



# All night long: Social media marketing to young people by alcohol brands and venues

Professor Christine Griffin, Dr Jeff Gavin and Professor Isabelle Szmigin

July 2018



## AUTHOR DETAILS

Professor Christine Griffin, Department of Psychology, University of Bath,  
[c.griffin@bath.ac.uk](mailto:c.griffin@bath.ac.uk)

Dr Jeff Gavin, Department of Psychology, University of Bath,  
[j.gavin@bath.ac.uk](mailto:j.gavin@bath.ac.uk)

Professor Isabelle Szmigin, Birmingham Business School, University of  
Birmingham, [i.t.szmigin@bham.ac.uk](mailto:i.t.szmigin@bham.ac.uk)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research team would like to thank those young people who gave up their time to participate in the focus groups and individual interviews. We would like to thank Alcohol Research UK for funding this research, and especially James Nicholls for his enthusiastic support. We would also like to thank Jemma Lennox, Samantha Garay, Lara Felder and Alexia Pearce for their invaluable work on the project.

This report was funded by Alcohol Research UK. Alcohol Research UK and Alcohol Concern merged in April 2017 to form a major independent national charity, working to reduce the harms caused by alcohol.

Read more reports at: [www.alcoholresearchuk.org](http://www.alcoholresearchuk.org)

*Opinions and recommendations expressed in this report are those of the authors.*

# CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	1
Background and aims.....	1
Methods .....	2
Findings.....	3
Conclusions and Implications .....	8
Recommendations .....	9
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION .....	10
1.1 Young people's alcohol consumption in the UK.....	11
1.2 Young people's engagement with social media: Digital and mobile technologies and the rise of the smartphone .....	13
1.3 The growth of alcohol marketing on social media.....	14
1.4 The impact of on- and offline alcohol marketing on young people's consumption and attitudes to drinking .....	15
1.5 Marketing alcohol to young people online: relevant research.....	17
1.6 Marketing alcohol to young people online: the regulatory context .....	20
1.7 Aims and research questions .....	22
SECTION 2: SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING BY ALCOHOL BRANDS AND VENUES.....	23
2.1 Selecting the sample .....	23
2.2 Social media marketing activity by alcohol brands and venues.....	26
2.3 Content analysis of social media marketing practices and themes .....	34
2.4 Branded drinking spaces .....	48
SECTION 3: YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING BY ALCOHOL BRANDS .....	56
3.1 Study design, sampling, recruitment, methods and respondents.....	56
3.2 The 'culture of intoxication' .....	63
3.3 'There's no point, but ...': Engaging with alcohol brands online .....	64
3.4 What constitutes alcohol advertising? Debate and critique .....	68
SECTION 4: YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING BY VENUES .....	73
4.1 Communication, organisation, information: young people's uses of social media marketing by venues .....	73
4.2 All night long: Young people's engagement with social media marketing by venues .....	76
SECTION 5: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY .....	90
REFERENCES .....	94
APPENDICES .....	103

Appendix 1: Upheld complaints against social media marketing by alcohol brands and venues.....	103
Appendix 2: Social Survey to select sample of alcohol brands, venues and social media platforms.....	104
Appendix 3: 'Long list' of 14 alcohol brands and 11 venues used to select final sample.....	106
Appendix 4: Coding Frame for analysis of social media marketing practices and themes.....	108
Appendix 5: Social media marketing practices and themes in posts by alcohol brands and venues on all three social media platforms .....	111
Appendix 6: Information Sheet for Individual Interviews in Schools .....	115
Appendix 7: Consent Form for Individual Interview .....	118
Appendix 8: Demographic information form .....	119
Appendix 9: Focus Group Schedule .....	121
Appendix 10: Interview Schedule.....	123
Appendix 11: Debriefing Information.....	125
Appendix 12: Information on focus group respondents .....	126
Appendix 13: Information on interview respondents.....	127

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background and aims

Alcohol is a pervasive theme in young people's social media interactions, and one of the most frequently cited products eliciting 'user engagement' online (Ridout et al., 2011; Socialbakers, 2013; Winpenny et al., 2014). The recent expansion of social media use amongst under-25s has created unprecedented opportunities for marketing alcohol products, especially with the emergence of more interactive platforms alongside digital and mobile technologies, most notably smartphones (Carah et al., 2014; Weaver et al., 2013). Most forms of social media alcohol marketing (SMAM) involve marketing messages created by alcohol brands alongside content created by consumers ('user-generated content' or UGC). Regulation of SMAM tends to focus on the former, but UGC can influence young people's attitudes to alcohol consumption by drawing them into close interactive relationships with brands, products and drinking venues (Nicholls, 2012; McCreanor et al., 2013). Although the drinks industry has invested heavily in SMAM since around 2010, to date few studies have examined the nature and potential impacts of online alcohol marketing to young people in depth (see Atkinson et al., 2014 and Purves et al., 2014 for exceptions).

Social media marketing involves a multi-platform social media presence, including smartphone apps and blogs, usually used alongside traditional offline marketing. Social media also offers new opportunities for viral marketing, such as 'astroturfing' and advergaming. Platforms encourage users to interact with each other via the 'like' 'comment' and 'share' functions, 'check-in' at venues, and via tweet and retweet functions on Twitter (Nicholls, 2012). Many young people also post photos of themselves and their friends on nights out on platforms such as Instagram (Niland et al., 2014), and many clubs and bars have their own photographers, posting images of guests onto the clubs' own social media pages (Lyons et al., 2017). As well as selling users' data on to third parties, marketers can use information about people who access their sites to send targeted messages about cheap deals, prompting them to drink (more) alcohol (Bucher, 2012).

Most previous research has focused on social media marketing by specific brands and alcohol products, with less attention paid to the online marketing strategies of organised drinking events and licensed venues used by young people. Many venues have a highly interactive online presence and are less visible beyond their clientele (Evans, 2012; Hubbard, 2011). Research has also struggled to keep pace with the rapidly changing forms of online marketing and the ways in which young people engage with these new media platforms, especially via smartphones (Beer & Burrows, 2010; Nicholls, 2012; Raine et al., 2012; Lyons et al., 2017). This project is the first to conduct a systematic analysis of online marketing aimed at young people in the UK by selected venues as

well as alcohol brands, investigating young people's engagement and the implications for the current UK advertising Codes of Practice.

The project aimed to:

- (a) Review current social media marketing practices aimed at young people by bars and clubs as well as alcohol brands, examining a selected sample of social media marketing cases in depth.
- (b) Investigate how young people below and above legal age for purchasing alcohol (hereafter, LDA or 'legal drinking age') engage with social media marketing by brands and venues, identifying the potential impacts on their drinking cultures, and exploring how these processes might be shaped by gender and social class.
- (c) Assess the effectiveness of the current Code of Practice for regulating social media marketing aimed at young people.

## Methods

### Stage 1

We selected a systematic sample of 419 social media marketing posts by five alcohol brands and three venues on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram during two consecutive weeks in May and June 2016. We then conducted a mixed-methods content analysis of social media marketing activities, practices and themes in all posts by these five alcohol brands and three venues.

### Stage 2

Eleven mixed and single sex focus groups, with a total of 53 young people aged just below and above the UK LDA of 18, were recruited from schools and universities in South-West England. Friendship group discussions investigated the participants' engagement with online alcohol marketing, and its relationship to their drinking cultures and social media practices. Group discussions were followed by 22 individual interviews involving 17 young people from the focus groups and a further five young people recruited independently. The interviews were conducted with online access via the project lap top, enabling us to display selected social media marketing posts and to discuss respondents' social media practices and profiles with their permission.

## Findings

### Social media marketing activity by alcohol brands and venues

There were several key differences in the social media marketing activities of the alcohol brands and venues in our sample. Overall, we found that:

- All venues in our sample posted on social media more frequently than the alcohol brands during our two-week research period.
- The level of social media marketing activity by alcohol brands varied depending on whether they were running specific promotions. This followed a similar pattern to traditional offline marketing campaigns rather than the constant activity that can characterise social media use. The social media pages of alcohol brands and venues attracted large numbers of followers 'liking' these pages, especially on Facebook. User-engagement ratios for posts by venues were lower than for the alcohol brands, but this does not reflect other important forms of user engagement, which we explore in Section 4.
- Venues, and especially alcohol brands, were more active on Twitter than Facebook or Instagram, in marked contrast to young people's pattern of social media activity which tends to favour Facebook and Instagram (and Snapchat) over Twitter (see also demographic information from our research respondents in Section 3).

### Content analysis of social media marketing practices and themes

There were important differences in the social media marketing practices and themes employed in posts by alcohol brands and venues across the three social media platforms. We found that:

- The most common social media marketing *practices* in posts by *alcohol brands* linked their products to sponsored events, or 'Real World Tie-ins'; followed by posts providing information about distribution and availability of products; posts that associated drinking with specific times and/or events; retweeting or sharing images; associating their product with other products and pages; and finally posts that resembled advertisements.
- The main *themes* in social media marketing posts by *alcohol brands* linked drinking to specific environments, such as the home, festivals or outdoors; used vernacular/informal language and emojis; engaged with popular music, such as festivals and gigs; included images of male and/or female consumers; and displayed a taste in popular culture, including sport, celebrities, etc. (see Table 1 below).

**Table 1: Alcohol brands - main social media marketing practices and themes**

<b>Social media marketing practices/ Brands</b>	<b>N (%) posts</b>	
A2: Real World Tie-Ins	101	48.8%
A9: Information Re. distribution & availability	88	42.5%
A5: Association between drinking & specific times and/or events	63	30.4%
A11: Retweets/share images	60	29%
A12.1: Association with other products, pages	48	23.1%
A3: Like Advertisements	46	22.2%
<b>Total no of posts</b>	<b>207</b>	
<b>Social media marketing themes / Brands</b>	<b>N (%) posts</b>	
B1.4: Link to drinking environment: home, festivals, outdoors, nightclub	121	58.5%
B6.1: Posts use vernacular/informal language	81	39.1%
B4: Engage with popular music: festivals, gigs	62	30%
B6.2: Posts involving emojis	41	19.8%
B1.1: Male and/or female consumers	38	18.4%
B3: Display taste in popular culture: sport, celebs	35	17%
<b>Total no. of posts</b>	<b>207</b>	

- The most common social media marketing *practices* employed in posts by venues presented information about events; provided information about distribution and availability of products; asked fans to book/reserve seats or guest list places; associated drinking with specific times and/or events; asked followers to like, comment, share a post; asked a rhetorical question; and included venue-generated images of consumers.
- The main *themes* in posts by venues used vernacular/informal language and emojis, followed by posts engaging with popular music, including festivals and gigs; posts making an association with friendship or group bonding; posts linked to an aspirational lifestyle; and posts including images of male and/or female consumers (see Table 2).



**Table 2: Alcohol venues - main social media marketing practices and themes**

<b>Social media marketing practices / Venues</b>	<b>N (%) posts</b>	
A14: Timescale of events: past/current/future	96	53%
A9: Information Re. distribution & availability	43	23.8%
A1.7: Ask fans to book/reserve seats or guest list places	39	21.5%
A5: Association between drinking & specific times and/or events	38	21%
A1.1: Ask to like, comment, share, follow, retweet etc	34	18.8%
A1.3: Ask rhetorical question: 'wouldn't you like to...?'	33	18.2%
A7.2: Brand/venue- generated images of consumers	27	15%
<b>Total no. of posts (excluding videos &amp; memes)</b>	<b>181</b>	
<b>Social media marketing themes / Venues</b>	<b>N (%) posts</b>	
B6.2: Posts involving emojis	82	45.3%
B6.1: Posts use vernacular/informal language	70	38.7%
B4: Engage with popular music: festivals, gigs	43	23.8%
B1.8: Association with friendship/group bonding	36	19.9%
B1.6: Link with aspirational lifestyle	34	18.8%
B1.1: Male and/or female consumers	17	9.4%
<b>Total no. posts (excluding videos &amp; memes)</b>	<b>181</b>	

- Female and male consumers were represented differently in posts by alcohol brands and venues. Posts by alcohol brands aimed at female consumers (such as Malibu and Lambrini) often depicted young women drinking in all-female groups in the domestic sphere, which can also be seen as an 'alternative' female playscape.
- In contrast, Facebook posts by venues included images of female and male guests taken by the clubs' in-house photographers. Young women tended to be posing in glamorous smart clothes, whereas young men appeared as more drunk and in less formal attire.
- Only 1.4% of the posts by alcohol brands and none of the venue posts included messages about responsible drinking. These were small, not very noticeable, and were generally undermined by exhortations to

consume alcohol in irresponsible ways in other posts. Some posts by venues would be unlikely to comply with the Advertising Standards Authority Code of Advertising Practice.

- The most common form of social media marketing by alcohol brands forged associations between particular alcohol products and '**branded drinking spaces**', including sponsored areas at music festivals and gigs at bars and clubs by featured artists. These promotions enabled alcohol marketers to target young consumers by sponsoring music events with predominantly youthful audiences, representing drinking as a constant activity associated with fun, silliness and escape.

### **Reported alcohol consumption levels among study participants**

The majority of our respondents reported consuming alcohol, with male respondents more likely to say they drank alcohol compared to females in both age groups. A minority of the over 18 group reported drinking over the current 'low risk' guidelines of 14 units in the previous week, at up to 23 units a week for females and up to 51 units a week for males. A small number of female and male respondents reported drinking over 20 units in the previous week. Three of these young men reported drinking over 40 units in the previous week. Respondents recounted stories of heavy drinking when asked to describe "good" and "bad" nights out in the majority of focus group discussions with both age groups.

### **Young People's Views of Social Media Marketing By Alcohol Brands**

In our analysis of young people's perspectives on social media marketing by alcohol brands we found that:

- Only four of our respondents reported following alcohol brands online, mainly because they saw no point in doing so; they felt this would send a negative message to relatives and work colleagues on social media; and because of the volume of advertising that following brands would generate on their own social media pages.
- Almost all older respondents reported following alcohol brands when they were younger, when following alcohol brands on social media was seen as a sign of maturity. The under-18 group reported following alcohol brands online when they were as young as 12, well under the official age limit of 18 for accessing the social media pages of alcohol brands.
- Older respondents felt that social media marketing by alcohol brands lacked authenticity, presenting inaccurate and potentially misleading representations of young people's drinking.
- Respondents defined alcohol marketing in a relatively traditional and narrow way as "anything with a picture of alcohol in it" or that mentioned a particular alcohol brand.

- Our respondents were keen to represent themselves as 'media savvy' consumers immune to the potential influences of marketing, and many were highly critical of alcohol advertising. There was widespread distrust of the motives of alcohol marketers in promoting 'responsible drinking' messages. A minority of young people from the under 18 groups advocated the inclusion of health education messages on alcohol products similar to those on cigarette packets.

### **Young People's Views of Social Media Marketing by Venues**

Our respondents reported more engagement with social media marketing by venues compared to online marketing by alcohol brands. We found that:

- A substantial minority (17) of the older age group and eleven of under-18s reported 'following' or 'liking' the social media pages of venues compared to only 9% who reported 'following' or 'liking' alcohol brands online in response to our demographic questions.
- Eight of the eleven under-18s who reported 'following' venues on social media were female.
- In focus groups and interviews, the majority of older respondents reported 'liking' or 'following' social media marketing related to *specific events* rather than the pages of venues *per se*.
- Most under-18s reported that they did not 'like' or 'follow' venues because they were too young to get into clubs and bars, although this was something they planned to do in the future.
- All the under-18s who reported 'liking' or 'following' one or more venues online did so because they went to bars and clubs despite being under age.
- Social media marketing by venues played an important role in young people's drinking nights out. It was involved at all stages of a night out, from the planning stage, to the night of the event itself, and then the period subsequent to the event.
- Older respondents reported 'liking' or 'following' the social media pages of venues or indicating they would 'go to' events to obtain information; sign up to guest lists; find out about promotions; gauge interest in the popularity of an event; organise an event amongst friends; and, finally, as a reminder about forthcoming events or events they had previously attended.
- Signing-up to the guest-list of events on venues' social media pages was a way of obtaining deals for cheaper alcohol and/or entry to venues, and this more active form of engagement with online marketing by venues was primarily driven by the incentive to get cheap alcohol.
- Our older respondents also reported: 'commenting' on venues' social media pages in order to alert their (online) friends to particular deals; signing up to the pages of third-party promoters that forwarded club/event posts directly; and a minority reported checking-in to venues

during a night out or uploading their own photos to the social media pages of the venue or event (usually via their own Facebook pages).

- One of the most distinctive aspects of social media posts by venues was images of guests, who were primarily young people in the 18 to 25 age range. Some of these images were uploaded by guests themselves, but most were taken by the club photographer with the guests' permission. Several respondents preferred to avoid 'tagging' the venue or being 'tagged' in such photos.
- Our respondents referred to using platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to post more 'respectable' content related to nights out drinking. They identified Snapchat as the main source of "drunken" posts that could be shared with a more restricted group of friends and as more temporary and ephemeral than platforms such as Facebook.

## Conclusions and Implications

Our research indicates that young people are not a group of naïve, malleable consumers, and are relatively critical of the motives of alcohol companies in promoting their products as well as in their display of 'responsible drinking' messages. Our respondents identified stark differences between the images of glamorous and carefree alcohol consumption in some social media marketing posts and the more likely outcome of drinking heavily. At the same time, social media activity played an important role in the experience of (often heavy) social drinking occasions. Participants actively sought out 'cheap deals' on alcohol and used social media to plan destinations.

Although our study is limited by the time and resources available to investigate this important and complex topic, we have developed a methodological framework for conducting research on social media marketing to young people by alcohol brands and venues. There is a need for further research in specific areas, which we discuss in the concluding section of this report.

A key problem with the regulation of on (and off)line advertising in the UK is that this is a reactive process relying on the submission of complaints by members of the public. Social media marketing to young people is less visible than traditional offline promotions via print or broadcast media (i.e. TV, radio and film) beyond its target group of consumers. It is also far more fleeting, temporary and ephemeral. A majority of our respondents reported 'following' social media marketing by alcohol brands well under the age of 18, and a minority of under-18s also 'followed' venues despite being too young to enter such premises legally. Social media enables marketing to be more precisely targeted at specific consumer groups, giving advertisers potential access to young people and their online 'friends' and 'followers'.

## Recommendations

We propose the following series of actions arising from the results of our study:

- Existing regulations on digital marketing relating to alcohol in the UK require a comprehensive review in order to ascertain whether they are fit for purpose. This review should include online marketing by venues as well as alcohol brands, and consider the ways in which young people above and below the legal age for purchasing alcohol engage with such material.
- The current system for regulating online marketing needs to become more proactive. The ASA could, for instance, conduct regular reviews of current online marketing by alcohol brands and venues attracting consumers in the 15 to 18 age range, and identify any adverts that breach the Advertising Code of Practice.
- A systematic review of the extent and nature of 'responsible drinking' messages in social media marketing related to alcohol, with a view to the systematic inclusion of such messages in such material. It is important to include social media marketing by venues in any such review.

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Government policy documents and alcohol education initiatives in the UK have tended to focus on the need to change individuals' drinking practices (Cabinet Office, 2004, 2007). In a thoughtful paper examining approaches to 'drinking culture' in public health research and policy, Savic and colleagues argue that the traditional public health focus on environmental and structural factors is often overlooked in favour of a concern with individuals' responsibility for their alcohol consumption, and the need to change their 'risky' behaviours and 'unhealthy' lifestyles (Savic et al., 2016). Savic and colleagues advocate a focus on changing drinking cultures based around the concept of norms, following Room (1975).

Norms refer to common understandings held by a group of people about what constitutes appropriate (and inappropriate) behaviour. In a key paper on normative approaches to alcohol consumption, Room defined norms "cultural rule[s] or understanding[s] affecting behaviour, which [are] to a greater or lesser degree enforced by sanctions" (Room, 1975, p.359, quoted in Savic et al., 2016, p.275). As with any social group, young people's alcohol consumption is shaped in part by the prevailing norms regarding what are considered to be desirable (and undesirable or unacceptable) drinking practices. In this project we aim to understand young people's engagement with social media marketing by alcohol brands and venues from their perspective, in the context of the prevailing drinking norms in their particular social milieux.

Our investigation into the role of social media alcohol marketing in young people's lives views young people's drinking culture as a dynamic entity that is already substantially engaged with social media. We examined the messages embedded in online alcohol marketing and the forms such messages take, as well as how young people engage with social media marketing by alcohol brands and venues in their everyday social lives, shaping the norms around alcohol consumption for these groups.

Current research indicates that a substantial proportion of young people in the UK use a range of multi-platform social networking sites (SNS), and that social media practices also play an important role in young people's drinking practices (Atkinson et al., 2014). High levels of alcohol-related content are posted onto social media, and a range of social media platforms are used to plan and document drinking events through posts, likes, comments, shares, and check-ins, as well as uploading, tagging and detagging photos (e.g. Moreno et al., 2010). Social media content is used for real-time interactions during drinking events and for sharing humorous drinking stories afterwards (Brown & Gregg, 2012; Lyons et al., 2014). In the context of this highly mediated culture of intoxication, alcohol companies use social media to promote positive brand engagement with young adults' drinking practices (Carah 2015; Nhean et al., 2014; Saffer, 2015; Purves et al., 2014). The involvement of alcohol venues in young people's social media practices and drinking cultures

appears to be even closer, with many clubs employing photographers, posting images of guests, and uploading posts about other promotions (Lyons et al., 2014). However, to date there has been no systematic examination of the social media marketing practices of venues as well as alcohol brands, or the engagement of young people with such material.

## 1.1 Young people's alcohol consumption in the UK

Over the past twenty years, considerable attention has focussed on the 'culture of intoxication' amongst young people in affluent societies including the UK (Hutton et al., 2013). The practice of drinking to intoxication (and beyond) in one session has been linked to a norm of 'determined drunkenness', or drinking with the aim of getting (very) drunk (Measham and Brain, 2005). Some commentators have identified the widespread concern over the 'culture of intoxication' as reflecting a recurring moral panic over young people's leisure activities in general and their alcohol consumption in particular (Szmigin et al., 2008). Much of this concern was associated with an increase in consumption, and changes in young people's drinking patterns from around the early 1990s following the introduction of new alcohol products, more youth- and female-friendly venues, and liberalised licensing regulations (Brain, 2000).

The pattern of heavy drinking in condensed periods is sometimes referred to as 'binge drinking' or heavy episodic drinking (HED). 'Binge drinking' in particular is a contentious and highly loaded term that is frequently used in alarmist press reports of young people's alcohol consumption (Griffin et al., 2009). There is also no consistent definition of 'binge drinking'; for instance, technical definitions such as more than 8 units for males and 6 units for females in one session rarely accord with the use of the term in common speech (Wybron, 2016). The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (also known as the ESPAD study), which investigated the reported alcohol consumption and attitudes to drinking amongst 15 and 16 year olds in 35 European countries from the 1990s, defined 'heavy episodic drinking' as consuming a minimum of five alcoholic beverages on one occasion at least once in the last 30 days (Hibell et al., 2004).

Most official definitions of 'binge drinking' or HED used in policy, public health and research contexts are quantitative and generally based on units of alcohol, with one unit roughly equivalent to 10 millilitres (or 8 grams) of pure alcohol. Research on lay understandings of these terms indicates that such units-based definitions are generally seen as irrelevant by those whose drinking patterns involve heavy weekend drinking, and as unrealistic by those motivated to drink for intoxication (Lovatt et al., 2015). Most people tend to measure their alcohol intake in terms of numbers of drinks or containers rather than units. For these reasons, we have used the term 'heavy drinking' or HED throughout this report and we have avoided a narrow units-based measure of

alcohol consumption in our analysis of interview respondents' reported alcohol consumption (see section 3).

There has been a recent decrease in reported levels of heavy drinking amongst young people in the UK, and an increase in the proportion of young people defining themselves as abstainers, 'light' or 'moderate' drinkers. Official figures from the Health Survey England (HSCIC, 2015), the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey for the UK (ONS, 2016) and the Understanding Society survey in 2013 indicate that the amount of heavy drinking reported by 16 to 24 year olds in the UK is decreasing at a faster rate than any other age group (see Wybron, 2016 for review). In addition, the proportion of 16 to 24 year olds who report not drinking alcohol has increased over the past ten years (HSCIC, 2015; ONS, 2016). The proportion of 16 to 24 year olds who reported drinking heavily fell from 29% in 2005 to 20% in 2014, while the proportion reporting as teetotal rose from 19% to 25% during the same period. Despite these changes, this age group remains the most likely to engage in HED compared to the rest of the UK population, although the overall level of consumption is higher among older drinkers (HSCIC, 2015; ONS, 2016; Understanding Society, 2013).

Despite these reported changes in young people's drinking practices, there is ample evidence that the culture of intoxication (i.e. drinking with the aim of getting drunk) remains prevalent amongst young people in the UK, both as a practice and as a social norm, and especially amongst student groups (Bewick et al., 2008; Wybron, 2016). In the surveys cited above, around 20% of 16 to 24 year olds report drinking heavily in the past week (HSCIC, 2015; ONS, 2016). A recent report by the think tank Demos argues that this figure is likely to underestimate the actual rates of heavy drinking by around 16% (Wybron, 2016). That said, it is important not to treat young people as an undifferentiated group. Young people's drinking practices also involve considerable variations according to gender, ethnicity, occupational status, location and early experience of drinking (see Wybron, 2016, for review).

Marketing is an important potential influence on young people's attitudes to alcohol and their drinking patterns, and the impact of online alcohol marketing has been the focus of considerable interest. It has been suggested that the rise of social media has contributed to recent declines in youth consumption by providing alternative spaces for socialisation that do not involve alcohol, though as yet there is no clear research evidence supporting this claim (Wigmore, 2015; Wybron, 2016). The other proposal is that social media use has increased young people's alcohol consumption, both by offering a new conduit through which to market alcohol, and as a consequence of its central role in young people's social lives and drinking cultures (McCreanor et al., 2013; Moreno and Whitehill, 2014). However, this sits uneasily alongside recent evidence that young people's alcohol consumption has fallen at the same time as the growth in social media use. Research evidence on the potential influence of on- (and off-)line alcohol marketing is considered in greater depth



in sections 1.3 and 1.4 below. We now turn to the growth of 'new' technologies and recent changes to young people's social media practices.

## 1.2 Young people's engagement with social media: Digital and mobile technologies and the rise of the smartphone

Several key features distinguish social media: they blur or remove boundaries between private and public spaces, private identities and public persona, and between users and consumers; sites and promotions aim to be 'sticky', that is, have users visit them frequently; and graphic images (including emojis and images/videos generated by users) form an increasingly significant part of online interactions (Boyd and Ellison, 2008; Papacharissi, 2011). There is ample evidence that engagement with social media is integral to many young people's identities, relationships and lifestyles (Boyd, 2007, 2014).

