

———— **The** ————
Straight Talk Guide
to Content Curation
———— **from rasa.** ————

**Learn how
to curate
content
like a pro
without all
the jargon.**

Curation.

The word itself has a bit of a cool edge to it. Think of an art museum curator. We picture someone smart, fashionable and discerning.

Curation is everywhere these days. Many of us take pride in our handpicked book/record/wine/insert-hobby-here collections. The term has even made its way into online marketing. Which is what brings you here.

Want to know how curation fits into your marketing strategy? You're in the right place.

This guide will cover:

- 1. What curated content is;**
- 2. Why it works as an online marketing approach;**
- 3. Best practices for curating content;**
- 4. A step-by-step guide to curating content the right way; and**
- 5. A curating checklist.**

First, let's start with the basics.

What the heck is curation?

Curation is the process of sifting through the vast world of content and information available online, identifying information that you find useful, and sharing that content with your audience. For business owners, your audience includes your customer base.

Think again about a **curator** at an art museum.

Their job is to select works of art that align with the museum's collection and purpose, or with the direction of a specific exhibit. The best curators are selective and intentional, not apathetic. Likewise, your curated content should be clustered around and related to a specific topic.

Real Life Examples

Netflix. Your landing page is a curated selection of movies, shows and documentaries you might like based on your viewing history.

Spotify. Your playlists are curated selections of your favorite music.

Amazon. The platform offers users a curated list of product recommendations based on their purchase history.

The types of curated content you can share include:

- **Articles**
- **Guides**
- **Reports**
- **Videos**
- **Social media posts**
- **Product reviews**

To clarify,

- ✓ Blog post
- ✓ Video tutorial
- ✓ Guide

Content curation differs from content creation.

- ✓ Links to articles
- ✓ Re-posts and shares on social media
- ✓ Entertaining memes or GIFs

Curation focuses on gathering useful content centered on a specific topic from multiple sources, re-organizing it and sharing it with your audience in an easily digestible way. Curated content includes articles and links pulled from external sources, like news websites, trade publications and social media.

Content creation, on the other hand, refers to the content your business develops on its own, like an original blog post, video tutorial or guide.

A robust content marketing strategy includes a healthy mix of creation and curation. Once your business starts generating enough content of its own, it's possible to start curating your original content around specific topics.

For example, a landscaping firm that features a backyard makeover each month on its YouTube channel can use that list to curate its most popular videos or feature projects that included a swimming pool installation.

You may be thinking,
"This sounds like a lot of work. Why should I care?"
We're glad you asked.

Here's why curating works.

There's a lot to think about when it comes to marketing your business. These are a few reasons to dive into content curation.

Earn expert status.

Passing relevant news and trends along to customers elevates your business as a go-to for trusted information and boosts awareness of your brand. When people know that they can rely on you to deliver useful info, they're more likely to open your emails and visit your website.

Invest time in defining how you want your customers to think about your brand. Be deliberate about what you share over email or social media; don't firehose your subscribers and followers with irrelevant content.

Save time.

It's hard work to write a blog and develop other quality original content on a daily basis. What happens when you don't have time to write a post? This is where curated content can help. You should already be staying up-to-date on industry news, trends and forecasts. Why not gather the most useful articles and social media posts you find, and share them with customers? It's faster and more cost-effective than creating original content, and serves the same purpose - to keep the conversation going.

Deliver value.

Think of content curation as another way to deliver value. Share content that educates and helps customers make decisions. If you run a tree trimming service, you want your customer to read a news report about tree trimming ahead of hurricane season.

Content curation delivers value without making it all about your business. Why is that important? People don't like others who only talk about themselves. The same goes for content marketing strategy. Successful content marketing encourages conversation, it doesn't dominate it.

Better understand customers.

Sharing curated content is a good way to quickly figure out who your audience is, especially when you're just starting to build your audience. Tracking performance on curated articles allows you to quickly learn what info your subscribers and followers find valuable, as well as the format they like to consume it in (e.g., email newsletter, tweet, vlog).

Use the data to better inform your products or services. For example, a community bank that notices subscribers like articles on personal finance can offer more tailored services, like a webinar on personal finance basics.

Grow business.

Curation allows you to share more content, more often. People will notice if what you're sharing is worthwhile. They'll also be more likely to think of you the next time they need to make a purchase.

Make contacts.

