

A *WALL STREET JOURNAL* BESTSELLER

HOW TO INSTANTLY ENGAGE YOUR
MARKET, CONNECT WITH CUSTOMERS,
AND CREATE PRODUCTS THAT
GROW YOUR BUSINESS NOW

*Revised
and
Updated*

REAL-TIME MARKETING & PR



DAVID MEERMAN SCOTT

Bestselling author of *THE NEW RULES OF MARKETING & PR*

Contents

[Cover](#)

[Praise for Real-Time Marketing & PR](#)

[Also by David Meerman Scott](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Introduction to the Revised Edition](#)

[Prologue](#)

[Part I: Revolution Time](#)

[Chapter 1: Grow Your Business Now](#)

[Dave's Slingshot Goes Viral on Goliath](#)

[The Stories Behind the Story: United](#)

[Airlines, Taylor Guitars, and Calton Cases](#)

[Break a Taylor Guitar and You Break this
Man's Heart](#)

[A Teachable Moment](#)

[Case Study in Real-Time Product
Development](#)

[United Comes Untied](#)

[Dave's Big Win](#)

Real-Time Engagement

Chapter 2: Speed versus Sloth

Google Finally Gets It

Caught on the News Cycle Hamster Wheel

Feeling an Invisible Presence in the

Conference Hall

What Matters Now

Can You See the Pattern?

Chapter 3: Laying Down Some Real-Time Law

The New Laws on Speed

The Real-Time Power Law

The Real-Time Law of Normal Distribution

How Would You React?

Chapter 4: Real-Time Attitude

Business as Usual

The Real-Time Mind-Set

No More Business as Usual

It's Not the Tools, It's the Mind-Set Behind

Them

Chapter 5: Too Big to Succeed?

Boeing's Radar Belatedly Spots Harry's Plane

Thank You for Your Inquiry

Contact Us (or Not)

Making Contact

How Fast Does the Fortune 100 Respond?

The ROI of Real-Time

Chapter 6: Live from the Revolution

Always On

Get in Sync with the Real-Time News Cycle

The Old Media Relations Timeline

Amazon.com as Big Brother

Now: While News Is Happening

Multiple Takes, One Story

How They Make News in Real Time

Did You Hear the One about the

Pornographic Robocall?

How to Engage the Media in Real Time

How You Can Own “The Second Paragraph”

Chapter 7: Crisis Communications and the Media

Eurostar and Silence

Twitter as a Crisis Communications Tool

Real-Time Media Alerts

Connect with Journalists before You Need Them

Thrust into the News When You Least Expect It

When You Have Hot News

How to Deflate a Scandal

The Time Is Now

The Million-Dollar Door

Chapter 8: What Are People Saying about You This Instant?

Who the Hell ARE These People?

The Importance of Being First

#AskObama

Tracking Those You Know

Choosing to Respond (or Not)

Listening in to Millions of Discussions in Real Time

A \$250-Grand Tweet!

Turning around a Critic

When You Don't Have an Immediate Answer

Social Web Analytics

A Selection of Social Web Analytics Services

How Even the Biggest Can Be Seamlessly Social

Chapter 9: Tap the Crowd for Quick Action

How to Title a Book or Name a Product

A Crowd for Any Purpose

Finding the Right Crowd

Massive Brainstorm

Crowdsourcing a Movie for Free

You Gotta Give to Get

Part II: Connect with Your Market

Chapter 10: Real-Time Customer Connection

Connecting with Customers Is Marketing and PR

Why Should I Help You?

Interacting with Customers in Real Time

Friends Tweet Friends First

Embracing the Tweet

Let Followers Feel the Love on Twitter

How Can You Fight a Fire after the House Burns Down?

Meet Your Critics on Their Turf

Put the CEO to Work

It Can Happen to You!

Rapid Response with Instant Websites

Multiple Communications Channels

Reaching Fans

Chapter 11: Going Mobile, Real Time Is All the Time

Tapping the World for Recommendations

Looking to Buy a House

Reaching Buyers via Mobile

Chapter 12: They Want It Immediately

I Want It Now

Real Time with the Grateful Dead

Real-Time Products for Your Marketplace

Hot Jobs in Real Time?