In 2008, Ofcom, the organisation responsible for the regulation of communication in the UK, conducted its first research report on social networking (Ofcom, 2008). The report concluded that 49% of 8 to 17 year olds and 54% of 16 to 24 year olds had set up a personal profile on a social network site, despite the common minimum age requirement of 13 for joining most SNS. There have been several substantial changes to young people's social media practices, available technologies and social networking platforms since 2008, and social media use is increasingly spread across age groups.

The SNS that were popular at the time of the 2008 Ofcom report such as Bebo and MySpace have now receded; the use of Facebook, Twitter and other semi-public platforms has expanded, while Snapchat and Instagram are increasingly used for content that is shared amongst closed groups (Bayer et al., 2016). The emergence of digital and mobile technologies, especially the smartphone and associated apps, have transformed everyday social interactions (Goodwin et al., 2016). Consequently, the range and reach of SNS and social media has grown substantially. Young people's social media use is now characterised by continual monitoring and engagement with a huge range of apps, platforms and SNS (Goodwin et al., 2014). The most recent Ofcom annual report on children and young people's media literacy found 12 to 15 year olds report spending more time each week online than watching a TV set, especially on their personal devices such as smartphones and tablets (Ofcom, 2016).

In addition, the emergence of so-called 'Web 2.0' produced a shift to increasingly interactive internet platforms and affordances (Bucher, 2012; Morey et al., 2014). Facebook is a test case illustrating how what originated as a relatively closed SNS for US colleges and universities used by a limited number of 'early adopters', expanded rapidly after it opened up to commercial networks. The affordances of Facebook have changed considerably over time, as have the technological means by which users access the site (Wilson

et al., 2012). Commercial organisations now dominate the social media domain, marketing products via and 'mining' data from network users for marketing purposes and to sell to third parties (Fuchs, 2010; Goodwin and Griffin, 2017). This is reflected in the recent acquisitions of SNS by global media interests, and buyouts of smaller popular competitors by major players such as Facebook, which took over Instagram in 2012. Social media users present a substantial market of differentiated consumers who can now be accessed via a range of innovative strategies (Goodwin et al., 2016).

The earlier focus on the risks and harms associated with young people's social media use is increasingly being balanced by an acceptance of the ubiquitous role of social media in people's lives across age groups. A 'digital divide' remains, but this can relate to a lack of access to faster broadband for financial and/or geographical reasons, as well as a lack of resources to acquire a smartphone (Ofcom, 2016). The previous separation between 'on' and 'offline' identities and social worlds also appears increasingly outdated (Wilson et al., 2012). Social media platforms are also viewed as sites for the expression, display, performance and/or promotion of self and identity (Williams, 2008). They have been seen as "sites of struggle between users, employers and platform owners to control online identities" (Van Dijck, 2012, p.199). The latter approach leads us to consider how young people's personal and social identities are shaped through the platform interfaces and affordances of different social media platforms (Goodwin et al., 2016; Ofcom, 2016).

The aforementioned changes to social media platforms, digital and mobile technologies, alongside (most) young people's extensive engagement with social media have also been reflected in the recent expansion of online alcohol advertising to young people.

### 1.3 The growth of alcohol marketing on social media

The drinks industry has invested heavily in online marketing. Some 90% of the top 25 global alcohol brands have active accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, averaging 2.6 million Facebook fans, over 11,500 Twitter followers, and over 2.9 million video views (Alhabash et al., 2015). Diageo, one of the largest multinational alcohol corporations with a marketing spend of over £1.6 billion a year, have had a long-standing involvement with online marketing. In 2010 social media marketing reportedly accounted for 21% of Diageo's marketing budget, and in 2011 the company stated that Diageo brands had "collectively enjoyed a 20% increase in sales as a direct result of Facebook activity" (AMA, 2012, p.23; Mosher, 2012).

In 2011 Diageo joined forces with Facebook to capitalise on social media experiences. The *Financial Times* reported that Diageo had identified through Nielsen basket-scanning research that some Facebook campaigns for brands such as Smirnoff and Baileys had increased consumers' purchases by

up to 20% in the US (Bradshaw, 2011). Diageo emphasised that they were looking to increase customer engagement alongside sales and market share. They reportedly spent more than \$10 million on Facebook adverts in return for early access to features and focused consultancy. In 2013 Diageo reportedly spent 20% of a \$3 billion marketing budget on digital advertising (Moth, 2013). Diageo recently stated that their focus is on “millennial consumers in high-energy occasions”, aiming to be “*more visible in all media channels, traditional and digital, all of the time*” (Diageo, 2015, p.20; emphasis in original).

‘Millennials’ (born around the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and in their mid- to late teens in 2016) are a particular target group for online alcohol marketing. Another global premium spirits alcohol company, Pernod Ricard, recently stated that they planned to spend at least 25% of their advertising budget to target millennials through social media sites (Hymowitz, 2015). Pernod Ricard’s CEO stated that single brand allegiance is outdated, rather alcohol products need to be sold to millennials as “moments of consumption”: as drinking occasions in restaurants and bars that are shared through social media sites (Hymowitz, 2015, para.2; Niland et al., 2016). Recent research in New Zealand indicates that young adult drinkers do not necessarily view online alcohol marketing by venues as advertising, treating it as useful information about where to find cheap drink (Lyons et al., 2017). This supports the proposition that the aim of online marketing is increasingly *not* to be viewed as advertising by consumers, but to instigate user engagement (Nicholls, 2012).

## 1.4 The impact of on- and offline alcohol marketing on young people’s consumption and attitudes to drinking

Considerable research attention has been devoted to investigating the potential impact of online marketing on young people’s alcohol consumption and their attitudes to drinking. Young people are exposed to substantial quantities of alcohol-related marketing material via social media (Jernigan & Rushman, 2014; Moreno & Whitehill, 2015). Recent research indicates that alcohol marketing content on Facebook was able to reach 89% of males and 91% of females aged 15-24 in the UK, followed closely by YouTube and then Twitter (Winpenny et al., 2014). It is worth noting that this material is accessible 24 hours a day – the previous concept of a 9.00pm ‘watershed’ used to regulate advertising to children in the UK has no relevance in the digital realm. Isolating the impact of alcohol marketing on consumption is notoriously difficult, given the multitude of factors at play and the challenges of measuring key variables. Large scale international studies with representative samples and longitudinal designs offer the most reliable source of data in this respect, but positive correlations between exposure to marketing materials and alcohol consumption (or attitudes to drinking) may still not reflect straightforward causal relationships. In addition, finding accurate means of recording alcohol consumption and exposure to online (or offline) marketing is no easy task.

Despite these caveats, research has found positive relationships between exposure to offline alcohol advertising and promotion and increases in young people's alcohol consumption as well as positive attitudes to drinking, with most studies focussing on the impact of offline advertising content, exposure and appealing messages in branding (Ali & Dwyer, 2010; Anderson et al., 2009; Atkinson et al., 2011, 2013; Chester et al., 2010; De Bruijn et al., 2012a and b; EUCAM, 2009; Huang et al., 2013; Mart et al., 2009; Moreno et al., 2010; Winpenny et al., 2014).

Some researchers have argued that exposure to online alcohol marketing appears to produce similar effects to the impacts of offline advertising (Jernigan & Rushman, 2013; Nhean et al., 2014). However, there is only one large scale study in this area which suggests that online alcohol marketing may have similar effects, and the evidence remains limited (De Bruijn et al., 2016). Relatively few UK studies have examined the extent or potential impact of exposure to online alcohol marketing on young people's alcohol consumption, and none of these involve large scale projects (see Brooks, 2010; Gordon, 2010). Overall, social media marketing works alongside conventional online marketing, and appears to contribute to increases in young people's positive attitudes to alcohol, although as yet there is little clear evidence concerning its effects on alcohol consumption (Anderson et al., 2009; Saffer, 2015).

Given the highly interactive nature of contemporary social media, online alcohol advertising involves far more than simple exposure to marketing messages, (Carah, 2015). The various ways alcohol marketers use social media to communicate with users to co-produce and generate alcohol-related content is known as engagement marketing (Hoffman et al., 2014). Alcohol brands use these digital marketing strategies to embed the brand into people's everyday lives through social networking, thus normalizing the regular consumption of alcohol (Nicholls, 2012). The potential impact of social media marketing related to alcohol on pervasive social norms around alcohol consumption in young people's drinking cultures are therefore worthy of investigation.

Some research suggests that young people's co-creation of alcohol promotional activities (e.g. 'liking' and 'sharing' activities on branded nightclub pages) may be associated with increased consumption (Moraes et al., 2014). In the USA, college students' interactions with social media alcohol marketing (e.g. clicking on alcohol advertisements, receiving alcohol-related updates, downloading alcohol related wallpapers, screensavers and widgets) was associated with self-reported problem drinking behaviours (Hoffman et al., 2014). Similarly, Alhabash and colleagues found that 'viral reach' (or the volume of views, 'shares' and 'likes') for an alcohol marketing side-bar advert viewed by US college students was associated with higher intentions to consume alcohol. Young adults' willingness to use Facebook status updates to 'like', 'share' and 'comment' were strongly related to their intention to

consume alcohol when these status updates were strongly 'liked' and shared by their peers (Alhabash et al., 2015).

Although the research evidence cited above points to a positive relationship between exposure to online alcohol marketing and positive attitudes towards alcohol consumption for young people, this does not necessarily indicate a direct causal relationship. It also tells us relatively little about the social and psychological processes at work as social media marketing intersects with young people's drinking cultures.

## 1.5 Marketing alcohol to young people online: relevant research

A number of recent studies have investigated the relationship between online alcohol marketing, young people's alcohol consumption and social media practices in greater depth. One key finding is that alcohol brands and other alcohol sellers align their brands with young people's social activities and mimic online interpersonal interactions, merging marketing content with the contributions of friends in social media (Lyons et al., 2014; Nicholls, 2012; Niland et al., 2016). Embedding positive messages about alcohol within young adults' online socializing practices is likely to associate drinking with every aspect of young people's social lives, without acknowledging the harms of heavy alcohol consumption (Niland et al., 2016; Carah, 2015).

The second focus of this work is on drinking, social media and youth identities. Alcohol plays a central role in many young people's social media practices, and is a key element in their on- and offline identities. Ridout and colleagues used the term 'alcohol identity' to refer to "the extent to which alcohol is part of one's self concept" (2012, p.25). They analysed the Facebook photographs of 158 Australian university students in an attempt to quantify the extent to which alcohol played a role in these young people's online identities and offline drinking practices. Alcohol identity (i.e. having more alcohol-related images in one's Facebook photo album) was associated with higher reported levels of alcohol consumption (Ridout et al., 2012).

McCreanor and colleagues conducted a focus group study with 14 to 17 year olds in New Zealand on the meanings of alcohol consumption and alcohol marketing in their everyday social lives (McCreanor et al., 2008). They argued that the pervasive associations of drinking with fun, being 'cool', as a means of indicating gender and ethnic identities and local culture, all operate to produce an 'intoxigenic' cultural environment for young people that reinforced the culture of intoxication. These findings predate the emergence of contemporary social media platforms, mobile and digital technologies, so alcohol marketing via more interactive forms of social media may build on and exploit such pre-existing associations.

Using a form of cyberspace ethnography, Griffiths and Casswell (2010) examined how young people in New Zealand engage with alcohol marketing

messages on Bebo, then a popular SNS. They analysed 150 Bebo pages created by 16 to 18 year olds in a qualitative study of online visual and textual material. Griffiths and Casswell found that young people were creating 'intoxigenic social identities' as well as 'intoxigenic digital spaces', all of which intensified norms around regular alcohol consumption amongst young people, reproducing alcohol marketing messages.

In Australia, Carah and colleagues examined how Facebook creates value for marketers by exploiting young people's everyday social activities and identity practices (Carah et al., 2014). They argued that such marketing practices also enable alcohol brands to circumvent regulatory regimes by encouraging connections between mediations of drinking culture and alcohol brands that would not be possible in other media channels. Carah and colleagues mapped alcohol brand activities on Facebook in 2011 and 2013, analysing posts by three selected brands in Australia: Smirnoff, Jagermeister and Victoria Bitter (VB). They also interviewed 35 respondents, including observational research at music festivals.

Carah and other researchers have argued that alcohol companies use Facebook and other SNS to embed their alcohol brands as 'friends' into young adults' social networking friendship activities using multiple platforms, real-world tie-ins, and blurring the lines between user and alcohol brand generated content (McCreanor et al., 2013; Moraes et al., 2014; Nicholls, 2012). As well as branded Facebook pages and 'fans' or followers (Alhabash et al., 2015), alcohol companies use Facebook as a tool to re-circulate material showing branded areas at bars and music festivals. Users are encouraged to register their experiences by check-ins, status updates and photos from their smartphones (Carah et al., 2014).

Three recent UK studies have investigated social media alcohol marketing to young people on a broader range of social media platforms (Atkinson et al., 2014; Cranwell et al., 2016; Purves et al., 2014). Cranwell and colleagues (2016) conducted a qualitative analysis of lyrics and imagery in 49 UK Top 40 songs and music videos on Youtube containing alcohol content. They found that alcohol was associated with image, lifestyle and sociability, and with sexualised imagery or lyrics and the objectification of women. Some videos encouraged heavy drinking with no negative consequences for the drinker. These popular Youtube videos were likely to be viewed by 11 to 18 year olds in the UK, and many were inconsistent with the current UK advertising Codes of Practice.

Purves and colleagues carried out an in-depth mixed method content analysis of five popular social media platforms over a seven day period in March 2014 (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Pinterest and tumblr) by six alcohol brands (Budweiser, Bulmers cider, Dragon Soop, Malibu and WKD). This ARUK-funded study developed a sophisticated coding frame to identify social media alcohol marketing practices and themes, which we refined for use in the

current project. Purves and colleagues found that brands used social media to advertise, engage with users and encourage them to interact with the site in forms of co-creation. They identified three types of engagement: direct responses to brands' posts; self-presentation; and space for conversations between users (Purves et al., 2016).

Purves and colleagues also conducted 8 focus groups with 48 14-17 year olds, in single and mixed sex friendship groups involving 'starter' and 'established' drinkers. These young people reported using social media to make contact with their friends, as a shared space that gave them a sense of belonging, and to express self-identity and allegiance to friendship groups. They tended to be in constant online contact with friends, viewing alcohol marketing as inevitable, and making a clear gendered differentiation between alcohol products and brands. Purves and colleagues argued that the co-creation of marketing content is not recognised in the current regulatory codes of practices on advertising alcohol to young people.

In another recent ARUK-funded project, Atkinson and colleagues investigated the role of SNS including alcohol marketing and health education campaigns in young people's drinking cultures (Atkinson et al., 2013; 2014). They carried out a mixed methods content analysis of alcohol health campaigns and alcohol marketing on Facebook and Twitter by five alcohol brands (Budweiser, Fosters, Smirnoff, Strongbow and WKD) in November to December 2013, mapping both 'official' and user-generated content. The key social media marketing strategies they identified were: real world tie-ins; seasonal events; lifestyle associations; competitions; deals; gendered messages; and responsible drinking messages.

The Atkinson study also analysed the Facebook profiles of 40 young people, alongside 14 focus groups and individual interviews with 70 16-21 year olds. These young people had more online interaction with marketing by local venues and events than with alcohol brands. In addition, Atkinson and colleagues found that social media played a key role in young people's drinking cultures and friendship networks; the depiction of drinking online was a highly managed and gendered practice; accumulating the 'right' degree of drinking capital was an important route to social inclusion; and young people strove to represent themselves as 'mature' drinkers. This study also found that far from passive recipients of marketing messages, young social media users operate as relatively 'active' and critical audiences (Atkinson et al., 2013; 2014).

Our study draws on the research designs, methods and analytic procedures employed in these studies, aiming to extend current research on social media marketing related to alcohol aimed at young people in the UK.



## 1.6 Marketing alcohol to young people online: the regulatory context

Alcohol marketing in the UK is regulated by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) and the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) through the British Code of Advertising Practice. This Code is reviewed by a committee including organisations representing the advertising and marketing sectors. There are effectively two codes, one relating to broadcast adverts, and the other to non-broadcast material. The UK Code of Broadcast Advertising (BCAP Code) applies to all adverts (including teleshopping, content on self-promotional TV channels, TV text and interactive TV ads) and programme sponsorship credits. The UK Code of Non-broadcast Advertising (CAP Code) covers non-broadcast advertisements, sales promotions and direct marketing communications (<https://www.asa.org.uk/codes-and-rulings/advertising-codes.html>).

These Codes were last subject to a major review in 2005, just one year after Facebook was launched in the UK, and there is increasing concern over the effectiveness of this regulatory system to deal with the complexities of online alcohol marketing to young people. (Hastings et al., 2010; Leyshon, 2011; Home Office, 2012).

The UK Code includes a particular remit relating to social media marketing which was first developed in 2005 (<https://www.asa.org.uk/advice-online/remit-social-media.html>). This covers any paid adverts on video on demand (VOD), music streaming services, banners, pop-ups and pay per click ads on search engines and 'promoted' social media posts. It also covers advertorial content on websites and advertising on third party retail platforms. This includes the brand's website and non-paid for online space that is within their control if they are directly involved with the supply of goods and/or services, opportunities or prizes. Viral advertising is also covered by the Code (<https://www.asa.org.uk/news/Insight-think-you-know-what-the-cap-code-applies-to-are-you-sure.html>).

In March 2011, the ASA extended its remit to include marketers' own websites and non-paid-for space online under their control:

(<https://www.asa.org.uk/resource/Extending-the-digital-remit-of-the-CAP-Code.html#.VX7KzaROVi4>),

and the guidance has been updated a number of times in recent years

(see <https://www.asa.org.uk/advice-online/remit-social-media.html> and <https://www.asa.org.uk/asset/F0AB1553%2D1212%2D4106%2D8C6E6C0047FEBEBA/>).

The Committee of Advertising Practice writes and enforces the Advertising Codes of Practice and the ASA administers the rules laid out in these Codes.



This covers online marketing including third party sites such as Facebook and Twitter and online behavioural advertising. Regulation operates as a reactive system: the ASA relies on complaints from the public or organisations and decisions are published weekly on [www.asa.org.uk](http://www.asa.org.uk). Possible sanctions available to the ASA include adverse publicity, media refusal, disqualification from industry awards and referral to Trading Standards or Ofcom, although the ASA are not able to levy fines. Additional online sanctions include the removal of paid-for search adverts, being named on the ASA's non-compliant online advertiser page and an ASA advert naming the advertiser.

A key aspect of the ASA's decisions relates to whether adverts are viewed as being in the advertiser's own space, i.e. that they have control of the content. So, for example, a re-tweet by a company would be an example of the advertiser having control of the content. Where there is third party endorsement (e.g. through celebrities or vloggers), the key question is whether the company has paid for the content, which includes non-financial reciprocal relationships and whether the company has editorial control of the content.

One of the most problematic areas for the regulation of online marketing relates to user-generated content (UGC). Any comment made by a company to a question or statement made by the public that includes a marketing claim would be within the ASA's remit. So, any UGC created by private individuals that the owner adopts and incorporates within their own marketing communications can be regulated, which can include 'likes', 'comments' and retweets by the company (see Example 1 in Appendix 1 for an upheld complaint against Fireball whiskey).

The ASA also requires that companies' alcohol posts should not reach more than 25% of viewers under the age of 18. This is particularly problematic for the sharing of material, since it is difficult for advertisers to identify the age of followers who 'liked' or 'shared' a page (see Example 2 in Appendix 1 for an upheld complaint against Hold Fast Entertainment related a post about Jagermeister liqueur). Alcohol companies have also fallen foul of offences related to sex and gender. The Code states that marketing communications should not contain any material that is likely to cause offence, including in relation to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age (see Example 3 in Appendix 1 for an upheld complaint against the Budge wine brand).

Despite the relatively hidden quality of social media marketing posts by venues, there have been a relatively large number of upheld complaints by the ASA regarding venues. Often these have been the result of flyers circulated in the vicinity of the club or bar, but a number of complaints have also been upheld against Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or the venues' own internet sites. We reviewed over 25 social media alcohol complaints put to the ASA in the last five years. These included posts on websites, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube and for venues and alcohol brands. Where complaints were upheld,

the reasons given included the following: appearance of models as aged under 25; promoting excessive drinking; linking alcohol with sexual activity; their likelihood to appeal to those under 18 by associating alcohol with youth culture; sexually explicit representation; and suggesting the product could enhance mental capabilities. Upheld complaints against venues frequently related to the inclusion of sexually explicit material and condoning excessive drinking (see Examples 4 and 5 in Appendix 1 for upheld complaints against the venues TrocStar and Coco Beach. The latter is a club in Bristol, South-West England, though it was not included in our sample of venues).

The Portman Group (funded by ten alcohol companies who account for more than half of the UK alcohol market) has also issued guidelines for its members on responsible digital marketing of alcoholic drinks, though these have not been updated since they were first published in 2009

(<http://www.portmangroup.org.uk/docs/default-source/advice-and-guidance/responsible-marketing-of-alcoholic-drinks-in-digital-media.pdf>).

In addition to following advice from the ASA, the Portman Group encourages members and other companies to add a prominent link to [drinkaware.co.uk](http://drinkaware.co.uk) on the age affirmation page that a visitor must navigate before gaining access to a brand website. Companies are also encouraged to accompany this link with a statement encouraging the consumer to drink responsibly. While the addition of this link has been suggested for websites, this recommendation has yet to be extended to all social media advertising.

## 1.7 Aims and research questions

Overall, research evidence suggests that alcohol marketing via social media can influence young people's attitudes towards drinking, and that it may have an impact on their alcohol consumption. Research to date has not examined social media marketing by venues as well as alcohol brands, nor young people's engagement with social media marketing by venues and its role in their drinking cultures. The aim of the current study was to undertake an in-depth examination of young people's interactions with social media marketing by alcohol brands and venues from within their own social media worlds and drinking cultures. We then discuss the implications of our findings for the UK Code of Advertising Practice.

## SECTION 2: SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING BY ALCOHOL BRANDS AND VENUES

Conducting research on social media and the material posted on such platforms is a relatively recent and rapidly developing field. Our study followed the four steps involved in studying online forums outlined by Coulson (2015), following Rose (2012). These are: (1) the choice of social media sites; (2) the selection of threads, sections or forums on each site; (3) the choice of conversational threads; and (4) preparing the data for analysis. In our case step (2) relates to the selection of posts by specific alcohol brands and venues, and step (3) relates to the focus on text (including posts and accompanying comments) and images (excluding videos) for the content analysis.

### 2.1 Selecting the sample

The sample of social media platforms, alcohol brands and venues was selected according to a number of related and overlapping criteria. In order to identify which social media platforms, alcohol brands and venues young people in the local area used and were most familiar with, we carried out a small-scale social survey in January and February 2015 involving 137 students from two local universities in South-West England (see Appendix 2). This survey was limited to young people aged 18 to 25, excluding those under the legal age for purchasing alcohol for ethical reasons. Respondents were recruited from universities due to the limited time available, so the sample cannot be considered fully representative of young people across the South-West region or the UK as a whole.

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram emerged as the most popular social media sites, with all respondents reporting that they used Facebook, followed by 68% using Instagram and 33% using Twitter. Our decision to focus on these three platforms was also based on information from the subscription site CrowdTangle which provides information regarding online marketing materials by a wide range of brands. This indicated that Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are frequently used by venues and alcohol brands aiming to reach young adults in the 18 to 25 age range.

We aimed to include only alcohol brands and venues with an active social media presence, defined as posting material on social media platforms at least once a week. We used CrowdTangle to identify the frequency of social media posts by specific alcohol brands and venues, as well as checking their activities across a range of social media platforms. Our sampling period ran from Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May to Friday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016 inclusive. The first week included the late May Bank holiday, and the second week was selected as a 'typical' week with no specific national holiday or other special event.

We also used our social survey to identify alcohol brands and venues that were familiar to young adults in South-West England. Some 31% of our respondents reported drinking Smirnoff vodka, 15% reportedly consumed Jägermeister and a further 15% mentioned drinking Gordons Gin. However, most respondents reported drinking the cheapest products on offer or unbranded drinks rather than any specific brands. We also wished to include some of the alcohol brands that had been investigated by related research studies, notably by Atkinson and colleagues (2014) and Purves and colleagues (2014). The Atkinson study investigated posts by Budweiser, Fosters, Smirnoff, Strongbow and WKD, alongside focus group discussions with 17-21 year olds. The Purves study included posts by Budweiser, Bulmers, Dragon Soop, Malibu and WKD, conducting focus groups with a younger age group of 14-17 year olds.

This initial selection process produced a 'long list' of 14 alcohol brands and 11 venues (see Appendix 3). This included a range of types of drinks typically consumed by and marketing to young adults aged 18 to 25, such as spirits, cider, beer/lager, wine and RMDs, although we did not include the same number of drinks in each product category. This 'long list' provided a basis for the selection of our final sample of five alcohol brands and three venues in two nearby University cities in South-West England for our analysis of social media marketing posts.

The five alcohol brands were:

- Bulmers
- Jägermeister
- Lambrini
- Malibu
- Smirnoff EU and UK

The three venues were:

- Po Na Na (Bath)
- Pryzm (Bristol)
- Vodka Revolution (Bath)

See Tables 3 and 4 below.

We included Bulmers cider in our final sample since cider has been successfully rebranded and marketed to the young adult market in recent years, and the Bulmers brand is active in the festival sector. Smirnoff was included as a key vodka brand that was mentioned by respondents in our social survey, and which has been very active in social media marketing. Smirnoff has run major promotional campaigns including substantial social media elements such as the Nightlife Exchange Project (Nicholls, 2012). We included both Smirnoff EU and UK in our final sample because our examination of posts by Smirnoff on

CrowdTangle showed some variation between social media activities in the two sectors and we hoped to investigate this in greater depth.

We included Jägermeister because it is closely associated with the 'Jägerbomb', where a shot glass of Jägermeister is dropped into a glass of beer, or sometimes mixed with high caffeine energy drink Red Bull. Jägerbombs are often priced at as little as £1 a glass, and several are often consumed in quick succession, so this brand has a close association with the culture of intoxication. Jägermeister was also mentioned by respondents in our social survey, and this brand is involved in sponsorship of music events at bars, clubs and festivals, especially heavy metal and rock acts such as the Download festival. Finally, Malibu and Lambrini were included as an RMD and a wine brand respectively with active social media presences that are highly gendered, and marketed to young women in particular. Bulmers, Malibu and Smirnoff (EU and UK) were also included in the studies by Atkinson and Purves and colleagues (Atkinson et al., 2014; Purves et al., 2014).

