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United Breaks Guitars

On July 8, 2009, United Airlines offered professional musician Dave Carroll \$1,200 in cash and \$1,200 in flight vouchers to 'make right' a situation in which his guitar had been damaged at Chicago's O'Hare airport during transfer from one airplane to another, in full view of passengers seated in the plane.

Carroll had spent 15 months seeking compensation, but the effort appeared to have reached an impasse when a United Airlines customer service representative told him that the airline had concluded that the damage was Carroll's responsibility and that she considered the matter closed. He replied that in that case he would be composing three songs about his experience and posting them to the video-sharing site YouTube. The first song was posted on July 6, 2009. At the same time, he wrote a blog entry detailing the ordeal and posted the link to the YouTube video on his Twitter account. Within a week the video had been viewed three million times, and United Airlines had reached out to Carroll to offer the compensation.

Online and offline media helped propagate the story. On July 22, 2009, The Times of London wrote that "the gathering thunderclouds of bad PR caused United Airlines' stock price to suffer a mid-flight stall, and it plunged by 10 per cent, costing shareholders \$180 million."¹ Hundreds of news reports repeated the story of how a single poorly handled customer complaint had, thanks to the power of social media, cost the company \$180 million. News channel CNN urged viewers, "Anyone who's ever been frustrated with an airline needs to see this video."² The first song, "United Breaks Guitars," began to be referred to as the complaint anthem of airline travelers, and Carroll was called the Accidental Chief Marketing Officer of United Airlines. His catchy melody stuck in people's minds.

Carroll observed, "It's been said that in the old days (maybe only a decade ago) that people who had a positive customer service experience would share that with 3 people. If they had a bad experience, they would tell 14. . . . [A]s of today I have reached more than 6 million people on YouTube with my story and, according to some estimates, some 100 million people if you total all media references."³

By October 2009, the video seemed to have receded from the public mind. Worldwide viewings had slowed to 5,000 a day, and traffic to the websites of Dave Carroll and his band, Sons of Maxwell, had declined from 150,000 unique visitors a month in July 2009 to 2,000 in October. And yet evidence suggested that Carroll's song had had a more persistent influence on perceptions of the United Airlines brand. British blogger Peter Cochrane recounted an incident that took place in October 2009 on a shuttle bus from his hotel to New York's JFK airport. "Barely awake," wrote Cochrane, "I heard the driver call for airlines and terminals. Someone piped up 'United' and the immediate rejoinder from the rest of the passengers was a chorus of the song 'United Breaks Guitars.'"⁴

Just what was the significance of this incident to a brand like United Airlines? Could its scale have been anticipated or influenced? How, when, and how much could the brand have reacted? And looking forward, what contingency planning would be appropriate? Was this kind of incident the responsibility of brand management, customer service management, or media and public relations, or did responsibility lie elsewhere in the organization?

United Airlines

With close to 50,000 employees and more than 3,300 flights per day, United Airlines was one of the largest international airlines based in the U.S.⁵ Since deregulation of the industry in 1978, airlines had been unconstrained by pricing and scheduling mandates. Deregulation initially yielded profits for the airlines, but profitability soon gave way to cycles of losses.

In common with all major airlines, United Airlines struggled with competitive fare slashing and high fuel costs. In December 2002, United filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. Its losses for the year totaled \$3.21 billion. In 2003, it took further measures to trim operational costs, including a workforce reduction of 20%, renegotiation of salaries, and outsourcing of maintenance services, and its yearly loss decreased to \$2.81 billion.⁶ The layoffs and cuts continued, with flight attendants and in-flight services bearing the brunt of the reduction. In 2006, United laid off 11% of its salaried workers,⁷ and in 2008 the airline announced it would no longer be handing out complimentary pretzels and biscuits to economy class passengers in North America.⁸ Shortly thereafter, the American Customer Satisfaction Index Airline Rankings for 1996–2009 were released. United's score was the lowest, with the largest percentage drop in the 13 years of the survey (see **Exhibit 1**; United Airlines' stock price is shown in **Exhibit 2**).

