort of anonymous Instagram, and Blink Link (a link that disappears after a certain number of clicks) popped up. Services such as secure messaging app Heml.is, traffic anonymiser Tor and the Bitcoin-enabled black marketplace Silk Road all grabbed headlines as citizens wondered what territories the NSA didn’t currently monitor.

Meanwhile, Facebook’s Q3 earnings call noted a decrease in teenage users’ frequency on the site, which many chalk up to mum and dad joining in on the fun, sending their offspring scurrying to the sanctuaries of mobile messaging apps such as Whatsapp and Line.

PERMALANCE PROLETARIAT

‘Workers of the world, unite – you have nothing to lose but your cubicle and tyrannical commute!’

This might have been an updated call-to-arms for the so-called ‘Sharing Economy’, built on everyday Joes and Janes turning into taxi drivers (with services such as Uber and Lyft), gofers (Taskrabbit, eBay Now, Wunwun), micro-landlords (Airbnb), neighbourhood chefs (Cookist0) and expertise-lenders (in services such as Google’s Helpouts).

But it’s not all utopian in this more-perfect-marketplace, where barriers to entry in new gigs are low-to-nonexistent. For one, the notion of every worker being a freelancer is redefining our ideas of job security and collective bargaining around working hours and rates of pay. Second, as the collaborative economy has grown (pundit Rachel Botsman puts it at $26bn), people are beginning to realise that profits aren’t distributed the way work is – billionaire investors and fund managers profit while humble taxi drivers get displaced by under-cutters such as Uber or Lyft.

The reason the collaborative economy has taken off is partly why Craigslist has been so successful: sometimes it’s fun to do business with another person rather than a faceless corporation. Civic leaders, who argue the laws and regulations that disruptive services sidestep, have begun to mount their response, with New York’s attorney general subpoenaing Airbnb in October ‘to recover millions of dollars in unpaid taxes, and to stop the abuse of the site by operators of illegal hotels.’
First the twerking craze came to a head after Miley Cyrus’ notorious MTV Video Music Awards display, and then the selfie was named by Oxford Dictionaries as its prestigious Word of the Year. Whether it’s taken ‘duck-faced’ or, in 2013’s evolved poses, ‘sparrow-faced’, or with ‘Drake hands’, one could barely walk through a tourist urban area without stepping onto the set of a solo drama played out between a narcissist and a smartphone.

Whether at funerals, work or the gym, if vanity were rocket fuel, the human race would have no problem reaching Mars next year. Services such as dating (ok, hook-up) app Tinder, which combined the network effect of Facebook and the thumbs-up-or-down metric of sites such as Hot or Not, reinforced the importance of a good avatar and the seeming disposability of depth and personality when choosing a mate.

In all the fuss, bandwidth increases allowed visual culture to evolve into video culture, with Instagram’s video function and Vine’s rapid growth creating a whole new array of behaviours – and creators such as Logan Paul – to go with the short-form medium. Despite a range of earlier startups such as Socialcam working in the shareable video space, the second wave seems to have taken hold, with monthly Vine compilation videos proving hilarious viewing, six-second slices of pranks, skits and general youthful lunacy.
Privacy, gender, work, sexual expression: it’s not just the traditional cultural mores that are being tested these days. TV is facing increased pressure as well, from unlikely areas.

YouTube’s multichannel networks – aggregations of channels based on subject matter or audience – reach an estimated 70 million users across the platform, and are finally providing a way for brands to work with creators on the site to integrate product and message beyond just running ads through Google.

Meanwhile, a portrait of anxiety emerged via Netflix: imagine being a Hollywood executive whose long-in-development buddy comedy came out the same weekend that the new Arrested Development season arrived on the streaming service. The binge-watching trend can have a deleterious effect across any medium – film, TV, gaming, music – that relies on coordinated attention. The confluence of data and programming allows Netflix to commission based on things it already has a hunch people like: Faux Reality With Ricky Gervais (Derek) or Kind of an Alternate West Wing Universe (House of Cards). Netflix CEO Reed Hastings talks about the ‘managed dissatisfaction’ created by TV programming on behalf of, wait for it, advertisers.

So, if the usurpers are making traditional TV look a little shabbier, what kind of innovations and content plays will the advertiser paymasters demand in 2014?
PURPOSE
Taking a pragmatic approach
PURPOSE / ‘A brand is a lot like a person – if it doesn’t have a point of view, it’s not very interesting,’ Marc Mathieu, Unilever’s SVP of marketing, told Contagious in our case study on Unilever’s Sustainable Living Plan (Contagious 35).

And consumers agree. Globally, 91% of people are likely to switch brands if another of similar price and quality supports a good cause, according to the 2013 Cone Communications/Echo Global CSR Report.

Unilever is on a journey to embed social impact into its brands, hoping to replicate the success of Dove’s Campaign for Real Beauty. This year’s Dove Real Beauty Sketches tackled women’s self-esteem issues and became the most-viewed branded online film of all time, racking up 163 million views in two months. Created by Ogilvy, São Paolo, Sketches scooped 19 Cannes Lions awards, including the coveted Titanium Grand Prix (Contagious 35).

Standout examples of purpose in 2013 came from brands adopting a pragmatic approach, delivering practical solutions to social problems in ways that are rooted in their day-to-day business.
Purpose

Augmented Media

Stories

Context / Targeting

Service Design

Technology

Ad Break

Retail

Crowdsourcing

Connected Experiences

Design

Behaviour Change

SBFF

Movements

Purpose

Augmented Media

Stories

Context / Targeting

Service Design

Technology

Ad Break

Retail

Crowdsourcing

Connected Experiences

Design

Behaviour Change

SBFF
One of Unilever’s oldest yet fastest-growing brands, Lifebuoy, is on a mission to save the lives of more than one million young children who die every year before the age of five as a result of diarrhoeal infections. The Lifebuoy Handwashing Behaviour Change Programme aims to reach a billion consumers across Asia, Africa and Latin America by 2015.

This year the brand launched its Help A Child Reach 5 campaign (Contagious 35). It adopted a village, Thesgora, in central India, pledging to help every child in the village reach the age of five. On Facebook, fans can join the pledge, with Lifebuoy promising to match all donations. A film to promote the initiative, created by Lowe Lintas, Mumbai, racked up nearly 14 million views on YouTube.

For Contagious, it’s a perfect example of a sense of purpose that is centred on the product. Rather than simple donations, Lifebuoy is using the power of its product to save lives. And it’s developing new markets in the process. ‘Given a choice of get up every morning and sell more soap bars versus get up every morning, sell soap bars and save lives, guess which one people choose?’ said Lifebuoy’s global brand vice president Samir Singh.

www.youtube.com/helpachildreach5
www.facebook.com/lifebuoy
Toyota is renowned for its efficiency. This year, it donated that expertise to a relief agency to help deliver food parcels to the Rockaways area of New York, which was still struggling to rebuild itself eight months after Hurricane Sandy tore through the area in October 2012.

The automotive company’s Meals Per Hour initiative (Contagious 36) applied the ‘kaizen’ principles of the Toyota Production System – where many small improvements are made to a process to create a much larger overall impact – to Metro Food Distribution’s system.

As a result of Toyota’s intervention, the agency increased the number of parcels it could fit in each truck from 864 to 1,260 and reduced the packing time of each box from three minutes to just 11 seconds. A film detailing the process (via 360i, New York) achieved more than a million views on YouTube, with the carmaker donating one free meal for every view.

This initiative is an innovative approach to philanthropy, which sees Toyota donate not funds but its own business expertise to help cash-strapped charities run more efficiently. The Toyota Production System works with 40 organisations, half of which are non-profits that receive the services for free.
tiny.cc/ToyotaKaizen

In developed markets, tablets and e-readers are starting to replace heavy textbooks in schools. But in the Philippines, these new devices are too expensive and the majority of children still have old-style feature phones.

To promote its ‘light and easy’ text service, Philippine telco Smart Communications and Makati City-based DDB DM9JaymeSyfu collaborated with educational publishers to turn text books into 160-character text messages in a campaign called TXTBKS (Contagious 36). These were then preloaded onto surplus SIM cards and distributed to partner schools.

Smart Communications is now creating further iterations of SMS study aids across more subjects and the programme is being rolled out nationwide. The initiative won a Grand Prix in the mobile category at Cannes, where jury chair Rei Inamoto, chief creative officer at AKQA, praised it for its low-tech approach: ‘It’s not the most technologically advanced entry – in fact, it’s a little bit backwards. But that’s what I like the most about it.’
tiny.cc/TXTBKS
www.smart.com.ph/corporate
In a noble endeavour to demystify banking and provide customers with an accessible way to improve their financial literacy, Bank of America partnered this year with non-profit online educator Khan Academy to launch the Better Money Habits website.

The website aims to teach the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of personal finance through videos created by both parties. Each video is designed to help viewers learn the basics of personal finance, targeted at an audience with varying levels of knowledge in a style that is ‘simple, conversational and self-paced’.

In keeping with Khan Academy’s open-to-all philosophy, BetterMoneyHabits.com extends the opportunity to sharpen up financial skills beyond existing Bank of America customers.

Despite the somewhat dry subject matter, videos such as ‘How to set a budget and stick to it’ have notched up some 436,253 views on the site (Contagious 35).

www.bettermoneyhabits.com

In October, The Coca-Cola Company launched an initiative to provide communities in Africa, Asia, Latin America and North America with clean water and other vital development-supporting resources.

At the heart of the initiative are purpose-built EKOCENTERS, transportable kiosks that can be customised for the specific needs of each destination. Each EKOCENTER combines a Slingshot water-purification system (invented by DEKA R&D’s Dean Kamen), sustainable energy supply, wireless communications and a commercial space, and is operated by a specially trained female entrepreneur recruited from the local community.

Working with an impressive roster of partners, The Coca-Cola Company aims to install 1,500-2,000 of the units (or Slingshot water-purification systems) by 2015. The goal is to improve health in rural communities, while also providing access to communications and connectivity.