**Book Publisher Goes Real Time with Truman
Fires MacArthur
Real-Time Futures Trading Training Course**

Part III: Grow Your Business Now

Chapter 13: Let Them Communicate... Now

**Real-Time Communications Policy
How to Develop Real-Time Communications
Guidelines
Publishing Your Guidelines
Encouraging Communications
My Nordstrom Guy Does Real-Time Right
When One of the Flock Strays
Chief Real-Time Communications Officer
Let Employees Communicate Now**

Chapter 14: How Your Website Becomes a Real-Time Machine

**Respond Now, While Buyers Are Hot
Know When She's Ready for You
Test It Out!
What's the Other Guy Doing?**

Chapter 15: Make the Sale

**Real-Time, Data-Driven Marketing and
Sales
Real-Time Technology**

I Heard You Just Came into Some Wealth!
Make Your Sales Team Love You
Real-Time Sales Playbooks
They Know What I'm Doing!

Chapter 16: Business at the Speed of Now

The Mass-Media Aberration
Lutz and Me
Yes, We're Listening!
TweetDeck in Motown
GM Learns to Show Its Human Face
Lutz Always Gets the Last Word
How Real-Time Communications Sells Cars
Starting Up in Real Time
Improvising under the Volcano
It's About Focusing the Mind-Set on the Tools

Appendix: 2010 Fortune 100 Real-Time Speed Analysis

Media Sources

Acknowledgments

About the Author

***Preview Newsjacking: How to Inject
your Ideas into a Breaking News
Story and Generate Tons of Media
Coverage***

***Have David Meerman Scott Speak at
Your Next Event***

Index

Praise for Real-Time Marketing & PR

With his acute ear for the cash register and his journalist's sense of urgency, no one understands the value of time better than David Meerman Scott. He teaches marketers and C-level execs how to use time and urgency to gain huge competitive advantage. Read *Real-Time Marketing & PR*. Make money while your competitors sleep.

Brian Fetherstonhaugh

*Chairman & CEO,
OgilvyOne Worldwide*

If you are not hooked (hook, line, and sinker) within 10 minutes of starting David Meerman Scott's wonderful new book, well, I fear for you. Beautifully written, cases that reach out from the page and grab you and shake you, and practical advice that anyone, anywhere can use in a flash to make hay. I simply loved this book, and doubled my knowledge along the way.

Tom Peters

Author of The Little Big Things

Information is like running water. The speed of information as it cascades through digital channels has been dramatically accelerated and amplified requiring marketing to change in order to catch up to this new reality. Real time is the keyword.

Hiroshi Ishii

*Muriel R. Cooper
Professor of Media Arts and Sciences,
Massachusetts Institute of Technology,
and Associate Director of MIT Media Laboratory*

Right now, opportunities are passing you by as prospective customers and journalists search and chat online for solutions to their problems. David's new book, *Real-Time Marketing & PR*, gives you the playbook and toolbox to help you act fast and be present as these conversations emerge. However, the real message of the book is one of mind-set: How can you deliver value faster today? Entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs focused on growing their profits, customers, and influence now can't afford to wait to read this book.

Richard Jackson

*Chairman & CEO,
Jackson Healthcare*

We all know that opportunities and threats from the digital world often arrive without warning. They can't wait for discussion at monthly planning meetings. Hell, most times they can't wait for you to finish lunch! David Meerman Scott's book provides a rationale to help you create a real-time mind-set in your own organization.

Bill Sledzik

*Associate Professor
School of Journalism & Mass Communication,
Kent State University*

The world has changed dramatically, and we have now entered a new, real-time era. Dusty business plans are now being crushed by right-now strategy and adaptation. David's book offers the new road map to entrepreneurs, business leaders, and individuals. It's made a big impact on the way I approach our business and our customers; the insight I've gained by reading it is priceless. This important and thoughtful book is a must-read to compete in the next era of business, and life.