**Table 3: The five selected alcohol brands**

Brand	Type of drink	% Alcohol by Volume	Comments
Bulmers	Cider	4.5%. Various fruit-flavoured apple & pear ciders launched since 2011	Somerset-based family firm Bulmers now a brand name & subsidiary of Heineken group
Jägermeister	Spirit	35%	Herbal based liqueur, produced by German Mast-Jägermeister company. Widespread sponsorship of heavy metal bands/festivals and motor sport
Lambrini	Perry	Original: 7.5%, most 5%	Marketed like wine, but cheaper. Produced in Liverpool by Halewood International from 1994
Malibu	Rum flavoured with liqueur. Many different flavours available	21%	Now owned by Pernod Ricard group, produced in Barbados
Smirnoff	Vodka	35% - 50%	Produced by Diageo, originated in Moscow. Wide range of vodka-based products available

The final sample of venues included those that were most familiar to and used by respondents in our social survey, covering national chains and smaller independent venues, bars and nightclubs of different sizes and in two cities in South-West England with a clientele in the 18 to 25 age group, all with an active social media presence as defined above.

**Table 4: The three selected venues**

Venue	Location	Type of venue	Ownership
Po Na Na	Bath	Club	Independent
Pryzm	Bristol	Superclub	Chain *
Vodka Revolution	Bath	Bar	Chain

\* Pryzm has closed since the study was conducted

Our data corpus was collected directly from the social media pages of the selected alcohol brands and venues during our research period using NCapture software. This material was copied into separate folders for each social media platform, each alcohol brand and each venue for analysis, and each individual post was allocated a code number for ease of identification. This proved to be a more accurate method of compiling the data corpus than using the subscription site CrowdTangle. Such sites tend to change their systems and criteria for inclusion on a regular basis, which has detrimental effects on the reliability and accuracy of the sample. However, CrowdTangle did prove a useful and efficient means of examining social media marketing posts by specific alcohol brands and venues during the sample selection process.

## 2.2 Social media marketing activity by alcohol brands and venues

Tables 5 and 6 below present information on the number of posts or tweets by each alcohol brand and venue during the research period. '0' refers to instances where a brand page existed but no content was uploaded. 'N/A' means the brand or venue did not have a page or account on that platform.

**Table 5: Number of posts by alcohol brands during the research period**

Brand	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Total
Bulmers	0	2	7	<b>9</b>
Jägermeister	16	81	15	<b>112</b>
Lambrini	8	24	6	<b>38</b>
Malibu	7	46	3	<b>56</b>
Smirnoff EU	N/A	12	N/A	<b>12</b>
Smirnoff UK	0	N/A	N/A	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>227</b>

**Table 6: Number of posts by venues during the research period**

Venue	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Total
Po Na Na	23	5	0	<b>28</b>
Pryzm	33	92	8	<b>133</b>
Vodka Revolution	26	3	2	<b>31</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>192</b>

Venues and alcohol brands use social media marketing for different reasons: alcohol brands want to promote their products, while venues aim to attract guests, although both strive to build brand loyalty. All the venues in our sample posted on social media more frequently than many of the alcohol brands during the research period. All five alcohol brands (apart from Bulmers) had more posts on Twitter than Facebook or Instagram, and for all five alcohol brands combined, Twitter posts outweighed posts on Facebook and Instagram by a factor of 5:1. This is in marked contrast to young people's pattern of social media activity which favours Facebook and Instagram (and Snapchat) over Twitter (see section 4). Many of the same posts by alcohol brands and venues were posted onto several platforms simultaneously, and there was no consistent evidence that brands or venues adopted different marketing strategies for different social media platforms.

## **2.2.1 Social media marketing activity by alcohol brands**

The extent of social media marketing activity by each alcohol brand varied depending on whether they were running particular promotions or campaigns. Of the 227 posts by alcohol brands, Jägermeister was most active during the two-week research period, with 81 posts on Twitter, 16 on Facebook, and 15 on Instagram. This was most likely a consequence of the 'Road Trip' campaign run by the brand at this time, which is analysed in greater depth in section 2.4. The link between specific promotions and social media marketing activity patterns was also reflected in the relative paucity of posts by Smirnoff EU and Smirnoff GB during the research period. Smirnoff was an early and active exponent of social media marketing, but the brand was relatively inactive on social media during the research period. When we selected our sample in late 2015, Smirnoff had a relatively active social media presence, posting regularly across our three social media platforms. By May and June 2016, when we collected our data, both Smirnoff EU and Smirnoff UK were relatively inactive. This is not necessarily an indication that Smirnoff are reducing their overall social media presence, more a reflection of the relatively sporadic social media activity by alcohol brands.

The social media marketing activities of the selected alcohol brands and venues were collected directly from brands' and venues' social media pages on the first day of the research period, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2016 (see Tables 7 to 9 below). Total numbers 'liking' and 'following' pages could come from outside the UK, especially for alcohol brands; all other data relate to online activity within the UK. Figures for numbers 'liking' or 'following' each page are cumulative, producing higher figures for those brands that have been active on social media for longer periods of time.

The alcohol brands and venues in our sample had large numbers of followers, especially on Facebook. Malibu had well over 2 million 'liking' its Facebook page, Jägermeister had over 4.5 million, whilst Smirnoff UK had almost 13.5 million. A proportion of these followers may be generated by 'bots', or

automated online systems, which would skew the figures. Tables 7 to 9 also include user engagement ratio (UER) data for key posts, presenting a ratio of the number of 'likes', 'comments', 'shares', re-tweets or favourites for each post. User engagement data is of considerable interest to marketers since they offer information on the extent of consumer engagement with each post, albeit in a relatively crude form (Socialbakers, 2013).

**Table 7: Social media marketing activity by alcohol brands on Facebook** (UER in brackets)

Brand	Posts	Videos	Likes	Comments	Shares	Total liking page
Bulmers	0	0	0	0	0	352,445
Jägermeister	16	1	1706 (1:107)	83 (1:5)	64 (1:4)	4,537,583
Lambrini	8	1	741 (1:93)	38 (1:5)	67 (1:8)	71,516
Malibu	7	2	3730 (1:533)	973 (1:139)	148 (1:21)	2,375,145
Smirnoff EU	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Smirnoff UK	0	0	0	0	0	13,479,479
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6177 (1:199)</b>	<b>1094 (1:35)</b>	<b>279 (1:9)</b>	<b>20,816,168</b>

**Table 8: Social media marketing activity by alcohol brands on Twitter** (UER in brackets)

Brand	Posts	Videos	Re-Tweets	Favourites	Followers
Bulmers	2	0	11	15	34,895
Jägermeister	81	6	228 (1:3)	456 (1:6)	10,693
Lambrini	24	1	34 (1:1)	70 (1:3)	10,133
Malibu	46	6	203 (1:4)	793 (1:17)	13,122
Smirnoff EU	12	1	1418 (1:118)	1540 (1:128)	13,824
Smirnoff UK	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1894 (1:11)</b>	<b>2874 (1:17)</b>	<b>82667</b>

**Table 9: Social media marketing activity by alcohol brands on Instagram** (UER in brackets)

Brand	Posts	Videos	Likes	Comments	Followers
Bulmers	7	1	394 (1:56)	139 (1:20)	8250
Jägermeister UK	15	0	4468 (1:298)	47 (1:3)	11,561
Lambrini	6	1	47 (1:8)	1	696
Malibu	3	0	611 (1:204)	38 (1:13)	13,979
Smirnoff EU	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Smirnoff UK	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5520 (1:178)</b>	<b>225 (1:7)</b>	<b>34,486</b>



Some posts generated a substantial amount of user engagement. Three Instagram posts by Malibu generated a relatively high UER (1:204), as did Jägermeister's 15 Instagram posts (UER 1:298). However, the highest Facebook UERs were generated by Malibu in response to only seven posts, two of which were videos (1:553). The post by Malibu in Figure 1 below, which gained the highest number of 'likes' during the research period, is based on a link with celebrity fashion blogger Leanne Lim-Walker asking users to post their own fashion photos to Malibu's Instagram page ("Post your fashion pics to Insta"). Note that this post also appears on Facebook, encouraging multi-platform activity or targeting a wider potential audience. Users are invited to follow and tag their photos in order to enter a competition, with the opportunity to win a holiday in Ibiza for themselves and their "BFF" ('best friends forever').

Despite the relatively higher number of posts on Twitter by most of the five selected alcohol brands, the UERs were relatively small. One exception here was Smirnoff EU. Despite the paucity of their social media posts, Smirnoff EU had relatively high UERs for retweets (1:118) and favourites (1:128) for their 12 posts on Twitter. The post in Figure 2 below is a retweet from the 'Official Reading and Leeds Festival' Twitter account which gained the highest number of retweets and favourites during the research period. The Reading and Leeds festivals take place during the same weekend in June. Both events were sponsored by Carling and were branded the 'Carling Weekend' until 2007, when the Reading Festival was managed (and re-branded) by Festival Republic. Now primarily associated with rock and indie artists, the festival attracts a predominantly young, white and middle-class audience (Griffin et al., 2017). Alcohol and drinking are not referenced at all in this post, but throughout our dataset the highest UER ratios related to posts linking alcohol brands to music festivals or gigs (see sections 2.3 and 2.4).

**Figure 1: Malibu post on Facebook**



**Figure 2: Smirnoff EU on Twitter**



This revealed a somewhat different pattern of social media activity compared to the alcohol brands. All three venues were active on Facebook, with only the Bristol based superclub Pryzm highly active on Twitter. Of the 192 posts by venues, Pryzm was the most active across all three social media platforms, and Facebook was used consistently by all three venues.

**Table 10: Social media marketing activity by venues on Facebook** (UER in brackets)

Venue	Posts	Videos	Likes	Comments	Shares	Total liking page	Total Check-ins
Po Na Na	23	3	58 (1:2.5)	1	1	10,891	15,116
Pryzm	33	1	313 (1:9.5)	109	6	41,021	45,004
Vodka Revolution	26	1	22	1	0	14,367	34,679
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>393 (1:4.8)</b>	<b>111 (1:1.4)</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>66279</b>	<b>94799</b>

**Table 11: Social media marketing activity by venues on Twitter** (UER in brackets)

Venue	Tweets	Videos	Re-Tweets	Favourites	Followers
Po Na Na	5	0	3	2	1410
Pryzm	92	1	81	106	9546
Vodka Revolution	3	0	1	3	1060
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>12,016</b>

**Table 12: Social media marketing activity by venues on Instagram** (UER in brackets)

Venue	Posts	Videos	Likes	Comments	Followers
Po Na Na	0	0	0	0	310
Pryzm	8	0	100 (1:12.5)	3	1849
Vodka Revolution	2	0	13	1	693
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>113 (1:11)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2852</b>

The number of 'check-ins' on the social media pages of venues are important indices of user engagement by young people. The number of 'check-ins' reflects the number of guests who check-in to the venue's Facebook page whilst at the venue, an activity which immediately becomes visible to all their 'friends' on Facebook (see section 4). In all areas, Pryzm had the highest number of check-ins on Facebook, and the highest number of followers on all three social media sites.

The Twitter post in Figure 3 below is almost identical to equivalent posts by Pryzm on Facebook and Instagram during the research period. It offers a number of benefits linked to a group booking, including a bottle of vodka and

'hostess service', which involved being waited on by young women in tight-fitting red dresses who encouraged guests to buy drinks throughout the night. User-engagement ratios for posts by venues were lower than those for the five alcohol brands, with the highest UER for Pryzm from their eight posts on Instagram (1:12.5). Figure 4 refers to a competition to win a bottle of branded Ciroc vodka, asking followers to go to the Pryzm's Facebook page for more details. In Figure 5, the Facebook post by Po Na Na highlights their regular Tuesday '!CRASH!' night, including 150 images, mainly involving young female guests, and/or the crowd enjoying themselves at the club. The post also includes links to the club's Twitter and Facebook pages.

**Figure 3: Pryzm on Twitter**



**Figure 4: Pryzm on Instagram**



**Figure 5: Po Na Na on Facebook**



## Summary: Social media marketing activity by alcohol brands and venues

Overall, we found that:

- All venues in our sample posted on social media more frequently than the alcohol brands during our two-week research period.
- The level of social media marketing activity by alcohol brands varied depending on whether they were running specific promotions. This followed a similar pattern to traditional offline marketing campaigns rather than the constant activity that can characterise social media use.
- The social media pages of alcohol brands and venues attracted large numbers of followers 'liking' these pages, especially on Facebook. User-engagement ratios for posts by venues were lower than for the alcohol brands, but this does not reflect other important forms of user engagement, which we explore in Section 4.
- Venues, and especially alcohol brands, were more active on Twitter than Facebook or Instagram, in marked contrast to young people's pattern of social media activity, which tends to favour Facebook and Instagram (and Snapchat) over Twitter (see also demographic information from our research respondents in Section 3).

### 2.3 Content analysis of social media marketing practices and themes

Our content analysis identified the main marketing *practices* as well as *themes* in social media posts by our sample of alcohol brands and venues. We employed a substantially revised version of the coding frame developed by Purves and colleagues (Purves et al., 2014). Our data also included posts by venues as well as alcohol brands, so additional categories were required to incorporate the social media marketing practices and themes in this material. Of the 419 posts outlined in Section 2.2 above, 33 posts were discarded because they involved videos and/or memes. These were deemed too complex and dynamic (in the case of video material) for analysis using a coding frame of this type. This left a total of 388 posts for content analysis, 207 by alcohol brands and 181 by venues.

Revising the coding frame involved a series of iterations returning to the dataset to check for deviant cases and refine our coding categories. Once a final version of the coding frame was agreed, two members of the research team (CG and JG), carried out independent inter-rater reliability checks on 10% of the dataset (N=40 posts), including posts by a range of the venues and alcohol brands across all three social media platforms. This produced a Cronbach's alpha value of 90%. All three members of the research team (CG, JG and IS) then coded one-third of the total dataset (approximately 140 posts each), followed by further checks for consistency of coding. The final version of the coding frame can be found in Appendix 4 and Tables 13 and 14 below.

**Table 13: Social media marketing practices by alcohol brands & venues on all social media platforms**

<b>Codes: Social Media Marketing Practices</b>	<b>No. (%) Brand posts</b>	<b>No (%) Venue posts</b>
A1.1: Ask to like, comment, share, follow, retweet etc	15 <b>7.2%</b>	34 <b>18.8%</b>
A1.2: Ask fans a question – with an answer	5 <b>2.4%</b>	4 <b>2.2%</b>
A1.3: Ask rhetorical question: 'wouldn't you like to...?'	31 <b>15%</b>	33 <b>18.2%</b>
A1.4: Ask fans to go to website and get something	17 <b>8.2%</b>	10 <b>5.5%</b>
A1.5: Polls: 'which one is your fave?'	1 <b>0.5%</b>	0 <b>0%</b>
A1.6: Competitions that ask fans to create content	8 <b>3.9%</b>	2 <b>1.1%</b>
A1.7: Ask fans to book/reserve seats or guestlist places	6 <b>2.9%</b>	39 <b>21.5%</b>
A2: Real World Tie-Ins	101 <b>48.8%</b>	2 <b>1.1%</b>
A3: Like Advertisements	46 <b>22.2%</b>	33 <b>18.2%</b>
A4.1: Consumption ideas re. Drinking games	2 <b>1%</b>	0 <b>0%</b>
A4.2: Consumption ideas re. Cocktails, food etc.	41 <b>19.8%</b>	12 <b>6.6%</b>
A5: Association between drinking & specific times and/or events	63 <b>30.4%</b>	38 <b>21%</b>
A6.1: Competition details	13 <b>6.3%</b>	5 <b>2.8%</b>
A6.2: Competition details with alcohol as prize	5 <b>2.4%</b>	6 <b>3.3%</b>
A7.1: Images of models posing as consumers	14 <b>6.8%</b>	1 <b>0.6%</b>
A7.2: Brand/venue- generated images of consumers	26 <b>12.6%</b>	27 <b>15%</b>
A7.3: User-generated images of consumers	3 <b>1.4%</b>	0 <b>0%</b>
A8: Responsibility	3 <b>1.4%</b>	0 <b>0%</b>
A9: Information Re. distribution & availability	88 <b>42.5</b>	43 <b>23.8%</b>
A10: Tagging users into posts	8 <b>3.9%</b>	16 <b>8.8%</b>
A11: Retweets/share images	60 <b>29%</b>	19 <b>10.5%</b>
A12.1: Association with other products, pages	48 <b>23.1%</b>	9 <b>5%</b>
A12.2: Association with alcohol brand: as prize, in VIP package	6 <b>2.9%</b>	17 <b>9.4%</b>
A13: Demonstrating engagement with users: respond	12 <b>5.8%</b>	1 <b>0.6%</b>
A14: Timescale of events: past/current/future	0 <b>0%</b>	96 <b>53%</b>
<b>Total no. posts (excluding videos &amp; memes)</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>181</b>



**Table 14: Themes in social media posts by alcohol brands & venues on all social media platforms**

<b>Codes: Social Media Marketing Themes</b>	<b>No. (%) Brand posts</b>		<b>No (%) Venue posts</b>	
B1.1: Male and/or female consumers	38	<b>18.4%</b>	17	<b>9.4%</b>
B1.2: Sense of tradition or heritage	0	<b>0%</b>	2	<b>1.1%</b>
B1.3: Everyday activities: sport, bank holidays	17	<b>8.2%</b>	7	<b>3.9%</b>
B1.4: Link to drinking environment: home, festivals, outdoors, nightclub	121	<b>58.5%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>
B1.5: Link with particular lifestyle	12	<b>5.8%</b>	4	<b>2.2%</b>
B1.6: Link with aspirational lifestyle	4	<b>1.9%</b>	34	<b>18.8%</b>
B1.7: Associations with sex	4	<b>1.9%</b>	4	<b>2.2%</b>
B1.8: Association with friendship/group bonding	14	<b>6.8%</b>	36	<b>19.9%</b>
B2: Display sense of humour	11	<b>5.3%</b>	12	<b>6.6%</b>
B3: Display taste in popular culture: sport, celebs	35	<b>17%</b>	8	<b>4.4%</b>
B4: Engage with popular music: festivals, gigs	62	<b>30%</b>	43	<b>23.8%</b>
B5: Posts relating to sporting events	7	<b>3.4%</b>	3	<b>1.7%</b>
B6.1: Posts use vernacular/informal language	81	<b>39.1%</b>	70	<b>38.7%</b>
B6.2: Posts involving emojis	41	<b>19.8%</b>	82	<b>45.3%</b>
<b>Total no. posts (excluding videos &amp; memes)</b>	<b>207</b>		<b>181</b>	

There were some clear differences in the social media marketing practices and themes employed in posts by our sample of alcohol brands and venues across the three social media platforms. The most common social media marketing practices and themes in posts by alcohol brands and venues on each social media platform are examined in greater detail in sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 below. We also provide examples of social media posts from our sample illustrating key points from our analysis throughout this section. The full dataset is presented in Appendix 5.

### **2.3.1 Social media marketing practices and themes in posts by alcohol brands**

The most common social media marketing *practices* employed by the five *alcohol brands* linked their products to sponsored events, or 'Real World Tie-ins' (A2: 48.8% of all brand posts; see Figures 2 and 6, and Table 15 below). Almost half the posts by brands provided information about distribution and availability of products (A9: 47.5% of posts; see Figure 6). This was followed by posts associating drinking with specific times and/or events (A5: 30.4% of posts; see Figures 2 and 7). Just under 30% of brand posts retweeted or shared images (A11: 29%; see Figure 3). Just over 20% of brand posts associated their product



with other products and pages (A12.1: 23.1%; see Figures 2 and 3). A similar proportion of posts resembled advertisements (A3: 22.2%; see Figure 7).

Figure 6 refers to the 'Colourena' area at the Common People music festival held in Oxford (see also section 2.4). The post encourages followers to "say hi and DO NOT miss the paint fight at 7pm", but there is no explicit reference to drinking apart from the two large Bulmers cider bottles on display. This post exemplifies the type of 'branded drinking space' discussed in section 2.4. Like a number of Jägermeister posts, Figure 7 displays a substantial number of Jägermeister bottles themed with the logos and flags of all the competing nations in Euro 2016. The small 'Drinkaware' message is somewhat undermined by the exhortation: "if you're having a shot, make sure it's the right one!"

**Table 15: Main social media marketing practices by alcohol brands on each SMS**

<b>Main Social media marketing practices</b>	<b>Facebook</b>	<b>Twitter</b>	<b>Instagram</b>	<b>N (%) posts</b>
A2: Real World Tie-Ins	12 42.9%	69 46.6%	20 64.5%	<b>101 48.8%</b>
A9: Information Re. distribution & availability	13 46.4%	61 41.2%	14 45.2%	<b>88 42.5%</b>
A5: Association between drinking & specific times and/or events	11 39.3%	44 29.7%	8 25.8%	<b>63 30.4%</b>
A11: Retweets/share images	0 0%	60 40.5%	0 0%	<b>60 29%</b>
A12.1: Association with other products, pages	1 3.6%	46 31.1%	1 3.2%	<b>48 23.1%</b>
A3: Like Advertisements	12 42.9%	22 14.9%	12 38.7%	<b>46 22.2%</b>
<b>Total no of posts</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>207</b>

As far as common *themes* in social media marketing posts were concerned, almost 60% of posts by *alcohol brands* linked drinking to specific environments, such as the home, festivals, outdoors etc. (B1.4: 58.5%; see Figures 2 and 6, and Table 16 below). Posts using vernacular/informal language (B6.1: 39.1%) and emojis (B6.2: 19.8%) were also common (see Figures 1, 2 and 7). Some 30% of posts engaged with popular music, such as festivals and gigs (B4; see Figure 6). Just under 20% of posts included images of male and/or female consumers (B1.1: 18.4%), and a similar proportion displayed a taste in popular culture, including sport, celebrities, etc. (B3: 17%; see Figure 1).

**Table 16: Main themes in social media marketing posts by alcohol brands on each SMS**

Main Social media marketing themes	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	N (%) posts
B1.4: Link to drinking environment: home, festivals, outdoors, nightclub	14 50%	89 60.1%	18 58.1%	<b>121 58.5%</b>
B6.1: Posts use vernacular/informal language	14 50%	55 37.2%	12 38.7%	<b>81 39.1%</b>
B4: Engage with popular music: festivals, gigs	7 25%	46 31.1%	9 29%	<b>62 30%</b>
B6.2: Posts involving emojis	9 32.1%	26 7.6%	6 19.4%	<b>41 19.8%</b>
B1.1: Male and/or female consumers	8 8.6%	24 16.2%	6 19.4%	<b>38 18.4%</b>
B3: Display taste in popular culture: sport, celebs	4 14.3%	29 19.6%	2 6.5%	<b>35 17%</b>
<b>Total no of posts</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>207</b>

### 2.3.2 Social media marketing practices and themes in posts by venues

The most common social media marketing *practices* employed by venues presented information before, during and after events (A14: Timescale; 53% of all venue posts; see Figures 3, 4 and 8; and Table 17 below). Almost a quarter of venue posts provided information about distribution and availability of products (A9: 23.8% of posts; see Figure 3). This was followed by posts asking fans to book/reserve seats or guestlist places (A1.7: 21.5%; see Figures 3 and 9). Just over 20% of venue posts associated drinking with specific times and/or events (A5: 21% of posts; see Figure 8). Just under 20% of venue posts asked followers to like, comment, share a post (A1.1: 18.8%; see Figure 9). A similar proportion asked a rhetorical question (A1.3: 18.2%; see Figures 8 and 9). Finally, 15% of venue posts included venue-generated images of consumers (A7.2; see Figure 5).

Figures 8 and 9 are typical of social media marketing posts by venues, providing information on forthcoming events, and especially on cheap deals on drinks and entrance to the venue ("£2.50 entry and a FREE DRINK on guestlist"). Figure 9 in particular employs the informal language and frequent use of emojis that typified social media posts by venues. Whilst the Twitter post by Vodka Revolution Bath in Figure 8 restricts itself to providing information about how to spend the May Bank Holiday weekend, Figure 9 is more typical of the offers presented by venues in our sample.

**Table 17: Main social media marketing practices in posts by venues on each SMS**

<b>Main Social media marketing practices</b>	<b>Facebook</b>	<b>Twitter</b>	<b>Instagram</b>	<b>N (%) posts</b>
A14: Timescale of events: past/current/future	40 54.8%	50 51%	6 60%	<b>96 53%</b>
A9: Information Re. distribution & availability	18 24.7%	23 3.5%	2 20%	<b>43 23.8%</b>
A1.7: Ask fans to book/reserve seats or guestlist places	15 20.5%	21 1.4%	3 30%	<b>39 21.5%</b>
A5: Association between drinking & specific times and/or events	14 19.2%	22 2.4%	2 20%	<b>38 21%</b>
A1.1: Ask to like, comment, share, follow, retweet etc	13 17.8%	20 0.4%	1 10%	<b>34 18.8%</b>
A1.3: Ask rhetorical question: 'wouldn't you like to...?'	12 16.4%	18 8.4%	3 30%	<b>33 18.2%</b>
A7.2: Brand/venue- generated images of consumers	23 31.5%	4 4.1%	0 0%	<b>27 15%</b>
<b>Total no of posts (excluding videos &amp; memes)</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>181</b>

Posts using vernacular/informal language (B6.1: 38.7%) and emojis (B6.2: 45.3%) were common *themes* in social media marketing posts by venues (see Figures 4, 5 and 9; and Table 18 below). Just under a quarter of venue posts engaged with popular music, including festivals and gigs (B4: 23.8%; Figure 9). Just under 20% of venue posts reflected an association with friendship or group bonding (B1.8: 19.9%; see Figure 5), and also with an aspirational lifestyle (B1.6: 18.8%; see Figure 3). Just under 10% of posts included images of male and/or female consumers (B1.1: 9.4%). This issue is examined in greater depth in section 2.3.3 below.