The global scale of Coca-Cola’s distribution system positions it well to deliver this kind of equipment to disadvantaged communities (Contagious 37).

www.coca-colacompany.com/ekocenter
AUGMENTED MEDIA

Enhancing experience
AUGMENTED MEDIA / With smartphones and tablets an ever-more ubiquitous stepping stone between brands and consumers, they’re increasingly seen as the most expedient way to deliver a soupcon of customised digital magic to the dull-but-serviceable channels of yore.

‘It is estimated that more than 90% of people worldwide who have mobile phones keep them within three feet of themselves 24 hours a day,’ Google’s Eric Schmidt writes in *The New Digital Age: Reshaping the Future of People, Nations and Business*, the book he published with colleague Jared Cohen this year.

That proximity changes everything. Those second screens bring a layer of additional functionality into play, creating the potential to make our traditional media work harder, to wring out extra value and relevance.

Last year we highlighted augmented media’s ability to eliminate the time and friction between awareness and purchase. 2013 has been about building engagement, transforming content – print, packaging, movies, music videos – from something complete and contained into the beginning of a more personal, less passive experience.
With food provenance an increasing concern for many people, McDonald's in Australia released an app that enabled customers to find out from where the constituent parts of their meal had been sourced.

The TrackMyMacca’s app (Contagious 34) used GPS and image recognition, combined with date and time information, to establish where and when a particular McDonald’s menu item was purchased. It then overlaid that information with data from McDonald’s supply chain in real time. Finally, it served up an unexpectedly immersive story about the meal’s journey, using augmented reality to transform the restaurant table-top into a farmyard or ocean scene – with the narrative unfolding not only in accordance with what the customer was eating, but also tailored to their location.

Getting customers better acquainted with not only the ingredients but the individual suppliers proved a huge win for the client and the agency, DDB Sydney. Data, fast food, smartphones, real time AND storytelling? We’re lovin’ it.

www.trackmymaccas.com

Whatever you think about kids and screens, the act of reading is generally something parents strive to encourage, whether through pixels or print. In May, publishing company Penguin (itself reimagined and restructured this year as super-sized Penguin Random House, through a merger of the two companies) put a new spin on the traditional storytime experience with a new app for Google+.

The Penguin Storytime Hangout app (Contagious 36), created with BBH, London, lets families act out the characters of the Ladybird classic tale Three Billy Goats Gruff in an online video call. By joining a special Google+ Hangout, each participant can see themselves transformed into their favourite character by augmented-reality masks super-imposed onto their faces. Lines from the dialogue appear on-screen alongside the masked faces, so children and their parents can each read and perform their character’s part.

At the end of the story, app users can read it again or click on a link to buy the book from the publisher’s online store.

www.storytimehangout.com
The thriving Japanese newspaper industry is wisely exploring ways to introduce a new generation to the delights of broadsheet news. The twice-daily *Tokyo Shimbun* released an augmented-reality smartphone app (Contagious 34) that ‘translates’ stories from the publication into a more child-friendly format.

When viewed through a smartphone camera, via the app, a number of stories are transformed from the standard black-and-white print into animated, colourful commentaries. Created by Dentsu, Tokyo, the service aims to tackle tricky and confusing issues, such as the economy, bullying and politics, by adapting the language and design in order to repackage them as more accessible content that kids will understand.

A compelling enough innovation in its own right, the idea has also been adopted by advertisers – travel company Hato Bus, soft drink Kirin and yogurt brand Meiji have all since launched dedicated newspaper adverts that target both parents and children.

tiny.cc/TokyoShimbun

In February the research arm of Japanese telco NTT debuted technology that uses digital watermarks built into broadcast TV content to unlock deftly timed augmented-reality material on viewers’ tablet or smartphone screen.

The Visual SyncAR system allows viewers to see synchronised and relevant content, while still watching the main screen in the background. NTT has been testing the technology’s efficacy in leading viewers from a shopping television programme to a retail website. In addition to potential broadcast TV uses, the company envisages the technology being used to translate information on public signs from Japanese into foreign languages and sign language.

A major quest for advertisers and broadcasters is not upstaging content on the screen with what is happening off it. If this technology can manage that balance better than audio-dependent systems such as Shazam and Zeebox, viewers – and advertisers – will be more likely to engage with second-screen content.

tiny.cc/VisualSyncAR
Canadian indie darlings Arcade Fire partnered with Google again on an interactive video to accompany their single, *Reflektor* (Contagious 37). While Google/Arcade Fire’s *The Wilderness Downtown* collaboration from 2011 offered a personalised experience using Google Street-view and information input by the user, this time viewers influenced the action via their Chrome web browser and smartphone or tablet.

Filmed in Haiti, ‘the story follows a young woman who travels between her world and our own’. As the narrative unfolds, viewers control how rays of light reflect on the various characters, thanks to the gyroscope, accelerometer and camera in their mobile device. The action also skips across to the smartphone/tablet, and the webcam incorporates a ‘selfie’ of the viewer into the video, to add that all-important personal touch.

Created by Unit 9 director Vincent Morisset and Google Data Arts Team creative director Aaron Koblin, the experience also, of course, wins Arcade Fire a shortcut to the eyes and ears of the internet, and Google the potential for a few million extra downloads of its Chrome app.

[www.justareflektor.com](http://www.justareflektor.com)
Cinema screenings usually begin with a request to switch off electronic devices, but for this September's theatrical re-release of animated classic *The Little Mermaid*, Disney encouraged audience members to bring along their iPads.

The brand has introduced special interactive screenings where kids are invited to download the entertainment giant's *Second Screen Live* app on their iPads and use it to access games and additional content. Available at select cinemas for a limited time, Disney promised that viewers would ‘become part of the story’, competing in games with each other and singing along with songs. That emphasis on the collective nature of the experience sets it apart from previous apps released to provide second-screen experiences for at-home viewers of *The Lion King* and *Bambi*.

It is easy to feel conflicted about layering digital distractions into the lean-back pleasures of the traditional cinema experience. But there is a certain satisfaction to debating aspects of immersion when they relate to an animated film about a mermaid.

[www.disneysecondscreen.go.com](http://www.disneysecondscreen.go.com)
STORIES
Neverending narratives
STORIES / Adland has spent decades honing the craft of storytelling as it applies to traditional broadcast media. Now it is scrambling to redefine what storytelling means in a non-linear, real-time world where platform-hopping has become the standard mode of media consumption.

People who grew up with mobile technology switch between devices and platforms 27 times per hour, according to a Time Inc. study. Compelling storytelling in this context means eschewing linear narratives for a more fluid and immersive form of narrative, in which people can pick up different pieces of the story across different platforms in any order.

We are even seeing classic works of literature reworked in this vein: earlier this year The Lizzie Bennet Diaries reimagined Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* for YouTube. It also means relinquishing control of your narrative and collaborating with your audience. In this new era of immersive storytelling, ‘The End’ is no longer applicable.
INTEL, TOSHIBA
The Power Inside

While many brands have been reluctant to relinquish control of the storytelling process, Intel and Toshiba’s much-lauded social films put the consumer front and centre of the content – to impressive effect. Last year’s The Beauty Inside (Contagious 28) won a 2013 Daytime Emmy award for Outstanding New Approach to Daytime Programming and scooped three Grands Prix at the Cannes Lions festival for agency Pereira & O’Dell. There was also a 360% increase in sales of the Ultrabook following the campaign launch.

This year Intel and Toshiba partnered once again with award-winning directors to push the concept of branded entertainment into ambitious new territory. Like its predecessor, The Power Inside is driven by user-generated content, with people able to audition for a part in the film and audience participation shaping the story’s narrative.

Toshiba and Intel appear to have demonstrated the power of real-time co-creation so effectively that The Power Inside even has other brands’ advertising inside: Spotify, Skype and Skullcandy all signed deals for product placement within the already-branded storyline.

www.insidefilms.com
This summer AT&T, along with Hollywood’s The Chernin Group and BBDO, New York, developed an unscripted reality series that unfolded entirely on social media. 

@SummerBreak (Contagious 36) followed the lives of a group of Los Angeles teenagers via their Twitter and Instagram accounts, supplementing the real-time narrative with 30-second YouTube ‘webisodes’ assembled by a team of professional producers, plus weekly recaps that clocked in at less than five minutes.

Providing snackable content across multiple devices and embracing non-linear storytelling paid off. The most popular episode attracted more than 400,000 views and people watched @SummerBreak content 644 million times via Twitter, Tumblr, AT&T’s Facebook page, advertising around the show and social media conversations. Fans of the programme made approximately 10.4 million comments, shares and Likes across social media, while conversation around the show grew at a rate of about 24% each week it was on.

www.att.com

While AT&T demonstrated the efficacy of snackable storytelling in the @SummerBreak series, it also proved that long-form content can still be incredibly powerful with a 30-minute film directed by the acclaimed film-maker Werner Herzog.

From One Second to the Next brought viewers face to face with the victims and perpetrators of life-changing accidents caused by texting while driving. The film was screened in 40,000 schools across the US and was supplemented with a campaign website where people could pledge not to text and drive, share their own story and try their hand against the Texting & Driving Simulator.

The quality of the film recalls a point made by this year’s Cannes Lions Film Jury president, Sir John Hegarty, who said: ‘There is a danger in the term “long form”. The great thing about creativity is the ability to edit, and long-form content doesn’t always do that. You have to ask, “Would this win at Sundance? Would this win at the Cannes film festival?”’

www.itcanwait.com
When it comes to data-driven storytelling it’s hard to find a more literal example than Honda’s recreation of the late race-car driver Ayrton Senna’s record-breaking F1 Japanese Grand Prix qualifying lap. In 1989 the driver set a new record around the Suzuka Circuit in Japan and the data from that lap was recorded using Honda’s engine telemetry system. Twenty-four years later Honda, via Dentsu, Tokyo, combined that historic data with modern media to tell Senna’s story through light and sound. The project was part of a larger promotion for Honda’s ‘internavi’ navigation system.

Spectators watched as a light raced around the Suzuka Circuit in step with Senna’s qualifying lap, and speakers around the track echoed the sound of the McLaren MP4/5 engine. Footage from the live event was then released as a short film and used to raise awareness of an accompanying app that plays the sounds of one of Honda’s signature cars in time with your movements, adding a very personal dimension to the storytelling.

www.honda.co.jp/internavi-dots/dots-lab
Great storytelling in a multiplatform world doesn’t mean platform-hopping, rather the goal should be to tell a story that builds with all of the platforms, producing a sort of ‘additive friction’. While multiplatform storytelling simply takes a user from one touchpoint to another, additive friction combines different media to fully immerse a user in the story.

