

IN 2007, ONLINE WAS DEFINITELY WHERE IT WAS AT, AND PART OF THE BEAUTY OF THE INTERNET IS THAT THE LANDSCAPE KEEPS SHIFTING. **BEN COOPER** CAPTURES THE YEAR'S MOST NOTABLE ONLINE MOMENTS AND FIXES HIS KALEIDOSCOPE UPON THE YEAR AHEAD.

**L**OOKING BACK AT the year seems to get harder and harder, simply for the fact that so much keeps happening. A poll of web-savvy peers produced unanimous praise for Radiohead's *In Rainbows* release and widespread fascination for the weird interest we have for celebrity, cultivated online in characters such as Chris Crocker. Then there's the platforms and services that constantly improve our online experience. Without further ado, here is an eclectic collection of what stood out online in 2007.

### *In Rainbows*

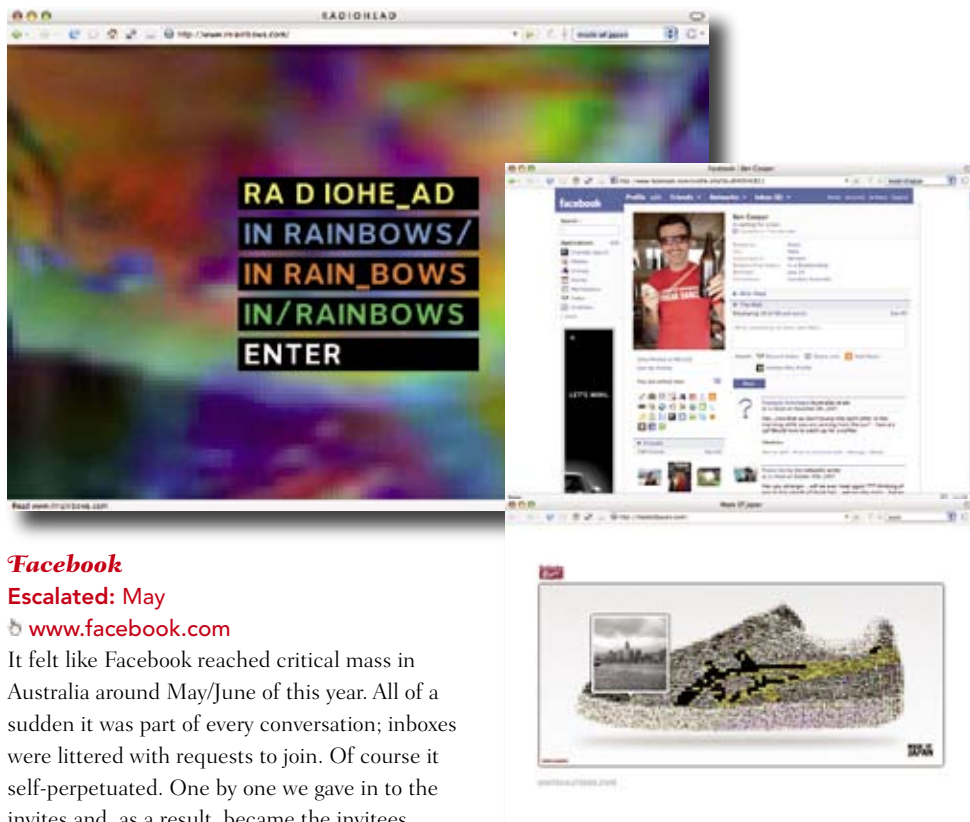
Released: October 10

[www.inrainbows.com](http://www.inrainbows.com)

The self-released album from Radiohead seems to have turned the record industry on its head. The band decided to let fans make a decision about what price they should pay for the digital download version. In doing this it started an online/offline debate that has probably created more buzz about the release than any traditional advertising or marketing campaign could.

There seems to be much speculation about whether or not Radiohead is making any money from this seemingly radical move. According to web traffic-measurement firm Comscore, over 1.2 million people worldwide had visited inrainbows.com during October. Of those, 38 percent had supposedly paid to download with an average payment of US\$6. Comscore's figures are based only on a sample group, and, though factual, have been dismissed by Radiohead, but if they add up then Radiohead – the band, not the label – would have directly generated over US\$2.5m from the download of the album. The estimations don't take into account pre-order purchases of the discbox (US\$84) so we can only speculate that it's been a financial success.

Aside from the money, Radiohead has broken new ground in the marketing of its music, not only to diehard fans but to a wider audience who have been intrigued by this seemingly maverick stunt. The trust placed in people to 'choose what they pay' has earned respect – of course there'll be freeloaders, but from the conversations happening around the place from online to the local pub it seems *In Rainbows* will go down in history as one of the most talked-about releases of all time.



### Facebook

Escalated: May

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

It felt like Facebook reached critical mass in Australia around May/June of this year. All of a sudden it was part of every conversation; inboxes were littered with requests to join. Of course it self-perpetuated. One by one we gave in to the invites and, as a result, became the invitees. This tipping point was further accelerated by the release of the Facebook Platform, which allowed third-party developers to build applications for the network. This strategy was the polar opposite of MySpace, which began to 'lock-out' third parties, arguing that external companies were making money off their success, yet failing to see the applications were what engaged users and made MySpace so vibrant.

A Facebook report from October shows there are a staggering 1.6 million active users in Australia, and it's growing by the minute. Of those active users, 77 percent are between the ages of 25 and 34, with 20 percent 35 and over. Social networking for grown-ups!