**Table 18: Main themes in social media marketing posts by venues on each SMS**

<b>Main Social media marketing themes</b>	<b>Facebook</b>	<b>Twitter</b>	<b>Instagram</b>	<b>N (%) posts</b>
B6.2: Posts involving emojis	19 26%	58 59.2%	5 50%	<b>82 45.3%</b>
B6.1: Posts use vernacular/informal language	32 43.8%	35 35.7%	3 30%	<b>70 38.7%</b>
B4: Engage with popular music: festivals, gigs	23 31.5%	18 18.4%	2 20%	<b>43 23.8%</b>
B1.8: Association with friendship/group bonding	25 34.2%	11 11.2%	0 0%	<b>36 19.9%</b>
B1.6: Link with aspirational lifestyle	17 23.3%	15 15.3%	2 20%	<b>34 18.8%</b>
B1.1: Male and/or female consumers	15 20.5%	1 1%	1 0%	<b>17 9.4%</b>
<b>Total no posts (excluding videos &amp; memes)</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>181</b>

**Figure 6: Bulmers on Instagram**



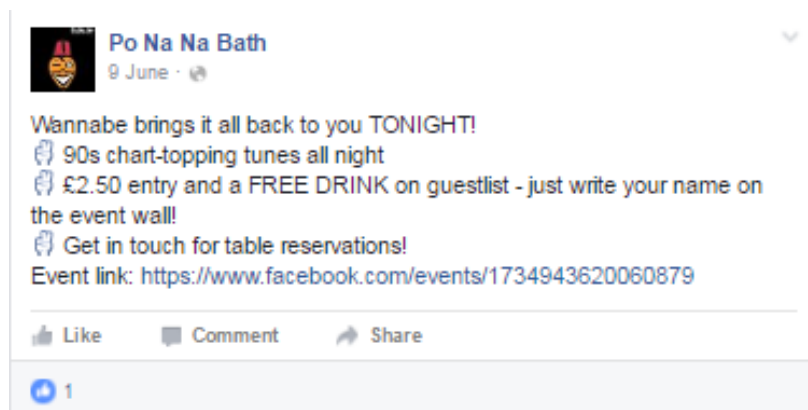
**Figure 7: Jagermeister on Facebook**



**Figure 8: Vodka Revolution Bath on Twitter**



**Figure 9: Po Na Na on Facebook**



### **2.3.3 Gender and drinking in social media posts by alcohol brands and venues**

There is considerable research evidence that drinking (and especially heavy drinking) is still viewed as a marker of traditional masculinity (Griffin et al., 2013). In contrast, women's drinking (and getting drunk) have traditionally been viewed as unfeminine (DeVisser and McDonnell, 2011; Lyons and Willott, 2008). In the UK, young men tend to consume more alcohol (and different drinks) compared to their female peers, although young women's alcohol consumption has been catching up over the past two decades (Bailey and Griffin, 2017).

Despite young women's increased alcohol consumption, traditional cultural associations between alcohol and gender have not disappeared. Some 18.4% of posts by alcohol brands in our sample included images of male and/or female consumers, compared to 9.4% of posts by venues (see Table 14). Our content analysis identified a number of distinctive and highly gendered representations of female and male consumers, which took different forms in posts by alcohol brands and venues. For alcohol brands, the most highly gendered posts related to representations of young women drinking products aimed at female consumers. This was especially marked in (though not confined to) posts by Lambrini.

#### **Lambrini: Acceptable female drinking in the domestic sphere**

As a relatively cheap and low alcohol perry, Lambrini is marketed to female consumers, and young women featured in many of their marketing posts. Figure 10 refers to the low calorie 'Skinny Original' Lambrini, depicting the product as ideal "for those shaping up for summer". The image of apples and a measuring tape forges a connection with dieting regimes and familiar exhortations to mould the female body (Grogan, 2016). It is notable that the two comments on this post include one that is partially negative ("I love Lambrini but this tastes horrible...").

If the Lambrini post in Figure 10 makes an implicit connection with femininity, this association is far more explicit in Figure 11, which references the Euro 2016 football competition. Unlike the Jägermeister post in Figure 7, the Lambrini post in Figure 11 is aimed at a female audience of non-football fans. It represents Lambrini as central to female-only socialising in the domestic sphere ("get the girls round"), separate from the ubiquitous presence of male partners with their different interests outside the home ("we all become football widows"). This post depicts Lambrini drinkers as (white) women in heterosexual relationships, mixing with other women like themselves, drinking in the home in all-female groups - and definitely not as football supporters. Posts by alcohol brands tended to represent female consumers as socialising and drinking together in all-female groups in the domestic sphere.

## **Venues: Feminine glamour and funny guys**

Images of young female and male consumers in posts by venues took a different form. Whereas representations of female and male consumers in posts by alcohol brands were more likely to involve images of models posing as consumers, images of male and female consumers in posts by venues were more likely to be 'real' guests at bars and clubs posing in photos taken by the venues' in-house photographers (see Table 13). Images of guests were usually uploaded to Facebook, since it has the most developed facility for uploading, sharing, 'liking' and commenting on images. It is notable that the posts in Figures 12 to 14 include almost 300 images of guests.

There were more images of young women than men, and the 'headline' images in a post often included images of young women posed in all-female groups, looking glamorous, smiling and fully made-up, wearing smart figure-hugging dresses with short skirts and low-cut necklines (see Figures 12 and 13 below). In contrast, in images of young (and not so young) male guests, men appeared in less formal clothing, such as T-shirts and open-necked shirts, often in all-male groups (see Figure 14). In these images, men were often depicted laughing or making humorous faces, very different to the glamorous and smart poses of the female guests. Male guests were also more likely to appear visibly drunk compared to their female peers. Our focus group data indicates that some young people view such images of young female consumers as offering a form of 'bait' to attract male guests (see Section 4).

### **2.3.4 Absent messages: Drinking responsibly**

Only 1.4% (n=3) of the 227 brand posts and none of the 192 venue posts included messages about drinking responsibly. These comprised two posts by Jägermeister (see Figures 7 and 15), and one post by Malibu (see Figure 16 below). Where they appeared, such messages were small and not very noticeable. In the Jägermeister posts, the 'responsible drinking' message is limited to a mention of the Drinkaware website, and in the Malibu post it involves the clearer statement to 'enjoy Malibu responsibly'. However, the call to "enjoy Malibu responsibly" is somewhat undermined by the exhortation "all day long" in the retweet by Ibiza Rocks.

'Ibiza Rocks' is a company started in 2005 organising beach parties on the holiday island of Ibiza. It now represents itself as "a major lifestyle and travel brand" ([www.ibizarocks.com](http://www.ibizarocks.com)), capitalising on the island's reputation as a party holiday destination for young people. Malibu Rum is one of the company's "brand partners", along with the energy drink Monster, which is owned by Coca-Cola. The message about drinking Malibu responsibly in the post shown in Figure 16 is also undermined by this wider context, given that such holidays frequently involve the consumption of substantial quantities of alcohol and other substances by young people (Briggs et al., 2011).



The absence of 'responsible drinking' messages in venue posts was also undermined by the exhortations to consume alcohol in irresponsible ways found in some posts by venues in our sample. For example, Figure 17 below shows a woman clinging to the edge of a bar, saying "Honey, I'd suck the alcohol out of a deodorant stick", and Figure 18 suggests followers to treat their hangovers by drinking "the hair of the dog". These two Twitter posts by superclub Pryzm would be unlikely to comply with the current UK Code of Advertising Practice, although they have not been the subject of any complaints to the ASA.

Figure 10: Lambrini on Facebook



Figure 11: Lambrini on Facebook



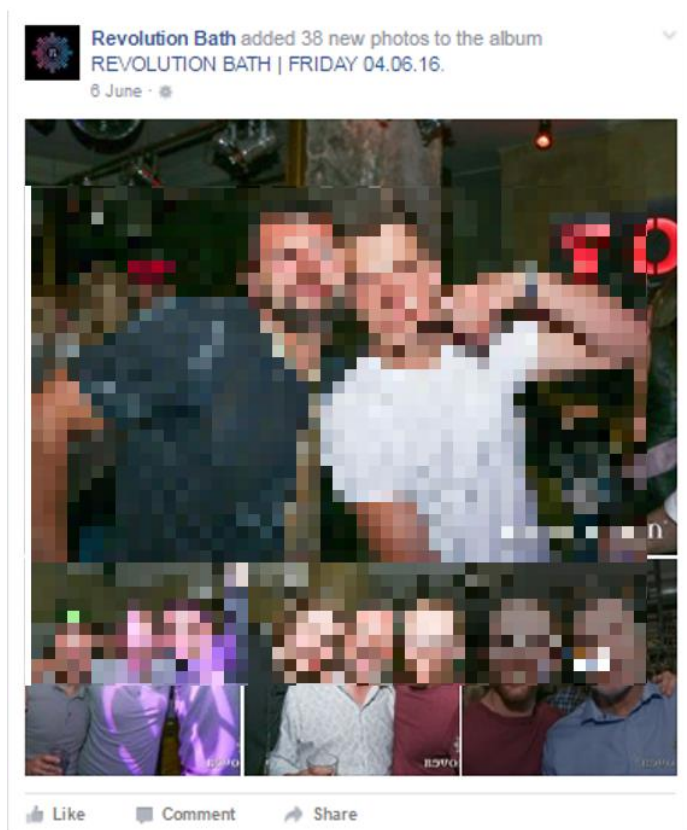
Figure 12: Po Na Na on Facebook



Figure 13: Pryzm on Facebook



**Figure 14: Vodka Revolution on Facebook**



**Figure 15: Jagermeister on Twitter**



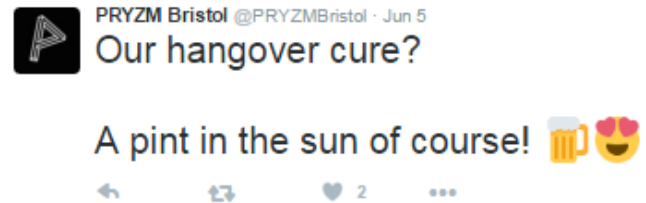
**Figure 16: Malibu on Twitter**



**Figure 17: Pryzm on Twitter**



**Figure 18: Pryzm on Twitter**



## 2.4 Branded drinking spaces

The most common form of social media marketing by alcohol brands involved the promotion of 'branded drinking spaces' rather than simply a direct promotion of the brands themselves. Such posts were mainly coded as A2 (Real world tie-ins); A9 (Information about availability); B1.4 (Link to drinking environment at festival, nightclub); and B4 (Engage with popular music). These posts related to a variety of events, including sponsored areas at music festivals and gigs at bars and clubs by featured artists.

Around 500 music festivals are held in the UK each year, many rely on sponsorship from alcohol brands, and almost all are associated with the consumption of large quantities of alcohol and other substances (Bengry-Howell et al., 2017). High ticket prices mean that most of the major music festivals attract a relatively affluent audience across a wide age range. However, many festivals do cater for 18-25 year olds, and some (such as the Reading and Leeds festivals) attract an even younger age group (Griffin et al., 2017).

Figure 19 below is a typical example of the promotion of 'branded drinking spaces' at music festivals. This post refers to 'The Colourena', a branded area sponsored by Bulmers cider that appeared at several music festivals in the UK during 2015 and 2016. The Bulmers website represents 'The Colourena' as providing "an insane amphitheatre", "a place where dreams come true" and "somewhere where there's lots of colourful fun". As they put it: "Visit the



Colourena, and you will get to enjoy some of the planet's most consistently magnificent DJs, join in with welly wanging, daily paint fights, and jelly wrestling. Race one another on space hoppers, climb into a sleeping bag and pretend to be a caterpillar. Watch actual people dressed as fruit having a dance off" ([www.bulmers.co.uk](http://www.bulmers.co.uk) , 2016). Although drinking is scarcely mentioned in this online text, the Bulmers Instagram post in Figure 19 promotes the Colourena as an area where "the ice cold Bulmers is flowing" and includes a highly visible brand logo.

The second example of a 'branded drinking space' at a music festival promotes the 'Jägerhaus' at the Field Day Festival in London (see Figure 20). This Instagram post focusses on the new product 'Jägermeister Spice' (with the hashtag #Jagerspice), including a list of hashtags linking with related topics, and comments from followers in Spanish and English, reflecting the international reach of social media marketing and the opportunity for generating user engagement.

Marketing posts by alcohol brands seldom represented people consuming their products, and the UK Advertising Code of Practice includes several restrictions on the portrayal of young people and older drinkers (<https://www.asa.org.uk/codes-and-rulings/advertising-codes.html>). However, the promotion of branded drinking spaces enabled alcohol brands to represent anonymous crowds of festival-goers enjoying themselves. In Figure 21 for example, festival-goers at the Common People festival in Oxford are exhorted not to miss "the epic powder paint fight" in the Colourena area sponsored by Bulmers.

At first glance, such promotions simply encourage followers to go to particular venues to see bands, or to participate in 'fun' activities and competitions at festivals. However, the sponsorship of 'branded drinking spaces' at music festivals enables alcohol brands to reach relatively affluent groups of young people via social media since festivals are heavily promoted online (Morey et al., 2014). This also provides the opportunity for alcohol brands to encourage consumption of their products in the hedonistic atmosphere that characterises music festivals (Griffin et al., 2017).

The Jägermeister Road Trip was the most prominent social media marketing campaign run by an alcohol brand during our research period, promoting a different type of branded drinking space (see Figures 22 and 23). The Road Trip visited bars and clubs in towns and cities around the UK during May 2016, and was a particularly valuable focus for analysis since it linked social media marketing of a specific alcohol brand with venues. Promotion for the campaign was similar to the format and style of tours by bands. Jägermeister is closely associated with the 'Jägerbomb', which is frequently consumed by 'downing' rounds of shots and is closely associated with the culture of drinking to intoxication (see section 2.1 and section 3). The Jägermeister Road Trip can be viewed as an attempt to reposition this product amongst young adult

drinkers by incorporating it into a more sophisticated circuit of cocktail bars. In Figure 22 for example, a member of bar staff at the Hummingbird venue in Glasgow carefully pours a cocktail into a long glass in a Twitter post retweeted by Jägermeister UK from “Ms S and Mr G” linked to the hashtag @cocktaillovers. However, this campaign also included posts making references to a less sophisticated drinking culture. Posts by Jägermeister as part of the ‘Road Trip’ campaign included several images of small groups of friends, apparently young adults, drinking together in featured bars. In Figure 23 for example, a group of friends raise their glasses in a toast that references the ubiquitous practice of drinking rounds of shots that is associated with the culture of intoxication.

Figure 19: Bulmers on Instagram



Figure 20: Jagermeister on Instagram



Figure 21: Bulmers on Twitter



**Figure 22: Jagermeister on Twitter**



**Figure 23: Jagermeister on Twitter**





## Summary: Content analysis of social media marketing practices and themes

There were important differences in the social media marketing practices and themes employed in posts by alcohol brands and venues across the three social media platforms. We found that:

- The most common social media marketing *practices* in posts by *alcohol brands* linked their products to sponsored events, or 'Real World Tie-ins'; followed by posts providing information about distribution and availability of products; posts that associated drinking with specific times and/or events; retweeting or sharing images; associating their product with other products and pages; and finally posts that resembled advertisements.
- The main *themes* in social media marketing posts by *alcohol brands* linked drinking to specific environments, such as the home, festivals or outdoors; used vernacular/informal language and emojis; engaged with popular music, such as festivals and gigs; included images of male and/or female consumers; and displayed a taste in popular culture, including sport, celebrities, etc. (see Table 19 below).

**Table 19: Alcohol brands - main social media marketing practices and themes**

<b>Social media marketing practices/ Brands</b>	<b>N (%) posts</b>	
A2: Real World Tie-Ins	101	48.8%
A9: Information Re. distribution & availability	88	42.5%
A5: Association between drinking & specific times and/or events	63	30.4%
A11: Retweets/share images	60	29%
A12.1: Association with other products, pages	48	23.1%
A3: Like Advertisements	46	22.2%
<b>Total no of posts</b>	<b>207</b>	
<b>Social media marketing themes / Brands</b>	<b>N (%) posts</b>	
B1.4: Link to drinking environment: home, festivals, outdoors, nightclub	121	58.5%
B6.1: Posts use vernacular/informal language	81	39.1%
B4: Engage with popular music: festivals, gigs	62	30%
B6.2: Posts involving emojis	41	19.8%
B1.1: Male and/or female consumers	38	18.4%
B3: Display taste in popular culture: sport, celebs	35	17%
<b>Total no of posts</b>	<b>207</b>	

- The most common social media marketing *practices* employed by in posts by venues presented information about events; provided information about distribution and availability of products; asked fans to book/reserve seats or guestlist places; associated drinking with specific times and/or events; asked followers to like, comment, share a post; asked a rhetorical question; and included venue-generated images of consumers.
- The main *themes* in posts by venues used vernacular/informal language and emojis, followed by posts engaging with popular music, including festivals and gigs; posts making an association with friendship or group bonding; posts linked to an aspirational lifestyle; and posts including images of male and/or female consumers (see Table 20).

**Table 20: Alcohol venues - main social media marketing practices and themes**

<b>Social media marketing practices / Venues</b>	<b>N posts</b>	<b>(%)</b>
A14: Timescale of events: past/current/future	96	53%
A9: Information Re. distribution & availability	43	23.8%
A1.7: Ask fans to book/reserve seats or guestlist places	39	21.5%
A5: Association between drinking & specific times and/or events	38	21%
A1.1: Ask to like, comment, share, follow, retweet etc	34	18.8%
A1.3: Ask rhetorical question: 'wouldn't you like to...?'	33	18.2%
A7.2: Brand/venue- generated images of consumers	27	15%
<b>Total no of posts (excluding videos &amp; memes)</b>	<b>181</b>	
<b>Social media marketing themes / Venues</b>	<b>N posts</b>	<b>(%)</b>
B6.2: Posts involving emojis	82	45.3%
B6.1: Posts use vernacular/informal language	70	38.7%
B4: Engage with popular music: festivals, gigs	43	23.8%
B1.8: Association with friendship/group bonding	36	19.9%
B1.6: Link with aspirational lifestyle	34	18.8%
B1.1: Male and/or female consumers	17	9.4%
<b>Total no posts (excluding videos &amp; memes)</b>	<b>181</b>	

- Female and male consumers were represented differently in posts by alcohol brands and venues. Posts by alcohol brands aimed at female

consumers (such as Malibu and Lambrini) often depicted young women drinking in all-female groups in the domestic sphere, which can also be seen as an 'alternative' female playscape.

- In contrast, Facebook posts by venues included many images of female and male guests, usually taken by the clubs' in-house photographers. Young women tended to be posing in glamorous smart clothes, whereas young men appeared as more drunk and in less formal attire.
- Only 1.4% of the posts by alcohol brands and none of the venue posts included messages about responsible drinking. These were small, not very noticeable, and were generally undermined by exhortations to consume alcohol in irresponsible ways in other posts. Some posts by venues would be unlikely to comply with the Advertising Standards Authority Code of Advertising Practice.
- The most common form of social media marketing by alcohol brands forged associations between particular alcohol products and '**branded drinking spaces**', including sponsored areas at music festivals and gigs at bars and clubs by featured artists. These promotions enabled alcohol marketers to target young consumers by sponsoring music events with predominantly youthful audiences, representing drinking as a constant activity associated with fun, silliness and escape.

## SECTION 3: YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING BY ALCOHOL BRANDS

### 3.1 Study design, sampling, recruitment, methods and respondents

We conducted 11 mixed and single sex focus groups with a total of 53 young people aged just below and above the legal age for purchasing alcohol, recruited from two schools and two universities in South-West England. Group discussions were followed by 22 individual interviews involving 17 young people from the focus groups and a further five respondents who were recruited independently. These five additional respondents included one female and four male University students aged 18 and over (interviews 18 to 22). Young people aged under 18 were recruited from two co-educational state secondary schools. School A was in a small city, and school B was in a small town in commuting distance of a two larger conurbations. The catchment areas of both schools included households with a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Young people over 18 were recruited from two local universities in two cities in the same area. The student population of University A was drawn primarily from households in the AB socio-economic groups, whereas University B was selected because its student population included young people from a wider range of socio-economic groups to produce a broader sample. Respondents aged 18 to 24 were recruited from local universities because student drinking culture is characterised by high levels of alcohol consumption and students form a particular target market for alcohol brands and venues (Wybron, 2016). All phases of the study obtained full ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology at the University of Bath.

Once recruited, respondents were provided with an information sheet covering the aims and procedure of the study (see Appendix 6 for sample information sheet). Full informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to their involvement in focus groups and individual interviews (see Appendix 7 for sample consent form). Respondents were asked to complete a demographic information form at the start of the study, which involved questions about their age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, education level, living arrangements, alcohol consumption, social media use, and for those over 18 only, a drinking diary for the previous week (Appendix 8). All focus groups and individual interviews were carried out by Samantha Garay, a local university student in her twenties.

Focus group discussions with friendship groups investigated young people's engagement with online alcohol marketing, and its relationship to their drinking cultures and social media practices. Research respondents tend to respond differently in individual interview and focus group contexts, and we used both methods to maximise the ecological validity of our data (Braun and Clarke,

2013). Interviews were conducted with online access via the project lap top, enabling us to display selected social media marketing posts and to discuss respondents' social media practices and profiles with their permission (Appendices 9 to 12). For ethical reasons, only respondents aged 18 and over were shown examples of social media marketing posts in interviews and asked to complete drinking diaries.

All focus groups and individual interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, anonymised at the point of transcription. These transcripts were analysed through several cycles of coding, using a form of Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013). We coded material in all transcripts related to our research questions, identifying patterns across and between focus groups and interview transcripts. We recognise that focus groups and individual interviews are different methodological contexts, and that material arising from these research encounters should not be viewed as identical. For this reason, we have indicated whether extracts quoted in our findings sections below are taken from focus groups or individual interviews.

## Respondents

Tables 21 and 22 below present demographic information on the age and gender of respondents in our focus groups and individual interviews respectively. More detailed information about respondents can be found in Appendices 13 and 14.

**Table 21: Focus Group discussions: Age and gender of respondents**

Age group	Female	Male	Total
16 to 17	19	14	<b>33</b>
18 to 25	10	10	<b>20</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>53</b>

**Table 22: Individual interviews: Age and gender of respondents**

Age	Female	Male	Total
16 to 17	5	5	<b>10</b>
18 to 25	6	6	<b>12</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>22*</b>

\* Includes 17 respondents recruited from focus groups and 5 additional respondents in the 18 to 25 age group, one female and four males.

## Demographic information: Social media use

The total number of respondents was 58. We have treated the demographic information from interviews and focus groups separately to avoid double reporting. Table 23 below presents information on the numbers of interview respondents aged under 18 who reported using different social media platforms. All the respondents in this group reported using Facebook and Snapchat, with 70% using Instagram and only 50% reportedly using Twitter. The average number of social media platforms used by these young people was 3.6 (range three to four), whilst for females the mean was 3.8, and for males 3.4, all with a range of three to four platforms. Only two interview respondents aged under 18 reported following alcohol brands online, one female and one male. Three interview respondents in the younger age group reported following venues online: two females and one male.

**Table 23: Social media use by under 18s: Interview respondents**

<b>Social media platform</b>	<b>Females (n=5)</b>	<b>Males (n=5)</b>	<b>Total (n=10)</b>
Facebook	5 (100%)	5 (100%)	<b>10 (100%)</b>
Snapchat	5 (100%)	5 (100%)	<b>10 (100%)</b>
Instagram	4 (80%)	3 (60%)	<b>7 (70%)</b>
Twitter	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	<b>5 (50%)</b>
YouTube	2 (40%)	0 (0%)	<b>2 (20%)</b>
Tumblr	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	<b>2 (20%)</b>
Pinterest	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>0 (0%)</b>
LinkedIn	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>0 (0%)</b>

Of the focus group respondents aged under 18, Table 24 below indicates that almost all these young people reported using Facebook, with 73% using Snapchat and 64% using Instagram, again proportionally more females. The average number of social media platforms used was similar at 3.4, but with a wider range of between one and five. The average number of platforms used was higher for females at 3.4, with a range between two and five, whilst the average for males was 2.4 platforms, with a range between one and five.

Only two focus group respondents aged under 18 reported following alcohol brands online, both male. Eight under-18s reported following venues online, including two males and six females. Of those that did report following venues, the average number of venues followed was 1.8 (with a range between one and five for females and between one and three for males).

**Table 24: Social media use by under 18s: Focus group respondents**

<b>Social media platform</b>	<b>Females (n=19)</b>	<b>Males (n=14)</b>	<b>Total (n=33)</b>
Facebook	18 (95%)	13 (93%)	<b>31 (94%)</b>
Snapchat	15 (79%)	9 (64%)	<b>24 (73%)</b>
Instagram	13 (68%)	8 (57%)	<b>21 (64%)</b>
Twitter	8 (42%)	7 (50%)	<b>15 (45%)</b>
YouTube	5 (26%)	8 (57%)	<b>13 (39%)</b>
Tumblr	2 (11%)	0 (0%)	<b>2 (6%)</b>
Pinterest	2 (11%)	0 (0%)	<b>2 (6%)</b>
LinkedIn	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>0 (0%)</b>

Table 25 below presents information from interview respondents aged 18 and over. All the respondents in this group reported using Facebook, with only 33% using Snapchat, 42% using Instagram and 50% using Twitter. Females were more likely to report using Snapchat and Instagram, and males to report using Twitter. The average number of social media platforms used was 2.8 (range one to four), whilst for females the mean was 3.0, and for males 2.3, all with a range of between one and four platforms.

Only two of the over-18 interview respondents reported following alcohol brands online, both of them males. Seven of the older group reported following venues online, including four males and three females. Of those that did report following venues, the average number of venues followed was 2.9 (with a range of between two and four for females and males).

**Table 25: Social media use by over 18s: Interview respondents**

<b>Social media platform</b>	<b>Females (n=6)</b>	<b>Males (n=6)</b>	<b>Total (n=12)</b>
Facebook	6 (100%)	6 (100%)	<b>12 (100%)</b>
Snapchat	3 (50%)	1 (17%)	<b>4 (33%)</b>
Instagram	4 (67%)	1 (17%)	<b>5 (42%)</b>
Twitter	2 (33%)	4 (67%)	<b>6 (50%)</b>
YouTube	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>0 (0%)</b>
Tumblr	1 (17%)	0 (0%)	<b>1 (8%)</b>
Pinterest	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>0 (0%)</b>
LinkedIn	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>0 (0%)</b>

Table 26 below presents information on focus group respondents aged 18 and over. All the respondents in this group reported using Facebook, with only 40% using Snapchat and Twitter, and 70% using Instagram, including proportionally more females than males. The average number of social media platforms used by these young people was 3.2 (range one to six), whilst for females the mean was 3.9 (range two to six), and for males 2.6, with a range of between one and six platforms.

**Table 26: Social media use by over 18s: Focus group respondents**

<b>Social media platform</b>	<b>Females (n=10)</b>	<b>Males (n=10)</b>	<b>Total (n=20)</b>
Facebook	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	<b>20 (100%)</b>
Snapchat	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	<b>8 (40%)</b>
Instagram	9 (90%)	5 (50%)	<b>14 (70%)</b>
Twitter	6 (60%)	2 (20%)	<b>8 (40%)</b>
YouTube	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>0 (0%)</b>
Tumblr	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	<b>3 (15%)</b>
Pinterest	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>0 (0%)</b>
LinkedIn	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	<b>4 (20%)</b>

Only one of the over-18 focus group respondents reported following alcohol brands online, a male. In contrast, ten of the older group reported following venues online, including six males and four females. Of those that did report following venues, the average number of venues followed was 2.5 (with a range of between two and five for females and between one and three for males).