Josh Linkner

Chairman/Founder, ePrize and author of

*Disciplined Dreaming: A Proven System
to Unleash Business Creativity*

Also by David Meerman Scott

The New Rules of Marketing and PR (Third Edition):

How to Use Social Media, Blogs, News Releases, Online Video, and Viral Marketing to Reach Buyers Directly

Newsjacking: *How to Inject Your Ideas into a Breaking News Story and Generate Tons of Media Coverage*

Marketing Lessons from the Grateful Dead: *What Every Business Can Learn from the Most Iconic Band in History (with Brian Halligan)*

World Wide Rave: *Creating Triggers that Get Millions of People to Spread Your Ideas and Share Your Stories*

Tuned In: *Uncover the Extraordinary Opportunities that Lead to Business Breakthroughs (with Craig Stull and Phil Myers)*

Cashing in with Content: *How Innovative Marketers Use Digital Information to Turn Browsers into Buyers*

eyeball Wars: *A Novel of Dot-Com Intrigue*

REAL-TIME MARKETING & PR

**HOW TO INSTANTLY ENGAGE
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CUSTOMERS, AND CREATE
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Revised and Updated

DAVID MEERMAN SCOTT



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Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.

Published simultaneously in Canada.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Scott, David Meerman.

Real-time marketing and PR: how to instantly engage your market, connect with customers, and create products that grow your business now/David Meerman Scott.—Rev. and updated.

p. cm. – (Wiley desktop editions)

ISBN 978-1-118-15599-8 (pbk.); ISBN 978-1-118-26614-4 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-118-26616-8 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-118-26637-3(ebk)

1. Internet marketing. 2. Public relations. I. Scott, David Meerman. Real-time marketing & PR. II. Title.

HF5415.1265.S393 2012

658.8 072—dc23

2011037181

Introduction to the Revised Edition

As I was writing the first edition of this book back in early 2010, I felt like a lone voice in the wilderness. Every time I searched the web for talk about issues relating to real-time marketing and PR, results were scarce. Pundits and practitioners seemed locked into thinking about long-term campaigns and not how to seize advantage from what's happening right now.

Eighteen months later, search engines tell a very different story: “real time + marketing” is a topic that has exploded. This year, even the Direct Marketing Association is in the game. Their annual conference, one of the largest gatherings of marketing professionals in the world, is billed as “The Global Event for Real-Time Marketers.”

What happened?

Although my humble book did climb to number two on the *Wall Street Journal* best-seller list (“and stayed there for a week or two,” as Jerry Garcia once said), I can't claim paternity here. The wave was coming, like it or not. I just happened to spot it early.

When I first sat down to write, protestors in Tehran had just figured out how to use social media as a weapon of civil disobedience. Less than a year later, the same real-time techniques were toppling despotic regimes in Egypt and Tunisia. And as I write this several others are teetering.

Even among CEOs 80 floors above the street, the realization has begun to seep up from below: “What happened to Mubarak is not unrelated to my business.” The revolution now underway is not just political and it's not just an “Arab thing.” Upheavals are coming. Those who

understand and adapt stand to be among the winners. Those who ignore what's happening may not fare so well.

The real-time revolution is very much a “people thing.” And the people you will meet in this book are its heart and soul: passionate characters at the forefront, from Amsterdam to Boston to Tokyo, each with an eye-opening story to tell. They made researching and writing this book such a compelling experience for me that I hope...even those who'd choose a root canal over a marketing book will not be disappointed if they continue to turn these pages.

By definition, this is a subject that changes quickly. So if you read the first edition you will find the pages herein are significantly different, with many new examples and anecdotes added.

And so, I invite you to turn the page....

Prologue

Awareness of information as it happens, in real time, can give you an enormous competitive advantage—if you know how to use it. This was a key lesson I learned working on Wall Street in the go-go 1980s.

It's 1985, and I'm on the institutional trading floor of an investment bank in lower Manhattan. It's nearly noon, time for lunch, and nothing has happened all morning. But none of the bond traders leave. They're scared they might miss something. The bank doesn't want them leaving either, so everyone gets pizza delivered to their desks.

