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Press release: Tweecret santa – tweeted treats at Christmas time

The virtual giving of Christmas presents is about to kick off: from today onwards, twitterers can register for the pre-Xmas «tweecret santa» action launched by the online community.

Twittering, blogging, xinging, facebooking and other web 2.0 activities have long since taken hold amongst a large part of the new media scene in much the same way as gossiping in the smokers' corner. Friends and colleagues are permanently connected to each other online and invite the outside world to enter their private spheres via 140-character twitter infos.

The first christmas hashtags have already been spotted on Twitter, for the Christmas is once again just around the corner: With the advent season upon us once more, shop shelves are stacked with decorations, chocolate, gingerbread men, Christmas biscuits and other irresistible goodies. All of these should be brought home to delight our nearest and dearest: «the same procedure as every year», as Leila Summa and Ralph Hutter, both with a high affinity to web 2.0, asked themselves via direct message on Twitter. Is this «offline 1.0» type of present giving not a shade behind the times?

After several direct tweets, the German «Wichteln» (secret Santa) had mutated into «Twichteln», «tweecret giving», and a new pre-Christmas tradition had been born. The idea is beautiful in its simplicity: the act of giving takes place online, with the offline presents being replaced by equally valuable online nuggets of knowledge. From 1 December, «tweecret givers» send and receive useful links to unusual youtube clicks, current soundtracks, stunning photographs, informative podcasts or a potentially useful contact presenting him/herself, and much more. True to the motto of «a joy shared is a joy doubled», the tweecret network is called upon to partake in sharing presents via twitters and twitpicen with the hash tag «#tweecret». (more on this procedure at www.tweecretsanta.co.uk)

Leila Summa, founder and communications expert, says: «I have to admit I do not overly care for outmoded Christmas rites, such as our secret Santa tradition. My personal incentive lay in reinventing the ritual to be used in social media and tailor it to the patterns of usage as seen in the online community. As we know, the ritual of giving and receiving presents is little changed, unlike the places and worlds in which we inhabit and move in, and the media we use to communicate with our friends. Twitter struck us as being very cutting-edge in breathing new life into this tradition. We are launching this campaign in Switzerland and in England. I will be intrigued to see whether there will be a discernible difference in the behaviour of the German- and English-language communities.»

Ralph Hutter, founder and someone well known for his series of blogger portraits, says that social networks fascinate him in that «spontaneous actions can suddenly appear with the help of the online community. With «tweecret giving» we only wanted to launch a small pre-Christmas campaign in our blogs. However, the idea quickly found many new friends. With the rapid willingness of Liip AG to offer us technical support, we have been able to expand the project's dimensions and, although a non-commercial project, to inject professionalism into it. But that is not all: the whole project was conducted without one physical meeting: just using Skype, Google Docs, and of course Twitter».

Paul Levy: «My aim is simple, I just would like to rescue Christmas off- and online».

Fabienne Steiner, Head of Communications at Liip AG, adds: «After we were introduced to the idea by Leila Summa, we quickly realised that we wanted to support it. Liip builds individual, innovative web applications which all go a step further than usual, combining pleasure and functionality. Liipers are solid pillars in the web community and are used to communicating productively in the most varied online channels. The spontaneous Christmas action aims to enliven all participating twitters, build cordiality and enable genuine social exchange. Liip delivers, and knows that: social media is much more than collecting as many friends as possible».

UK: <http://www.tweecretsanta.co.uk>

CH: <http://twichteln.ch>

The founders would be delighted to answer your questions...

The founders...

Leila Summa has been hooked on the World Wide Web ever since the dot.com hype. In her capacity as Co-(r)evolutionary Strategist & Management Consultant, she advises companies in the areas of social business and integrated communication strategies. Aiming to connect 2.0 addicts off- and online, she has co-founded the first guild for new media professionals: the Net Guild (www.netzzunft.ch).

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Ralph Hutter (Pixelfreund), Blogger & Twitterer predominantly writes on net culture, web 2.0, social media, online marketing and brand management in the internet. His blog, pixelfreund.ch, mirrors his interests and those subjects he is currently occupied with.

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Paul Levy, facilitator, writer and collusion breaker and founder of [Fringereview](http://fringereview.com) and of [Cats3000](http://Cats3000.com) - a Brighton based creativity and change agency.

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Liip AG represents agile web development with open source and open standards. Some 55 experts in Fribourg, Zurich and Berne are at work on creating innovative solutions with cutting-edge technology to meet consistently high demands. www.liip.ch

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