

## **Hyper Island: Living In A Digital World**

***Featuring:***

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**Stephen:** Hi I'm Stephen Martincic joined in London today by Gaby Bell, Sally-Ann Shapiro and Laura Holme who are here to share with us their experience at Hyper Island.

So Sally-Ann, what is Hyper Island?

**Sally-Ann:** Well, it's a place essentially in the middle of nowhere. It takes planes, trains, automobiles to get there. I think it took us about two days. It's a digital master-class where you learn everything there is to know about digital in about two days. And you're with a bunch of people and some experts in digital who talk to you and facilitate workshops to inspire you about digital work.

**Stephen:** Laura, what were the highlights of your weekend in Sweden?

**Laura:** Well, a naked man who came into our classroom and jumping off a tower in the Baltic Sea were the personal highlights, but it was, going to a weekend where there were incredible lecturers that really changed your way of thinking. A good combination of that and workshops where together as individual markets and cross country groups were looking at how digital has changed and will continue to change everything, how we need to reorganize our thinking and the structure of our agencies to succeed in the post-digital age.

**Stephen:** Gaby, what did you take from it?

**Gaby:** That it's time that we stop being passengers of what's going on in the digital world and start genuinely living it and breathing it. That this is one of the biggest things to happen to the world since the Industrial Revolution. That it will fundamentally change the way that society operates. In fact, probably the most interesting thing for me was not so much what's going on and what's new in digital, because that will change before I've even learned about it; it was more digital's impact on society.

So one of the things one of the teachers said, and they like to think of themselves not as teachers but inspirers, was that before the Industrial Revolution, childhood didn't exist. The concept of childhood didn't exist. There were children, but there wasn't childhood. And he likened that change to some of the changes that digital will have on our society. So for me, that was pretty inspirational and a game changer.

**Stephen:** Sally-Ann what is the most significant thing that you learned there that has really changed your way of thinking about digital?

**Sally-Ann:** I think that the most significant thing was actually that digital is not as hard as the "geeks" would have us believe. You always have this image of digital as being something that's a little bit unattainable, scary, in the world of computer geeks and not really accessible to everybody. And that there's this whole air of mystery around it, not everybody can do it. You need to be specially trained all of that kind of stuff.

I think really the most significant thing about spending the weekend learning about digital is that it's not so bloody hard. It's something that anybody can do. It's a question of having an understanding of it, not being afraid. And then the sky's the limit. You can really go ahead and do things.

**Stephen:** You use digital for work but also in your day to day life. What did this training at Hyper Island change in your private life?

**Laura:** I'll go first. Only because a lot of people have asked me about Hyper Island this is probably one of the coolest things you could do right now, anywhere. And we're pretty privileged to have done it. A lot of people have been very interested, and I've said to them for me it's really simple; it's like flicking a switch in your brain. It's not that you necessarily come away knowing about Foursquare or you know how to do Twitter from your phone live; it's not that. The switch flickers in your brain and after that nothing is the same again. Again one of the speakers talked about viewing the digital world with analogue eyes.

So I guess for me what's changed is I'm not viewing the world with analogue eyes anymore. I'm recognizing that everything's changed. Things don't mean the same. The word friend means something different in a digital world than it does in an analogue one. Given the generation we are, we need to not view the world with our analogue eyes just because that's what we were brought up on but recognize we're now living in a digital world. And if we're going to see it properly and exploit it properly, we need to view it with digital eyes.

**Gaby:** The switch for me was similar. The speakers said you don't have to like the fact that the world is very public. We all grew up in a very private world where you wrote in your diary and you kept your private thoughts private. You don't have to like that it's a public world but it is a public world and accept it. That was the digital switch in my eyes, which was just accept that it is the way that it is. Once you've accepted that and adjusted your mindset, the rest isn't difficult.

One other thing that was interesting is the problem isn't a lack of digital skills. We focus on questions like "do we have the skill set?" It isn't the lack of skills, but the lack of experience we have with the technology. So it was much more of an insight that we need to immerse ourselves in the experience.

**Sally-Ann:** I agree with Gaby, actually, in the sense that it's a completely different way of thinking and a challenge because I think we've all been thinking in a certain way up until this point. Then you get there and it's almost like everything is turned upside down, turned on its end and you start looking at things in a totally different way.

**Stephen:** Gaby you work in planning; Sally-Ann, account management and Laura in new business. How did Hyper Island change in the way that you work?

**Laura:** Well, one of the speakers talked about eating your own dog food. I like that thought because he said if you are going to ask your clients to experiment with digital, you need to experiment yourself before you begin to take something out there.

For me, the experiment to conduct is to look at the agency and how we can use different combinations of digital channels to market the agency and to look at developing our reputation management program. So that's what I actively started doing and putting together a plan that includes a listening report. Seeing what's said about the agency is Part One. I now realize how important digital is to the reputation and management of the agency.

**Stephen:** Sally-Ann?

**Sally-Ann:** I think for me it's a realization that we're constantly competing with digital specialist agencies, and it's not about being a digital agency. It's about being an agency that thinks digitally, which means that you can do everything. It's completely incorporated into everything that you're doing for your clients.

So for me, from an account management perspective, it's very much offering an integrated marketing plan. We can add to the different executions because they all fit together. Clients need to have the analogue side and the digital side so they can co-exist. And we can do that; it's just a question of how we think and changing the way we think.

**Stephen:** Gaby?

**Gaby:** I have three key things to think about in planning. One is the role of influencers and how that changes. We need to understand that there are some very influential communities online, professional or amateur, and we need to embrace those and understand how to talk to them.

The second thing is the proposition. When you're writing a brief for a traditional analogue campaign, the proposition can be quite different. I think as planners we need to think about writing propositions so that a campaign can start anywhere--in a digital environment or an analogue environment.

And the third thing is what I mentioned before, which is understanding that consumers and language have changed as a result of the digital revolution. We need to reframe some of the language that we use currently and think about it differently.

**Stephen:** And now the last question, what did Hyper Island bring to you in 6.5 Seconds That Matter? Gaby?

**Gaby:** I think the only thing that's holding anybody back is fear itself.

**Stephen:** Laura?

**Laura:** For me, it was not to focus on the now, it's to focus on the trajectory.

**Stephen:** Sally-Ann?

**Sally-Ann:** For me, it was very much realizing and learning that, if you don't have a digital footprint, you don't exist.

**Stephen:** Laura, Sally-Ann, Gaby, thank you very much.