Inhabiting a world of split-second decisions, bond traders earn big money-making trades involving hundreds of millions of dollars. It's a daily battle that involves incredibly long periods of tedium punctuated by occasional short bursts of intense action.

Fortunes are made in seconds; reputations lost in a minute.

Nothing is happening now, though. All is quiet, and boredom reigns because no significant news has broken all morning.

Some traders desperately search their real-time news feeds from Dow Jones, Reuters, and the Associated Press for an angle, any angle, in the quiet market. What's Ronald Reagan up to today? What about Margaret Thatcher? Any news from Paul Volcker, the Federal Reserve chairman? Any economic data due to be released this afternoon? Any large companies announcing quarterly earnings today?

As they pore through data and news, the traders are poised, ready to commit huge sums of money when the moment is right. They peer intently at the Bloomberg screens displaying bond prices *the moment they change*.

Data from futures markets and stock exchanges update *the instant a trade is made*.

Speed on the trading floor is so crucial that traders are linked one to one with their counterparts at other institutions by direct, dedicated lines—just like the Kremlin and the White House.

At a nearby desk, I see a phone panel light up (no ringing on the trading floor), and a trader answers by jabbing the button with his middle finger. But when he sits back relaxed, his body language tells me he's simply swapping the latest off-color joke or talking football.

Suddenly, one of the senior traders yells, loud as he can: “The Fed's in!”

For a split second, the room is completely silent as all listen.

When the senior trader then bellows “Buying Treasuries!” it's as if a bomb has hit. The entire room erupts in highly organized chaos. Pizza is tossed aside, and phones are grabbed in one fluid movement. It's time to earn those huge salaries.

In a heartbeat, everyone is on at least one phone, and many are on two or more, alerting customers in an instant: “The Fed is in!”

Within seconds, the screens light up in seas of green as bond prices rise steeply across the board. Before the same minute expires, financial newswires like Dow Jones and Reuters write and issue newsflashes that appear instantly on trading room screens from Albuquerque to Zagreb. *Within just 60 seconds, everywhere knows and everyone is equal again.* The competitive advantage disappears.

But within that minute the traders who got their orders placed a split-second faster had earned their daily bread. *Being first* with the news is valuable currency that earns them lucrative deals from their clients. Hearing it first and

acting on it fast equals money—*lots of money*—on Wall Street.

Since I first witnessed a Wall Street minute in 1985, trading technology has advanced light-years. But what I saw then was still new: Technology was transforming financial trading into a game where instant information informs split-second decisions worth millions of dollars.

It's impossible to overstate the impact of innovations in computing and telecommunications on the financial markets in the 1980s. Within a decade finance was transformed from a clubby, old-boys' network to a 24-hour global trading system. With that revolutionary shift a new currency of success emerged: the ability to gather, interpret, and react to new information in fractions of a second—real time.

It has taken a quarter century. But in fields like marketing and public relations the impact of the real-time revolution in finance is finally beginning to hit the so-called “real economy.”

Who's leading the way? As you will read in these pages, it's not mega-corporations with billion-dollar information technology budgets. Far from it!

In today's real-time revolution the swift are out in front. As you discover in Chapter 1, one of the largest, most technically sophisticated marketers in the United States proved no match for one irate Canadian with a broken guitar and a video camera.

Part I

Revolution Time

Wake Up, It's Revolution Time!

Your accustomed methods and processes may be already fatally out of sync with the world around you. The narrative of your business now unfolds, minute by minute, in real time. And it's driven by your customers, talking among themselves—it's no longer guided by the mass media your ad budget can buy.

In a world where speed and agility are now essential to success, most organizations still operate slowly and deliberately, cementing each step months in advance, responding to new developments with careful but time-consuming processes.

This time lag can leave your business fatally exposed. But it doesn't have to! As you discover in Part I of *Real-Time Marketing & PR*, there are clear paths to follow in adapting your course and your culture to the new environment.

Allow me to introduce you to the rules of realtime marketing and public relations (PR).