The way we conduct a relationship has changed forever – we're reconnecting with old friends, classmates, work colleagues and acquaintances we've met along the way. Whether we are biting, sharing what we iLike'd, winning at Scrabulous or ordering our Top Friends, we are conversing in newfound ways. Changing your status to 'in a relationship' is almost like PR for your life as the enquiries come flooding in.

### Onitsuka Tiger 'Made Of Japan'

Released: March

[www.madeofjapan.com](http://www.madeofjapan.com)

I'm a sucker for information aesthetics and this is a great use of online data to bring to life the Onitsuka brand and the iconic Tiger sneaker. Accessing pictures from 150 Japanese-related blogs every hour, this site (created by Strawberry Frog and Woedend! Amsterdam) dynamically creates the sneaker you see on screen. The site then analyses the pictures and builds the mosaic.

It's a simple idea, with complex technology in the background but it stays true to the original thought, 'Made of Japan', bringing to life the Onitsuka Tiger sneaker and its Japanese heritage.

### California Milk Processor Board 'Get The Glass'

Released: March

[www.gettheglass.com](http://www.gettheglass.com)

Created by Goodby, Silverstein & Partners and North Kingdom, this website is part of the highly successful US milk advertising campaign. To put

the site into context, think online 3D board game. The user's task is to help the Adachi family (made famous in the ads) break into Fort Fridge and get the Glass – without ending up in Milktraz!

It starts by introducing the user to the Adachi family, each character animated in 3D to mimic his or her TVC counterpart. A roll of the dice and the game begins: a task-driven journey through a graphical island, with the Fort Fridge security guards hot on your tail. The craftsmanship that has gone into this online execution is staggering. Consequently you forgive the time-consuming download and the wait between scenes.

North Kingdom presented results from the campaign at OFFF in Barcelona. They say six weeks after the launch of the campaign the site had received about six million visitors. Of those, 650,000 game players spent 15 to 30 minutes reaching the Glass at Fort Fridge. Aside from the clicks, impressions and time spent completing the game, the California Milk Processor Board has sold 10 million more gallons of milk than in previous years.

### **Chris Crocker 'Leave Britney Alone!'**

**Released: September 11**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHmvkRoEoww](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHmvkRoEoww)

The rise of the Internet celebrity. Chris Crocker is a YouTube and MySpace personality most noted for his 'Leave Britney Alone!' video plea on YouTube. The video was in response to the media's attack on Britney's MTV Video Music Awards performance of 'Gimme More'.

In the first 24 hours of posting, his video appeal was viewed more than two million times. The footage has gone on to be seen an incredible 12.5 million times and is the second most discussed content on YouTube, with more than 180,000 comments. In true YouTube style, it kick-started parody responses such as 'Leave Chris Crocker Alone'. Crocker's video became its own story, getting him interviews on CNN, FOX News and with other notable mainstream media. He now has a TV deal and apparently Britney has a restraining order on him, which isn't surprising if you watch the clip.

### **Google Maps 'Street View'**

**Released: May 25**

<http://maps.google.com/help/maps/streetview>

Street View is a ground-breaking new feature for Google Maps, which provides 360-degree panoramic, street-level views of select US cities. Searching for a location on Google Maps, you can switch to street-view and then navigate in the environment through actual photography of the area. It's mind boggling that the mapping of our world is so readily accessible to us. Through maps and Google Earth we can take ourselves to places we've yet to visit – or show someone where we've been.


On a separate note, check out <http://streetviewr.com> which is a collection of street-view photos that are sometimes hilarious, sometimes a little dodgy. The feature continues to cause a stir with privacy concerns in question.

### **Burger King 'Simpsonize Me'**

**Released: July 23**

<http://simpsonizeme.com>

The whole world went yellow with the launch of *The Simpsons Movie*. There was a huge online effort with many sites and online content to engage with. What stood out as a very simple and engaging website was 'Simpsonize Me', a co-branded site with Burger King, created by Crispin Porter + Bogusky. Simply upload a photo of yourself and the website 'Simpsonizes' you; that is, it makes you yellow and turns you into a Simpsons character. It requires a decent portrait shot with a plain background but the site does the rest.

Quantifying the success of the site on its own is impossible to fathom. Suffice to say that if Facebook's profile pictures act as a social barometer, then the amount of yellow caricatures that appeared during this time was a good guide for the campaign's success. According to 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, *The Simpsons Movie* sold almost US\$168m worth of tickets on its opening weekend. In the US it ranked the fifth highest opening film of 2007. 

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## THE VIEW FROM HERE

- Google's Open Social platform could democratise social application development, but on its terms. Will the people further embrace other networks just because they have interoperable applications? The coming months will be a continuing battle in the social space as we see what Microsoft's 1.6 percent share in Facebook actually means, and watch how they handle Open Social.
- The launch of Facebook Ads shifted control of social advertising into the user's hands (much like Google AdSense), allowing us to create polls, ads or even custom profiles for a nominal fee. Then target it at the people we want. Perhaps the days of nine-to-five work are coming to an end as we all have the opportunity to become internet entrepreneurs!
- Larger budgets allocated to online development will lead to better craftsmanship. As demonstrated with 'Get The Glass', users will expect brands to deliver far smarter and more immersive experiences with higher production values. Let's hope we see the back of uneducated budgets for a medium with so much more potential.
- The computer will fast become a secondary device when connecting to the web, not that this will happen in 2008. Devices such as the iPhone are only the beginning of online access everywhere. Its inbuilt wireless technology enables iTunes to deliver music and videos without even syncing the device.
- Content remains king as we find more opportunities and occasions to consume it. For filmmakers, the opportunity to engage is growing exponentially – it's just that the screen is getting smaller.