Curating content is all about elevating the work of others, which also happens to be a great way to meet like-minded people. Also, know that others are more likely to share your stuff, when you're sharing theirs.

In addition to encouraging a dialogue with customers, leverage curation to connect with leaders and influencers in your industry.

Stay informed.

The internet is an infinite pool of information and content. Curation helps your business stay sharp by keeping you and your team plugged into the news and reports that are most relevant in your work.

Ready to get started?

Let's take a look at curation [best practices](#).

The dos and don'ts of content curation.

Content curation is a low-cost, efficient way to keep the conversation going with customers, but it's easy to mess up.

Keep these best practices in mind as you get started.

Don't...

Don't overshare. The point of curation is to come up with content that is hand-picked for your audience, not to share links just for the sake of sharing. The more generic (and prolific) your curated content gets, the lower its value is to the reader. Don't sacrifice the quality of your curated content for the sake of quantity.

Don't plagiarize.

Never (ever) try to pass other people's content off as your own. Your audience and the content creators will notice, and your reputation will be damaged.

Do...

Do add context. Sharing content with no context puts you dangerously close to spam territory. There should be a clear reason why you are sharing a particular piece of content with your audience. Don't be afraid to offer your take or opinion on the topic being covered.

Do give credit. Make an effort to shout out the blogs, companies and other sources where your curated content is coming from. Tag creators in social posts, and include links to the original work. It's the right thing to do and has the added benefit of strengthening your online network.

Don't...

Don't overdo it.

Curated content should not replace original content generated by your business. Aim to strike a balance, mixing original content with content created by someone else. For example, an email newsletter can feature original blog posts, while also including a handful of links and content from external sources.

Don't lose focus.

Make sure to focus curated content on specific topics. If your weekly newsletter shares curated content on business one week, gardening the next and windsurfing the week after that, your subscribers will lose interest fast. Pick a topic or two and dive into it, providing relevant, timely and useful content specific to that area.

Do...

Do use caution. Put thought into what you share, and think about how curated content reflects on your brand. What does it say about your values? How will it be received by your audience? Is there a chance people will take it the wrong way? Be especially careful with sharing content that is satirical or controversial.

Do experiments. Experiment with sharing different types of curated content in different formats, and measure the results. This is how you zero in on what really matters to your audience. Share curated content in blog posts, an email newsletter and on social media channels. Also, mix up the type of content you share; share curated videos, guides, social media posts and even other blogs and newsletters, in addition to articles.

Ready. Set. Go.
It's time to start curating.

How to do curation the right way.

Your audience wants to hear from your brand on a regular basis, but they don't always want to hear about your brand. Striking that balance is the difference between a content marketing strategy that includes [curated content](#), and one that does not.

How do you do content curation the right way?

Here's a step-by-step guide for getting started.

Step #1 **Figure out what topics you will curate**

The goal of content curation is to deliver the content that is most useful and valuable to your audience. Brands that do this well focus on sharing content clustered around a specific topic or set of topics related to their product or service. How do you pick what topics to focus on?

First, think about what your [business](#) does.

What is your product or service? What topics do you find yourself reading about when you're learning about your own industry? Your audience will be interested in some of that content as well.

Next, think about what your audience **actually** cares about.

This is different from what your business does, but the two can intersect. Your audience cares about a lot of different things, from their health and well-being and that of their families to saving money. Your curation sweet spot is a blend of what you do and what your audience cares about.

Case Study: Outdoor retailers like Patagonia, REI and Huckberry are great examples of how to achieve this blend. What do they do? They sell outdoor gear. In addition to gear, their audience (read: their customers) really cares about being outside, finding adventure and taking care of the Earth. The curated content those brands deliver includes video profiles of rock climbers, mountain bikers and fisherman; articles on climate change, developing sustainable wetsuit material and developments in federal conservation regulations; and guides to hiking trails and beaches. All of that content relates to their brand, even if it's not about their brand.

Curate around topics that help your audience understand how your product can help them meet their needs, as well as the topics that they genuinely care about.

Step #2 Pick reputable sources

The bulk of your curated content is going to be in the form of articles, videos and other content linked from external websites, blogs and social media feeds. The places where you look to find content are called content sources.