Chapter 1

Grow Your Business Now

In the emerging real-time business environment, where public discourse is no longer dictated by the mass media, size is no longer a decisive advantage. Speed and agility win.

In this chapter we examine a Dave-versus-Goliath contest that shows how even one individual can outgun one of the largest, most scientific, marketing, PR, and customer-service organizations on the planet. We also discover how other agile players quickly harness the momentum of Dave's slingshot.

Now, more than at any other time in history, speed and agility are decisive competitive advantages.

“My God, they're throwing guitars out there,” said a woman in a window seat as passengers on a United Airlines flight waited to deplane in Chicago on March 31, 2008.

Singer-songwriter Dave Carroll and fellow members of Sons of Maxwell, a Canadian pop-folk band, knew instantly *whose* guitars. Flying from home in Halifax, Nova Scotia, for a one-week tour of Nebraska, their four guitars were in the airplane's hold. Sure enough, when the bass player looked out the window he witnessed United Airlines baggage handlers tossing his bass.

The band did not have to wait to retrieve their luggage in Omaha, their final destination, to start complaining, because they had actually observed this abuse of their equipment. As they made their way out of the plane, they told the flight

attendants what they had seen. "Talk to the ground staff," they were told. But the O'Hare ground staff said, "Talk to the ground staff in Omaha."

Sure enough, when Dave opened his hard-shell case in Omaha he discovered his \$3,500 Taylor guitar had been smashed. And United Airlines staff in Omaha refused to accept his claim.

So Dave spent months phoning and emailing United in pursuit of \$1,200 to cover the cost of repairs. At each step, United staff refused to accept responsibility and shuffled him off: from telephone reps in India, to the central baggage office in New York, to the Chicago baggage office.

Finally, after nine futile months, Dave got a flat no. No, he was told, he would not receive any form of compensation from United.

"At that moment, it occurred to me I'd been fighting a losing battle all this time," Dave told me. "I got sucked into their cycle of insanity. I called and emailed and jumped through hoops, just as they told me to do. The system is designed to frustrate customers into giving up their claims, and United is very good at it. However, I realized that, as a musician, I wasn't without options. So when I finally got the 'no,' I said, 'I urge you to reconsider, because I'm a singer-songwriter and I'm going to write three songs about United Airlines and post them on YouTube.'"

Making good on this promise, on July 6, 2009, Dave posted on YouTube "United Breaks Guitars," a catchy tune with memorable lyrics that tells the saga of his broken guitar:

United, United, you broke my Taylor Guitar

United, United, some big help you are

You broke it, you should fix it

You're liable, just admit it

I should have flown with someone else

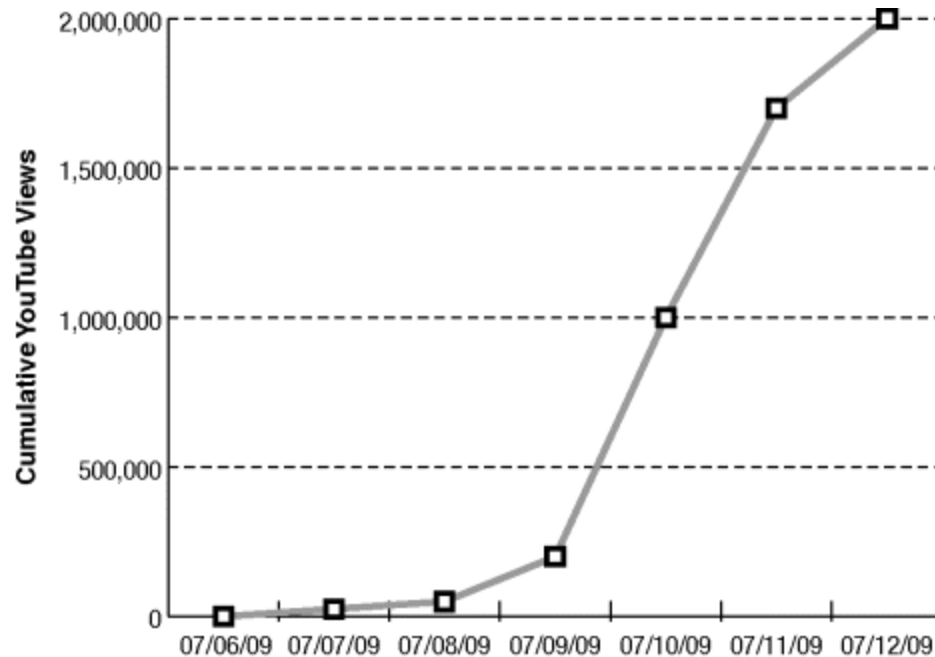
Or gone by car

'Cause United breaks guitars

Yeah, United breaks guitars

Within just four days, the video reached 1 million views on YouTube. And then another million. And another.

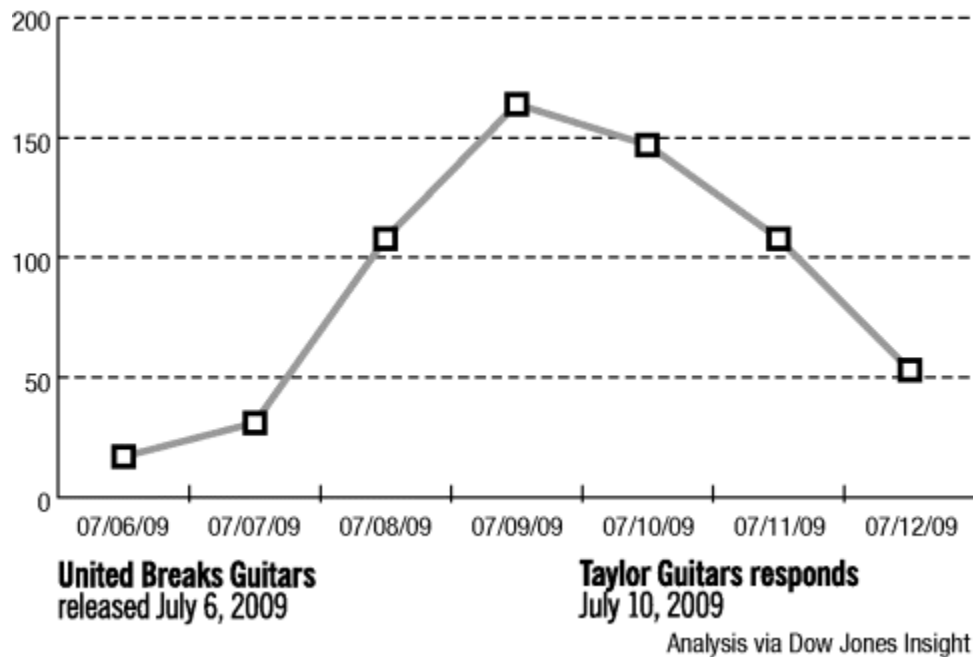
United Breaks Guitars: YouTube Video Views



Momentum built from July 8 to 11 as up to 100 bloggers a day alerted their readers to the video. Incidentally, notice how the number of blog posts per day follows a bell-shaped curve—starting slowly (because Dave Carroll wasn't well known), building to a peak, then trailing off. We come back to this in Chapter 3 when I discuss the importance of what I call the Real-Time Law of Normal Distribution.

This is a story about speed in media relations.

United Breaks Guitars: Blog Posts per Day



“United Breaks Guitars” soon became a real-time phenomenon that propelled Dave into the spotlight. It continued to grow in the spotlight because Dave was ready and able to speak with the media in real time, conducting dozens of interviews in a few days while the story was hot.

This is also a story about real-time market engagement.

The maker of Dave's instrument, Taylor Guitars, seized the real-time opportunity to build goodwill among customers. Within days of Dave's initial YouTube post, Bob Taylor, the company's president, had his own video up on YouTube, advising traveling musicians how to pack equipment and use airline rules to best advantage.

There's more: This is a story of real-time product creation, too.

Calton Cases, a specialist maker of highly durable instrument cases for professional musicians, likewise seized the moment. Within mere days, Calton had a new product on the market: the Dave Carroll Traveler's Edition Guitar Case.

