



## The culture of intoxication: Young adults, social networking & alcohol marketing

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Project investigators: Tim McCreanor, Ian Goodwin, Helen Moewaka Barnes, Fiona Hutton, Christine Griffin, Kerryellen Vroman

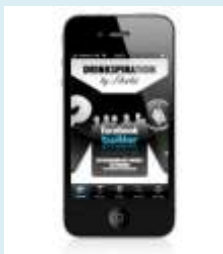
Co-investigators & research students: Patricia Niland, Dee O'Carroll, Lina Samu Ross Hebden, Anna Tonks

## 'Flaunting it on Facebook' Project background

Young people's drinking cultures and the 'culture of intoxication'

The use of social network technologies within drinking cultures and practices

Alcohol marketing and commercialisation within online environments



## The culture of intoxication



'determined drunkenness'  
'calculated hedonism'

Regular, routine, normalised

Socialising, fun and friendship

Pre and post-sharing and (re)telling stories

Linked to alcohol availability, accessibility, increased products, night-time economy, targeted marketing

## Social networking



Rapid growth in use of social networking sites  
Especially young people: 87% of under 30s in NZ (WIPNZ, 2011)  
Facebook most popular - 1 billion users in October 2012  
About friendships, social connections, photo sharing, identity

## Social networking and drinking cultures



## Social networking and drinking cultures



Intoxigenic digital spaces (Griffiths & Casswell, 2010)

Alcohol a key component of university students' identity on Facebook (Ridout et al., 2012)

Sharing drinking episodes online using digital photos is fun and important for friendships (Tonks, 2012, Brown & Gregg, 2012)

## Digital alcohol marketing



## Digital alcohol marketing

Goal is "interaction and conversation among potential consumers" (Nicholls, 2012).

Digital marketing budgets increasing rapidly, e.g. Diageo:

2010 social media marketing would account for 21% of its marketing budget (Mosher, 2012).

2011 Diageo brands had collectively enjoyed a 20% increase in sales as a "direct result of Facebook activity" (AMA, 2012).



## Concerns about digital alcohol marketing

Shapes young people's attitudes and behaviours

Increases the likelihood young people will start drinking, and will drink more once they do (Anderson et al, 2009; Smith & Foxcroft, 2009)

Creates perceived social norms – important for drinking and high-risk drinking patterns

Largely unregulated; underage people are attracted to online marketing activities (Mosher, 2012)

## Participants and data Stage 1

37 friendship group discussions with 154 participants

15 Pakeha  
12 Māori  
10 Pasifika



10 all female  
6 all male  
21 mixed

90 female, 60 male, 4 Fa'afafine  
18-25 years (mean 20.3)

## Participants and data Stage 2

23 individual interviews with laptop

7 Pakeha  
8 Māori  
8 Pasifika



15 females  
7 males  
1 Fa'afafine

18-25 years (mean 20.9)

## Social networking - Facebook

Embedded in drinking cultures:

- gain information about drinking places, people, products
- organise drinking events
- share photos about drinking (liking, tagging, commenting)
- interact about previous drinking
- interact while engaging in drinking
- connect with alcohol brands and products
- meet up with people while out drinking
- receive alcohol promotions



**AW:** whenever we're having drinks at my girlfriend's house, we'll just all sit there on Facebook just casually drinking too.  
**Dee:** And so what sort of things do you do?  
**AW:** On Facebook?  
**Dee:** When you're having a drink?  
**AW:** Uploading statuses, telling everyone that you're drinking.  
**KB:** "So drunk right now", "Anybody wanna join?"  
**AW:** I actually do that  
**Dee:** What sort of statuses would you say?  
**AW:** Oh plan to go out tonight, I don't know just like sending it out, or who's going out tonight

GP16; 4 females

**Dylan:** I think the reason why we have the drinking photos is because it makes your life like more fun, so you're always doing something (...)  
**Lo:** It's memories as well and all your friends are out together on the piss and you do have fun. So you take photos and some of them will be funny photos, and you'll just look at them and crack up and go oh my gosh, do you remember when you were that wasted? [laughing]

GP 1; 4 females

**Krystal:** oh yeah, if you don't really remember what happened the night before, like you will see a photo and it will trigger your memory and then you will remember what happened

GP24; 2 males 2 females



"Let's check Facebook to see if we can find out what we did last night"

Private Eye, 25.07.08

## How do young people engage with digital alcohol marketing?

Qualitative research

3 illustrative quotes

Trish: Do you see any alcohol advertising online?  
 Alex: Yeah...no.  
 Jack: there might be some somewhere  
 Mark: I don't think - oh are they allowed to?  
 Alex: I never see it online bro. Not on Facebook or anything. I always just see it on a billboard  
 Trish: Have you seen any Facebook profiles, like Tui or Cruiser or?  
 Mark: Oh yeah [all nod].  
 Jack: Yeah.  
 Alex: Yeah I have seen that. You can 'like' them. And then oh it'll just be on Facebook so often you'll come across a friend in the notification or the update his profile update it'll just say [name] likes 42 Below New Zealand vodka and you click on it and it'll be like a description of what it's about. Stuff like that. What flavours. Where you can get it from.