Portal Entertainment, a UK-based ‘immersive entertainment’ company, has recently produced an iPad-based storytelling experience called The Craftsman (Contagious 37) that illustrates how different media can combine to produce this sort of additive friction. The moment you open the iPad app, The Craftsman is told in real time over a five-day period, with the app exploiting all the various functionalities of the tablet to tell a personalised story that is unique to the reader.

The app integrates with applications such as iCal and Mail so that the fiction ‘bleeds’ out for the audience to send emails and reminders on the other applications they already use. The app also uses the iPad’s camera light to push the story forward, and certain parts of the story maximise the retina-display capabilities to help with problem-solving.

www.portalentertainment.co.uk
CONTEXT/ TARGETING
It's relevancy, stupid
CONTEXT / TARGETING / As technology allows for the ever-increasing collection of audience data, the ability to identify and exploit personal context is becoming a key brand differentiator.

It may be clichéd, but the analogy of integrated marketing being like matching luggage remains apt. The only problem is that people don’t live their lives according to media silos. As more marketers begin prioritising consumer-centricity a new age of integration is starting to emerge – one based not on media channels, but on an individual’s specific context; including location, time of day, their intent and even the persona they have adopted. Statistics from Accenture show that 61% of millennial shoppers would trade privacy for personalised offers from retailers.

Consumer privacy will continue to be the defining issue in this area; better-targeted marketing increases relevancy and therefore campaign effectiveness, but is only possible if consumers are prepared to share more data. So far, people seem happy to give away that data provided the benefit of doing so is made clear.

Here are the ideas from 2013 that best constructed this value exchange.
Digitising the milk carton tradition of featuring missing children, Australian Police created YouTube pre-roll ads detailing missing people and then transformed the ‘Skip’ button into ‘Yes, I have’ or ‘No, I haven’t’ seen the featured person.

The Missing Person Pre-Roll (Contagious 37) clip included a photo and description of one of Australia’s 1,600 long-term missing persons and information on their last sighting.

The ads were geo-targeted to the YouTube viewer’s location. Those clicking the ‘Yes, I have’ icon were directed to a website where they could enter information about their sighting. A collaboration between Google and VML Australia, Sydney, the initiative received 1.2 million views in five days and 238 people clicked the ‘Yes, I have’ button.

www.missingpersons.gov.au
**SKY GERMANY**

*Sky Livespots*

Pay-TV broadcaster **Sky** in Germany gave free access to Champions League football to millions of viewers on competitive networks. The catch? Viewers could watch the game only during 60-second spots in the ad break, driving brand awareness with a taster of the product.

Partnering with agency **Serviceplan**, Munich, **Sky Livespots** (*Contagious 36*) debuted in February during the Arsenal vs Bayern Munich game. The ads contained 40 seconds of live game action, followed by a call to action urging interested viewers to sign up for a subscription to Sky. The execution dominated both print and online media the day after the match, and trended on Twitter thanks in part to a goal that was fortuitously scored during one of the six live look-ins.

The campaign led to a 24% increase in sign-ups to the network and earned a Gold Direct Lion at Cannes.

[www.sky.de](http://www.sky.de)
Recognising that Google is a first port of call for information, tissue brand Kleenex in the UK teamed up with media agency Mindshare in May to develop an adaptive planning tool that tracked searches for cold and flu remedies. In one of the smartest uses of multiple data sources we have seen, this information was then correlated with historical public data showing visits to the doctor in order to predict likely flu outbreak areas with 96% accuracy.

Using this model Kleenex was able to deploy media in only the areas suffering from flu, leading to a 40% year-on-year sales increase in the first two months of the campaign. Later in the year, Kleenex USA used a similar approach (with data from America’s Centers for Disease Control) to predict where winter flu would strike next. At the my-achoo.com microsite, people can enter their zipcode to discover if the virus is likely to hit their neighbourhood in the next three weeks (Contagious 37).

Supported by TV ads and a nationwide promotional tour, the campaign secured 750 PR placements across traditional and social media outlets and engaged with more than 2,000 people in the worst US flu-affected cities.

KLEENEX
Achoo by Kleenex

AUDI
AudiUSA.com

Algorithms are increasingly being employed to create unique online experiences, anticipating needs and even learning from people’s behaviour. AudiUSA.com, built by agency AKQA, San Francisco, uses 27 different self-scoring algorithms to automatically customise the whole user experience.

‘From the moment that you come to the site, Audi knows who you are, what you last bought on other websites, where you live, how many kids you have, your rough income,’ Ben Jones, chief technical officer at AKQA, explained (Contagious 36). ‘What this means is instead of having to search for their perfect car, the user is automatically presented with it.

‘Even errors are data points: when the site is wrong, and you click from the car the site has selected for you to a different one, the algorithm will reverse-correlate and update itself. It self-learns.’

www.audiusa.com
Not all of this year’s contextual targeting campaigns had such lofty technical ambitions. Two of the best ideas tickled us with a lightness of touch. Automaker Mazda USA targeted people waiting in line for a restaurant table in 15 US cities (Contagious 37). Would-be diners were given a six-minute spin in the new Mazda6 and rewarded with a gift certificate for their preferred eatery. Out of 7,000 participants, 1.5% bought a Mazda.

Meanwhile in Paris, Mattel-owned board-game Scrabble, via Ogilvy, Paris, provided wifi in areas of the city with patchy coverage (Contagious 36). Smartphone users who selected the Scrabble network were given a collection of random letters from which they had to create a word. The more words they submitted, the more minutes they unlocked: a deft exchange of utility in return for a spot of unchallenging fun. In two weeks, people played more than 6,000 words, receiving more than 110,000 minutes of free wifi.

www.mazdausa.com
www.scrabble.com
SERVICE DESIGN

Outside in
SERVICE DESIGN / The first of October took on special significance for service designers this year. The inaugural ‘Customer Experience Day’, ratified by the US House of Representatives and championed by the Customer Experience Professionals Association, celebrates ‘great customer experience and the professionals who make it happen’.

With customers using more touchpoints than ever, getting those experiences right is becoming trickier. This has spawned the evolution of Living Services – utilities that are all-pervasive, distributed across many web-connected devices and aware of the user and their surroundings.

Research by McKinsey published this year in Harvard Business Review showed that performance on end-to-end consumer journeys is 30% to 40% more strongly correlated with customer satisfaction than performance on an individual touchpoint. Brands that take the plunge with this strategy design from the outside in: they start with the needs of customers and work back. The best examples from 2013 did exactly that.
Garanti

Garanti, Turkey’s second-largest bank, launched a truly innovative mobile app banking suite named iGaranti (Contagious 37). Developed by service design agency Fjord’s offices in London, Helsinki and Istanbul, the service aggregates 23 financial functions into one app, which can be customised by the user.

iGaranti helps customers spend wisely, save money and conduct banking transactions. Facebook integration makes it easy to send money to friends, while shopping and partnership apps give users exclusive deals. Among other innovative features, users can scan QR codes to ‘pre-alert’ an ATM, removing the need to insert a card to make a transaction.

Mark Curtis, chief client officer at Fjord, explains: ‘The future of banking isn’t about anonymous high-street branches, it’s about banks fusing financial expertise with technology to personalise the relationship between customers and their money.’

In the month following the app’s release in May, 100,000 users downloaded it and iGaranti now boasts more than 85,000 active customers.

www.garanti.com.tr
**AMERICAN EXPRESS**

**Sync on Twitter**

Back in February, the US-based financial corporation [American Express](https://www.americanexpress.com) launched a new service that allows members to purchase items and access offers by simply sending a tweet.

By linking their Twitter and Amex accounts via a website, people can purchase items on the micro-blogging platform by using specific hashtags, promoted by the @AmericanExpress handle. Companies that have been involved include Amazon, H&M, Zappos.com, Best Buy, Dell, FedEx Office, Microsoft, McDonald’s, Ticketmaster and Virgin America.

To purchase an item, customers simply send a tweet using a hashtag that has been created by Amex (e.g. #buysmartphone). An automated tweet is sent back, asking whether they want to proceed with the purchase. If users reply (using another hashtag, such as #confirmsmartphone) then the sale goes through. Items are shipped to the user’s address, free of charge, within two days.

[sync.americanexpress.com/Twitter](http://sync.americanexpress.com/Twitter)

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**INTERRAIL**

**InterRail Mobile**

To promote its Europe-wide train ticket, the Global Pass, transport company [InterRail](https://www.interrail.eu) launched a new offering that provides its customers with the cheapest data roaming rates in Europe.

Via [Havas Worldwide](https://www.havas.com), Brussels, the company announced the creation of a dedicated mobile phone operator, [InterRail Mobile](https://www.interrail-roaming.eu) ([Contagious 36](http://www.contagiousmag.com/)), enabling Global Pass ticket-holders to stay connected throughout their travels.

The service covers 97% of Europe and it costs just €17 ($22) to buy alongside a Global Pass rail ticket. Customers receive a micro-SIM and mobile phone number, which, once activated, offers the lowest rates when either calling or messaging in different European countries.

[www.interrail-roaming.eu](http://www.interrail-roaming.eu)
Dutch train operator NS has tested smartphone technology that will be welcomed by any commuter who has ever found themselves stuck in a busy train carriage without a seat.

For three months in 2013 the operator experimented with adding functionality to its mobile journey-planner app, Reisplanner Xtra, that informed passengers just how busy an incoming train was and which carriages had free seats (Contagious 35). The company invested approximately €2m ($2.68m) on installing 280 infrared sensors on 11 trains travelling on the Zwolle to Roosendaal intercity route.

Users were sent information about their train before it rolled into the station, in an effort to ease congestion and increase customer satisfaction as part of the operator’s commitment to improve journeys ‘door-to-door’.