### **Demographic information: Alcohol consumption**

Respondents aged under 18 were only asked whether they drank alcohol: they were not asked to complete drinking diaries for ethical reasons. Of the interview respondents, 100% of the 5 males and 80% (n=4) of the five female under-18s reported that they drank alcohol. Of the focus group respondents, 100% of the 14 males and 89% (n=17) of the 19 females aged under 18 reported that they drank alcohol.

Respondents aged 18 and over were asked to complete a drinks diary listing how many of the following drinks they had consumed in the previous seven days: pint of beer, lager, cider etc.; small glass of wine; large glass of wine; measure of spirits (vodka, whisky, gin etc.); and other (see Appendix 8). We converted these data into equivalent units of alcohol using the Department of Health guidelines as follows: one pint = 2 units of alcohol; small glass of wine = 1 unit; large glass of wine = 2 units; and one measure of spirits = 1 unit.

This information cannot be taken as a straightforward reflection of our respondents' alcohol consumption due to possible social desirability effects, recall bias and the focus on the previous week's consumption only. However, these data do give some indication of the reported alcohol consumption amongst our sample of interview and focus group respondents. Although these figures can only be considered as approximate, they enable comparisons to be made with current UK Department of Health guidelines regarding 'low risk' alcohol consumption: 14 units per week for females and males (Lovatt et al., 2015: see Tables 27 to 30 below).



**Table 27: Reported weekly alcohol consumption: Female interview respondents (Over 18s: N=6)**

<b>Drinks: Approx. units</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Total (Mean)</b>
<b>Pints</b>	16	0	0	0	0	0	<b>16</b>
<b>Small glass wine</b>	2	0	0	6	0	0	<b>8</b>
<b>Large glass wine</b>	0	0	3	0	0	0	<b>3</b>
<b>Spirits measure</b>	4	0	1	4	0	0	<b>9</b>
<b>Other</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total units/week</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36 (6.0)</b>

**Table 28: Reported weekly alcohol consumption: Male interview respondents (Over 18s: N=6)**

<b>Drinks: Approx. units</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Total (Mean)</b>
<b>Pints</b>	14	38	6	8	0	0	<b>66</b>
<b>Small glass wine</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Large glass wine</b>	21	0	0	0	0	0	<b>21</b>
<b>Spirits measure</b>	5	7	0	0	0	0	<b>12</b>
<b>Other</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total units/week</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>99 (16.5)</b>

**Table 29: Reported weekly alcohol consumption: Female focus group respondents (Over 18s: N=10)**

<b>Drinks: Approx. Units</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Total (Mean)</b>
<b>Pints</b>	2	0	6	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	<b>16</b>
<b>Small glass wine</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Large glass wine</b>	3	0	3	0	0	0	3	3	12	0	<b>24</b>
<b>Spirits measure</b>	0	0	0	0	0	11	2	8	7	1	<b>29</b>
<b>Other</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total units/week</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>69 (6.9)</b>

**Table 30: Reported weekly alcohol consumption: Male focus group respondents (Over 18s: N=10)**

<b>Drinks: Approx. Units</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Total (Mean)</b>
<b>Pints</b>	0	0	0	8	10	0	0	22	26	2	<b>68</b>
<b>Small glass wine</b>	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Large glass wine</b>	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	15	0	<b>21</b>
<b>Spirits measure</b>	0	0	0	5	7	0	0	0	10	0	<b>22</b>
<b>Other</b>	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>4</b>
<b>Total units/week</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>117 (11.7)</b>

Half of the female over-18 interview respondents (N=3) and two-thirds of the males (N=4) reported consuming at least one unit of alcohol in the previous week. Of those who reported drinking, weekly consumption among male interview respondents were heavily skewed: two reported consuming less than 8 units a week and two reporting very heavy drinking (40 units and above). Reported consumption among female interview respondents was also very varied: ranging from 4 units to 22.

70% of the female over-18 focus group respondents (N=7) and the same proportion of males reported that they had consumed at least one unit of alcohol in the previous week. Of those who reported drinking, consumption among male focus group respondents ranged from 2 units to 51; among females it ranged from just 1 unit to 23.

The average reported alcohol consumption in the previous week was generally within the current UK Department of Health 'low risk' guidelines of 14 units per week for females and male respondents aged 18 and over. However, two of our female respondents reportedly consumed over this level at 22 and 23 units in the previous week respectively, as did five males, at 22, 25, 40, 45 and 51 units in the previous week. The latter three individuals were consuming at a level that would be considered hazardous (Lovatt et al., 2015). Males aged 18 and over reported drinking more than their female peers in the previous week, and our male respondents were more likely to say they drank alcohol compared to females in both age groups.

### 3.2 The 'culture of intoxication'

In section 1.1 above, we pointed out that the overall levels of alcohol consumed by 16 to 24 year olds in the UK has fallen in recent years, and the proportion of young people who report drinking in moderation or not at all has risen (Wybron, 2016). Our results appear to echo this trend, with three quarters of female participants, and only one less male participant, reporting drinking within the revised guidelines. However, a small minority of the over-18 group reported drinking very heavily in the previous week. Our focus group discussions and individual interviews with young people above and below the LDA of 18 also suggest that the culture of intoxication persists as a social norm among many young drinkers:

*Int: Would you drink different things say if you stayed at home rather than going out?*

*F1: I never really like just drink casually I only drink if I'm going out*

*F3: Yeah*

*F2: Yeah I don't drink, unless I'm gonna get, drunk*  
*Extract 1: Focus Group 3, over 18, females*

When asked to describe a "good night out", one group of young men reflected that the "stupid stuff" that could happen following heavy drinking would only be viewed as humorous in hindsight:

*M1: We were on a night out together, it was at a house party [M2]'s house party, and when you say a good night out, I mean it's like hilarious to look back on. 'Cos you basically all just get very drunk you don't remember what happens and, stupid stuff happens on the way home or at the party, so, I don't know, but even if like someone got injured which you did*

*M2: Yeah, unfortunately yeah*

*M1: You still see it as a funny thing, I guess and that can be classed as a good night out, which is weird*  
*Extract 2: Focus Group 5, over 18, males*

References to heavy drinking as a normative practice were less common among the younger age group. Under-18s were more likely to report drinking (and getting drunk) at private house parties rather than bars and clubs, although a minority had clearly been to local venues as underage drinkers. In extract 3 below, a group of 16 and 17 year-old school students were responding to a question about "a bad night you've had":

- F6: *When someone gets with someone they shouldn't*
- F2: *Oh god, yeah*
- F4: *Oh yeah*
- F1: *It's always like*
- F3: *It's quite funny though [laughter]*
- F1: *It really does depend on how drunk you are. And when you wake up and you remember everything and everyone else has forgotten it all*

*Extract 3: Focus Group 8, under 18, females*

- M3: *One typical night would probably be, me out with my friends at someone's house, and probably drink until we pass out to be honest and [Laughter] wake up the next morning and*

- M2: *Do it again [laughter]*

*Extract 4: Focus Group 7, under 18, mixed group*

- F6: *At our age I think girls drink more to get drunk, whereas boys, do you not think they just, drink?*

- F4: *I feel like they don't really have any like, motive*

- F2: *They don't really care [laughter]*

*Extract 5: Focus Group 8, under 18, mixed group*

The extracts above recount stories of drinking to intoxication, but this does not necessarily imply that our respondents did so regularly. It does indicate, however, that drinking to intoxication remained a widespread social norm amongst these young people.

### 3.3 'There's no point, but ...': Engaging with alcohol brands online

Although engagement with social media was important to our respondents, only one young man from the older group reported following the Facebook, Twitter or Instagram accounts of alcohol brands. The primary reported reason for not following alcohol brands was that there was simply no point, because "we already know what we like":

- F: *I just don't see the point really because, like I said we already know what we like and there's not much they can keep telling you. If you already know what you're gonna drink, I don't see the point in advertising it more, if you know you like it.*

*Extract 6: Interview 3, over-18 female*

Another key reason for not following alcohol brands online was the negative message it could send to work colleagues and relatives:

*F: It's not something I would like to be associated with, because that's not who I am fundamentally. And as I said before, I have workmates, I have relatives [laughter], family members as my Facebook friends, so I would look pretty bad if I start to like lots of alcohol brands.*

*Extract 7: Interview 4, over 18 female*

A further deterrent was the volume of advertising that following brands would generate on respondents' social media pages:

*M5: There's no reason to follow an alcohol brand cos all it's gonna do is chuck a load of adverts at you*

*Extract 8: Focus Group 9, under 18, males*

There was a common understanding among respondents that following brands on social media was a rite of passage. Of the younger age group, while only three of the ten who were interviewed reported following alcohol brands, respondents from both age groups reported that they had followed alcohol brands when they were even younger. The similarity in responses between the two age groups is striking, and appears to reflect a widespread practice of young people engaging with alcohol brands online when they were well under the official age limit of 18 for accessing the social media pages of alcohol brands. Our respondents indicated that a key reason for following alcohol brands when younger was to display one's alcohol consumption to friends (see extract 9 below). In extract 10, young males in the under 18 group refer to 'liking' the social media pages of Jack Daniels, a prominent spirits brand, as a sign of maturity:

*Int: Do you like or follow any alcohol brands on social media?*

*F: I don't think so, but I probably do. I've probably liked one in the past*

*Int: Why would you have done it in the past?*

*F: I dunno. Maybe it came up when I was younger and I was like 'Oh, I've actually drunk that. [laughter] Let's show everyone' kind of thing*

*Extract 9: Interview 13, under 18 female*

*Int: Do ever like or follow any alcohol brands on social media?*

*M: As I said last week, unfortunately, we all go through that stage when we're young of just cringingly liking everything we see that we*

*know, so probably but I wouldn't do it consciously now, so, yeah, but no at the same time*

*Int: Why do you think you did it when you were younger?*

*M: It's probably just to seem a bit more mature isn't it like 'Oh, I like, say Jack Daniels'. Again it's like, I dunno, just pretending you're a bit older than you are*

*Int: And why wouldn't you do it now?*

*M: 'Cos there's just no need really. I mean, it's fair enough to have a favourite brand but liking them on Facebook's like, just doesn't seem to be any point to it.*

*Extract 10: Interview 12, under 18 male*

In extract 11 below, an older group endorsed the widespread view amongst our respondents that they had first 'liked' alcohol brands online from around age 12 or even earlier.

*M2: I think the majority of the stuff that I follow comes from when I was like*

*F3: Twelve*

*F1: Year seven*

*F3: Yeah [laughter]*

*M2: A bit younger, and was like 'Ah, you've got to like it to show that you're interested in it.'*

*Extract 11: Focus Group 4, over 18, mixed group*

*F: I'm sure I liked a few pages like, a few alcohol pages when I was twelve years old and I thought liking a WKD page was really fun, and really cool. I've liked that and I see them post things every so often but I don't really pay attention to it.*

*Extract 12: Interview 1, over 18 female*

The recollections of the older group were characterised by considerable uncertainty regarding whether they had ever followed alcohol brands and what brands they currently followed. Most could not recall if they had ever unfollowed these brands or what the brands were, and there was also a widespread denial that exposure to alcohol brand marketing might influence young people's purchasing or consumption:

F: *I imagine I definitely did follow this one [brand] and Bacardi and Smirnoff. I imagine I unfollowed them because after their initial sort of campaign and their videos and stuff that got you to like them, I was just getting loads of adverts, and I already know what Smirnoff is like, I know if I'm gonna drink vodka. I will get Smirnoff if it's on offer but these adverts wouldn't make me choose to buy it.*

*Extract 13: Interview 5, over 18 female*

### **Alcohol adverts lack authenticity**

One common reaction to the sample of social media marketing posts we presented towards the end of focus group discussions was that such images of youthful drinking lacked authenticity. In the extracts below, a group of 18 year-old females referred to a post by Lambrini (Figure 24) in overwhelmingly negative terms:

F1: *But I don't, no one drinks that [Lambrini] casually like they're doing. You just drink*

F4: *No, you neck it from the bottle*

F1: *To get, hammered*

F2: *You just drink it to get wasted*  
*Extract 14: Focus Group 3, over 18, females*

F3: *Maybe they should, like, advertise that*

F4: *Yeah, I think*

F2: *Yeah, they should have said 'Here is a litre of wine'*

F4: *For three pounds [Laughter]*

F2: *This is only, like, whose really winning? That would be the true advert*

F3: *[Laughter] Yeah*

F2: *Suitable for drinking under bridges*  
*Extract 15: Focus Group 3, over 18, females*

Similar views were also expressed by some respondents in the younger age group. In the extracts below, 16 and 17 year-old female school students contrasted representations of unspecified vodka brands as “glamorous”, “classy” and “perfect” in some online alcohol marketing with the likely outcomes of drinking these products for themselves and for others:

F6: *It's like 'Ooh, look at this perfect night that you're gonna have if you drink this', and it's, like: well you'll probably just fall down the stairs [Laughter]*

*Extract 16: Focus Group 8, under 18, females*

F2: *Adverts you see are quite glamorous. They make it seem, like, I remember I saw this advert from vodka and they were like making it look so classy whereas a lot of the time it's just two people completely out of it*

*Extract 17: Focus Group 6, under 18, females*

### 3.4 What constitutes alcohol advertising? Debate and critique

Accounts of alcohol marketing as lacking authenticity, producing inaccurate and potentially misleading representations of young people's drinking were recounted with humour, but they were linked to more profound critiques of alcohol marketing by some of our respondents. Our respondents engaged in extensive debates about alcohol advertising and what it involved. Some were unsure whether the social media posts we showed them could be viewed as alcohol advertising at all, according to their relatively traditional definitions.

In extract 18 below the interviewer asked a group of three 18 year-old males which of the social media posts by alcohol brands we showed them might be considered as marketing. In common with most of our respondents, these young men defined alcohol marketing in a relatively traditional and narrow way as “anything with a picture of alcohol in it” or that mentioned a particular alcohol brand. Many of the social media marketing posts by alcohol brands appearing on young people's newsfeeds and social media pages would not, therefore, necessarily be perceived as advertising. This group reflected that the post by Malibu giving a recipe for an Easter ‘loaf cake’ (which they liked) did not “at first glance” appear to be advertising Malibu at all (Figure 26):

M1: *That Jägermeister one [Figure 25] I think that's [promoting] alcohol - but that's just me. I guess they're all technically promoting alcohol, like this one still is. But it's not specifically promoting Malibu, it's a Malibu cake*

M2: *At first glance you wouldn't necessarily know that that was for alcohol. If you, like, didn't see who it was posted by, and just saw a picture of the cake, you'd just be, like 'Oh, that's just, that's cake. That's not alcohol.'*

Int: *How about you?*

M3: *Anything with a picture of alcohol in it or just mentions the brand [is advertising alcohol]*



*Extract 18: Focus Group 5, over 18, males*

Many of our respondents were highly critical of alcohol advertising. While seeing it as “unnecessary” (but also potentially “cool”), many felt it had no influence on their own alcohol consumption. Respondents may have been eager to present themselves as ‘media savvy’ consumers who were immune to the potential influences of marketing. However, our focus group and interview data also reflected our respondents’ objections to some contradictory aspects of alcohol marketing. Their accounts reflected a widespread distrust of the motives of alcohol marketers’ claims in their promotion of ‘responsible drinking’ messages.

*F4: Advertising's a bit unnecessary and it's just spending a lot of money to, like, promote an image that they're trying to like put forward. And I think if you're gonna kind of fall for that and be, like, 'Oh, if I drink this this is kind of personal', or 'This is what people think of me' then, like, whatever. If you can understand that they're advertising and if you like the alcohol then it's cool: that was a cool advert. I'm still going to enjoy it but I don't, I've never been swayed by an advert: like, 'Wow, that naked man makes me really want to drink Southern Comfort!'*

*Extract 19: Focus Group 3, over 18, females*

A number of our respondents identified a contradiction in the advert for Jägermeister showing a ‘Jäger Jenga’ game involving a stack of empty Jägermeister bottles (see Figure 25). In extract 20, a mixed group of young people in their early twenties discuss this post:

*F1: Oh my goodness, I didn't notice the link until now [Jäger jenga ad]*

*M2: What link?*

*F1: Drinkaware.co.uk*

*Int: What do you think about them putting the link to Drinkaware?*

*M2: Yeah, they're trying to portray a good image, trying to tell people to drink responsibly. But then the picture, it kinda contradicts that.*

*Extract 20: Focus Group 1, over 18, mixed sex group*

Our respondents were generally unconvinced by the motives of the alcohol industry in their promotion of ‘responsible drinking’ messages. In extract 21 below, a group of 21 year olds represent such messages as a necessary but largely ineffectual practice by drinks companies:

*M2: I think it's just necessary for the drinks companies to, sort of, cover themselves, because everyone knows what alcohol does. Most*

*people drink alcohol for the same reason and people are aware what happens if you drink and you do things. I guess it's good for, like, shock factor in some cases so it can really sort of, send home the message, that you shouldn't drink and drive or, drink to excess. But I think that's more, they sort of have to do it if they want to advertise.*

*Extract 21: Focus Group 2, over 18, mixed sex group*

A minority of young people from the under-18 focus groups advocated the inclusion of health education messages on alcohol products. In extracts 22 and 23 below, a group of 16 and 17 year-old females discuss the use of more realistic images of the likely consequences of drinking (such as "someone passed out") on bottles of spirits.

*F3: Please drink responsibly right at the end*

*F6: They've made it illegal to not do that for tobacco so I don't see why they shouldn't be doing it with alcohol.*

*F2: Yeah. I hate, like, smoke packets with like the rotting lungs but I think you can generally put that on a, like, a bottle of vodka or something*

*F6: You could put a photo of someone passed out it doesn't have to be particularly gory it just has to be, this can be a consequence*  
*Extract 22: Focus Group 8, under 18, females*

*F6: If you saw a photo of someone passed out you'd be, like, 'I remember when my friend passed out because they drank too much vodka.'*

*F4: But that wouldn't, I don't think that would stop you*

*F6: No, but it would make you think and be more cautious*  
*Extract 23: Focus Group 8, under 18, females*

It is worth reiterating here that only 1.4% (n=3) posts from our sample of social media marketing by alcohol brands and none of the posts by venues included responsible drinking messages of any kind.

**Figure 24: Lambrini post on Facebook (2015) Figure 25: Jagermeister post on Facebook (2015)**



**Figure 26: Malibu post on Twitter (2015)**



### **Summary: Reported alcohol consumption levels among study participants**

The majority of our respondents reported consuming alcohol, with male respondents more likely to say they drank alcohol compared to females in both age groups. A minority of the over 18 group reported drinking over the current 'low risk' guidelines of 14 units in the previous week, at up to 23 units a week for females and up to 51 units a week for males. A small number of female and male respondents reported drinking over 20 units in the previous week. Three of these young men reported drinking over 40 units in the previous week. Respondents recounted stories of heavy drinking when asked to describe "good" and "bad" nights out in the majority of focus group discussions with both age groups.

### **Young people's views of social media marketing by alcohol brands**

In our analysis of young people's perspectives on social media marketing by alcohol brands we found that:

- Only four of our respondents reported following alcohol brands online, mainly because they saw no point in doing so; they felt this would send a negative message to relatives and work colleagues on social media; and because of the volume of advertising that following brands would generate on their own social media pages.
- Almost all older respondents reported following alcohol brands when they were younger, when following alcohol brands on social media was seen as a sign of maturity. The under-18 group reported following alcohol brands online when they were as young as 12, well under the official age limit of 18 for accessing the social media pages of alcohol brands.
- Older respondents felt that social media marketing by alcohol brands lacked authenticity, presenting inaccurate and potentially misleading representations of young people's drinking.
- Respondents defined alcohol marketing in a relatively traditional and narrow way as "anything with a picture of alcohol in it" or that mentioned a particular alcohol brand.
- Our respondents were keen to represent themselves as 'media savvy' consumers immune to the potential influences of marketing, and many were highly critical of alcohol advertising. There was widespread distrust of the motives of alcohol marketers in promoting 'responsible drinking' messages. A minority of young people from the under-18 groups advocated the inclusion of health education messages on alcohol products similar to those on cigarette packets.

## SECTION 4: YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING BY VENUES

While the majority of our respondents did not report any current engagement with online marketing by alcohol brands, proportionally more of the older age group (39.5%: N=17) and 25.6% (N=11) of under-18s reported following the social media pages of venues. Social media marketing by venues also spanned a range of platforms, although Facebook was by far the most prominent, largely because users cannot 'follow', 'like' or 'go to' events on Instagram and Twitter. We have already noted that Twitter was rarely used by our respondents. Snapchat was used sometimes to communicate with each other and organise a night out, while Instagram and Snapchat were used for photos of the event afterwards, as discussed later in this section.

### 4.1 Communication, organisation, information: young people's uses of social media marketing by venues

#### **Under-18s: The irrelevance of following clubs on social media**

On the whole, most of our younger respondents reported that they did not 'follow' venues such as bars or clubs, since they were too young to legally enter such venues:

*M: There's just not really any need at the minute. I don't I don't have an ID that says I'm over the age of eighteen as well so it would be pretty pointless following them if I can't get in to any [laughter]*

*Extract 1: Interview 14, under 18, male*

*Int: Everyone else said no. Why don't you like or follow any?*

*F5: Can't get in [Laughter]*

*F1: Yeah true*

*F3: Yeah same.*

*F1: Yeah. That might change in like in a year's time but, for now, I don't know. In a way you could say that it makes you almost jealous because you're unable to do it - so what's the point of following it and seeing everyone else have a good time and being able to when you're not allowed to because you're under age?*

*Extract 2: Focus Group 11, under 18, females*

Although the majority of younger respondents reported that they did not currently 'follow' any venues on social media, some interview and focus group respondents aged under 18 indicated that this was something they planned to do in the future:

*M: Not yet but, I definitely see myself doing it in the future. If we all say, you know, if we like it or if we go to this club you then, know you, obviously go in and see who else is going to it*  
Extract 3: Interview 9, under 18, male

Two younger interviewees did report 'following' venues online, and four focus groups with under-18s had at least one group member who reported 'following' one or more venues. In all cases, these respondents reported 'following' venues because they went to bars and clubs despite being under 18. Obtaining information about cheap deals on the price of entry and on alcohol were the main reported reasons for 'following' venues:

*M: I just don't really have any reason to follow them. Like, if they put up pictures and I know I've been there recently I'll go and look on their page, but I don't. I won't follow them because I just don't have a reason to really*  
Extract 4: Interview 11, under 18, male

*F: Yes, I think I follow most of the bars or clubs in Bath 'cos, again it's, like, promotions and they, like, say what's going on and I don't really know how else you'd know. But if you'd go in and ask [laughter] but, yeah, I think that that's how everyone kind of knows what's where to go and when to go kind of thing*  
Extract 5: Interview 13, under 18, female

*Int: Do you ever like or follow any bars or clubs on social media?*

*F6: Yeah*

*F3: Yeah*

*Int: Why is it you do that?*

*F5: To get the deals*

*F3: Yeah*

*F6: Yeah*

*F4: Yeah*

*F6: To know what's going on basically*

*Extract 6: Focus Group 8, under 18, females*

The majority of respondents aged under 18 who reported following venues on social media were female (eight females compared to three males). There was a widespread assumption amongst younger respondents (especially males) that it was easier for underage women to get into clubs and bars compared to their male peers.

**Over-18s: The importance of club events on social media**

In contrast to the younger respondents, the majority of older respondents reported 'following' or 'liking' at least one club, pub or bar on social media. These were usually local venues close to where respondents currently lived, or from the towns in which they grew up, and most were venues they reported attending on a regular basis.

*F: So I follow quite a few [Laughter] But I don't really, look at them, I just I follow them because they invite you to like their pages. And I think generally when you see it and you're, like, 'Oh, I know that place. Oh, I'll like it', or whatever, you're not thinking 'Oh, I'm gonna look at this', but I do follow probably about five or six clubs*

*Extract 7: Focus Group 4, over 18, mixed-sex*

The young woman in extract 7 above is referring to a relatively passive form of engagement with social media posts by venues, in which she reportedly followed "five or six clubs", but then did not interact any further with posts by these venues. Throughout the interviews older respondents reported relatively little engagement with social media marketing by venues beyond following specific clubs or bars. They rarely reported checking-in at venues, or tagging venues in status updates. Some respondents reported not using their phones on nights out, which would prevent them from updating friends on a night out, taking photos, tagging themselves or friends at venues, or checking in:

*F: No, not really, I, don't ever do that [post status updates, or like/comment on friends' posts in clubs], I'm not sure why but, I just don't think it's necessary*

*Extract 8: Interview 3, over 18, female*

However, social media marketing related to *specific events* at these venues was the focus for considerable user engagement, and this provided an important social tool for our respondents. These events included one-off club nights, including parties involving celebrity guests or DJs, as well as regular 'nights' or events at these venues (see Figures 26 to 31). Some older respondents referred to more active forms of engagement with social media posts by venues, such as uploading photos after a night out, or 'commenting' in order to alert their (online) friends to particular deals, as outlined in extracts 9 and 10 below. We explore this process in greater detail in section 4.2.

F: *Sometimes I'll upload some pictures from a night out but I'll never tag a club in it. I only really use [it] to, like, put our names on the guest list. That's it really*  
Extract 9: Interview 3, over 18, female

F: *I'll comment [on club Facebook pages] if, like I said if we're if we're planning a night out I'll. I'll comment and tag my friends in the comments*  
Extract 10: Interview 1, over 18, female

## 4.2 All night long: Young people's engagement with social media marketing by venues

Social media marketing by venues played an important role in their drinking nights out. It was involved at all stages of a night out, from the planning stage, to the night of the event itself, and then the days and weeks subsequent to the event. Respondents aged 18 and over reported a range of ways in which they engaged with social media marketing by venues before, during and after events.

F: *[W]e'll use Facebook Messenger to tell people to come over and we'll, like, put our names on the guest list on the Facebook page because then you get cheaper entry, so in that way it [social media] does overlap [with drinking with friends] but, apart from that, not really, I mean, sometimes we will be in club photos on Facebook and we look at them, but they're normally horrible [laughter]. Or any other way would be, like, if we'd upload a picture from the night to Instagram or Facebook and, I think, pretty much everyone uses Snapchat*  
Extract 11: Interview 3, over 18, female

### Organising a night out: Following 'nights', 'liking' events, & signing up to guest lists

We asked respondents if they 'liked' or 'followed' clubs. While a majority said they did, this question missed a key feature of this practice: the important point of engagement for our respondents was 'liking' or 'following' *particular events* hosted by these venues, rather than 'following' the social media pages of venues *per se*. Sometimes this process involved 'following' venues, at other times 'following' club nights at venues, but most often it involved 'following' specific events. A minority of respondents also reported signing up to the pages of third-party promoters that forwarded club/event posts directly to their Facebook newsfeeds, thus negating the need to 'follow' venues' Facebook pages directly.