Finally, this is about a company that chose not to connect with customers.

As millions of potential customers saw a video that persuasively cast its brand in the worst possible light, negating the value of tens of millions of dollars in media advertising, United Airlines chose to make absolutely no response. This from the largest player in one of the most consumer-facing of industries, an industry that over decades has spent billions on advertising, public relations, and scientific customer-service methodology.

As a YouTube phenomenon “United Breaks Guitars” has drawn attention from thousands of media commentators. But two aspects have been overlooked: the reasons why Dave's video gained so much momentum, and the way agile players on the periphery were able to surf that momentum.

Dave's Slingshot Goes Viral on Goliath

I learned about “United Breaks Guitars” from one of my readers three days after Dave posted it on YouTube. At that time the video had about 200,000 views, and after watching for 30 seconds I said, “I need to blog this *right now!*” It was so fresh and exciting that I wanted my blog readers and Twitter followers to hear about it from me first.

So I quickly wrote a blog post, embedded the video, and pushed it live within half an hour of discovering it. I also tweeted the link to my tens of thousands of Twitter followers. I was just one of many triggers that helped spread the video to millions. But I was early—because I reacted *in real time*. I felt like a bond trader eager to make a deal.

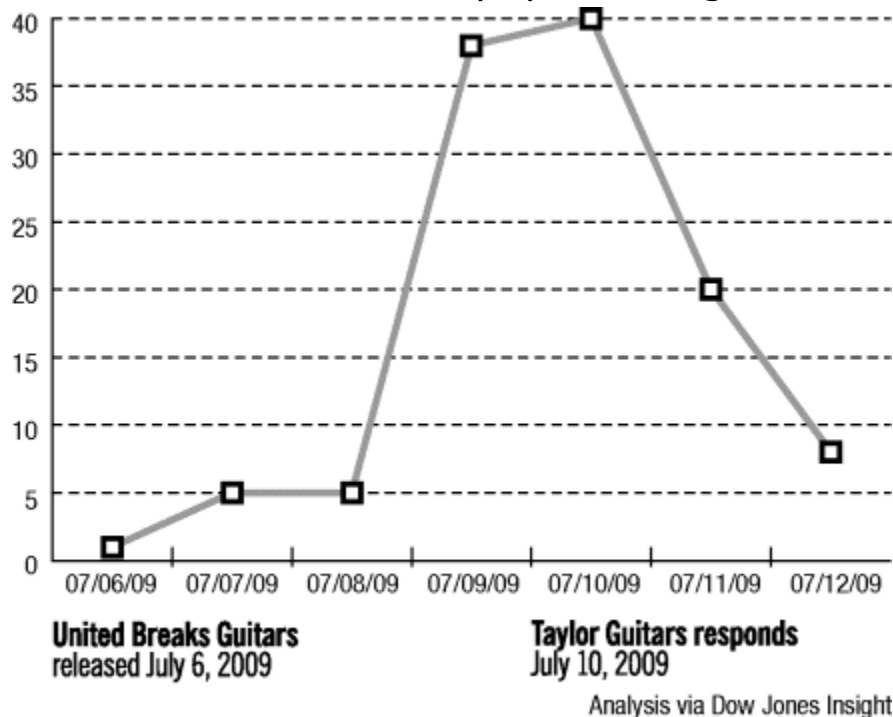
The video's first viewing growth spike came on Day 2 (July 7). After *The Consumerist* website posted a link to it, the number of views jumped to 25,000. The *Los Angeles Times* called Dave that day. So did several local Canadian publications.

Next day, July 8, after CNN broadcast part of “United Breaks Guitars,” Dave was suddenly the media celebrity of the moment.

Improvising with the snowball, Dave mounted a real-time PR effort that many agencies would be hard-pressed to match. Family members set up a communication room, fielding media requests that flooded in by phone and email, and triaging Dave's schedule in real time to ensure he made it onto the highest-profile outlets. His 15 minutes of fame were happening *right now*, and he needed to ride it as hard as he could.