The Incident

For more than 20 years, Dave Carroll had been making a modest living as a musician, performing his brand of pop-folk music with his band, Sons of Maxwell. Carroll's life as a working musician took him back and forth across Canada most years, into several U.S. cities, and sometimes to international destinations for music festivals. On March 31, 2008, Carroll and members of the band were flying from their hometown of Halifax, Canada, for a week of shows in Omaha, Nebraska. During a connection in Chicago, other passengers aboard the flight noticed some very rough handling of cargo, and Carroll's bandmates watched helplessly as Dave's \$3,500 Taylor guitar was mishandled by United's baggage handlers. Carroll shared his concerns with a flight attendant. He was told, "Don't talk to me. Talk to the lead agent outside."⁹ Carroll complied and was informed by the employee at the gate that he should take the issue up with the ground crew in Omaha. But the flight was delayed, and Carroll saw no ground crew when he arrived in Omaha after midnight.

On his return to the airport in Omaha, he spoke with a United agent, who advised him that he would need to start a claim at the originating airport, in Halifax. Once he was back in Halifax, Carroll was given a phone number that he called a few times, eventually being rerouted to a call center in India. Several calls later, Carroll was directed to United's baggage offices in Chicago, where he was told that he would need to bring the guitar to Chicago for inspection. When Carroll explained that he was over 1,200 miles away from Chicago, the agent told him to go through United's central baggage center in New York, which eventually led Carroll back to the call center in India.

To Carroll's delight, the customer service manager in India promised to get in touch with a United representative in Chicago. He did so, and the representative reviewed Carroll's file and made direct e-mail contact with him. It was now seven months since the process began, but Carroll felt that at last the matter was being addressed. When the email arrived, however, the representative said she was

sorry about what had happened to the guitar, but that standard airline policy held that claims be made within 24 hours of damage (a precaution against fraudulent claims). She told him that his claim was going to be denied. Carroll asked to speak with a supervisor, but was refused. His final request was for \$1,200 worth of United flight vouchers, the amount he had paid to repair his guitar. The representative told him no, United considered the case closed, and there would be no further communication on the matter. "At that moment," wrote Carroll in his blog, "it occurred to me that I had been fighting a losing battle. . . . The system is designed to frustrate affected customers into giving up their claims and United is very good at it." In his final exchange with the representative, he told her that he would be writing three songs with video about United Airlines and sharing them on YouTube. His goal, he said, was to get one million hits in one year.¹⁰

Carroll wrote the first song, and with his friends at Curve Productions in Halifax, produced a biting video to accompany it. The budget for the video was \$150, with people donating time, props, and locations for the shoot.¹¹ The location that stood in for the O'Hare airport tarmac was the fire station in Waverly, Nova Scotia, where Dave Carroll worked as a volunteer firefighter. On July 6, 2009, the video was posted to YouTube.

The Video Takes Off

Carroll's friend, Ryan Moore, posted the video to YouTube at about 10 p.m. on Monday, July 6. Throughout the night and the following day, a small team of friends used Twitter to introduce their followers to the video. They also tweeted to those on Twitter who had themselves tweeted about bad experiences with United Airlines, and to members of the media including Jay Leno, Jimmy Fallon, and Perez Hilton. They posted the story to Digg and other social news sites to which people could submit stories and vote them up and down.

At 1:49 p.m. on Tuesday, July 7, the video was picked up by Consumerist.com, a website affiliated with Consumers Union, America's leading not-for-profit consumer advocacy organization and the publisher of Consumer Reports magazine. That evening at 7:02 p.m., the story made its first mainstream news appearance in the travel section of the website of the Los Angeles Times. The reporter had seen the video when it was e-mailed to a colleague by a friend. The story reported that by that time the video had received 24,000 views and 461 comments, most of them maligning United Airlines.

On Wednesday, July 8, HuffingtonPost.com and NBCChicago.com relayed the story to their followers, and on that day there were 190,000 views on YouTube (see Exhibit 3). Mainstream media such as CNN, the CBS Morning Show, and Associated Press began calling Carroll for interviews, and on July 9 and 10 mainstream media mentions peaked at 150 and 155, respectively.