Respondents reported 'liking' or 'following' the social media pages of venues or events for a number of reasons: to get information about events; to sign up to guest lists (which often included cheap deals on drinks and free or discounted entry); to find out about promotions (sometimes related to alcohol deals, such as two for one or happy hours); to gauge interest in and popularity of an event (via number of people who click 'going to' an event); to organise the event amongst friends; and finally as an *aide memoire* regarding a forthcoming event or related to events they had previously attended.

F: *I do status updates very rarely, and 'drinking with friends' even less really, but if I do click 'going' in the Facebook event pages then of course it will turn up on my timeline, will turn up on people's [i.e. Her Facebook friends'] newsfeed*  
Extract 12: Interview 4, over 18, female

This respondent then described her reasons for clicking on 'going to' an event, and articulated a common view amongst older respondents, which applied equally to 'liking' or 'following' an event:

F: *Because that will keep me more updated. That will keep me updated on the latest things that have been posted on the club night. But things like whether there are still any tickets left, like guest lists is closed or, yeah, things like that*  
Extract 13: Interview 4, over 18, female

Indicating that one is 'going to', 'liking' or 'following' specific events enabled Facebook users to receive relevant information on their newsfeeds. They could receive details of club nights or events, find out about promotions, invite other friends, share information (through 'following' or 'liking') and get added to guest lists in a relatively passive form of social media engagement.

F: *I don't really look for events because [they] automatically come up cos we follow them. So I don't look for them they just come up on the timeline and then you can say, like, whether you're going or not and then you follow it more and they'll keep, like, updating you on it.*  
Extract 14: Interview 3, over 18, female

F: *You can click that you're interested and then you follow it more, like they'll post more updates on it. Whereas before you might not see it, you'd definitely see it if you said that you were going and that you were interested, and if you do that it comes up on other people's timelines as well so. I don't know. Maybe you could, like, get your friends to go if they saw that you were interested. Maybe that would make them want to go more*

*Extract 15: Interview 3, over 18, female*

Female respondents were more likely to discuss using the social media pages of venues when organising nights out. Our male respondents had less to say about this, and this may be because their nights out tended to follow a less planned and more spontaneous pattern (Lyons et al., 2016).

*F: Like if we've planned a night out I just, I don't really think about it. I automatically, I just say 'going', 'cos then it lets other people know that I'm going. Often people say when I've done that often people say to me 'Oh, shall we go together, like shall we have drinks before' and things like that so it's good in that sense and I use it, like, as well 'cos when my friends say they're going to an event, it's a lot easier to organise people when they're actually in an event which is good*  
*Extract 16: Interview 1, over 18, female*

Secondly, and of equal importance, is the role that this process played in choosing the location for a night out:

*Int: Do you ever find you look for deals or offers, on these sites?*

*F: Not not specifically but when I go and see where's the best place to go for a night out I'll look where they advertise. Like, 'Oh, £1 Jägerbombs' and things like that and I'm more inclined to go there than I am when it's like 'Oh, £1.50 Jägerbombs.' So, I suppose so. Yeah.*  
*Extract 17: Interview 1, over 18, female*

*M1: There was an event for Cahoosies the other night and they [Jägerbombs] were like £1.50 all night*

*F3: Oh yeah*

*M1: Or something like that, so*

*F1: Jägers they always use Jägerbombs, to try and get you to come*

*F3: It entices us and we're like 'Hmm...'*

*Extract 18: Focus Group 4, over 18, mixed sex*

The young woman in extract 17 begins by denying that she ever actively looks for deals or offers on venues' social media pages, but goes on to acknowledge that information about cheap deals on alcohol will probably influence her decision about where to go on a night out. In both extracts above respondents

refer specifically to cheap deals on Jägerbombs as key elements in social media marketing by venues that would attract their attention.

Despite seeing social media marketing by venues as a way of receiving information about cheap deals, including alcohol promotions, many respondents did not see this as alcohol marketing. This was because posts by venues were viewed as promoting themselves as bars or clubs, rather than advertising a specific alcohol brand:

*F: The alcohol specific accounts are definitely, more alcohol marketing than the clubs and stuff, 'cos the clubs are more about promoting themselves and their events rather than a specific brand of alcohol.*

*Extract 19: Interview 1, over 18, female*

Previous research indicates that many young people do not necessarily recognise online marketing by venues as advertising, viewing such material as useful information about where to obtain cheap alcohol (Lyons et al., 2014; Hutton et al., 2016).

### **Signing up for guest lists**

Respondents also signed up to guest lists as a way of obtaining deals for cheaper alcohol. These deals usually involved free or reduced price of entry to the venue and/or discounted drinks. This could also involve discounted entry for a group, maybe a free bottle of vodka and other offers as part of a 'VIP package' (see Figure 3 in Section 2).

*Int: You mentioned the guest list and cheaper drinks. So have you used it to get discounts, or anything?*

*F2: Yeah 'cos it gives you, if you put your name on a guest list on the club page, then you get cheaper entry*

*Extract 20: Focus Group 3, over 18, females*

*F: Yeah we do that pretty much, every time because you automatically get cheaper entry I think. It's not a huge difference but, I mean, any difference is fine [laughter] if it's cheaper it's good*

*Extract 21: Interview 3, over 18, female*

*F: If it was something that I really wanted to go to I would definitely, take the opportunity for a free ticket. Like, I don't want to pay £9 or £13 you know, so yeah, I would. I would. I'd do that.*

*Extract 22: Interview 1, over 18, female*

In extracts 20 to 22, respondents are referring to more active forms of engagement with social media posts by venues, primarily driven by the incentive to get cheaper alcohol and cheaper entry to venues, which were often included in the same 'deals'. Figures 26 to 31 illustrate the type of social media marketing posts from our sample that respondents are referring to in these interview extracts. Such posts would appear on the social media pages of users who 'follow' or 'like' venues prior to a specific club night or other event. Note that like Figure 22 in the previous section, Figure 29 below represents a crowd of anonymous club-goers at the Pryzm superclub during their night out in an atmosphere of hedonistic enjoyment.

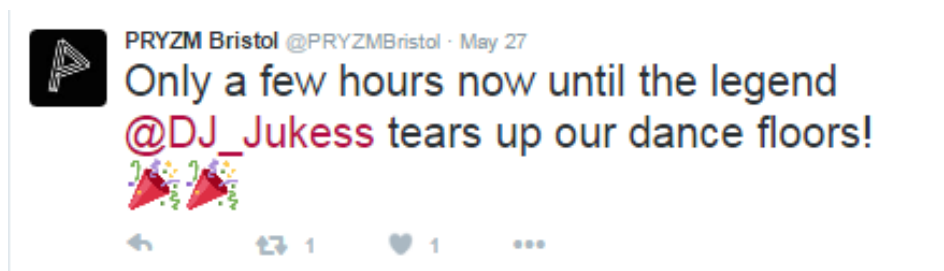
Figure 26: Pryzm on Twitter, pre-event information



Figure 27: Pryzm on Twitter, pre-event information



Figure 28: Pryzm on Twitter, pre-event information



**Figure 29 & 30: Pryzm Bristol on Facebook and Revolution Bath on Twitter, Happy Hour**



**Figure 31: Po Na Na on Facebook, sign-up to the guest list discounted entry & a free drink**



**During a night out: 'Some of the best Snapchats I receive are from drunk people'**

A minority of our respondents reported checking-in to venues during a night out or uploading their own photos to the social media pages of the venue or event (usually via their own Facebook pages):

*Int: Do you ever upload photos to social media of nights out?*

*F3: Yeah, all the time*

*F1: Yeah*

*F3: I'd say, our party had quite a few pictures didn't it?*

*F2: You just upload things on my Facebook, you'll just change my Facebook photo  
[Laughter]*

*F2: Of me [laughter]*

*F3: You uploaded a picture of me to the group as well. [Laughter]  
To the event  
Extract 23: Focus group 4, over 18, mixed-sex group*

This was a relatively unusual occurrence however, since almost all the images on venues' social media pages were taken in-house by the venues' photographers. Extract 23 illustrates the blurred boundary between young people's social media practices on their own private social media pages and the more public social media pages of venues. Such practices are likely to be less under their control when they are drunk. In addition, the social media landscape is subject to constant change, as reflected in the recent growth in popularity of more ephemeral and temporary platforms such as Snapchat.

Whenever respondents did discuss uploading photos during a night out, these would usually be shared via Snapchat. This image-messaging app was launched in 2011 and has grown in popularity in recent years, especially amongst young people. A key element of Snapchat is that images and messages are temporary, encouraging a light-hearted and more natural flow of communication, especially via the use of 'stories'. Snapchat has evolved into a mixture of private messaging and public content, including branded content such as sports and music. A recent survey of Snapchat use in the USA indicates that users still tend to access private messaging more than publicly offered content (Wallenstein and Ault, 2016).

*Int: Do you find that your social media use and drinking with friends overlaps in any way?*

F4: Yeah, on Snapchat I think, definitely

F3: Yeah, stories

Int: How is that?

F4: People make lots of stories if they go out. You're sure to see lots of pictures of everyone having a bit of a rave [Laughter] and if someone's, like, completely, plastered you'll probably see a photo of them, leaning against a toilet or something.

Extract 24: Focus Group 6, under 18, mixed sex group

F: I'd say some of the best Snapchats I receive are from drunk people doing drunken things. I wouldn't say it [social media use and drinking with friends] overlaps too strongly apart from maybe just documentation of the time when you were drunk. Maybe some promotional offers that you can acquire from social media.

Extract 25: Interview 5, over 18, female

These young women are referring to private posts shared between friends during their nights out: "drunk people doing drunken things". Such posts are distinct from the more widely shared and public images posted on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram by venues in our sample. The more temporary and private nature of platforms such as Snapchat appear to be associated with images of "everyone having a bit of a rave" that are shared with a more restricted and private group of friends. Many of the posts by superclub Pryzm in our sample referred to their account on Snapchat, encouraging their Twitter, Facebook and Instagram followers to 'follow' the venue on Snapchat, acknowledging young people's multi-platform engagement with social media (see Figure 32).

**Figure 32: Pryzm on Facebook**





## **After a night out: 'Sometimes we'll be in club photos on Facebook and we look at them'**

One of the most distinctive aspects of social media posts by venues was images of guests, who were primarily young people in the 18 to 25 age range. In some instances, these images were taken and uploaded by guests themselves, but most were taken by the club photographer with the guests' permission (see also section 2.3).

Figures 33 and 34 illustrate the type of marketing posts received by users who follow *Thursday Antics*, a regular 'night' at Pryzm in Bristol. Similarly, Figures 35 and 36 illustrate post-event photos from a night at Po Na Na in Bath. Users in these photos have the option of 'tagging' (or identifying) themselves, which will make the post visible to their network of online 'friends'. This could serve as a marketing tool for future events because their online 'friends' would be able to see which venues and events respondents had visited during their nights out. It is worth noting that these four sample posts include a total of 468 photos of young people, illustrating the potential reach of social media marketing by venues across their target population of youthful consumers.

Several respondents preferred to avoid tagging the venue or being tagged in such photos:

*Int: Would you ever tag yourself in club photos?*

*F: If it was a good picture, yeah, but I wouldn't tag it with the intention of people knowing like, 'Look I was at a club.' You know if it's a nice picture of me, or the people I was with, kind of thing, I think I'd be more likely to just save the picture and send it on, but if I wanted people to see it rather than tag myself in it*

*Extract 26: Interview 2, over 18, female*

*F: It depends on how I how I feel that I am presented in this photo [...] because if you're tagged in the photo then, it pops up in everyone's newsfeed and then it's like directly related to your profile. So if you're there looking like an absolute mess, it's fine that it's there because you know it happened and you know you can laugh about it, but it's choosing not to sort of advertise it or I might download it on my phone or my computer and then send it to someone privately. Most of the time I get whenever I get tagged in photos, like nine times out of ten, I just remove them because they're not my finest moments*

*Extract 27: Interview 5, over 18, female*

Research evidence from a similar study in New Zealand indicates that 'tagging' (and 'detagging') photos on social media after nights out is a highly gendered process, and is usually carried out by young women – and seen as 'women's work' by their male peers (Lyons et al., 2016). Young women were especially concerned not to look "an absolute mess" in such publicly shared images, preferring the more glamorous appearance of the posed photos in Figures 12, 13, 33 and 34 (Hutton et al., 2016).

## Figures 33, 34, 35, 36: Pryzm and Po Na Na on Facebook



## **Summary: Young people's views of and engagement with social media marketing by venues**

Our respondents reported more engagement with social media marketing by venues compared to online marketing by alcohol brands. We found that:

- A substantial minority of the older age group (39.5%: N=17) and 25.6% (N=11) of under-18s reported 'following' or 'liking' the social media pages of venues compared to only 9% who reported 'following' or 'liking' alcohol brands online in response to our demographic questions.
- Eight of the 11 under-18s who reported 'following' venues on social media were female.
- In focus groups and interviews, the majority of older respondents reported 'liking' or 'following' social media marketing related to *specific events* rather than the pages of venues per se.
- Most under-18s reported that they did not 'like' or 'follow' venues because they were too young to get into clubs and bars, although this was something they planned to do in the future.
- All the under-18s who reported 'liking' or 'following' one or more venues online did so because they went to bars and clubs despite being under age.

## **'All night long': Young people's engagement with social media marketing by venues**

Social media marketing by venues played an important role in young people's drinking nights out. It was involved at all stages of a night out, from the planning stage, to the night of the event itself, and then the period subsequent to the event.

- Older respondents reported 'liking' or 'following' the social media pages of venues or indicating they would 'go to' events to obtain information; sign up to guest lists; find out about promotions; gauge interest in the popularity of an event; organise an event amongst friends; and, finally, as a reminder about forthcoming events or events they had previously attended.
- Signing-up to the guest list of events on venues' social media pages was a way of obtaining deals for cheaper alcohol and/or entry to venues, and this more active form of engagement with online marketing by venues was primarily driven by the incentive to get cheap alcohol.
- Our older respondents also reported: 'commenting' on venues' social media pages in order to alert their (online) friends to particular deals; signing up to the pages of third-party promoters that forwarded club/event posts directly; and a minority reported checking-in to venues during a night out or uploading their own photos to the social media pages of the venue or event (usually via their own Facebook pages).

- One of the most distinctive aspects of social media posts by venues was images of guests, who were primarily young people in the 18 to 25 age range. Some of these images were uploaded by guests themselves, but most were taken by the club photographer with the guests' permission. Several respondents preferred to avoid 'tagging' the venue or being 'tagged' in such photos.
- Our respondents referred to using platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to post more 'respectable' content related to nights out drinking. They identified Snapchat as the main source of "drunken" posts that could be shared with a more restricted group of friends and as more temporary and ephemeral than platforms such as Facebook.

## SECTION 5: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

Venues and alcohol brands are selling different commodities, and using social media marketing for different reasons. Alcohol brands want people to buy and consume their products, whilst venues aim to attract guests to come to their bars and clubs.

Social media marketing by the alcohol brands in our sample represented drinking as ubiquitous, integral to socialising with friends and to celebrations – and of course, as ‘fun’. Marketing practices called on consumers to engage with social media posts via specific campaigns (e.g. the Jägermeister Road Trip), and especially via sponsored events and ‘branded drinking spaces’ at festivals, as well as using competitions and other offers. Representations of alcohol consumption were less central in social media marketing by venues, but drinking still played an important role in venues’ posts given the focus on ‘cheap deals’ and ‘VIP packages’. Particular types of alcohol (e.g. “free bottle of vodka” or cheap “shots”) or specific brands (e.g. Ciroc vodka, Jäger bombs) usually formed part of such offers. Offers related to VIP packages were more aspirational, associating particular venues with specific, more upmarket alcohol brands or products.

Online marketing by alcohol brands did not always take full advantage of the marketing opportunities offered by social media. The alcohol brands in our sample employed relatively traditional marketing tactics, alternating specific promotion campaigns with periods of inactivity. The most distinctive form of online marketing by alcohol brands involved the promotion of *branded drinking spaces* at music festivals, clubs and bars. This enabled alcohol marketers to target young consumers by sponsoring music events with predominantly youthful audiences, representing drinking as an activity associated with fun, silliness and escape. Sponsorship of such branded drinking spaces provides a potential source of increased engagement with young people for alcohol brands. However, our respondents reported relatively little interaction with alcohol brands online, and posts involving promotions of this kind (eg. The Jägermeister Road Trip) did not appear to have increased user-engagement ratios. This would be a fruitful area for further research.

Key marketing practices by venues called on young consumers to engage with posts in a wide variety of ways, from ‘liking’ or ‘following’ the social media pages of venues, club nights or events to find out about cheap deals on alcohol or venue entry; joining guest lists to take advantage of such offers; appearing in photos uploaded by in-house club photographers; and ‘tagging’ (or ‘detagging’) photos after nights out. This indicates that online marketing by venues is a key player in young people’s nights out, shaping their decisions about where to go and documenting some aspects of their drinking and socialising. Considerations of price formed a crucial element in planning nights out for our older respondents. This illustrates the ways in which online marketing by venues engaged with young people’s drinking cultures, reinforcing the

social norm of drinking to intoxication through offers of cheap alcohol that were mentioned by a majority of our respondents.

The relative dearth of 'responsible drinking' messages in our sample of online marketing by alcohol brands and venues was exacerbated by the circulation of some posts that encouraged 'irresponsible drinking'. In 2009, the European Forum for Responsible Drinking (EFRD) published 'Guidelines for Commercial Communications on the Internet, for Digital and Mobile Marketing', which called for the inclusion of responsible drinking messages in all marketing by alcohol brands, accompanied by references to dedicated responsible drinking websites (Eurocare, 2009).

Influential marketing theorist Doug Holt has argued that a key sign of success in brand marketing occurs when brands "break-through in popular culture", since "branding is a set of technologies designed to generate cultural relevance" (Holt, 2016, p.42). The key aims of online (and offline) marketing by alcohol brands and venues are partly to increase market share and generate brand loyalty, but also to purchase a place in popular culture, moving into the everyday interactions that make up consumers' social lives. Our study investigates whether and how online marketing by alcohol brands and venues might engage with young people, "breaking through" into their drinking cultures and social lives via social media.

Social media marketing by venues appeared to offer a more effective means of "break[ing] through into popular culture" compared to online marketing by alcohol brands, as reflected in the greater level of engagement shown by our respondents. Online marketing by venues played an important role in young people's drinking nights out, and was involved at all stages from the planning stage, to the night of the event itself, and then the period subsequent to the event.

It is important to consider the role of social media marketing by alcohol brands and venues in wider cultural context. Other important platforms for the online marketing of specific alcohol brands are celebrity endorsements via Twitter in particular, and highly visible product placement in Youtube videos by pop, rock and hip hop artists (Cranwell et al., 2016). We found some overlap between these fields in venues' promotion of club nights or events by named DJs and alcohol brands' sponsorship of particular bands, for example. Exploring potential connections between different types of social media marketing by alcohol brands and venues via different online platforms would be a beneficial area for further research.

Existing research has identified the many challenges of regulating online marketing by alcohol brands (see Jernigan, 2012; Brodmerkel and Carah, 2013), but there has been no equivalent examination of the effectiveness of regulating social media marketing by venues aimed at young people. There are a number of problems with the UK Code of Advertising Practice as it

currently stands. The first is that the system is a reactive process, with the ASA responding to complaints and then adjudicating on these submissions. This requires far more time than is appropriate in the highly ephemeral and fast-moving social media environment. In the case of the upheld complaint against the TrocStar venue mentioned in Appendix 1 for example, the venue apologised and removed the advert from their Facebook page. Since the advert related to an event on a specific date it only had a limited time of usefulness for the venue. TrocStar was only required to remove the offending advert long after that moment had passed, rendering the 'punishment' of little or no importance.

A form of regulation that only requires the removal of a social media post is likely to have minimal impact on venues. Alcohol brands may be more concerned about the impact of an ASA ruling on company reputation, but the actual cost of producing social media material is limited compared to the costs involved in producing adverts for broadcast advertising. There is also no regular or systematic monitoring of social media marketing by alcohol brands or venues to ensure that they are abiding by the Code.

The ASA effectively applies the same code of conduct for traditional offline advertising to marketing via digital platforms. One important consideration is whether this is sufficient given the very different nature of social media marketing. Firstly, digital marketing is not a broadcast medium in the sense that the general public do not necessarily witness the adverts to lodge complaints about them. Secondly, the pace of change is very rapid in the digital realm, in terms of technological advances, the availability of online platforms and their affordances, and the ways in which users (especially young people) interact with such platforms. Thirdly, the notion of a 'watershed' beyond which time advertising that is accessible to children and young people might be broadcast is now meaningless given the 24 hour availability and accessibility of online material. Finally, the use of age confirmation portals to ensure that those accessing online sites are 18 or over is now widely recognised as ineffective. These points all raise important questions about the effectiveness of the current system of the regulating social media marketing to young people by alcohol brands, and especially by venues.

Although social media marketing posts by alcohol brands are likely to be more accessible to the general public, relatively few people beyond a youthful user group are likely to witness posts by venues. A number of the posts in our sample would probably not be acceptable within the terms of the UK Advertising Code of Practice, but they are unlikely to generate complaints since their audience is limited. The sheer volume of images of young guests posted on the social media pages of venues (especially young women in glamorous poses) may also contravene the Advertising Code of Practice, since many appear to be under 25.



Complaints about adverts on social media platforms that potentially breach the UK Advertising Code of Practice are therefore less likely, especially if aimed at young people aged 18 to 25. In addition, regulatory codes have not been reviewed since at least 2009 (see the Portman Group digital advertising guidelines). This is well before the emergence of digital and mobile technologies such as smartphones and more interactive forms of user engagement, so this material is likely to be out of date.

In this context we propose the following series of actions arising from the results of our study:

- Existing regulations on digital marketing relating to alcohol in the UK require a comprehensive review in order to ascertain whether they are fit for purpose. This review should include online marketing by venues as well as alcohol brands, and consider the ways in which young people above and below the legal age for purchasing alcohol engage with such material.
- The current system for regulating online marketing needs to become more proactive. The ASA could, for instance, conduct regular reviews of current online marketing by alcohol brands and venues attracting consumers in the 15 to 18 age range, and identify any adverts that breach the Advertising Code of Practice
- A systematic review of the extent and nature of 'responsible drinking' messages in social media marketing related to alcohol, with a view to the systematic inclusion of such messages in such material. It is important to include social media marketing by venues in any such review.

## REFERENCES

- Alhabash, S., McAlister, A.R., Quilliam, E.T., Richards, J.I., & Lou, C. (2015). Alcohol's getting a bit more social: When alcohol marketing messages on Facebook increase young adults' intentions to imbibe. *Mass Communication and Society*, 18(3): 350-375.
- Ali, M. & Dwyer, D. (2010). Social network effects on alcohol consumption among adolescents. *Addictive Behaviors*, 35(4): 337-342.
- Anderson, P., de Bruijn, A., Angus, K., Gordon, R., & Hastings, G. (2009). Impact of alcohol advertising and media exposure on adolescent alcohol use: A systematic review of longitudinal studies. *Alcohol and Alcoholism*, 44(3): 229-243.
- Atkinson, A. et al. (2011). *Young People, Alcohol and the Media*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Atkinson, A. et al. (2013). Young people's perspective on the portrayal of alcohol and drinking on television: Findings of a focus group study. *Addiction Research and Theory*, 21(2): 91-99.
- Atkinson, A., Ross, K.M., Begley, E. & Sumnall, H. (2014). *Constructing Alcohol Identities: The Role of Social Network Sites (SNS) in Young People's Drinking Cultures*. Alcohol Research UK/Centre for Public Health, John Moores University, Liverpool: ARUK Final report.
- Atkinson, A., Ross-Houle, K.M., Begley, E. & Sumnall, H. (2016). An exploration of alcohol advertising on social networking sites: an analysis of content, interactions and young people's perspectives. *Addiction Research and Theory*, 25(2): 91-102.
- Australian Medical Association (2012). *Alcohol Marketing and Young People: Time for a New Policy Agenda*. AMA report.
- Babor, T. F., Caetano, R., Casswell, S., Edwards, G., Giesbrecht, N., Graham, K., ... Rossow, I. (2010). Alcohol: No ordinary commodity – A summary of the second edition. *Addiction*, 105: 769–779.
- Bailey, L. & Griffin, C. (2017). Social locations: Class, gender and young people's drinking cultures in a digital world. In: A.C. Lyons et al. (ibid.)
- Bayer, J. B., Ellison, N. B., Schoenebeck, S. Y., & Falk, E. B. (2016). Sharing the small moments: ephemeral social interaction on Snapchat. *Information, Communication & Society*, 19(7), 956-977.

Beer, D. & Burrows, R. (2010). Consumption, prosumption and participatory web cultures. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 10 (1): 3-149.

Bengry-Howell, A., Szmigin, I.T., Morey, Y., Griffin, C. & Riley, S. (2017). Socio-spatial authenticity at co-created music festivals. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 63, 1-11.

Bewick, B.M., Mulhern, B., Barkham, M., Trusler, K., Hill, A.J. and Stiles, W.B. (2008). Changes in undergraduate student alcohol consumption as they progress through university. *BMC Public Health*, 8: 163-170.

Boyd, D. (2007). Why youth (heart) social network sites: The role of networked publics in teenage social life. In D. Buckingham (Ed.) *MacArthur Foundation Series on digital Learning – Youth, Identity and Digital Media Volume*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Boyd, D. (2012). Social network sites as networked publics: Affordances, dynamics and implications. In: Z. Papacharissi (ed.) *A Networked Self: Identity, Community and Culture on Social Network Sites*. New York: Routledge.

Boyd, D. (2014). *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*. New York: Yale University Press.

Boyd, D.M. & Ellison, N. B. (2008). Social network sites: Definition, history and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13: 210-230.

Bradshaw, T. (2011). Facebook strikes Diageo advertising deal. London. *Financial Times*, 18 September. Retrieved from <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/d044ea24-e203-11e0-9915-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3wiLn7wyi>

Brain, K. (2000). *Youth, Alcohol and the Emergence of the Post-modern Alcohol Order*. Occasional paper No. 1. London: Institute of Alcohol Studies.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2): 77-101.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners*. London: Sage.

Briggs, D., Turner, T., David, K. & De Courcey, T. (2011). British youth abroad: Some observations on the social context of binge drinking in Ibiza. *Drugs and Alcohol Today*, 11(1): 26-35.