Other information included the locations of first- and second-class carriages, where the quiet carriages were, whether the train had wifi availability and where the wheelchair and bicycle entrances could be found.

www.ns.nl
We're intrigued to see how Amazon's Mayday tech support service evolves. Users touch an icon on the screen of the new Kindle Fire HDX tablet and, within 15 seconds, an Amazon representative appears in a video box to respond to any query they might have, around the clock. The rep cannot see users, but can see their screens to help and guide them. The service comes at no additional cost.

Google Wallet first made waves in Most Contagious 2011, to huge fanfare. It is back this year after Google announced Wallet users’ accounts will be linked to their Gmail, making it possible to send money with just a few clicks. Recipients do not need to have a Gmail address, although they do need to be registered with Google Wallet. We’re excited to see how the ubiquity of Gmail in the US drives usage.

Meanwhile, young people living in house-shares in the UK can rejoice. Energy provider British Gas, via London-based agency Rufus Leonard, has launched a pilot customer account management service called Me (Mobile Energy) in order to meet the needs of house-sharers and younger customers (Contagious 36). Online account management lets the customers choose fixed or meter-based bills, easily set up direct-debit payments and split bills.

www.amazon.com
www.google.com/wallet
www.mobileenergy.co.uk

1 / Amazon Mayday
2 / Google Wallet
3 / British Gas, Me
TECHNOLOGY

Tilting access
TECHNOLOGY / Whether we’re talking iPhone price points or disruptive innovation, one thing is clear about technology in 2013: accessibility is king. From bringing internet access to remote areas to expanding device interactivity through virtual reality and gesture control, technology companies are dedicating time and resources to expanding their functionality and their geography. With developed markets approaching saturation and mobile economies developing in Asia and Africa, companies are hustling to adapt to a new, global normal.

Former tech titans like BlackBerry and HP took big hits this year, while mobile app upstarts like Tinder and Snapchat racked up headlines (and investment dollars). But apps be damned, hardware is still the major battleground. Samsung is challenging Apple’s smartphone dominance, Google is making forays into laptops, and startups – increasingly crowdfunded – are keeping the big guys on their toes.

The patent wars have cooled off a bit, although the smartwatch skirmishes may be setting the stage for a larger change that moves the front lines of tech competition from the pocket to the wrist. For now, we wait, while technology looks to expand its reach.
Ushahidi
BRCK

Nairobi-based open-source software company Ushahidi, which built its reputation collating crowdsourced crisis information, has created a ‘backup generator for the internet’. Called BRCK (Contagious 35), the durable software-infused device intelligently switches between available ethernet, wifi, 3G and 4G networks to ensure a steady connection even in areas with unpredictable coverage. A single BRCK can support up to 20 devices, with a battery that lasts more than eight hours, so even if the power is cut, connectivity is not.

Driven by the motto ‘If it works in Africa, it will work anywhere’, the team strove to create something of equal use to engineers in Kenya and coders in California. Ushahidi CEO Erik Hersman explained: ‘While the BRCK is made in Africa, its usage is universal. People who go camping or hiking, or who need a more secure wifi link in a public space, can use the BRCK if they’re disconnected from the normal power or home/office wifi connection.’

www.brck.com
After years – or is it decades? – of false starts in virtual reality, the one headset to rule them all is finally being forged. Oculus Rift is a low-latency headset that allows videogamers to enter the action, in 360 degrees, in real time. With unique images shown to each eye and a 110-degree display (wider than one’s peripheral vision), the Rift mimics a stereoscopic 3D viewing experience with depth, scale and a parallax effect, without the typical constraints of a screen or headset. The headset tracks even subtle head movement. Plus, the whole setup weighs about the same as a pair of ski goggles.

After raising $2.5m on Kickstarter, creator Oculus VR recently announced the Rift will support mobile gaming in addition to PC-based virtual reality. ‘We’re really looking at hitting the consumer market,’ said CEO Brendan Iribe. ‘We’re very excited about what we’re seeing.’ Soon, gamers will be too.

www.oculusvr.com

GOOGLE
Project Loon

Google[x], the division of Google responsible for audacious ideas like Google Glass and self-driving cars, is taking a moonshot to help the 4.5 billion people worldwide with limited or no internet access. Well, not quite a moonshot. Project Loon (Contagious 36), as the effort is called, uses a network of balloons floating 20km above ground to bring connectivity to hard-to-reach regions. The balloons beam signals between each other, rising and falling to move via wind to maintain consistent coverage. Antenna-bearing households within a 40km diameter below the network can tap the signal to connect to the internet.

Google says it plans to launch hundreds of balloons into the stratosphere, following a 30-balloon pilot scheme bringing web access to 50 farmers in New Zealand this July.

The ‘economic prosperity, vitality, health and education that would be improved by those people having access to the internet is incalculable,’ said Google[x] head Astro Teller.

www.google.com/loon

OCULUS VR

Oculus Rift

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www.oculusvr.com
Tackling accessibility in another way, Palo Alto startup Matternet is using unmanned-drone technology to build a delivery network that can access even the hardest-to-reach sections of the world. More than one billion people live in regions that are inaccessible by road for at least some portion of the year.

Using Grasshopper quadrocopters, Matternet hopes to create a system that allows people in those remote areas to order small packages such as medical supplies, seeds or other necessary items and have them shipped without delay, on demand, at a low cost. In phase one, which has currently been tested in relief camps in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, Matternet drones will need to return to a home port between trips. Later, the network hopes to add solar chargers throughout the system, allowing drones to move continuously from place to place autonomously.

The goal? An interconnected global network of easy, affordable, autonomous shipping that does not rely on standard infrastructure such as roads and rails.

www.matternet.us
ONES TO WATCH

3D printing became a household concept this year, led by pioneer Makerbot. We have our eyes on the firm’s Digitizer (Contagious 35), a desktop apparatus that scans real-world objects and creates digital 3D models that can be edited, shared and 3D-printed. Think of it as real-world copy and paste.

We are also fascinated by the concept of 4D printing (Contagious 37). MIT lecturer Skylar Tibbits and researchers at the University of Colorado have added another dimension to printed objects: time. Shape-memory polymer fibres are used to create printable materials that change shape when they come into contact with a catalyst. For example, six connected panels can fold into a cube when touched by water.

We continue to be amazed by the evolutions of display technology, which will no doubt change how we interact with devices in the not-so-distant future. Another MIT Media Lab star, Dhairya Dand, is experimenting with what he calls 2.5-dimensional displays. The elastic screen, called Obake (Contagious 35), can change shape as you pinch, pull and interact with the surface itself.

And, finally, we are watching the brains behind our devices – quite literally. Intel is experimenting with what it calls neuromorphic chips, which try to mimic the function of the human brain. The chips are well-suited for brain-friendly tasks such as associative memory and analogue data-sensing, and use between 15 and 300 times less energy than other chips.

www.store.makerbot.com/digitizer
www.sjet.us
tiny.cc/neurochip
tiny.cc/obake_mit

THE BARBARIAN GROUP

Cinder

Digital agency The Barbarian Group’s open-source software platform Cinder picked up the first Innovation Grand Prix at Cannes Lions. Cinder (Contagious 36), a C++ library and development platform, has grown from three original developers to encompass a large community of coders worldwide.

The Barbarian Group founders Keith Butters and Benjamin Palmer liken the tool to a free, open-source art supply store: ‘Cinder allows developers to quit spending their time reinventing that canvas and gives them the ability to spend more time painting.’

Originally developed to implement Apple’s iTunes visualiser and later used for a special augmented-reality issue of Esquire magazine, the platform is now used by professionals in nearly every facet of design and technology. ‘We think Cinder is an exciting example of the ad industry not just reacting to but actually leading tech innovation,’ said Butters and Palmer.

www.libcinder.org

THALMIC LABS

MYO

As tech behemoths get into the wearables game, smaller startups continue to push the edge of the field. One such company is Waterloo, Canada-based Thalmic Labs, which developed the MYO armband (Contagious 35).

Using a six-axis inertial measurement unit and, fittingly, an ARM processor, the MYO interprets the forearm muscle movements associated with specific hand motions and relays that information to connected objects via low-energy Bluetooth 4.0. Users map gestures to corresponding actions: make a fist and your TV turns on, or flick your wrist to bring up the weather report on your iPad, for example.

‘We’ve evolved for thousands of years to use our hands to manipulate and interact with everything. MYO is a way to do that,’ said co-founder Stephen Lake. MYO pre-sold 25,000 units within a month, giving the company $3.75m in guaranteed sales before it ever shipped a band. Thalmic aims to have the armband in retail stores by next summer.

www.getmyo.com

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www.libcinder.org
AD BREAK
Creating, sharing, watching
AD BREAK / As well as ultimately persuading people to buy stuff, some ads have always been a form of entertainment in their own right. The digital age has allowed for borders to be broken down because people consume, share and create content faster than ever before.

Branded content and YouTube-exclusive ads have stayed firmly put as a mainstay of the modern media landscape, and the evolution of social visual culture has meant that 2013 has been dubbed the Year of the Video.

The standard for brands to provide competitive high-quality snippets of entertainment in the space is higher than ever. Here are the Contagious top picks.
IBM
A Boy and his Atom

IBM Research marked the discovery of the world’s smallest magnetic memory bit by creating the record-breaking and rather sweet short film *A Boy and his Atom* (*Contagious* 35). The stop-motion film, directed by Nico Casavecchia, was composed using 242 photographs of individual atoms, amplified more than 100 million times.

Shot on what the Guinness World Records verified as the world’s smallest movie set, the short was filmed by four scientists who worked 18-hour days over two weeks. They used a tunnelling microscope, a piece of copper III and carbon-monoxide atoms.

The opening shot of the film shows 12 atoms, which represent IBM’s breakthrough: the ability to store one bit of data on just a dozen atoms, compared with the one million atoms typically needed. *A Boy and his Atom* has received 4.7 million views on YouTube and demonstrated that nanophysics can be fun. Via Ogilvy, New York, www.research.ibm.com

THREE
The Pony

A moonwalking Shetland pony entertained the masses in March when UK mobile operator THREE launched *The Pony*, directed by Dougal Wilson. The campaign by Wieden+Kennedy, London, featured popular Fleetwood Mac track *Everywhere*, and picked up more than 3.5 million YouTube views in six days. Fans could also create their own dancing ponies and shareable content through the Pony Mixing Tool. More than 500,000 ponies were created and 100,000 shared online.