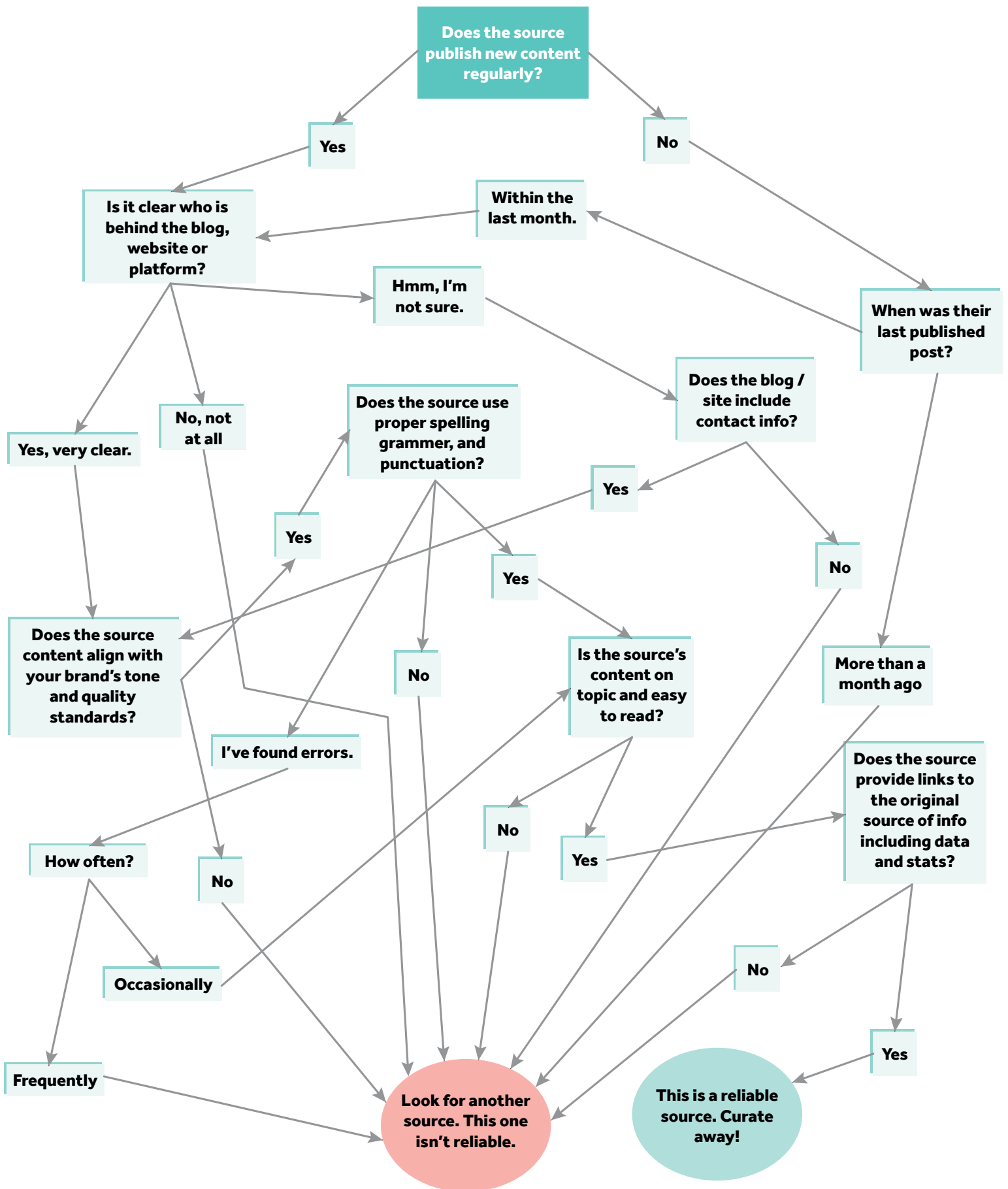
There are tons of places to get content online. Having a list of vetted sources makes the curation process easier and helps you avoid sharing content that is unreliable or that may reflect poorly on your brand. We cannot overstate the value of picking reputable sources.

You wouldn't do business with someone you don't trust. Don't share articles from a website or blog that you don't trust.

Good sources to start gathering content from include news websites, industry or trade publications, and blogs run by companies you partner with.

Use our chart on the next page to determine if your source is reputable or if you should look for another.





Step #3 **Develop a curation workflow**

With a list of topics and content sources in hand, it's time to start curating.

If you're curating content manually, think about how often you will be looking to share curated articles and links. Use that schedule to inform how often you will search for content and gauge how much you'll need to gather. Do you want to look out for curated content for a few minutes each day? Or for 30 minutes on a specific day of the week?