“I knew I was reaching a big audience when I was about to tape an interview with CTV and the host said I was on *The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer* on CNN at that moment,” Dave says. “We raced from one interview to another. While someone drove me studio to studio, I did newspaper interviews on my cell phone.”

United Breaks Guitars: Mainstream Media Stories per Day
(television, radio, newspapers, magazines)



In this way, Dave managed to do dozens of interviews in a few days with print outlets like the *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, and the *Los Angeles Times* and broadcasters like CBS, CNN, and FOX. With each media appearance the number of YouTube views spiked higher.

Evolution of a Real-Time Media Explosion

Monday, July 6, 2009: Dave Carroll posts “United Breaks Guitars” at midnight Atlantic Daylight Time. “There were six views by the time I went to bed,” he says.!

July 7, 8:00 A.M.: “There were 330 views when I woke up,” Dave says. “I was excited, and called the videographer.” That morning, Carroll is interviewed by his local newspaper, the *Halifax Herald*, and an online story appeared later in the day.

July 7, 12:00 P.M.: Video up to 5,000 views. *The Consumerist* website posts a link to the video that delivers 25,000 YouTube views in a few hours. Bob Taylor of Taylor Guitars and Jim Laffoley of Calton Cases also see the video. Laffoley contacts Carroll, asking how they might collaborate. *Got that? A mere 12 hours after posting the video, Carroll had an offer to collaborate with Calton Cases!*

July 7, 8:00 P.M.: While Dave Carroll is playing a gig, United Airlines calls and leaves a message: They want to speak with him. So does the *Los Angeles Times*.

July 8: “By Wednesday, things got busy,” Carroll says. He is interviewed by the *LA Times* and several Canadian publications. Parts of the video air on CNN, as the video passes 50,000 views on YouTube. FOX News and CBS both call for interviews. United calls again, and Carroll sets a time to talk—two days later. *Why bother rushing to talk with United? After all, they blew him off for nine months.*

July 9: As the video passes 200,000 YouTube views one of my readers points me to it and I post it to my blog right away. Laffoley and Dave make plans for the Calton Cases Dave Carroll Traveler's Edition Guitar Case.

July 10: “United Breaks Guitars” reaches 1 million YouTube views. Taylor Guitars posts its YouTube response. Dave talks to United Airlines by phone—and even now they don't apologize. But with some weasel words about the regrettable incident, he is finally offered compensation. He rejects this as too late, suggesting the money be given to someone in a similar situation.

July 12: “United Breaks Guitars” reaches 2 million YouTube views.

July 19: Website for Calton Cases Dave Carroll Traveler's Edition Guitar Case goes live. *Note how quickly the new product is developed and launched.*

July 22: BBC television interviews Dave. “Minutes after the interview ran, competing stations called wanting to speak with me. I did nine phone interviews in one day,” Carroll says. “United Breaks Guitars” is released on iTunes and becomes the number one Country and Western download in the United Kingdom.

July 23: “United Breaks Guitars” reaches 3 million YouTube views.

August 18: The second song in Dave's United trilogy is released.

September 14: In a meeting at O'Hare Airport (scene of the crime, so to speak) three senior United executives finally apologize to Dave. *Note the contrast between United Airlines' glacially slow and sluggish apology and communication efforts and the speed and agility of Dave Carroll, Taylor Guitars, and Calton Cases.*

September 22: Dave speaks at a U.S. Senate hearing on airline passenger rights.

The Stories Behind the Story: United Airlines, Taylor Guitars, and Calton Cases

The phenomenon that Dave Carroll created with “United Breaks Guitars” is a textbook example of what I call a World Wide Rave (see my 2009 book with that title), an online chain reaction that takes off when people spread your ideas by repeating your story. And there is much to learn from it if we dig a little deeper.

What Dave achieved is amazing in its own right. As of this writing, there are nearly 11 million views of “United Breaks Guitars”—song number 1 on YouTube. But as an observer of these phenomena, what fascinates me is the way Taylor Guitars and Calton Cases were able to react in real time to seize the marketing opportunity that Dave's momentum created. On the other hand, United Airlines exhibited a