Continued...

Trish: Do you think that could be advertising?  
 Jack: Yeah it's gotta be.  
 Mark: Oh not necessarily.  
 Alex: Not necessarily. I reckon it's just the-  
 Mark: Someone has to make it. They don't have to make it. We could make one about vodka.  
 Alex: Isn't advertising selling the product? Trying to get the public to see it's not selling the product. It's not really selling the product. It's just saying what it is. It's not really saying this much here. It's this much there. Specials are here. Or not as far as I know.  
 Jack: Yeah.

GP7; 3 males

*Digital alcohol marketing not seen as marketing*

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*Interacting through the 'like' button*

*Providing personal data to alcohol companies - data mining and algorithms*

*Viral marketing*

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*User-generated content*

*Not viewed as marketing - merely providing useful information*

Dave: Steinlager have got a thing going at the moment, you upload a photo of... you with a Steinlager, or like something happening with this can, and you go in a draw to win  
 Trish: Is that right?  
 Dave: Yeah, so that's like a group on Facebook you can upload pictures to. So I guess that's a way of advertising their stuff. And I mean that comes up on my 'like' down the side, it comes up on the side of mine. So different photos being uploaded every now and then.  
 Trish: Do you go to any alcohol websites?  
 Dave: Nah.  
 Chris: Oh I went to the Tui one once. I was trying to win something.  
 Alex: That's right.  
 Dave: What was it for?  
 Chris: No idea. Online doesn't do much for me. I go on... I go on Facebook.

GP5; 4 males

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*Ongoing interactions, facilitating engagement & awareness; going beyond to friends & friends of friends, etc.....*

*Blurring user and commercial content*

*Incentives for interaction*

*Facebook not even considered 'online'*

GP5; 4 males



### Marketing on mobile devices

CR Yeah they [bars] have their own pages and you can "like" it and then once you've liked them then... when they send out events and notifications then because you're part of it, it comes up in your notifications... so like, the Outback is having a quiz night or something and or else you know come before 11pm on Saturday and all girls get a free cruiser, little deals like that and stuff... that they send out to everybody

LP Ladies free night

CR Yeah ladies free night

WP Five dollar pizza and a jug

CR Yeah yeah yeah that kind of thing ... that just gets sent to notifications

Dee: And do those posts encourage you to go to those sort of places if they're having good deals or good things?

CR Um yeah cos' if it wasn't for that I wouldn't know about it ...if it wasn't for Facebook I would have no idea

GP17; 4 females 3 males

*Marketing in your personal notifications - like friends info*

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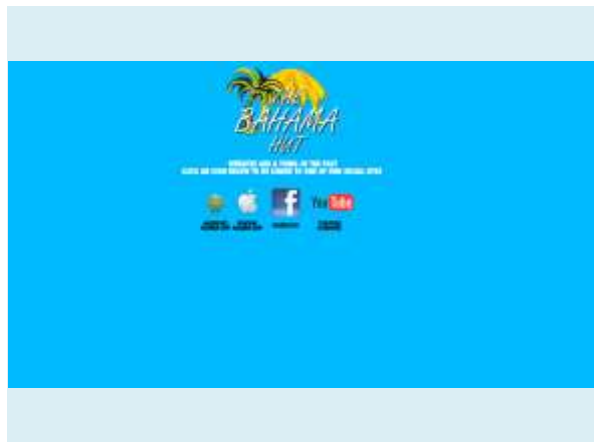
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*Mobile marketing - dynamic, instantaneous, real-time*

*Facebook essential for "being in the know"*

GP17; 4 females 3 males





### Online photos

CR *And I know that a lot of my friends are hard out into photos in town and because clubs take photos in town they're - straight away Sunday morning they're on- Straight on there aye*  
 HR *They're on Outback page waiting for the photos to be uploaded to tag everybody in them... yeah yeah yeah well my friends are freaks so you know... but yeah, they love Facebook photos and stuff, so that's what they do.*

GP17; 4 females 3 males

### What's new in this context?

Facebook is a place where you tell a story about yourself, your tastes and preferences, and your cultural world (Carah, 2012)

Alcohol brands are embedded within everyday Facebook practices and act like 'friend' relationships

User generated content blurred with commercial marketing; crucial as young people are influenced by their peers

.....NOT SEEN AS MARKETING...



### What's new in this context?

Online sharing of pro-drinking messages and content fuels the normalisation of the culture of intoxication (Mooney, 2011)

Mobile devices mean the spatial and temporal intensification of marketing; here the online and offline interaction is seamless

Provides more data than ever, so there is more sophisticated and predictive marketing



### Self-regulation?



### Public health and health promotion

Behavioural change approaches not enough & unlikely to succeed in the current environment

Outmoded attempts

Need basic data & to study corporate practices

'Individual responsibility' a smokescreen



May your life someday be as  
awesome as you  
pretend it is on  
Facebook.



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