So what was the point of all this? THREE successfully celebrated ‘all the seemingly stupid stuff we look at online on a daily basis’. While it ‘may seem silly,’ said the company, ‘it’s not – it’s what connects us through the simple act of sharing.’
www.theponymixer.com
tiny.cc/DancePonyDance
In our humble opinion, 2013 will remain forever in our hearts and minds as the year when dogs learnt to drive. Without the glory of the Olympics, the US presidential election or Gangnam Style to overshadow this momentous canine achievement, New Zealand’s Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) caught our attention with its whimsical but entirely worthy endeavour.

The campaign (Contagious 34) attempted to encourage people to adopt a dog by overcoming the misconception that rescue dogs can’t be trained. So, naturally, the SPCA attempted to teach three dogs to drive. A series of online videos followed the story of Porter, Monty and Ginny as they learnt to operate a car.

To put this training to the test, MINI – with the help of Draftfcb, Auckland – supplied the pooches with a MINI Countryman to try out. Of course, the car was adjusted to help the animals reach the accelerator and brake pedals. The campaign received over 10 YouTube views and increased awareness of MINI’s association with the SPCA by 40%.

tiny.cc/DrivingDogs
MARMITE
End Marmite Neglect

In a smart evolution of its ‘Love it or Hate it’ positioning, Unilever brand Marmite launched a nationwide campaign (Contagious 37) to stop people ‘neglecting’ the famous spread. The ad featured a Marmite rescue team calling on houses where they suspected people may be mistreating the product. A poignant voiceover provided by former BBC newsreader Michael Buerk ended the ad by saying, ‘Love it or hate it, just don’t forget it.’

The campaign, by adam&eveDDB, London, was based on a survey conducted by the brand, which found one in ten Brits admitting they had not opened their jar of Marmite for more than three months. The ad divided audience opinion across the country. For some, it was a witty take on the stereotypical charity ads that show distressed pets being saved from their owners. Others saw it as a little too mocking of the vital work that charities do to tackle animal cruelty – so much so that the Advertising Standards Authority received 278 complaints about the campaign.

From Marmite’s perspective, the controversy further supported the brand’s long-term ‘love or hate’ positioning. To appease any upset viewers, Marmite donated £18,000 ($28,000) to animal charity the RSPCA.

www.endmaremiteneglect.com

HELLOFLO
The Camp Gyno

If the word ‘vagina’ offends you, you should probably stop reading now.

HelloFlo is a subscription service based in Brooklyn, New York, sending monthly packages of sanitary products and time-of-the-month treats to your door. HelloFlo needed a way to stand out in the category, and found it in The Camp Gyno. The cheeky YouTube ad clocked up nearly four million views in just five days and has been described as a ‘game-changer’, ‘courageous’ and ‘an amazing breakthrough in tampon advertising’.

The viral stars a precocious tween who gets her first period at summer camp, appoints herself ‘Camp Gyno’ and proceeds to educate her peers about the bloody passage to womanhood. Our tween’s reign as Camp Gyno is finally foiled when her friends realise they can get their monthly supplies via a delivery service rather than a tyrannical 12-year-old. HelloFlo: ‘It’s like Santa for your vagina.’

More celebration, more humour and more vaginas: that’s definitely what sanitary product advertising needs.

www.helloflo.com
**VOLVO TRUCKS**

**Epic Split**

Belgian martial artist, actor and director Jean-Claude Van Damme does the splits in between two moving trucks to promote Volvo Trucks’ new dynamic steering system. His incredible achievement has been viewed more than 52 million times on YouTube and has generated stacks of global PR for the brand.

The camera pans out from Van Damme as the two trucks part and the 53-year-old stays attached to both while doing the splits. A soundtrack choice that is weird and wonderful in equal measure – Enya’s *Only Time* – provides the ethereal accompaniment for Van Damme’s astonishing feat.

**Epic Split** is the latest – and by far the most popular to date – of Volvo Trucks’ content-led push. Co-created with agency Forsman & Bodenfors in Gothenburg, the films are geared towards raising awareness and standing out from rival brands.

The viral quickly reached meme status with fans photoshopping their faces on to Van Damme’s body. New York-based visual effects shop Artjail superimposed disgraced Toronto Mayor Rob Ford so effectively, that it looked as if he was attempting the gymnastic stunt himself: the spoof video has received nearly 2 million views on YouTube. From Russian President Vladimir Putin straddling two fighter planes (via 9GAG.com) to actor Channing Tatum recreating the stunt for upcoming film *22 Jump Street*, Van Damme and Volvo Trucks have reached pop-culture zeitgeist.

www.youtube.com/user/VolvoTrucks

**CHRYSLER, DODGE DURANGO**

**Ron Burgundy**

Fans of cult-film *Anchorman* delighted in the news that a sequel would grace the big screen later this year (starring rap legends Drake and Kanye West to boot). For those who couldn’t wait to see Will Ferrell reprise his infamous role as *Ron Burgundy*, he didn’t disappoint. Working with US auto brand Chrysler and his comedy video website FunnyorDie.com, he shot 70 videos to promote the carmaker’s Dodge Durango model. Parodying a classic car sell in true inappropriate-70s-newscaster style, the spots see Burgundy on top form, dissing a ‘worthless’ horse and highlighting the benefits of an especially roomy glovebox.

The videos were released throughout the year and proved that Burgundy’s comically idiotic sales pitches work: one month after the first nine films had been released, sales of the re-engineered Durango climbed 59%, up 50% for the year. Dodge’s website also saw an 80% increase in web traffic.

Wieden+Kennedy, Portland, worked with Funny or Die writers on the scripts.

www.youtube.com/user/dodge
RETAIL / In last year’s Most Contagious report we noted how the barriers between offline and online shopping were evaporating, with digital tools helping to combine the best of virtual and real-world retail experiences.

That is still true in 2013 and we have seen brands use anything from mobile apps to LED lamps to make shopping more seamless and exciting. This focus on experience pays off. Retailers that provide people with engaging, digitally-enhanced experiences can expect in-store sales to increase by as much as 40%, according to SapientNitro’s Insights 2013 study.

By making shopping more frictionless and using storytelling techniques, brands are reimagining the ‘final mile’ and creating unique experiences for consumers that convert browsers into shoppers.
Visitors to apparel brand Under Armour’s new Shanghai store are not greeted by racks of clothing or shoes but the Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps.

The brand’s 2,000 sq ft store in the Jing An Kerry Centre highlights experience not product. Shoppers enter a tunnel of bright LED lights and watch a six-minute video on a massive, 270-degree video screen where Phelps and other sports stars explain what it feels like to train and perform like a world-class athlete. NBA star Brandon Jennings takes visitors through a basketball workout, while boxer Canelo Alvarez takes shots at a punch bag.

Following the video, shoppers are led to a minimalist, gallery-like space that features core Under Armour products. The Under Armour Experience was designed by Brooklyn-based agency Hush and Marc Thorpe Design in Manhattan, with Under Armour’s in-house creative team Tight Shirt Productions.

‘While most retailers are more like 80% product and 20% storytelling, we flipped that and are really concentrating on storytelling as a primary focus of the store,’ Under Armour founder Kevin Plank said (Contagious 37).
www.under armour.cn
Google, CFDA

Shop the Hangout

Google has merged ecommerce with entertainment by partnering with the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) to bring a shopping-TV-style experience to its Google+ platform. The tech company invited fashion designer and CFDA president Diane von Furstenberg to launch its shoppable Hangouts in September (Contagious 37). Google then followed with other similar Hangouts starring CFDA designers, including Rebecca Minkoff, Rachel Zoe and fashion label Rag & Bone’s Marcus Wainwright and David Neville.

The experience added an ecommerce element to Hangouts on Air, the platform that allows Google+ Hangouts to be edited and shared as a public video, which can then be added to a website or YouTube. While the designers shared fashion looks and replied to questions from Google+, viewers could click through Google Shopping Shortlists to see and then buy the products the designers were touting.

Shop the Hangout was designed to deepen engagement between designers and shoppers ahead of the Christmas season.

tiny.cc/CFDA

Vodafone

Fakka

In Egypt, it is common for small-shop owners to offer items such as sweets, chewing-gum or mints instead of small change. But Vodafone Egypt proposed that vendors hand out its mobile phone credit ‘micro-recharge’ cards instead of these unwanted items.

Vodafone positioned its cards as a new currency, calling them ‘Fakka’ – Arabic for petty change (Contagious 35). The telco then distributed the Fakka cards to vendors in denominations of 50 piasters, 1 Egyptian pound and EGP1.5 ($0.07-$0.22), later adding an EGP3 card due to popular demand.

Vodafone and JWT, Cairo, claimed that Fakka revenues exceeded the brand’s original target by 510%. The initiative increased average revenue per Vodafone user by 7% and there has been a steady 10% increase in distribution of Vodafone Fakka across the country. The cards have enabled Vodafone to create the biggest telco distribution network in Egypt, hitting more than 46,000 retailers.

tinyurl.com/fakka-JWT
EBay is digitising customer service with its Retail Associate Platform (Contagious 37), which puts information about its individual customers, products and inventory at sales assistants’ fingertips. The mobile app is designed to be accessed by salespeople in eBay partner stores via tablets and requires customers to actively opt in. Shoppers can check in on their smartphone to participating stores, alerting assistants of their arrival. The app stores the information about loyal customers’ purchase history, size and colour preferences, and displays tailored recommendations.

The online retailer took another step towards increasing its relevance to the world of physical retailing with its relaunched RedLaser iOS mobile app (Contagious 35), which eBay dubbed ‘the ultimate shopping companion’. It lets users see maps showing local stores offering deals and easily locates products or offers in select stores.

In Walgreens and Home Depot stores, for instance, shoppers can search for products and see a pin on a map showing exactly where in the aisle the item is located.

EMART
Sale Navigation

To help shoppers quickly locate discounted items, South Korea’s largest retailer Emart trialled a system using LED lighting (Contagious 35). The Sale Navigation feature, developed by Cheil Worldwide Korea in Seoul, was incorporated into the retailer’s mobile app.

