

completely.

This is a very ambitious vision. Historically, Gawker has been pretty weak with respect to technological innovations, and so it's reasonable to take an I'll-believe-it-when-I-see-it approach any time that Nick Denton claims to have invented a revolutionary new technology. As Wert said to me, forums have been around on the internet since the 90s, and no one's managed to reinvent them yet. But a few companies like Reddit and Quora have pointed in interesting directions, and Wert was quite open about wanting to ape Reddit's AMA ("ask me anything") feature for his new advertorial conversations.

The idea is for these things to be more a PR/marketing product than a brand-advertising product. The idea is to get challenger brands, in particular, to take part: they tend to be very open and transparent about what they're up to, and they love the idea of engaging with the public as much as possible, if they can do so in a reasonably controlled environment. When that kind of a brand has some kind of news they want to share, doing so through a Gawker Media sponsored post will be a pretty effective way of getting the news out to a large number of people while at the same time sending the message that they're trying to be as transparent as possible and are happy to answer lots of questions in a friendly and conversational and open manner. The metric for success, says Wert, isn't going to be the number of pageviews they get; rather, it will be the amount of earned media they get — the degree to which other media outlets pick up on the initial announcement and the rest of the information that the company reveals in the comments section.

The conversation will probably only go on for a day or two, but after that the post — and all its associated comments — will live on in perpetuity, a much more open and accessible record of the announcement than any press release could be.

The problem here, for Denton — and the reason why he got an editorial guy to run this new project — is the old one: how to persuade his websites' readers to read the sponsored posts and to engage in their comments sections. Wert's stated ambition — and you can hold him to this — is

- January 2012
- December 2011
- November 2011
- October 2011
- September 2011
- August 2011
- July 2011
- June 2011
- May 2011
- April 2011
- March 2011
- February 2011
- January 2011
- December 2010
- November 2010
- October 2010
- September 2010
- August 2010
- July 2010
- June 2010
- May 2010
- April 2010
- March 2010
- February 2010

