

Tuesday, July 09, 2013

A Round Up From Club eLuxe International Summit - June 2013 Edition.



I had the honor of attending the *Club eLuxe* International Summit held at Paris' chic Hotel Meurice on June 12. The title of the day-long seminar was "The Web Economy: Understanding How Digital Media is Re-writing the Rules of Luxury & Transforming Value Creation."

Club eLuxe founder Uché Okonkwo and her team search high and low to find topics and speakers to inform participants about upcoming digital and tech trends but also to probe and question received wisdom about digital and web related issues affecting the luxury industry. The day was therefore packed with information so it's beyond the scope of this post to summarize each one. Rather, I've chosen to focus on those presentations that truly stuck out for their relevance and insightfulness.

We were treated to a particularly insightful presentation on the digital luxury explosion in Asia by Julien Peh of *White Wave Media*. We are routinely bombarded with a steady stream of headlines and statistics about China. It was therefore refreshing to hear Mr. Peh tell the audience at the outset of his presentation: "Anyone who tells you they know how digital will evolve in China is lying. It's changing too quickly and its too vast to predict." While Mr. Peh did offer up some interesting statistics about mobile (mobile users make up 75% of web users in China and more people access the internet via mobile than on a traditional laptop and/or desktop) and digital media use (91% of web users have visited a social media site) in China, it was his observations relating to the attitudes lurking behind those statistics that were most valuable.

Guillaume Rostand of online luxury hotel reservation site *Splendia* spoke eloquently on the challenges of communicating exclusiveness and engaging the senses in a digital environment. His site works primarily with small independent luxury hotels and resorts. Interestingly, he likened the relationship he cultivates with *Splendia's* hotel partners as an ecosystem: "We work closely with our partner hotels because if they don't deliver what we promise our customers, we both lose." I personally found the use of the term particularly evocative of the relationship brands cultivate with their online communities.

While it may not be the sexiest of subjects, the presentation by Stephen Topliss of *ThreatMetrix* about fighting online fraud also stuck out as particularly timely. As an increasing number of luxury brands and retailers enter the e-commerce fray, it's absolutely essential that they're able to protect themselves and their customers from increasingly sophisticated scams. As Mr. Topliss' presentation made clear, there is no easy solution to online fraud and trust is especially important in the luxury context. Brands need to make security a priority of their web strategy.


This time around, I had the distinct honor of taking part in a panel discussion relating to the social economy, the evolving role of bloggers and personal data as the currency of the web. I shared the stage with Kate Barnett of *The Man Repeller*, Rohan Deuskar of *Stylitics* and Joerg Zuber of *Opium Effect*. We had a lively debate about blogging best practices (most notably transparency and disclosure by bloggers of their relationships with brands), the exploitation of consumers' personal data for economic gain by social media giants like *Facebook* and *Google* and of course, the impact of Edward Snowden's revelations on the credibility of these companies.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the gorgeous visual presentation we were treated to by Joerg Zuber of *Opium Effect*. *Opium Effect* is a Munich-based design agency that creates stunning visual presentations for clients like *Bulgari*, *Mercedes-Benz*, *BMW* and the *IHT*. We viewed a presentation Mr. Zuber's company had produced featuring the *Bulgari* snake necklace that simply wowed us with its precision and breathtaking detail.

All in all, it was a highly informative gathering. Many thanks to Ms. Okonkwo and her team. Thank you also to all those who followed my live tweets, retweeted and submitted questions. I hope you found the exercise useful.

Sincerely,

The Luxe Chronicles

Posted on Tuesday, July 09, 2013 at 09:00 in [Current Affairs](#), [Luxury](#), [Web/Tech](#) | [Permalink](#)  [ShareThis](#)

Technorati Tags: [Club eLuxe International Summit](#), [digital](#), [industry](#), [issues](#), [luxury](#), [Paris](#), [tech](#), [trends](#), [Uché Okonkwo](#)