After downloading the app, Emart shoppers place their smartphone in a holster attached to each shopping cart. From that position, the smartphone receives signals from the store’s LED lighting so shoppers see a map of the shop and their location, along with directions to nearby discounts. When the cart approaches an on-sale item, the app flashes the coupon on the screen to alert shoppers to the deal.

The technology aims to promote Emart as the retailer with the best mobile technology, as well as stress the company’s ‘Everyday Low Price’ brand positioning.

www.emart.com
The best of offline and online will converge further in retail to create the ultimate omni-channel shopping experience for consumers.

US startup Rosie’s goal is to make grocery shopping fast and convenient. The mobile and web app (Contagious 35) tracks the items that shoppers buy regularly and reminds them when they are running low on stock. The app works with local grocery stores, so once the user has purchased their goods online, these are ready to be collected in-store. Alternatively, users can hire people from chore marketplace TaskRabbit.com to deliver the groceries.

Meanwhile, the clothing retailer Hointer created a physical fashion store with the ease of online shopping, but where shoppers need not worry about poor fits or uncomfortable materials. Hointer’s Seattle and Washington stores let shoppers scan the clothing they like to have it delivered to their fitting room in less than 30 seconds. They can then use their mobile app to get alternative sizes and pay by swiping their credit card at a terminal.

www.rosieapp.com
www.hointer.com
CROWDSOURCING
People power
CROWDSOURCING / ‘It’s not outsourcing; it’s crowdsourcing,’ said author Jeff Howe in 2006, referring to companies tapping into the latent talent of the crowd. Seven years on, crowdsourcing’s role in business is continuing to gain momentum.

In 2012’s *Most Contagious* report, we looked at how companies were adopting a social business approach by giving the public opportunities to influence key decisions and represent brands on social media. This engagement has increased in 2013, with some brands now using crowdsourcing to experiment. From new delivery models to more collaborative sales processes, brands have used the power of the crowd to disrupt their models and provide them with a competitive advantage.

This investment, according to research firm Gartner, should increase brands’ bottom lines. Gartner predicts that by 2015, consumer goods companies employing crowdsourcing in marketing campaigns or new product development will boost revenue by 1%, compared with their ‘non-crowdsourced competitors’.

As Shelley Kuiper, founder and CEO of crowd intelligence agency Chaordix, told this year’s audience at Crowdsourcing Week: ‘Participation is the new brand.’
Courier DHL is piloting a platform where Stockholm’s residents are facilitating last-mile deliveries. MyWays (Contagious 37) allows members of the public to deliver packages from online orders directly to consumers. A mobile app connects individual purchasers with those offering to transport the parcels along their daily routes – for a small fee.

After ordering a product online, the buyer can select the ‘flexible delivery’ option and then specify the location and time they want the parcel delivered. They can also select how much they are willing to pay. When the package reaches a DHL collection point, it becomes visible (via the app) to all registered MyWays users, who can select to deliver a parcel to the given location at the specified time.

‘At the moment of purchase, people want to be able to determine exactly when and where their parcel is delivered,’ said project director of innovation at DHL Customer Solutions & Innovation, Joerg Hanser.

www.myways.com
Taking inspiration from the wedding registry practice of donating towards a honeymoon, US carmaker Dodge has launched an online platform called the Dodge Dart Registry (Contagious 34). Would-be car-owners create an online profile and design their ideal Dodge Dart. Users can choose from a variety of available exterior colours, trim options and engine specifications before receiving a fundraising goal based on these choices. They then send requests to friends and family, who can fund the vehicle in sections.

The website tracks how much of the vehicle has been paid for, and by whom, using crowdfunding platform RocketHub. When the cost of the car has been covered, the creator can then order it.

Michael Tabtabai and Aaron Allen, creative directors at Wieden+Kennedy, Portland, said: ‘The reality is that buying a car is inherently social and we wanted to give people a platform to behave this way with our car.’

www.dodgedartregistry.com
To help blind people in Singapore, telecoms company StarHub partnered with the Singapore Society for the Visually Handicapped to create MySmartEye, an app that harnesses a community of volunteers to identify objects that the visually impaired can’t see.

After downloading the app, users can photograph an item, scene or piece of information they are having trouble deciphering. The app shares this image with the charity’s volunteers, who identify the troublesome image, texting a detailed description back. Through text-to-speech technology, the visually impaired user then receives a voice description. Volunteers can quickly and easily report any erroneous answers, via YouTube and Facebook, to root out mistakes or misdirection.

The platform averaged 3.7 replies to each query within 20 seconds. The system of self-regulation also minimised erroneous answers to just 0.004% of replies. The project, via DDB Singapore, won a Gold Lion in the Direct category at the 2013 Cannes Lions festival.

As part of a broader marketing strategy to extend its popularity beyond feature phones and into smartphones in India, Nokia launched a nine-episode reality-TV contest on news network NDTV called Your Wish Is My App (Contagious 34). Running online and on Facebook, the contest accepted some 36,000 app idea submissions, ranging from a photo-sharing app with filters to a fake currency detector. The public could vote for concepts, assessing them in terms of usefulness, originality, potential to generate revenue and fun.

Shortlisted ideas could win up to 1 million rupees ($18,572). The show gave the top 36 submissions the chance to fight it out for the cash prize in front of judges, including venture capitalist Raj Chinai, co-founder of Harvard Business School Alumni Angels, and celebrity chef Vikas Khanna. Nokia also hosted festivals across New Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore, where Indians presented app ideas to judges. Strong ideas could gain a wild-card entry as one of the final 50 apps featured on the show.

www.nokia.com/in-en

www.mysmarteye.starhub.com
MINI, BMW

Not Normal

Classic car brand MINI celebrated its quirky British heritage by scouring the web to find fan creations that fitted its new tagline: ‘Not Normal’ (Contagious 37). The campaign, devised by Iris Worldwide, London, used the hashtag #mininotnormal to amalgamate car-lovers’ tributes from across the web – from a MINI-themed birthday cake to a MINI sandcastle. A microsite then hosted a scrollable content gallery, pulled from Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and Pinterest.

MINI name-checked individual fans for their images and asked others to share their passion with a picture, GIF, vine, video, tweet or story. The best examples were displayed on digital billboards in London as well as in a supporting TV campaign.

Anna Inglese, national communications and direct marketing manager for the brand, said: ‘Social media is full of amazing MINI creations; we’re simply surfacing them to show how MINI-owners feel about their cars. It’s less of an ad campaign and more of a “thank you” to all the creative people who love MINI.’

www.mini.co.uk/notnormal

ONES TO WATCH

Last year we predicted that even companies known for keeping their processes closed, such as financial institutions, would open up to the power of the crowd. And this year Barclays in the UK launched an online hub asking both members and non-members to share their ideas for how it could improve. Your Bank, by London-based agencies BBH and Dare, is specifically looking for ideas on how to better Barclays’ banking services, accessibility and tools. We should see more ‘traditional’ institutions follow this path in 2014.

Walmart announced it is working on a service that will trade discounts for drop-offs. The proposed programme will allow customers in one of the brand’s stores to fulfil other shoppers’ Walmart.com orders, in exchange for a discount off their own order. Walmart will match shoppers with online orders that are set to be delivered along their normal driving route, streamlining the delivery process and therefore preventing shoppers from travelling long distances to make their drop-offs.

www.yourbank.barclays.co.uk
www.walmart.com
CONNECTED EXPERIENCES
Multi-sensory digital marketing
CONNECTED EXPERIENCES / B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore’s far-sighted 1998 book The Experience Economy first suggested that people consumed experiences, but this year the creative possibilities of digitally-enhanced experiences really came to the fore.

Fuelled by the rapid rise of the Internet of Things (Cisco expects 25 billion devices to be web-connected by 2015) and wearables (ABI Research projects there will be 485 million annual device shipments by 2018), brands have started using cheap, small sensors and cutting-edge technology to connect on- and offline, augmenting analogue events and even products themselves in a variety of creative ways.

As digital transcends the physical world it creates new opportunities for more immersive, entertaining, personalised – even multi-sensory – experiences. Think vibrating underwear, light-up beer bottles, smartphone-controlled cityscapes and smart hockey goal lamps.

Currently these are relatively small-scale experiments, but at Contagious we reckon they are an important bellwether for the future of products, services and experience design.
Disney announced in January it was rolling out RFID-enabled wristbands at its theme parks. The introduction of the MagicBand (Contagious 34), a bracelet with an embedded RFID chip, began in the spring, offering an opt-in alternative to standard paper tickets.

Why? Data. Disney, like any big consumer-facing company, is anxious to optimise its parks and resorts to deliver the best possible customer experience. By encouraging visitors to use the RFID system, the company stands to vastly improve the depth and quality of the information it gathers about how people spend time and money in Disney parks.

The MagicBand forms part of Disney’s comprehensive vacation management system MyMagic+. For visitors this means a more magical (or at least personalised and simplified) experience: no queuing for rides, seamless payments and photos and targeted food and gift offers. Most magically, Disney characters might recognise individuals and wish your child happy birthday by name.

tiny.cc/DisneyMagicBand
HEINEKEN

Ignite

Products themselves can be enhanced by technology to provide better experiences or even, in the case of Heineken, become ‘part of the party’. The Dutch beer brand launched the world’s first smart beer bottle at Milan Design Week in April this year as part of its Lounge of the Future concept.

Each Ignite bottle (Contagious 35) lights up when it comes into contact with another Heineken, sparks when someone takes a sip, and ‘sleeps’ when it is not being held. The bottles can also be remotely activated by specially developed software – so, for example, they could be synchronised to a beat in a nightclub.

All of these functions are controlled by a circuit board, housed in the base of the bottle, which contains eight LEDs, an 8-bit microprocessor, an accelerometer and a wireless network transceiver to communicate with the outside world.

The Ignite bottle was developed using Tribal DDB Amsterdam’s Spark rapid prototyping programme, run in partnership with Massive Music and Contagious’ own Insider consultancy division.