Brodmerkel, S., & Carah, C. (2013). Alcohol brands on Facebook: the challenges of regulating brands on social media. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 13(3): 272-281.

Brooks, O. (2010). "Routes to magic": The Alcohol Beverage Industry's Use of New Media in Alcohol Marketing. University of Stirling: Institute for Social Marketing.

Bucher, T. (2012). Want to be on the top? Algorithmic power and the threat of invisibility on Facebook. *New Media & Society*, 14: 1164-1180.

Bulmers, (2015). 'Bulmers is at the Isle of Wight Festival!' <http://www.bulmers.co.uk/bulmers-is-at-the-isle-of-wight-festival/> , post dated 11/6/2015: accessed 20/4/2017.

Burton, S., Dadich, A.& Soboleva, A. (2013). Competing voices: Marketing and counter-marketing on Twitter. *Journal of Non-Profit and Public Sector Marketing*, 25: 186-209.

Carah, N. (2015). Algorithmic brands: A decade of brand experiments with mobile and social media. *New Media & Society*, 19(3): 384-400.

Carah, N. (2015). *Like, Comment, Share: Alcohol Brand Activity on Facebook*. Queensland, Australia: Foundation for Alcohol research and Education: University of Queensland.

Carah, N., Brodmerkel, S., & Hernandez, L. (2014). Alcohol branding, drinking culture and Facebook. *Convergence*, 20(3): 259-275.

Chester, J. et al. (2010). *Alcohol Marketing in the Digital Age*. Berkeley Media Studies group.

Coulson, N. (2015). *Online Research Methods for Psychologists*. London: Palgrave.

Cranwell, J., Britton, J. and Bains, M. (2016). "F\*ck it! Let's get drinking – poison our lives!": A Thematic analysis of alcohol content in contemporary Youtube music videos. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*,

Dadich, A.M. et al., (2013). Promotion of alcohol on Twitter. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 199(5): 327-327.

De Bruijn, A. et al. (2012a). *Report on the Impact of European Alcohol Marketing Exposure on Youth Alcohol Expectancies and Youth Drinking*. Alcohol Measures for Public Health Research Alliance (AMPHORA) project.

De Bruijn, A. et al., (2012b). *Commercial Promotion of Drinking in Europe*. Alcohol Marketing Monitoring in Europe (AMMIE) project.

De Bruijn, A. et al. (2016). European longitudinal study on the relationship between adolescents' alcohol marketing exposure and alcohol use. *Addiction*, 111: 1774-83.

De Visser, R. & McDonnell, E.J. (2011). "That's OK, he's a guy": A mixed-methods study of gender double-standards for alcohol use. *Psychology and Health*, 1-22.

Diageo (2015, July 29). Full year results 2015: Year ended 30 June 2015. [Webcast]. Retrieved from <http://cache.merchantcantos.com/webcast/webcaster/4000/7464/7468/49680/Lobby/default.htm>

Eurocare (European Alcohol Policy Alliance) (2009). EFRD publishes new 'Guidelines for Commercial Communications on the Internet, for Digital and Mobile Marketing. Retrieved from: [http://www.eurocare.org/media\\_centre/eurocare\\_newsletter/2009/march\\_april\\_2009/alcohol\\_industry\\_news/efrd\\_publishes\\_new\\_guidelines\\_for\\_commercial\\_communications\\_on\\_the\\_internet\\_for\\_digital\\_and\\_mobile\\_marketing](http://www.eurocare.org/media_centre/eurocare_newsletter/2009/march_april_2009/alcohol_industry_news/efrd_publishes_new_guidelines_for_commercial_communications_on_the_internet_for_digital_and_mobile_marketing)

European Centre for Monitoring Alcohol Marketing (EUCAM) (2009). *Alcohol Advertising in New Media: Trends in Alcohol Marketing*. EUCAM report.

Evans, G. (2012). Hold back the night: Nuit Blanche and all-night events in capital cities. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 15(1-2), 35-49.

Fuchs, C. (2010). Labor in informational capitalism and on the internet. *The Information Society*. 26: 179-196.

Goodwin, I., Lyons, A., Griffin, C. and McCreanor, T. (2014). Ending up online:@ Interrogating mediated youth drinking cultures. In: A. Bennett and B. Robards (eds.) *Mediated Youth Cultures: The Internet, Belonging and New Cultural Configurations*. London: Palgrave.

Goodwin, I., Griffin, C., Lyons, A., McCreanor, T. and Moewaka Barnes, H. (2016). Precarious popularity: Facebook drinking photos, the attention economy, and the regime of the branded self. *Social Media and Society*. 2(1): 1-13.

Goodwin, I. and Griffin, C. (2017). Neoliberalism, alcohol and identity: A symptomatic reading of young people's drinking cultures in a digital world. In: A.C. Lyons, T.N. McCreanor, I. Goodwin and H. Moewaka Barnes (eds.) *ibid*.

Gordon, R. (2010). An audit of alcohol brand websites. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 30(6): 638-644.

Griffin, C., Szmigin, I.T., Hackley, C., Mistral, W. & Bengry-Howell, A. (2009). "Every time I do it I absolutely annihilate myself": Loss of (self)-consciousness and loss of memory in young people's drinking narratives. *Sociology* 43(3):457-476.

Griffin, C., Szmigin, I., Bengry-Howell, A., Hackley, C. and Mistral, W. et al. (2013). Inhabiting the contradictions: Hypersexual femininity and the culture of intoxication among young women in the UK. *Feminism and Psychology*, 23(2): 184-206.

Griffin, C., Bengry-Howell, A., Riley, S., Morey, Y. & Szmigin, I. (2017). "We achieve the impossible": Discourses of freedom and escape at music festivals and free parties. *Journal of Consumer Culture*.

Griffiths, R. & Casswell, S. (2010). Intoxigenic digital spaces: Youth, social networking sites and alcohol marketing. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 29(5): 525-530.

Grogan, S. (2016). *Body Image: Understanding Body Dissatisfaction in Men, Women and Children*. London: Routledge.

Hastings, G. et al., (2010). Alcohol advertising: The last chance saloon. *British Medical Journal*, 340: 184-186.

Hibell, B., et al. (2004). *The ESPAD Report 2003: Alcohol and Other Drug Use Among Students in 35 European Countries*. Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, Stockholm.

Hoffman, E.W., Pinkleton, B.E., Weintraub Austin, E. & Reyes-Velázquez, W. (2014). Exploring college students' use of general and alcohol-related social media and their associations with alcohol-related behaviors. *Journal of American College Health*, 62(5): 328-335.

Holt, D. (2016). Branding in the age of social media. *Harvard Business Review*, March: 41-50.

Home Office. (2012). *The Government's Alcohol Strategy*. London: HMSO.

HSCIC (Health and Social Care Information Centre). (2015). *Statistics on Alcohol: England, 2015*. [www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB17712/alc-eng-2015-reo.pdf](http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB17712/alc-eng-2015-reo.pdf)

Huang, G.C. et al. (2013). Peer influences: the impact of online and offline friendship networks on adolescent smoking and alcohol use. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.adohealth.2013.07.001>

Hubbard, P. (2011). Carnage! Coming to a town near you? Nightlife, uncivilised behaviour and the carnivalesque body. *Leisure Studies*, 1-18.

Hutton, F., Wright, S. & Saunders, E. (2013). Cultures of intoxication: Young women, alcohol and intoxication. *Contemporary Drug Problems*, 40, 451-480.

Hutton, F., Griffin, C., Lyons, A., Niland, P. and McCreanor, T. (2016). "Tragic girls" and "crack whores": Alcohol, femininity and Facebook. *Feminism and Psychology*. 26(1): 73-93.

Hymowitz, N. (2015, March 13). Pernod Ricard's YouTube moment: The French distiller turns to social media to help boost sales. Retrieved from <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-03-12/pernod-ricard-turns-to-social-media-for-sales-boost>

Jernigan, D., (2012). Who is minding the virtual alcohol store? *Archives of Paediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 166(9): 866-868.

Jernigan, D., & Rushman, A. (2014). Measuring youth exposure to alcohol marketing on social networking sites: Challenges and prospects. *Journal of Public Health Policy*, 35(1), 91-104.

Leyshon, M. (2011). *New Media, New Problem? Alcohol, Young People and the Internet*. London: Alcohol Concern.

Lovatt, M., Eadie, D., Meier, P., Li, J., Bauld, L., Hastings, G. & Holmes, J. (2015). Lay epidemiology and the interpretation of low-risk drinking guidelines in the UK. *Addiction*, 110(12), 1912-1919.

Lyons, A.C., McCreanor, T., Hutton, F., Goodwin, I., Moewaka Barnes, H., Griffin, C., Vroman, K., O'Carroll, D., Niland, P. & Samu, L. (2014). *Flaunting it on Facebook: Young Adults, Drinking Cultures and the Cult of Celebrity*. Wellington, NZ: Massey University School of Psychology.

Lyons, A.C., Goodwin, I., McCreanor, T., & Griffin, C. (2015). Social networking and young adults' drinking practices: Innovative qualitative methods for health behavior research. *Health Psychology*, 34(4): 293-302.

Lyons, A., Goodwin, I., Griffin, C., McCreanor, T. and Moewaka Barnes, H. (2016). Facebook and the fun of drinking photos: Reproducing gendered regimes of power. *Social Media and Society*. Special issue on 'Making Digital Cultures of Gender and Sexuality with Social Media'. July-September: 1-13.

Lyons, A.C., McCreanor, T.N., Goodwin, I. and Moewaka Barnes, H. (eds.) (2017). *Youth Drinking Cultures in a Digital World: Alcohol, Social Media and Cultures of Intoxication*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge Studies in Public Health.

Lyons, A.C. & Willott, S. (2008). Alcohol consumption, gender identities and women's changing social positions. *Sex Roles* 59: 694-792.



Mart, S. et al. (2009). Alcohol promotion on Facebook. *Journal of Global Drug Policy and Practice*, 3: 1-8.

McCreanor, T., Moewaka Barnes, H., Kaiwai, H., Borrell, S. & Gregory, M (2008). Marketing alcohol to young people in Aotearoa New Zealand: creating and maintaining intoxicogenic environments. *Social Science and Medicine*, 76: 938-94

McCreanor, T., Lyons, A., Griffin, C., Goodwin, I., Moewaka Barnes, H., & Hutton, F. (2013). Youth drinking cultures, social networking and alcohol marketing: Implications for public health. *Critical Public Health*. 23(1): 110-120.

Measham, F. & Brain, K. (2005). "Binge" drinking, British alcohol policy and the new culture of intoxication. *Crime, Media and Culture*, 1(3), 262-283.

Moraes, C., Michaelidou, N., & Meneses, R. W. (2014). The use of Facebook to promote drinking among young consumers. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 30(13-14): 1377-1401.

Moreno, M.A. et al. (2010). A content analysis of displayed alcohol references on a social networking site. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 47: 168-175.

Moreno, M.A., & Whitehill, J.M. (2015). Influence of social media on alcohol use in adolescents and young adults. *Alcohol Research: Current Reviews*, 36(1): 91-100.

Morey, Y., Bengry-Howell, A., Griffin, C., Szmigin, I. and Riley, S. (2014). Festivals 2.0: Consuming, producing and participating in the extended Festival experience. In: A. Bennett, I. Woodward and J. Taylor (eds.) *The Festivalisation of Culture*. Ashgate.

Mosher, J. F. (2012). Joe Camel in a bottle: Diageo, the Smirnoff brand, and the transformation of the youth alcohol market. *American Journal of Public Health*, 102(1): 56-63.

Moth, D. (2013). Ten innovative digital marketing campaigns from Diageo brands. <https://econsultancy.com/blog/63593-10-innovative-digital-marketing-campaigns-from-diageo-brands>.

Nhean, S., Nyborn, J., Hinchey, D., Valerio, H., Kinzel, K., Siegel, M. & Jernigan, D. H. (2014). The frequency of company-sponsored alcohol brand-related sites on Facebook™ –2012. *Substance Use & Misuse*, 49(7): 779-782.

Nicholls, J. (2012). Everyday, everywhere: Alcohol marketing and social media-current trends. *Alcohol and Alcoholism*, 47(4): 486-493.



Niland, P., Lyons, A. C., Goodwin, I., & Hutton, F. (2014) 'See it doesn't look pretty does it?' Young adults' airbrushed drinking practices on Facebook. *Psychology & Health*, 29(8): 877-895.

Niland, T., McCreanor, T., Lyons, A. and Griffin, C. (2016). Alcohol marketing on social media: Young adults engage with marketing moments on Facebook. *Addiction: Research and Theory*. [doi/full/10.1080/16066359.2016.1245293](https://doi.org/10.1080/16066359.2016.1245293)

Ofcom, (2008). *Social Networking: A Quantitative and Qualitative Research Report into Attitudes, Behaviours and Use*. London: Office of Communications.

Ofcom, (2016). *Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report*. London: Office of Communications.

Office for National Statistics (2016). 'Adult Drinking Habits'. Office for National Statistics.

[www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationand/community/healthandsocialcare/drugalcoholandsmoking/datasets/aduldrinkinghabits](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationand/community/healthandsocialcare/drugalcoholandsmoking/datasets/aduldrinkinghabits)

Papacharissi, Z. (2009). The virtual geographies of social networks: A comparative analysis of Facebook, LinkedIn and ASmallWorld. *New Media and Society*, 11 (1&2): 199-220.

Papacharissi, Z. (2011). *A Networked Self*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Purves, R.I., Stead, M., & Eadie, D. (2014). "What are you meant to do when you see it everywhere?" *Young People, Alcohol Packaging and Digital Media*. Alcohol Research UK: Final report.

Quigg, Z. et al. (2013) Student drinking patterns and blood alcohol concentration in commercially organised pub crawls in the UK. *Addictive Behaviors*, 38: 2924-2929.

Raine, L. et al. (2012). *Photos and Video as Social Currency Online*. Pew Research Center Internet and American Life Project.

Ridout, B. et al. (2011). 'Off your Face(book)': Alcohol in online social identity construction and its relation to problem drinking in university students. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 31(1): 20-26.

Room, R. (1975). Normative perspectives on alcohol use and problems. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 5: 358-368.

Rose, G. (2012). *Visual Methodologies*. London: Sage.

Saffer, H. (2015), "Alcohol advertising and heavy drinking", in *Tackling Harmful Alcohol Use: Economics and Public Health Policy*, OECD Publishing, Paris. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264181069-9-en>

Savic, M., Room, R., Mugavin, J., Pennay, A. & Livingston, M. (2016). Defining "drinking culture": A critical review of its meaning and connotation in social research on alcohol problems. *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy*, 23(4):270-282.

Socialbakers, (2013) Alcohol and automotives lead user engagement rates on Facebook. <http://www.socialbakers.com/blog/>

Supski, S., Lindsay, J. and Tanner, C. (2016). University students' drinking as a social practice and the challenge for public health. *Critical Public Health*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09581596.2016.1190001> .

Understanding Society (2013). *Main survey*. Economic and Social Research Council. [www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/documentation/mainstage](http://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/documentation/mainstage)

Wallenstein, A. & Ault, S. (2016). Snapchat content survey: How much millennials actually use live stories, discover and more". *Variety*, March 24.

Weaver, E.R. et al. (2013). "Let's get wasted!" and other apps: Characteristics, acceptability and use of alcohol-related smartphone applications. *JMIR Mhealth Uhealth*, 1(1):1-11.

Wigmore, T. (2015). The strange death of boozy Britain: Why are young people drinking less? *New Statesman*, 9 October.

Williams, B. (2008). "What South Park character are you?": Popular culture, literacy and online performances of identity. *Computers and Composition*, 25: 24-39.

Willott, S. & Lyons, A. (2011). Consuming male identities: Masculinities and alcohol consumption in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*. DOI: 10.1002/casp.1115

Wilson, R.O., Gosling, S.D., & Graham, L.T. (2012). A review of Facebook research in the social sciences. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. 7(3): 203-220.

Winpenny, E. M., Marteau, T. M., & Nolte, E. (2014). Exposure of children and adolescents to alcohol marketing on social media websites. *Alcohol and Alcoholism*, 49(2): 154-159.

Wybron, I. (2016). *Youth Drinking in Transition*. London: Demos.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Upheld complaints against social media marketing by alcohol brands and venues

1. In 2013 the ASA upheld a complaint against Fireball whiskey which adopted a user-submitted image which "glorified the idea that the man had consumed a large amount of alcohol, and therefore promoted excessive drinking". In this case the images had been sent in to the brand following the request: "What are your Fireball stories from the weekend (or any weekend)? Best ones win Fireball freebies!" The responses were posted and included comments including. "Last week went to Las Vegas and saw guns n roses play for 3 and a half hours. Thanks to the bottle of fireball I had beforehand I only remember the first 7 songs"; "HAD FIREBALL + APPLE J AND SPEWED IN A BUSH. FREEBIE?" and "Went back to the bar so many times for some Fireball and Apple Juice the guy sold me the bottle so I could have it at my table instead. Fair to say, my memory is hazy. Woke up hugging said bottle, and my shoes in the shower" (<https://www.asa.org.uk/rulings/Hi-Spirits-Ltd-A12-217339.html> ).
2. In 2014 the ASA upheld a complaint against Hold Fast Entertainment which had asked people to 'like' and 'share' to win a VIP Jägermeister night out because the company could not demonstrate that the final audience of the advert comprised at least 75% over the age of 18 (<https://www.asa.org.uk/rulings/Hold-Fast-Entertainment-Ltd-A14-266434.html>).
3. In 2014 a complaint against Budge brand's post on Twitter was upheld. The ad showed the cropped body of a woman with '#TasteThe Bush' over her clothed torso. Followers were requested to retweet to win a case of wine. The ASA considered that the cropped image accompanied by the caption referring to the woman's genitalia reduced her to a sexual object and that the request to retweet was likely to amplify the offence (<https://www.asa.org.uk/rulings/budge-brands-ltd-a15-311127.html>).
4. In 2014 a complaint was upheld against the venue TrocStar in South Shields in the North East of England. TrocStar's Facebook page featured an image of two women drinking from large glasses and the following text "'Got yourself drunk at Trocs? Woke up in someone else's bed? Walk of shame? F\*ck that it's the stride of pride!" (<https://www.asa.org.uk/rulings/camerons-brewery-ltd-and-trocaderos-south-shields-a14-269470.html>). Although the venue apologised and removed the advert from their Facebook page, the advert was for a specific date and so it was only of value to the venue for a limited time.
5. The most recent upheld complaint against a venue in this area concerns a Facebook post for Bristol venue Coco Beach in April 2017. This included a

picture of a female with her head tilted back, her mouth wide open, her tongue extended out of her mouth and liquid being dropped in her eye with the accompanying text "FREE BUBBLY & VIP FOR GROUPS DISCOUNTED DRINKS & BIG TUNES ALL NIGHT." An event invitation for the Coco Beach Monday club night seen on the complainants Facebook feed included the same picture as above with the accompanying text "Nice artwork ... haha leaving to the imagination whats [sic] out of shot!" (<https://www.asa.org.uk/rulings/harvey-herdman-a17-385560.html> ).



## Appendix 2: Social Survey to select sample of alcohol brands, venues and social media platforms

A social survey of young people in the 18 to 24 age range was conducted in January and February 2015. The sample comprised 137 male and female students at universities in South West England, who were asked to list their favourite three bars and clubs in the local area, along with bars and clubs they did not like, and the reasons for their choices. They were also asked about the alcohol brands they typically consumed, their use of social media sites and any engagement with alcohol brands or local bars and clubs via social media pages. A focus group workshop was also carried out with 10 student respondents to discuss these findings in greater depth.

From these initial data, the most popular brands mentioned were Smirnoff vodka (31%), Jaegermeister (15%) and Gordons Gin (15%). However, most respondents reported drinking the cheapest products on offer or unbranded drinks, rather than any specific brands. Hardly anyone mentioned following alcohol brands on social media (0.6%), and a number of local clubs and bars were mentioned as favourite venues to follow online. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram emerged as the most popular social media sites, with all respondents reporting that they used Facebook, followed by 68% using Instagram and 33% using Twitter. Respondents stated that they were more likely to follow venues online rather than brands in order to gain free or cheap entry, discounts on drinks and to find out about forthcoming events, as well as to look at and tag or de-tag photos posted on the club social media pages.

## Appendix 3: 'Long list' of 14 alcohol brands and 11 venues used to select final sample

**Table 1: The 14 alcohol brands**

Brand	Type of drink	% Alcohol by Volume	Comments
Budweiser	Lager beer	4.8% (can/bottle; 4.3% (draught)	Manufacturer: Anheuser-Busch InBev
Bulmers	Cider	4.5%. Various fruit-flavoured apple & pear ciders launched since 2011	Somerset-based family firm Bulmers now a brand name & subsidiary of Heineken group
Captain Morgan	Rum	Products vary, up to 50%	Owned by Diageo.
Dragon Soop	Alcoholic energy drink. Fortified schnapps drink, high caffeine (35%), blended with Taurine & Guarana	8%	Produced by Corinthian brands Ltd, Knaresborough, Yorkshire.
Echo Falls	Wine	9 – 11%	Range of fruit flavours. Owned by global Accolade Wines group, based in California, Australian ownership.
Frosty Jack	Cider	7.5%	White cider, produced by Aston Manor breweries, Birmingham
Grey Goose	Vodka	40%	Originally produced in France, now owned by Bacardi, part of Diageo group.
Jagermeister	Spirit	35%	Herbal based liqueur, produced by German Mast-Jagermeister company. Widespread sponsorship of heavy metal bands/festivals and motor sport
Lambrini	Perry	Original: 7.5%, most 5%	Marketed like wine, but cheaper. Produced in Liverpool by Halewood International from 1994
Malibu	Rum flavoured with liqueur. Many different flavours available	21%	Now owned by Pernod Ricard group, produced in Barbados
Moet & Chandon	Champagne	12%	Moet is co-owner of luxury goods company LVMH.

			M&C produced by Moët Hennessy, joint venture between Diageo & LVMH.
Smirnoff	Vodka	35% - 50%	Produced by Diageo, originated in Moscow. Wide range of vodka-based products available
WKD	Vodka-based alcopop /RTD (Ready to drink)	4%, originally 5.5%, dropped to 5% in 2003.	Launched in Scotland as 'Wicked' in 1996 in 330ml bottles, later dropped to 275ml and 700ml.

**Table 2: The 11 venues**

<b>Venue</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Type of venue</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
The Beach	Trowbridge	Club	Independent
The Big Chill	Bristol	Bar	Independent
Bunker	Bristol	Late night bar/club	Independent *
The Cork	Bath	Bar	Independent
MBargo	Bristol	Late night bar/club	Independent
Po Na Na	Bath	Club	Independent
Pryzm	Bristol	Superclub	Chain *
Second Bridge	Bath	Club	Independent
Syndicate	Bristol	Superclub	Chain
Vodka Revolution	Bristol	Bar	Chain
Vodka Revolution	Bath	Bar	Chain

\*The Big Chill and Pryzm have both closed since the study was conducted

## Appendix 4: Coding Frame for analysis of social media marketing practices and themes

**Table 3: Coding Frame for analysis of social media marketing practices in social media posts**

<b>Codes: Practices</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>A1: Ask fans/followers to do something</b>	<p>Posts which call on fans to do something:</p> <p><b>A1.1</b> – Asking fans to like, comment, retweet or share a post, follow a page or friend on Snapchat</p> <p><b>A1.2</b> – Posts that ask fans a question – with an answer</p> <p><b>A1.3</b> – Posts that ask fans a rhetorical question – ‘wouldn’t you like to do X?’</p> <p><b>A1.4</b> – Posts that ask fans to go to brand/venue website and get something</p> <p><b>A1.5</b> – Polls. “Which one is your fave?”</p> <p><b>A1.6</b> - Competitions that asked people to create content or answer questions</p> <p><b>A1.7</b> – Asking fans to book/reserve seats/guestlist places</p>
<b>A2: Real World Tie ins</b>	<p>Refers to a branded event (festival, sporting event etc.) or something the brand does in ‘real life’. This content can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posts promoting brand-sponsored events or campaigns.</li> <li>• Photo albums from branded events.</li> <li>• Videos promoting brand-sponsored events or campaigns.</li> </ul>
<b>A3: Like Advertisements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole images including images or videos which appear like an advert, including product/venue image and logo</li> <li>• As above but specifically for a new product/flavour</li> <li>• Including updated cover photos or profile pictures</li> </ul>
<b>A4: Consumption Suggestion</b>	<p><b>A4.1</b>- Posts that suggest consumption methods for the product involving drinking games</p> <p><b>A4.2</b> - Posts that suggest consumption methods for the product, including cocktail and food recipes. Associations with other products (sweets, snacks, foods).</p>
<b>A5: Association between drinking &amp; specific times and/or events</b>	<p>Posts that link a particular time or event to drinking. This most often involved posts about drinking after work, on the weekends, or on public holidays.</p>
<b>A6: Competition</b>	<p><b>A6.1</b> - Posts that promote or give details about a competition.</p> <p><b>A6.2</b> – Posts that promote or give details about a competition where the prize involves alcohol.</p>
<b>A7: Images of consumers</b>	<p><b>A7. 1</b> - Brand/venue-generated images of models posing as consumers</p>



	<b>A7.2</b> - Brand/venue-generated images of consumers, eg. photos taken by club photographer <b>A7.3</b> – Uploaded user-generated images of consumers.
<b>A8: Responsibility</b>	Posts or messages that promote responsible consumption or feature a Drinkaware logo or message.
<b>A9: Information re. distribution &amp; availability</b>	Distribution strategies and locations, stockists, promotions involving pubs, special pricing offers.
<b>A10: Tagging</b>	Brands or venues tag users into posts. **
<b>A11: Retweets</b>	Brands or venues retweet or share images featuring their products, events, themed nights or offers.
<b>A12: Association with other products, pages etc.</b>	<b>A12.1</b> - Brands or venues 'like', share or retweet other pages, products or locations they feel reflect their values. <b>A12.2</b> – Venue posts making an association with an alcohol brand (eg. as prize in competition, part of VIP package)
<b>A13: Demonstrating engagement</b>	Posts where the brand or venue demonstrates an interest in individuals by responding to their comments.
<b>A14: Timescale of events at venues</b>	Code posts by <b>venues</b> for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relating to past event (e.g. previous night's photos)</li> <li>• Relating to current events (e.g live post or viral content)</li> <li>• Relating to future events (e.g. upcoming events)</li> </ul>

\*\* For venues, this usually involves users tagging themselves in photos they post onto social media sites, but it could also involve venues tagging users. It is not possible to distinguish between these two possibilities from our data.