If content curation is new to you, it may be helpful to dedicate time each week to look for content. Think about what your audience would find interesting when reading the news or an industry blog, and keep an eye out for interesting articles shared by other brands.

Next, plan how and where you will gather links to curated content. To start, it could be as simple as bookmarking links and gathering links in a specific folder.

Here are a few other ways to start finding content.

- **Create lists on social media.** Build Twitter lists around specific topics or hashtags, and follow specific hashtags on Instagram and Facebook. Your general feed is noisy; creating lists allows you to home in on the content that matters most to your audience.

- **Join niche groups.** The Internet is filled with groups, forums, message boards and clubs that focus on specific interests. Find the groups your audience members are most likely to be members of and join the conversation. Be respectful of the group dynamic; the goal here is to listen, not to spam groups with promotions from your brand.
- **Use Google Alerts.** Use Google search to sign up for alerts on topics your readers care about. A word of advice: Set very specific search parameters, otherwise your inbox will be flooded. Also, be sure to click through and read content served up by Google before sharing it to make sure it meets your sourcing standards.
- **Sign up for email newsletters.** Sometimes curated content comes from other curators. Subscribe to email newsletters from other brands in your category, as well as newsletter that aggregate news or focus on a specific interest. Don't be afraid to share announcements from other companies if you think it might be useful to your audience.

Step #4 Assemble a curation toolkit

If reading this and feeling overwhelmed, it may be worth considering adding curation software to your content marketing toolkit. Curating content by hand is doable, but it's hard to scale. And scale is what you need to establish yourself as a trusted source of information.

There's a range of tools available to help ramp up your curation efforts, including

- Flipboard
- Pocket
- Elink.io
- Feedly
- Scoop.it
- UpContent
- Quuu

And we'd be remiss if we left out rasa.io. Our platform has built-in curation features that make it easy to deliver curated content via email newsletter.

Visit [Pushing Send](https://pushing.send), the rasa.io blog, for a complete list of curation tools, what they do and how to use them.

Step #5 Plan out how to share content

Once you've assembled curated content think about how you want to share it with your audience. Consider questions like:

- Is the content best suited for social media?
- Is it better shared as a link in your email newsletter?
- Perhaps you want to share a roundup of the week's most interesting curated content in a weekly blog post?

There's going to be a lot of overlap here. Don't be afraid to share the same curated content on social media as you do elsewhere, though you'll want to tailor your posts to each platform. For example, you always want to provide context and commentary with the curated links you share, but that context will have to be shorter and snappier to fit in a short tweet versus a post on Facebook or your blog.

Think about [how often](#) you want to share curated content.

You don't want to overshare, but you also need to be consistent. How frequently you share content often depends on the platform. Social media feeds refresh often, making it possible to share curated content every day without getting on your audience's nerves. For other platforms, like newsletters or blogs, consider sharing curated content at least once a week.

Also, think about how much curated content you are sharing in relation to original and promotional content. There are multiple ways to approach this mix, but a general rule of thumb is to fold a healthy amount of original content into your curated content.

Messages that only promote your brand should be the [smallest slice](#) of your content marketing pie.

Here are two approaches for thinking about your content mix.

- **The Golden Rule.** This guideline is also known as the 30/60/10 rule. That stands for 30% original content, 60% curated content and 10% promotional content. In this mix, curated content is the bulk of day-to-day content, while original content, like blog posts, get about half as many shares.
- **The 5:3:2 Rule.** This rule is geared specifically for social media. For every 10 posts, share five pieces of curated content, three pieces of original content and two pieces of content that are fun and personal. The idea with the last two posts is to make a concerted effort to humanize your brand.

Step #6 Track performance

Congrats! Now that you're curating content like a pro, it's important to track the results of that work.

Each blog post read, social media share, and email click-through gives you a clearer picture of what **your audience is interested in.**

Pay attention to trends, and use that information to further refine the topics and content you pay attention to when curating.

Here are a few tools to help you get started on tracking how your content is doing.