Heineken tested pilot versions of the bottle in seven of its top 25 markets, and is working on Ignite 2.0 for 2014.

www.heinekenignite.tumblr.com

KDDI

Full Control Tokyo

Connected experiences can make smartphones controllers of a physical environment. To celebrate the launch of its content-sharing app Odoroki, Japanese telecoms giant KDDI gathered 1,500 invitees to Full Control Tokyo, an exclusive live event on 29 January in the city’s Shiba Park.

Singer and model Kyary Pamyu Pamyu performed while KDDI turned the surrounding area into a digital theme park. Guests could manipulate everything from water fountains to street lights via the Odoroki app on their smartphone. At one point the singer also controlled the illuminations on Tokyo Tower with her phone. The event was live-streamed so that people who were not lucky enough to be invited could still participate.

Controlling Tokyo was a one-off function of the app (available worldwide, in Japanese and English, on iOS and Android). Odoroki lets users package music, videos and images, and share the results with their friends.

www.kddi.com
Digital communication is inherently limited to sight and sound, but some brands are exploring the creation of multi-sensory experiences that incorporate touch. Designed for couples in a long-distance relationship, condom brand Durex’s Fundawear (Contagious 35) combines underwear with a layer of haptic technology to enable digital, remote touch. Developed by Havas, Australia, with Snepo Technologies and fashion designer Billie Whitehouse, the underwear can be controlled via smartphone app from thousands of miles away.

When one person touches their touchscreen device, a wireless signal is sent via a real-time server to their partner’s smartphone. That signal is then instantaneously sent to touch-actuators woven into the fabric of the partner’s underwear, transferring the sensation of touch to their skin.

A demo of Fundawear became Australia’s number-one YouTube video that month, increasing Facebook fan growth by 4,000% and generating AU$2m (US$1.9m) in earned media, a 35:1 return on investment.

www.durex.com
The potential for technology to enhance experiences is huge, as shown by a variety of eye-catching projects.

Disney Research announced its Aireal technology, enabling haptic experiences in thin air. A TV-mounted nozzle fires rings of pressurised air to give the sensation of touch to games, for example.

Huggies Argentina, meanwhile, created paired prosthetic waistbands so that expectant fathers could ‘feel’ their baby kicking in their partner’s pregnant belly.

Finally, man-cave Internet of Things special mention goes to Budweiser, via Anomaly, Toronto, for its Red Lights. Showing how TV can be made more experiential, these $149 faux-goal lamps, installed by the brand in people’s houses, flash when their team scores in a televised hockey game, and they sold out when launched in February.

www.disneyresearch.com
www.huggiesla.com
www.budweiser.ca/redlight
DESIGN / Speaking at the Most Contagious 2012 conference in London last year, acclaimed British designer Richard Seymour said: ‘We are facing something we haven’t seen for 500 years. We are not limited by technology... we are only held back by our imagination of what to do with it.’

Bravery, originality and smart thinking take centre stage in this year’s Most Contagious design section. The creations that impress no longer simply integrate technology or use new production techniques to make things smaller, smarter or shinier: imagination is coming to the forefront.

In 2013, our selected designs of the year disrupt the urban skyline, rethink the future of travel, remodel iconic products or use classic guerrilla marketing techniques and outstanding creativity to enthral an entire city.
Hiding a 450m building might seem impossible, but US architecture firm GDS is doing just that with an ‘anti-tower’ in Seoul, South Korea. Opening in 2014, Tower Infinity (Contagious 37) will comprise shops, a theme park and an observation deck, but the main feature is the building’s façade. Covered with LED screens, it will display what is behind the building in real time, as captured by optical cameras positioned on the tower. Digital processing will then allow the monolithic structure to blend seamlessly into the background.

The United Nations’ World Economic and Social Survey 2013 called for sustainable and adaptable strategies to deal with growing urbanisation, predicting that 6.25 billion people will be living in cities by 2050. Tower Infinity raises interesting questions about what we demand from our buildings and how they should integrate into the urban landscape.

Pasadena-based GDS hopes that the tower’s modest appearance will both showcase Korean technology and encourage a global narrative.

www.gdsarchitects.com

GABRIEL PINHEIRO AND VICTOR GARCIA
Color+City

Color+City (Contagious 35) is a project started by two Brazilian street-art enthusiasts, Gabriel Pinheiro and Victor Garcia, to match graffiti artists with people who have walls in need of brightening up in São Paulo.

The artists worked with the venture-capital/accelerator arm of Brazilian agency FLAG, São Paulo, which presented the project to potential partners. Google Brazil quickly got involved, using Google Maps to collect the locations of available artistic canvases across the city; 1,200 walls were donated in the first month, and Color+City plans to expand internationally.

www.colorpluscity.com.br
BANKSY
Better Out Than In

From videos of cartoon elephant Dumbo being shot down by Jihadis, to selling original paintings for bargain prices from a Central Park stall, to driving a truck of baa-ing, moo-ing and grunting stuffed toys through Manhattan, British graffiti artist Banksy’s New York City residency captured headlines in October.

Titled Better Out Than In (Contagious 37), daily pieces appeared in the city, unannounced, to both the delight and disgust of residents. A masterclass in guerrilla marketing.

www.banksyny.com
Coca-Cola in Singapore has created a new twist on sharing a Coke. Sharing Can (Contagious 36) brings the brand’s positioning to life, while messing with its established, iconic packaging. Coke partnered Ogilvy & Mather, Singapore and Paris, to launch the Sharing Can, which can be pulled apart to form two mini cans. A cross-functional team of graphic, product and digital designers perfected the can’s visuals and identity as well as refining how the product fits together and twists neatly apart.

Leonardo O’Grady, Coca-Cola’s ASEAN integrated marketing communications director, said the ‘objective is to disrupt with something surprising or positive that will make people smile’. The can also serves as a response to demand for smaller packs, based on shopper-led research into the behaviour of young adults in Asia, and helps to address issues around obesity and waste.

O’Grady added: ‘Packaging doesn’t often get fresh ideas, something that goes beyond just a different shape or a different portion and has a more powerful significance.’

tiny.cc/CokeSharingCan
Tesla owner Elon Musk has announced his ambitious plan to build a high-speed rail service in the US. Musk claims his Hyperloop would be able to carry passengers from San Francisco to Los Angeles in just 30 minutes, covering 300 miles at a cost of just $20 each way (Contagious 37). The design uses magnets and fans to push airborne capsules through a tube at speeds of up to 760mph (1,220km/h).

Building Hyperloop would cost around $6bn, but the service could be both crowdsourced and crowdfunded, with people submitting ideas and evaluating others’ to bring the project from concept to reality. Look out for a working prototype in early 2015.

Dutch designer Dave Hakkens is redesigning the smartphone as we know it. Phonebloks (Contagious 37) splits a handset into different functions, or ‘bloks’, so users can customise their phone based on personal preferences. Don’t use the camera? Just swap it for a bigger battery.

In October Hakkens teamed up with Motorola’s Project Ara, which aims to create the modular phone of the future. ‘We want to do for hardware what the Android platform has done for software,’ said Motorola’s advanced technology and projects group leader, Paul Eremenko. Almost 100,000 people supported Phonebloks via crowd-pledging site Thunderclap in October.

Toyota’s FV2 concept vehicle offers a glimpse of the future. The single-seater car can be driven from a seated or standing position and does not have a steering wheel or pedals. Instead the driver controls the speed by leaning forwards and back, and direction by leaning from left to right. The wheels rearrange themselves to corner more smoothly and the windscreen not only displays information but also reads the driver’s voice and facial expressions, changing colour depending on stress levels.

Lager brand Heineken worked with industrial designer Marc Newsom and kitchen-appliance manufacturer Krups to develop The Sub, a draught beer machine for the home (Contagious 37).

Inspired by Nespresso coffee systems, Heineken hopes that the machine will reimagine the home-drinking experience.

London is set to get its very own High Line equivalent, with a vegetation-filled oasis designed by stellar British designer Thomas Heatherwick. Garden Bridge will connect north and south London across the Thames and create a new kind of public space. Heatherwick Studio is working on the scheme in partnership with Transport for London and engineering consultant Arup. It is hoped that work will start in 2015 and be completed in late 2017.
BEHAVIOUR CHANGE
Beneficial influencers
BEHAVIOUR CHANGE / The American actor Will Rogers once famously said: ‘Advertising is the art of convincing people to spend money they don’t have for something they don’t need.’

While that may still ring true, some brands are setting their sights on loftier goals and focusing their persuasive powers on more positive behavioural change.

This year has seen a range of brands using gaming, online video and behavioural economics techniques of the type favoured by the UK and US governments to keep people safer, help them become more financially responsible and encourage them to eat more healthily.
RAC AUSTRALIA
Attention Powered Car

With lack of attention estimated to be a factor in 46% of all fatal car crashes, RAC Australia worked with JWT, Perth, to show drivers just how easily distracted they can be.

The roadside assistance/insurance company hooked drivers up to a headset, designed by neuroengineering company Emotiv, to measure their brain signals, tracking blink rate, blink duration, gaze rate, head tilts and how often the driver switched tasks, e.g. talking on the phone, drinking water and reading a map.

These signals were then used to control a real Attention Powered Car, which slowed down when the tech sensed the driver was distracted. After being demonstrated on a test track, the Attention Powered Car has since gone on a road trip around Australia to allow the public to get behind its wheel (Contagious 37).

More information is on RAC’s For the Better website, which includes videos where medical experts, psychologists and trauma victims speak about the importance of paying attention. www.forthebetter.com.au

PRUDENTIAL
Challenge Lab

‘The time was right to feed a more sceptical, more empowered and enlightened consumer with a fresh approach that didn’t brow-beat them into investing and financial planning,’ said New York agency Droga5’s strategy director Zach Foster when Contagious interviewed him in May about Prudential’s Challenge Lab. The initiative explores why Americans don’t save enough for retirement and what they can do to start.

The campaign centres on the Challenge Lab website, which features interviews with leading behavioural economists and scientists. Quizzes, articles, animated histories and filmed experiments demonstrate and explain the reasons why so-called ‘Homo Economicus’ is a fallacy, and why we are influenced by a wide range of factors that we are ill-equipped to understand.

