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4/3/2014

 **Do our readers really want trash?**

When I first clicked in an article names like “ 12 reasons why you need a friend”, I think that really works for me ——warm words with cute pictures from kittens and bunnies to Snoopy and Harry Potter——heartwarming and releasing your pressure from the harsh life. The second time is fine and third time is OK. But when I clicked one says “12 ways to keep fit” and in the content the author said nothing more than “eat less and exercise more”, I got really irritated. Do I need you to particularly write a story and tell me this? After that I got immune to similar kind of trash and even to the number of 12.

That’s my experience as a reader. Do I really want trash? No. But are they tempting? Yes, sometimes I have to be really self-disciplined to control myself from clicking on an evident trash again.

The stunning Miley Cyrus twerking video went viral immediately right after she finished the performance at 2013 MTC VMAs. The second day, even CNN.com has given her a spot in the morning’s top story. Managing editor of CNN.com, Meredith Artley, posted on the Onion, “[It was an attempt to get you to click on CNN.com so that we could drive up our web traffic, which in turn would allow us to increase our advertising revenue.”](http://www.theonion.com/articles/let-me-explain-why-miley-cyrus-vma-performance-was%2C33632/?ref=auto) As driven by the metrics of clicks, journalists some times have a make comprise to follow the trend.

“I don’t hesitate to call it stupid bullshit because we all know it’s stupid bullshit,” said Artley. But the bullshit does drive the traffic, anyway. As though it seems stupid, I feel it is newsworthy and deserves the coverage, for it shows what’s going on in the world right now. But when websites and journalists found “Miley Cyrus” and “twerk” could drive traffic, and turned into wild writing trash like “ Miley’s 12 Shocking Moments”, “Evolution of Miley”, and “12 Pictures Tell You How to Twerk”, that’s when the journalists doing disservice to the public and should stop.

Metrics cannot only be used as the way to identify “traffic whoring”, but also as way to improve the quality according to their interest. Just as Katharine Viner, deputy editor of the Guardian and editor-in-chief of Guardian Australia, said, [“Watching the traffic isn't about clickbait - it's about finding out how your readers behave and what they are interested in, and if they're not, working out why not.”](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/oct/09/the-rise-of-the-reader-katharine-viner-an-smith-lecture)

Sensational headlines may help attract clicks, but if the content is as plain as water and worth no “attention time”, readers will stop clicking anymore, even stop visiting the website some time. So using metrics to create trash is not the future of journalism. Using data to analyze reader’s interest and tailor the content, improve the quality and add more interactive elements in the stories will be the right way to follow the trend.