- **Google Analytics.** This is the most popular tool for tracking website and content performance with good reason - it's free and it works. This tool allows you to dig into the demographics of your audience, where they're coming from and what content they're clicking on. You can also use it to measure the effectiveness of social media campaigns.
- **Facebook Page Insights.** Also free for business profile users, this tool allows you to gather information on what actions your audience is taking on your Facebook page, including post engagement (i.e. likes, comments, shares) and audience data, like when your followers tend to be online. It also shows you what types of posts are doing well on pages similar to yours.
- **Instagram Insights.** Similar to Facebook's analytics page (Facebook owns Instagram), your Instagram Insights page lets you dig into data on your most popular posts and your overall reach. Unfortunately, there's no desktop version of this tool. It's only available for use by business account holders in the mobile app.
- **Twitter Analytics.** You have to be a paid advertiser on Twitter in order to start using its analytics page, but the tool has useful features. Among other data, it gathers your top tweets, engagements and impressions over time, which can help you see what content could be repurposed at a later date.

You've made it to the end of this guide.

We're impressed by you and psyched for you. You're now on your way to a well-rounded, thoughtful content curation approach.

In this guide we:

- ✓ **Explained what curated content is;**
- ✓ **Learned why it works as an online marketing approach;**
- ✓ **Talked about best practices for curating content; and**
- ✓ **Gave you a step-by-step guide to curating content the right way.**

Now here's **a gift from us to you.**

Use this curation checklist as you would a packing list before a trip. Run through it, make sure you have what you need and happy curating!

Your straight-talk curation checklist by rasa

Time to start sharing cool stuff with your audience. Here's a checklist to get you started.

I know what topics I want to curate.

Write down three topics that are relevant to your business/industry and to your audience, and three topics that your audience is actually interested in.

Topics my business is interested in...	Topics my audience is interested in...
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

I have a list of content sources.

Remember, you want to source content from places that are reputable, publish regularly and match your brand standards for writing. Think about trade publications, industry blogs, news websites, magazines, email newsletters and the blogs of your partner companies.

Write down five industry sources, five general sources (news websites, magazines, interest blogs), and five social media sources you could gather content from.

Industry Sources	General Sources	Social Media Sources
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.

Your straight-talk curation checklist by rasa.

❑ I have a system for gathering and storing curated content.

This could be as simple as setting up a folder in your web browser where you can drop links to curated content.

Step 1:

Find content

Step 2:

Bookmark link

Step 3:

Save in 'Curated Content' folder

Step 4:

Curation tools:

❑ I have a plan for sharing curated content.

Make a list of all the channels you have for contacting customers, including social media accounts. How often do you want to share curated content on each channel?

Also, figure out your desired content mix. For example, for every 10 posts, post five (5) curated pieces of content.

Channel	How often will I share?	What's our content mix?
Email Newsletter		
Company Blog		
Facebook		
Twitter		
Instagram		
YouTube		

Your straight-talk curation checklist by rasa

I have a plan for tracking content performance.

Place a check-mark next to which tools you will be using to track how curated content is performing.

Tool
<input type="checkbox"/> Google Analytics
<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook Insights
<input type="checkbox"/> Instagram Insights
<input type="checkbox"/> Twitter Analytics
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

I have a favorite ice cream flavor picked out.

Because (obviously) you deserve ice cream for making it through this checklist. Excellent work!

Flavor
<input type="checkbox"/> Vanilla
<input type="checkbox"/> Chocolate
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

We don't want to brag, but...

We have a lot more where this came from. Content marketing is kind of our thing here at rasa.io and we could talk for days about this stuff. But we won't do that. Instead, we'd like to take a minute to introduce what we do and how it could help you and your newly minted content curation strategy.

There are all sorts of ways to share useful content (both original and curated) with your audience. In our view, the email newsletter is one of the most effective channels. Email newsletters are a direct way to stay in touch with your audience on a regular basis, without having to post daily updates to a blog or compete with the real-time stream of thoughts, content and media that fills feeds on social media and other platforms.

Here at rasa.io, we're dedicated to helping our users better inform the world by sending smarter email newsletters. Our platform offers users a fast and easy way to:

1. Build an email newsletter;
2. Fill it with original and curated content that your audience will find useful;
3. Send it out to your email lists on a regular basis.

The icing on the cake? Our platform uses artificial intelligence to customize your email newsletter for each subscriber on your list based on what articles they click on. Each time you hit send, rasa.io generates a unique email newsletter for each reader. The result is a newsletter that has a consistent look, feel and branding, but with slightly different content depending on the reader. Pretty cool, right?

We're here to help whether you're completely new to the world of email newsletters (welcome!) or have an existing newsletter that hasn't gotten much traction (let's talk!).

Visit rasa.io to get started building a smarter email newsletter.