Ignoring the rational economics behind much financial services advertising (better interest rates, etc), Prudential created an emotionally resonant campaign that translated behavioural studies into digestible content to help Americans tackle the challenges they face (Contagious 35).

www.bringyourchallenges.com
Young people are not really afraid of hurting themselves. They are, however, averse to having people think they’re dumb’, observed McCann Erickson, Melbourne, when we quizzed the agency on the runaway success at Cannes and other awards festivals of Dumb Ways To Die. This delightfully cute PSA for Metro Trains Melbourne has so far notched up more than 65 million views on YouTube.

The three-minute video shows a collection of cartoon fools shuffling off this mortal coil due to their various acts of idiocy, such as setting fire to their hair, taking off their helmet in outer space and selling both their kidneys on the internet.

In addition to becoming one of the most viral ads of all time, DWTD also changed dumb behaviour, with rail-related accidents down by 21% year-on-year.

A mobile game for Android and iOS launched earlier this year, allowing people to virtually defend their private parts against piranhas, remove forks from toasters, or simply stand back from the edge of railway station platforms (Contagious 34 and 35).

www.dumbwaystodie.com

ASAZUKE NO MOTO
Funfair in Your Mouth

Taking a leaf out of the Mary Poppins playbook, Japanese vegetable seasoning sauce Asazuke No Moto has taken on the challenge of trying to persuade kids to eat vegetables by digitally gamifying the experience.

The brilliantly named Funfair in Your Mouth website takes kids on a virtual ride through the sky or on a rollercoaster while, thanks to the position of their head and mouth being tracked via webcam, they are challenged to catch as many virtual vegetables as they can by chomping their mouths as they fly by.

Blurring digital with the real world, kids are encouraged to hold up actual vegetables in front of their webcam and are rewarded with a fireworks display for every bite they take.

Created by Beacon/Leo Burnett Japan, with production by interactive studio Birdman in Tokyo, the campaign has already achieved an impressive 130% sales increase for Asazuke No Moto sauces, with 2.5 million virtual vegetables – and 25,000 real vegetables – consumed.

www.mouth.jp
SMALL BUT PERFECTLY FORMED

Punching above their weight
**SMALL BUT PERFECTLY FORMED** / As more large companies incorporate incubator and accelerator units into their businesses, much can be learnt from fledgling companies with innovation in their blood.

This section is devoted to Contagious’ favourite startups of the year, selected for their overachievements in terms of investment and growth and their willingness to disrupt their sector or even to create a whole new category.

Last year we wrote about how social responsibility had become part of the fabric of some of the best new businesses. That trend has evolved: this year companies are not just looking to have a positive impact, but to change the world, whether addressing gender inequality, starting a healthcare movement or unlocking human potential. It’s the small companies with big purpose that are leading the way to change.
GOLDIEBLOX

This year will see a new kind of toy on girls’ Christmas lists. GoldieBlox (Contagious 36) is an engineering game for girls, setting out to close the gender gap in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics industries. Debra Sterling, founder of GoldieBlox and an engineer from Stanford University, was frustrated by how few women there were in her class. In fact, 89% of engineers are men, according to a survey from Manpower that spanned 41 countries and 38,000 companies.

GoldieBlox blends building with storytelling and features Goldie, a female engineer who encourages girls to build things. The toy is aimed at five- to nine-year-olds and is currently stocked at Toys “R” Us and Amazon.com, priced at $29.99. Sterling achieved nearly double her funding target on Kickstarter in 2012 and her success hasn’t wavered since. She said that the California-based company is now inundated with requests for international distribution.

In November a GoldieBlox YouTube video featuring girls building a Rube Goldberg machine – and set to a feminist version of the Beastie Boys’ Girls – racked up more than six million views in just three days.

www.goldieblox.com
TINDER

We saw Tinder (Contagious 36) explode across the dating scene this year as millions turned to their smartphones in their quest for true lust. Asking users to simply swipe left on a profile for no, right for yes, the mobile app makes 1.5 million matches each day. Tinder’s clean and straightforward interface, which eliminates awkwardness and dulls the pain of rejection, is one of the major drivers behind its success.

The Los Angeles-based company also nailed its rollout strategy by deciding to target younger people first. Justin Mateen, co-founder and chief marketing officer, said: ‘We knew that if it resonated with college students, who live in a highly social environment, then it would eventually trickle up to the older generations.’

Mateen explained that Tinder’s vision is to become the de facto way of making new connections, extending the app far beyond matchmaking. ‘We want to develop a way for people to meet, whether it’s for friendship, for business or for dating,’ he said.

www.gotinder.com

UPWORTHY

This year saw social feeds gain moral gravitas, as news-aggregation site Upworthy (Contagious 37) went from strength to strength. It now has at least five million daily subscribers and a website with more monthly visitors than People.com, Entertainment Weekly or TMZ. Business Insider named it ‘the fastest-growing media company in the world’.

People are increasingly consuming their news on Facebook and Twitter, places where there is no editor telling them what is important. Upworthy aims to help stories on subjects such as gay marriage, racial discrimination and banking regulation compete with the internet’s obsession with cat GIFs and Buzzfeed.

After early backing from investors including Chris Hughes, one of the founders of Facebook, in September Upworthy won $8m in investment. Co-founder Eli Pariser hopes the business will go on to ‘build the most popular public-spirited media company in history’.

www.upworthy.com
NINJA BLOCKS

The Internet of Things market will deliver $14.4 trillion of economic value by 2022, according to a prediction by Cisco earlier this year. However, different brands’ connected devices don’t currently talk to each other.

Ninja Blocks (Contagious 37) is a young Sydney-based company on a mission to join up the dots, placing itself at the forefront of the revolution of connected objects. President and chief executive Daniel Friedman explained that the company’s concept of ‘generic devices’ means people only have to use one Ninja Remote application to control multiple appliances.

Ninja Blocks plans to work alongside tech manufacturers to build connectivity into their products and charge for use of the company’s API. Blocks sales already bring in $100,000 a month in revenue, according to Silicon Valley tech blog PandoDaily, and developers will increasingly pay for access to Ninja Blocks’ tech.

www.ninjablocks.com
One remarkable New York-based venture is disrupting the country’s health-insurance industry. Sherpaa (Contagious 37) helps firms procure health insurance and then keeps costs to a minimum with three full-time doctors who work as an always-on primary physician team. Patients email Sherpaa when a problem arises and, after a few questions, the doctors recommend next steps for treatment. This cuts out unnecessary tests and trips to the emergency room while also providing a better patient experience. Sherpaa costs just $50 a month per person but saves companies between $1,000 and $4,000 each year per employee.

The company currently services 55 firms and has so far raised $1.8m in seed funding from investors. But co-founder Jay Parkinson wants to extend Sherpaa beyond the realms of insurance and ‘really change how healthcare is delivered’. Parkinson is investing in developing best practices based on recent research and modern techniques. He aims to use the internet to standardise treatment so that the best solutions are available to all.

www.sherpaa.com

One app that caught our attention this year was San Francisco-based Everest (Contagious 35), an iOS platform dedicated to helping people achieve their goals. ‘We want to help unlock human potential,’ said Katherine Krug, who co-founded the company in December 2011 with Victor Mathieux and Francis Pedraza. Everest stands out from other organisational apps by connecting its users and thus enabling them to support and inspire one another. Krug explained: ‘Technology itself isn’t the great motivator – a person reaching out to you is’.

Brands – such as Quiksilver, Airbnb and Codecademy – are facilitating users’ progress by offering advice, setting challenges or creating reward schemes. In the future, the company hopes to carefully build more brand partnerships, expand the app into Android and the web and work towards making Everest a more social experience (Contagious 35).

www.everest.com
SHORTLIST

Judged by the editorial team, the criteria for our Most Contagious awards are simple. They are awarded to what we consider the most important companies, ideas and innovations from around the world this year.

**DESIGN SHORTLIST**

- Banksy / Better Out Than In
- Coca-Cola / The Coca-Cola Sharing Can
- Ogilvy & Mather, Singapore, Paris
- Tower Infinity, Incheon, Korea
- GDS Architects, Seoul
- Google / Color+City
- CUBOCC, Flag, São Paulo

**TECHNOLOGY SHORTLIST**

- Google / Project Loon
- Google Creative Lab, New York
- Matternet / Next-generation Transportation
- SU Labs, Palo Alto
- Oculus Rift
- Oculus VR, Irvine
- BRCK
- Ushahidi Inc, Nairobi
- Cinder
- The Barbarian Group, New York

**PURPOSE SHORTLIST**

- Bank of America, Khan Academy / Better Money Habits
- Coca-Cola / EKOCENTERS
- Coca-Cola, McCann Worldgroup, Clinton Global Initiative, New York
- Lifebuoy / Help a Child Reach 5
- Lowe Lintas & Partners, Mumbai
- Toyota / Meals per Hour
- TSSC, Erlanger, 360i, New York

**SERVICE SHORTLIST**

- DHL / MyWays
- DHL Solutions & Innovation, Bonn, Passion Lab, Stockholm
- Garanti Bank / iGaranti
- Fjord, Helsinki, Istanbul, London
- InterRail / InterRail Mobile
- Havas Worldwide, Brussels
- Nederlandse Spoorwegen / iNSTapp
- M-Lab, Utrecht

**RETAIL SHORTLIST**

- Disney Parks & Resorts / MagicBand
- Walt Disney Imagineering
- E-Mart / E-Mart Sale
- Navigation
- Cheil Worldwide, Seoul
- Under Armour / The Under Armour Experience, Shanghai
- Tight Shirt Productions, Baltimore, Hush, Marc Thorpe Design, New York
- Vodafone Egypt / Fakka
- JWT, Cairo

**SBPF SHORTLIST**

- Everest
- GoldieBlox
- NinjaBlocks
- Sherpaa
- Tinder
- Upworthy
WINNERS

TECHNOLOGY
BRCK / Ushahidi Inc, Nairobi

PURPOSE
Toyota / Meals per Hour / TSSC, Erlanger, 360i, New York

DESIGN
Tower Infinity / Incheon, Korea / GDS Architects, Seoul
**SERVICE**

**SMALL BUT PERFECTLY FORMED**
GoldieBlox

**RETAIL**
Vodafone Egypt / Fakka / JWT, Cairo
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The most contagious ideas of the year

MOS T CONTAGIOUS
2013

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