

## The Importance of Brand Monitoring as Part of a **Social Media Strategy**

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One of our employees was recently looking to buy a game for the Xbox 360 console. He and his friend, both avid gamers with ample tech savvy, decided to search online for the best-rated Xbox 360 title to help their buying decision. Immediately, they found many blogs, forums and sites discussing an amazing game everyone was referring to as "GRAW2." Convinced by the overwhelmingly positive buzz surrounding the title, they decided it was the game they were looking for. Ready to get in the car and head to Best Buy, they just needed to find the full title of the game. It was clear that "GRAW2" was an acronym used on the forums and blogs, but the two friends could not find any reference to what GRAW stood for. It seemed that the acronym had become so widespread that no one even bothered to explain what it meant. They typed "GRAW2" into Google and were brought to various sites, all of which talked about how great the game was, but NONE of which contained the full title of the mystery game "GRAW2." After searching for more than 20 minutes, these gamers lost interest and decided to buy "Need For Speed," a racing game that they knew they would like, and which they could go out and buy immediately. They wanted instant satisfaction and their research limit had been reached.

It turns out that GRAW2 was the internet community acronym for "Ghost Recon 2: Advanced Warfighter," the long anticipated sequel to a very popular XBOX game. It was getting great reviews and incredible positive buzz throughout the online communities, but something very important happened that resulted in the loss of at least one—and likely many thousands—of sales. The lengthy title of the game led to the quick adoption of an acronym on forums and blogs where this game was being discussed (a common occurrence in the gaming world). However, due to the lack of resources monitoring the brand on popular fan sites, the game producer, Ubisoft, failed to maximize the return from the buzz surrounding the popular game. Buzz about "GRAW2" was not properly connected to "Ghost Recon 2: Advanced Warfighter" through any formal channels. A rift had appeared because the game producer and merchant websites only mentioned the game's full title while the rest of the net only used the acronym. A positive conversation was taking place, but Ubisoft failed to build the necessary keyword bridge in order to capitalize on that buzz and facilitate sales.



While the game was still successful, very little time, money and effort would have been required to monitor the social media spread of the product and correct the issue. With dedicated online brand monitoring as part of a complete social media strategy, Ubisoft would have been able to search engine optimize their own sites immediately to include the popular game acronym thereby preventing a significant loss of sales.