**Table 4: Coding Frame for analysis of themes in social media posts**

<b>Codes: Themes</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>B1: Cultural Identity</b>	Posts where brand or venue creates a distinct identity: <b>B1.1</b> – Invoking masculine or feminine norms and values; and/or mainly male or female consumers <b>B1.2</b> – Where the brand or venue invokes a sense of traditions or heritage connected with a place or way of life. <b>B1.3</b> – Where the brand or venue positions itself as part of everyday activities or cultural pastimes such as sporting events or national holidays. <b>B1.4</b> – Where the brand is associated with a particular drinking environment (outdoors, nightclub, home, festivals?). Not applicable to venues. <b>B1.5</b> - Brand or venue associates itself with a certain lifestyle, e.g. interested in a 'balanced lifestyle'. <b>B1.6</b> – Aspirational lifestyle including VIP events. <b>B1.7</b> – Associations with sex. <b>B1.8</b> – Association with friendship & social group bonding.

<b>B2: Humour</b>	Posts where brands or venues craft a personality by displaying a sense of humour by posting viral images, videos and jokes.
<b>B3: Popular Culture</b>	Posts where brand or venue crafts a personality by displaying a sense of taste in music, sport, film or television programs, famous people, celebrities (including music and sports people), and circulating memes.
<b>B4: Music</b>	Posts where brands engage with popular music. This includes music mixes, information about gigs and festivals.
<b>B5: Sport</b>	Posts relating to sporting events.
<b>B6: Vernacular/Informal language</b>	<b>B6.1</b> - Posts where brands use certain terms or informal language in a bid to appeal to a specific population. <b>B6.2</b> – Posts involving emojis.

## Appendix 5: Social media marketing practices and themes in posts by alcohol brands and venues on all three social media platforms

**Table 5: Social Media Marketing Practices in Posts by Alcohol Brands on each SMS**

Social Media Marketing Practices Codes	No. and % for each SMS			Total
	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	No. and %
A1.1: Ask to like, comment, share, follow, retweet etc	4 14.3%	9 6.1%	2 6.5%	15 7.2%
A1.2: Ask fans a question – with an answer	1 3.6%	4 2.7%	0 0%	5 2.4%
A1.3: Ask rhetorical question: 'wouldn't you like to...?'	7 25%	19 12.8%	5 16.1%	33 18.2%
A1.4: Ask fans to go to website and get something	3 10.7%	14 9.5%	0 0%	17 8.2%
A1.5: Polls: 'which one is your fave?'	0 0%	1 0.7%	0 0%	1 0.5%
A1.6: Competitions that ask fans to create content	3 10.7%	3 2%	2 6.5%	8 3.9%
A1.7: Ask fans to book/reserve seats or guestlist places	1 3.6%	4 2.7%	1 3.2%	6 2.9%
A2: Real World Tie-Ins	12 42.9%	69 46.6%	20 64.5%	101 48.8%
A3: Advertisements	12 42.9%	22 14.9%	12 38.7%	46 22.2%
A4.1: Consumption ideas re. Drinking games	0 0%	1 0.7%	1 3.2%	2 1%
A4.2: Consumption ideas re. Cocktails, food etc.	7 25%	27 8.2%	7 22.6%	41 19.8%
A5: Association between drinking & specific times and/or events	11 39.3%	44 29.7%	8 25.8%	63 30.4%
A6.1: Competition details	2 7.1%	9 6.1%	2 6.5%	13 6.3%
A6.2: Competition details with alcohol as prize	1 3.6%	3 2%	1 3.2%	5 2.4%
A7.1: Images of models posing as consumers	4 14.3%	8 5.4%	2 6.5%	14 6.8%
A7.2: Brand/venue- generated images of consumers	5 17.9%	10 6.8%	11 35.5%	26 12.6%
A7.3: User-generated images of consumers	0 0%	3 2%	0 0%	3 1.4%
A8: Responsibility	1 3.6%	2 1.4%	0 0%	3 1.4%
A9: Information Re. distribution & availability	13 46.4%	61 41.2%	14 45.2%	88 42.5%
A10: Tagging users into posts	1 3.6%	6 4.1%	1 3.2%	8 3.9%

A11: Retweets/share images	0 0%	60 40.5%	0 0%	60 29%
A12.1: Association with other products, pages	1 3.6%	46 31.1%	1 3.2%	48 23.1%
A12.2: Association with alcohol brand: as prize, in VIP package	1 3.6%	2 1.4%	3 9.7%	6 2.9%
A13: Demonstrating engagement with users: respond	6 21.4%	4 2.7%	2 6.5%	12 5.8%
A14: Timescale of events: past/current/future	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
<b>Total no. posts (excluding videos &amp; memes)</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>207</b>

**Table 6: Themes in Social Media Marketing Posts by Alcohol Brands on each SMS**

Social Media Marketing Themes Codes	No. and % for each SMS			Total
	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	No. and %
B1.1: Masculine/feminine norms/consumers	8 8.6%	24 16.2%	6 19.4%	38 18.4%
B1.2: Sense of tradition or heritage	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
B1.3: Everyday activities: sport, bank holidays	4 4.3%	12 8.1%	1 3.2%	17 8.2%
B1.4: Link to drinking environment: home, festivals, outdoors, nightclub	14 50%	89 60.1%	18 58.1%	121 58.5%
B1.5: Link with particular lifestyle	3 0.7%	7 4.7%	2 6.5%	12 5.8%
B1.6: Link with aspirational lifestyle	0 0%	3 2%	1 3.2%	4 1.9%
B1.7: Associations with sex	1 3.6%	2 1.4%	1 3.2%	4 1.9%
B1.8: Association with friendship/group bonding	3 10.7%	9 6.1%	2 6.5%	14 6.8%
B2: Display sense of humour	2 7.1%	8 5.4%	1 3.2%	11 5.3%
B3: Display taste in popular culture: sport, celebs	4 14.3%	29 19.6%	2 6.5%	35 17%
B4: Engage with popular music: festivals, gigs	7 25%	46 31.1%	9 29%	62 30%
B5: Posts relating to sporting events	3 10.7%	2 1.4%	2 6.5%	7 3.4%
B6.1: Posts use vernacular/informal language	14 50%	55 37.2%	12 38.7%	81 39.1%
B6.2: Posts involving emojis	9 32.1%	26 7.6%	6 19.4%	41 19.8%
<b>Total no. posts (excluding videos &amp; memes)</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>207</b>

**Table 7: Social Media Marketing Practices by Venues on each SMS**

Social Media Marketing Practices Codes	No. and % for each SMS				Total
	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram		No. and %
A1.1: Ask to like, comment, share, follow, retweet etc	13 7.8%	20 0.4%	1 10%		34 18.8%
A1.2: Ask fans a question – with an answer	1 1.4%	3 3.1%	0 0%		4 2.2%
A1.3: Ask rhetorical question: 'wouldn't you like to...?'	12 6.4%	18 8.4%	3 30%		33 18.2%
A1.4: Ask fans to go to website and get something	5 6.8%	2 2%	3 30%		10 5.5%
A1.5: Polls: 'which one is your fave?'	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%		0 0%
A1.6: Competitions that ask fans to create content	1 1.4%	1 1%	0 0%		2 1.1%
A1.7: Ask fans to book/reserve seats or guestlist places	15 0.5%	21 1.4%	3 30%		39 21.5%
A2: Real World Tie-Ins	1 1.4%	1 1%	0 0%		2 1.1%
A3: Advertisements	13 7.8%	15 5.3%	5 50%		33 18.2%
A4.1: Consumption ideas re. Drinking games	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%		0 0%
A4.2: Consumption ideas re. Cocktails, food etc.	10 3.7%	1 1%	1 10%		12 6.6%
A5: Association between drinking & specific times and/or events	14 9.2%	22 2.4%	2 20%		38 21%
A6.1: Competition details	1 1.4%	2 2%	2 20%		5 2.8%
A6.2: Competition details with alcohol as prize	1 1.4%	4 4.1%	1 10%		6 3.3%
A7.1: Images of models posing as consumers	0 0%	1 1%	0 0%		1 0.6%
A7.2: Brand/venue- generated images of consumers	23 1.5%	4 4.1%	0 0%		27 15%
A7.3: User-generated images of consumers	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%		0 0%
A8: Responsibility	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%		0 0%
A9: Information Re. distribution & availability	18 4.7%	23 3.5%	2 20%		43 23.8%
A10: Tagging users into posts	9 2.3%	5 5.1%	2 20%		16 8.8%
A11: Retweets/share images	0 0%	19 9.4%	0 0%		19 10.5%
A12.1: Association with other products, pages	2 2.7%	7 7.1%	0 0%		9 5%
A12.2: Association with alcohol brand: as prize, in VIP package	7 9.6%	9 9.2%	1 10%		17 9.4%

A13: Demonstrating engagement with users: respond	1 1.4%	0 0%	0 0%	1 0.6%
A14: Timescale of events: past/current/future	40 4.8%	50 51%	6 60%	96 53%
<b>Total no. posts (excluding videos &amp; memes)</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>181</b>

**Table 8: Themes in Social Media Marketing Posts by Venues on each SMS**

<b>Social Media Marketing Themes</b>	<b>No. and % for each SMS</b>			<b>Total</b>
<b>Codes</b>	<b>Facebook</b>	<b>Twitter</b>	<b>Instagram</b>	<b>No. and %</b>
B1.1: Masculine/feminine norms/consumers	15 20.5%	1 1%	1 0%	17 9.4%
B1.2: Sense of tradition or heritage	0 0%	2 2%	0 0%	2 1.1%
B1.3: Everyday activities: sport, bank holidays	2 2.7%	5 5.1%	0 0%	7 3.9%
B1.4: Link to drinking environment: home, festivals, outdoors, nightclub	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
B1.5: Link with particular lifestyle	3 4.1%	1 1%	0 0%	4 2.2%
B1.6: Link with aspirational lifestyle	17 23.3%	15 15.3%	2 20%	34 18.8%
B1.7: Associations with sex	2 2.7%	1 1%	1 10%	4 2.2%
B1.8: Association with friendship/group bonding	25 34.2%	11 11.2%	0 0%	36 19.9%
B2: Display sense of humour	5 6.8%	7 7.1%	0 0%	12 6.6%
B3: Display taste in popular culture: sport, celebs	2 2.7%	6 6.1%	0 0%	8 4.4%
B4: Engage with popular music: festivals, gigs	23 31.5%	18 18.4%	2 20%	43 23.8%
B5: Posts relating to sporting events	2 2.7%	1 1%	0 0%	3 1.7%
B6.1: Posts use vernacular/informal language	32 43.8%	35 35.7%	3 30%	70 38.7%
B6.2: Posts involving emojis	19 26%	58 59.2%	5 50%	82 45.3%
<b>Total no. posts (excluding videos &amp; memes)</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>181</b>

## Appendix 6: Information Sheet for Individual Interviews in Schools

### **Who am I?**

My name is Samantha Garay and I work in the Department of Psychology at the University of Bath. This project is looking at alcohol advertising online and what young people think about it. The project is funded by Alcohol Research UK.

### **What is this study about?**

Thank you for taking part in the discussion group and for agreeing to take part in this next part of the project. I am looking for people to take part in an interview with online access. In this interview I would like to talk to you about some examples of alcohol marketing on social media as well as your own social media use. I am interested in how you use social media, especially when it comes to planning spending time with your friends and what you think of alcohol brands and bars and clubs online.

### **What would I need to do?**

I would like you to come along to an interview where we would talk about topics such as how you use social media before, during and after spending time with your friends, alcohol brands and bars and clubs that you 'like' or follow online and what you think of social media alcohol marketing. I will bring along a laptop so that I can show you some examples of online alcohol marketing I would like to hear what you think of. If you are happy to do so, I would also like you to log on to your Facebook profile and we can talk about how you use social media using examples from your profile that you are happy to talk about. There are no right or wrong answers – I just want to hear what you think. The interview itself will last about 30-40 minutes and will take place at a time that suits you. The interview will take place in a private room at your school or another suitable local public location. The discussion will be recorded so that I can catch everything that you say and listen to it again later. I will also make a recording of the pages online that we visit during the session so I can link these up with what you have talked about.

After completing the interview you will be given a £10 gift voucher to thank you for taking part.

### **Do I have to take part?**

Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary, and you are free to make your own choice about whether you want to take part. If you agree to take part you can choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to and you are free to leave at any time.

### **What will happen to the online recording?**

The pages that we look at will be screen recorded and kept on a secure file. If there are any photographs, status updates or anything else on your profile that you wish me to delete from the recording just let me know and I will make sure this happens. Any information from your Facebook page that is recorded will be anonymised so that no person can be recognised from it (e.g. I will block out names, locations and blur faces in photographs). You are in charge of what we look at and should only show me parts of your profile that you are happy to talk about. We will not use any photographs or anything that could identify you from your Facebook page in our final report.

### **What will happen to the information I provide?**

Should you decide to take part the interview it will be audio recorded. These recordings will then be typed up and the files stored on an encrypted password-protected computer. Anything that could identify, including your name, will be removed. These documents will not be linked to any contact details that you provide and will be stored separately so you cannot be identified. The only exception to this is if you tell me that you are at serious risk to yourself or someone else, in which case I will have to inform an appropriate person (e.g. teacher).

Once the project is completed, the information you have given to me will be kept safely by the University of Bath. If you allow it, it may be used by other researchers, with the University of Bath's approval, but your name, or anything else that might identify you, will never be used or given to anyone.

### **What will happen to the results of this research?**

What you tell me will inform our project on how young men and women talk about alcohol marketing and social media. I may use some examples of what you have told me, however these would not identify you to anyone. The findings of the research may also be published in research journals or used in presentations. If you would like to be sent a summary of the findings, we can arrange for this.

### **What do I do if I would like to take part or have any more questions?**

You can contact me, Samantha Garay, to arrange a suitable time or to discuss any questions you might have. I am a researcher from the Psychology Department at University of Bath  
Email – smg27@bath.ac.uk    Phone – 0xxxxxxx3

You can also speak to the supervisor of the project, Professor Christine Griffin  
Email – c.griffin@bath.ac.uk    Phone – 0xxxxxxx3



Our address is: Department of Psychology, University of Bath, Claverton  
Down, Bath, BA2 7AY

Many thanks for taking the time to read this. I would be delighted if you  
would be willing to take part.

## Appendix 7: Consent Form for Individual Interview

This form is to make sure that you are happy with everything that will happen in the interview.

Please tick each box to show you agree with the following statements:

- ☐ I have read and understood the information sheet that describes the study, and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- ☐ I agree to take part in an audio recorded interview. I give permission for extracts to be used for research purposes, including research publications and presentations, with strict preservation of anonymity.
- ☐ I understand that the social media content accessed during this interview will be recorded using screen capture software. All recordings will be anonymised so that my name and identifying features will be removed and that any social media content from my profile will not be used in the final report or any publications and presentations. I am aware that I should only show the researcher aspects of my profile I am happy to discuss. I can ask for any aspect of the recording to be removed.
- ☐ I agree that interview recordings will become the property of the University of Bath.
- ☐ I understand that I do NOT need to answer any questions that I do not wish to and that I may stop the interview at any time without giving a reason for withdrawing from the project.
- ☐ I understand and agree that the information from the interview may be made available to genuine researchers in the future, and that this would be overseen by the University of Bath and will be in accordance with their strict rules of confidentiality.
- ☐ **I hereby consent to take part in this study and agree that my participation has been fully explained to me.**

Signed..... Date.....

## Appendix 8: Demographic information form

**PLEASE GIVE US A FEW DETAILS ABOUT YOURSELF...**

<b>Staff Use</b> <b>Group &amp; ID</b> <b>Number</b>				
<b>Are you</b>		<b>Male?</b>		<b>Female?</b>
<b>Age</b>				
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
<b>Postcode</b>				
<b>Occupation</b>				
<b>Highest level of education</b>				

<b>Please tell us about your current living situation. Do you live...</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>With parents?</b>		
<b>In University accommodation?</b>		
<b>With flatmates/friends?</b>		
<b>By yourself?</b>		
<b>With a partner/spouse?</b>		

**If other please describe**

.....

**Which Social media sites do you use (please order from most frequently used)**

.....

**Do you like or follow any alcohol brands or local bars or clubs/clubnights on social media? Please list below**

.....

**Do you drink alcohol? (please circle)**                      **Yes**                      **No**

**If yes, please turn over and complete the diary on the next page (over 18s only)**

For each day of the week please tell us how many of the following drinks you have had in the past 7 days

	PINTS (BEER, LAGER, CIDER ETC)	SMALL GLASS WINE	LARGE GLASS WINE	MEASURE OF SPIRITS (VODKA, GIN, WHISKY ETC)	OTHER (PLEASE DESCRIBE)
MONDAY					
TUESDAY					
WEDNESDAY					
THURSDAY					
FRIDAY					
SATURDAY					
SUNDAY					

THANKS!

## Appendix 9: Focus Group Schedule

Thank you all for agreeing to take part in this project. We are interested in finding out more about young people's experiences of alcohol marketing on social media sites. We would like to know more about what social media sites you use, what you think of alcohol brand marketing on social networking sites, and your opinions on bar and club marketing online. We are using group discussions as a way to find out more about what you think about these areas. There are no right or wrong answers. We are just interested in finding out more about your own personal opinions and experiences.

Go through information sheet; Go through consent form and get signed; Background information

Rules of the focus group (confidentiality, privacy of group, speak loudly and clearly, try not to talk over each other, you are experts please give us as much detail as possible and feel free to question each other).

### **Introductory topics/ Drinking Behaviour generally**

- Do you drink alcohol?
- Where would you normally drink? (e.g. outside, in the house, bars, clubs?) Do you have any favourite places? Places you don't like? Why is that?
- Who do you usually go with?
- Do you have any drinks you especially like? Don't like? Why do you like them/don't like them? What would you normally drink? Would this change depending on who you are with/where you are?

### **Drinking Occasions**

- Can you tell me about a typical night out and what you would usually do? (i.e. where? who with?) (Prompts - organising, getting ready, clothes wear, transport, places visited, alcohol use, preloading, after parties, getting home etc?). Would this be different depending on the night (e.g. casual drinks, big night out, special occasion?). In what way?
- Can you tell me about a good night out you have had? What made it good?
- Can you tell me about a bad night out you have had? What made it bad?

### **Social Media Use**

- What social media sites do you use? What do you use them for? Do you use different sites in different ways?

### **Social Media Sites and Alcohol**

- Does your social media use and your drinking with friends overlap in any way? (e.g. look for places to go, organising nights out, checking in, uploading photos, looking for photos, getting discounts). Why do you do this/not do this?
- Have you ever seen any alcohol marketing online? Can you give me some examples you have seen?
- Do you like or follow any alcohol brands on social media sites? Why/why not? Ever interact with them? In what way? Why/why not?
- Do you like or follow any bars or clubs on social media sites? Why/why not? Ever interact with them? In what way? Why/why not? (Prompt – Ever had your picture taken by a nightclub photographer? Experiences of this?)
- Good things about alcohol marketing online? Anything you don't like about them?

### **Social Media Alcohol Marketing Examples (for over 18s groups only)**

- I'd like to show some examples of alcohol brand and bar and club pages on social networking sites. I'd like you to tell me what you think of them. Do you recognise this? What do you notice about them? What do you like? What do you not like? What 'image' do you think they are trying to project? Would this make you more likely or less likely to drink this/go there? Why/why not?
- Would you consider any of these to be alcohol marketing? Why/why not?

### **Ending**

- Is there anything you think I haven't covered that you would like to add?
- Have you got any questions for me? How was the group discussion for you?

Debrief respondents, give out vouchers, ask about interviews, thank respondents.

## Appendix 10: Interview Schedule

### Introduction and Thanks

Thank you agreeing to take part in this part of the study. We are interested in your use of social media sites and information on alcohol products, events, and bars and clubs and how you might use social media when planning, during, and after drinking occasions. I would like you to guide me through your use of the web and social media sites regarding alcohol and bar and club marketing. I'd like you to go to some sites I think are interesting but I'd also like you to show me sites that you use and like too. It would also be great if we could look at your own social media profile if you would be happy to do this and if you could talk me through some of the pages you like and follow and chat about content you have posted during your own drinking occasions. You are in charge of the sites and content we look at and please only show me content from your own profile that you are happy discussing. I will make a screen recording of everything we look at to help me remember what we talked about but this recording will not be used in any reports, publications or presentations. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your opinions and experiences in your own words.

Go through information sheet; Go through consent form and get signed

### Introductions and basic information

- Do you drink alcohol? Reasons for drinking/not drinking?
- Can you tell me where you go out drinking? Who with? How often?
- Do you have any favourite places? Places you don't like? Why is that?
- Do you have any drinks you especially like? Don't like? Why/why not?
- What social media sites do you use? What do you use them for? Use different sites in different ways? What do you like about them/not like about them?
- Does your social media use and your drinking with friends overlap in any ways? (e.g. looking for where to go, looking for offers, attending events, checking in, taking photos, looking for photos, status updates, commenting etc)? Tell me more about this? Why/why not do you do this?
- Have you ever seen any alcohol marketing online? Examples?
- Do you like or follow any alcohol brands on social media? Why/why not?
- Do you like or follow any bars or clubs on social media? Why/why not?
- Do you ever check in at bars/clubs/events? Why/why not?

### Social Media Marketing: Their Examples (over 18s only)

- In this next part I'd like you to take charge of the laptop and talk out loud about what you are doing. I'd like you to show me some examples of alcohol or bar and club marketing that you are aware of on social media. I'd like you to talk me through what is on the screen and what your opinion is of them. Are you aware of any recent posts on your newsfeed (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)? What was it? (Clubs, bars, brands). Did you respond to these posts? Why/Why not? Did others respond? Why do you think this was on your newsfeed? (Prompt with the venues/brands previously mentioned)
- I'd like you to show me some examples of the alcohol brands or bars and clubs that you like or follow. Again I would like you to talk me through what is on the screen. Why have you liked/followed these particular examples? What do you think of them? Like/dislike? Have you interacted with the pages in any way? Why/why not? Why do other people interact with them? Can you show me the pages of events that you have attended? How did you decide to go? Have you ever tagged a venue or brand in any of your posts/photos? Have you ever tagged yourself in nightclub photographer/event photos? Do you ever see your friends in these photos?

### **Social Media Marketing: Our Examples (over 18s only)**

- I'd like to show you some examples of alcohol, bar and club pages on social media. I'd like you to have a look at these sites and tell me what you think of them. Do you recognise them? What do you notice? What grabs your attention? What image do you think they are trying to portray? Like/dislike? Would you ever interact with them? Do your friends interact with them? Would they make you more or less likely to use them?

Venues (Facebook) – Second Bridge (local)

Revolution (chain)

Brands (Twitter) – Jagermeister

Lambrini

- Would you consider any of the pages you have shown me or I have shown you to be alcohol marketing? Why/why not?

Is there anything you think I haven't covered that you would like to add?

Have you any questions for me?

Thank you for taking part in this study.



## Appendix 11: Debriefing Information

Thank you for taking part in this project which has been investigating the advertising of alcohol to young people on social media. Your contribution is very much appreciated. Although this project is not focused on 'problems' related to drinking, we are aware that some of the people who take part in this project may find information and about safe drinking and where to get advice on alcohol-related matters useful. Below is a list of organisations and websites that may contain information useful to you.

Radio 1 – Onelife (lots of information on drugs and alcohol)

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/advice/drink\\_drugs](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/advice/drink_drugs)

Unitcheck ([www.unitcheck.co.uk](http://www.unitcheck.co.uk)) and NHS Alcohol Unit Calculator (<http://www.nhs.uk/Tools/Pages/Alcohol-unit-calculator.aspx>)

See how many units are in the alcohol you drink, check if the amount you are drinking is risky for your health and see how many people drink a similar amount to you.

The Site (general information for young people on drinking and drugs and other issues)

<http://www.thesite.org/drinkanddrugs/drinking>

Alateen – support service for young people (aged 12 -20) whose lives have been or are affected by someone else's drinking.

<http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk/alateen>

Thank you again for participating. If you would like to speak to us about the project please get in touch.

Email – [smg27@bath.ac.uk](mailto:smg27@bath.ac.uk) Phone – 0xxxxxxx3

You can also speak to the supervisor of the project, Professor Christine Griffin

Email – [c.griffin@bath.ac.uk](mailto:c.griffin@bath.ac.uk) Phone – 0xxxxxxx3

Our address is: Department of Psychology, University of Bath, Claverton Down Bath, BA2 7AY

.....

I confirm I have received a voucher to the value of £10 for participating in the University of Bath project 'Young people, alcohol marketing and social media'

Signed.....

Date.....

Researcher's signature.....

Date.....

## Appendix 12: Information on focus group respondents

**Table 9: Demographic information on focus group respondents**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Gender of group</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1</b>	Over 18: 21 - 23	Uni A	Mixed sex	1	3	4
<b>2</b>	Over 18: 4 x 21	Uni A	Mixed sex	2	2	4
<b>3</b>	Over 18: 4 x 18	Uni B	Female	4	-	4
<b>4</b>	Over 18: 19 - 24	Uni B	Mixed sex	3	2	5
<b>5</b>	Over 18: 3 x 20	Uni A	Male	-	3	3
<b>6</b>	Under 18: 16 - 17	School A	Mixed sex	4	2	6
<b>7</b>	Under 18: 16 - 17	School A	Mixed sex	3	3	6
<b>8</b>	Under 18: 16 - 17	School A	Female	6	-	6
<b>9</b>	Under 18: 16 - 17	School A	Male	-	5	5
<b>10</b>	Under 18: 4 x 17	School B	Female	4	-	4
<b>11</b>	Under 18: 16 - 17	School B	Female	6	-	6

## Appendix 13: Information on interview respondents

**Table 10: Demographic information on interview respondents**

<b>Interview</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Gender</b>
<b>1</b>	Over 18	Uni B	Female
<b>2</b>	Over 18	Uni B	Male
<b>3</b>	Over 18	Uni B	Female
<b>4</b>	Over 18	Uni A	Female
<b>5</b>	Over 18	Uni A	Female
<b>6</b>	Over 18	Uni A	Female
<b>7</b>	Over 18	Uni B	Female
<b>8</b>	Under 18	School A	Male
<b>9</b>	Under 18	School A	Male
<b>10</b>	Under 18	School A	Female
<b>11</b>	Under 18	School A	Male
<b>12</b>	Under 18	School A	Male
<b>13</b>	Under 18	School A	Female
<b>14</b>	Under 18	School A	Female
<b>15</b>	Under 18	School A	Male
<b>16</b>	Under 18	School A	Female
<b>17</b>	Under 18	School A	Female
<b>18</b>	Over 18	Uni A	Female
<b>19</b>	Over 18	Uni A	Female
<b>20</b>	Over 18	Uni A	Female
<b>21</b>	Over 18	Uni A	Male
<b>22</b>	Over 18	Uni A	Male