By Friday, July 10, YouTube views per day crested, with cumulative views reaching nearly 1.6 million. By this time "United Breaks Guitars" was YouTube's number one rated music video of all time, and number three in any category of video.¹² Beginning on July 23, a second surge in YouTube traffic arose when the British news media picked up the story. By the end of July, the video had been viewed 4.6 million times.

The popularity of "United Breaks Guitars" on YouTube spilled over to other online media. Traffic to Dave Carroll's website, www.davecarrollmusic.com, on which he sold his CDs, surged from a few hundred unique visitors per week to more than 20,000 per week (see Exhibit 4). Song sales on iTunes increased from one or two per day to hundreds per day. "United Breaks Guitars" became a Top 20 iTunes download in Canada and the number-one country music download in the United Kingdom for July 2009.¹³ "My mother handles our mail-order," said Carroll. "I went round there on Saturday and her couch was piled high with CDs ready to be mailed out. It was the third 'couch full'. . . . We might have to hire someone to help her, or at least buy her a bigger sofa."¹⁴

On July 10, Bob Taylor of Taylor Guitars, the California-based manufacturer of high end guitars, posted a two-minute video on YouTube to express his support for Carroll and to offer advice on transporting guitars on planes. Taylor guitars were used by some of the top names in the music industry, among them Prince, Taylor Swift, and Aerosmith. In the description section of his YouTube video, Bob Taylor wrote, "Taylor has had an artist relationship with Dave for several years now. In 2006, our owners' magazine, Wood & Steel, reviewed Dave's CD, "Sunday Morning." As we've had an ongoing relationship, we have made the offer to replace and/or further repair his damaged 710ce . . . we've offered Dave [as a Taylor artist] our support, a choice of a new guitar, and to re-repair the damaged 710ce. Dave and his bandmate Julian made the trip to the Taylor factory in July and have met many of our staff. We'll also be running a story on Dave's experiences in the fall issue of Wood & Steel." In the video, Bob Taylor expressed his concern for Dave Carroll's situation and went on to say, "If your guitar is broken and you had it in a hard shell case, there was clearly some negligence and abuse there, because the case can protect the guitar from all kinds of damage."¹⁵

United Airlines' Response

United Airlines had its own presence in both online and social media. Its website, like that of most commercial airlines, gave customers the ability to browse fares and schedules, make bookings, check their flyer miles balance, interact with customer service, file damaged baggage complaints, and view the latest news from the airline (see Exhibit 5 for more information on united.com). In July 2009, United maintained a presence on Twitter that had approximately 18,000 followers. United Airlines used Twitter actively, tweeting two or three times a day with information useful to travelers, such as Twitter-only airfare deals and system disruptions. All United employees were encouraged to monitor social media for mentions of United Airlines. All they needed to do to monitor tweets involving United Airlines was to subscribe to the service and search for mentions.

At noon on July 7, before any blogger or mainstream news medium had reported the story, and with cumulative views of Carroll's video under 20,000, a United Airlines staff member read the following tweet from one of Carroll's friends: "psssst . . . @UnitedAirlines breaks guitars! And they don't even care!" Minutes later, Robin Urbanski of United Airlines' media relations team in Chicago called Rob Bradford, managing director of customer solutions at United, and told him, "We need to call Carroll." The call was made, but Carroll was not available to return the call until the next morning. Urbanski then sent out United's first tweet: "This has struck a chord w/us and we've contacted him directly to make it right."

United Airlines tracked the Twitter conversation throughout the day and onward, joining the conversation many times and frequently tweeting the sentence, "This has struck a chord with us," as new people joined the conversation. United would often have to state that it had reached out to Dave Carroll, as in this interchange:

- At 1:02 p.m., from a member of the public: "Check the @unitedairlines account. They've apologized and accepted responsibility. Cool stuff."
- At 2:28 p.m., from one of Carroll's team: "word has it @UnitedAirlines isn't trying to make it right, they are just tweeting is that way."
- At 2:31 p.m., from United Airlines: "The word you hear is wrong. We have called him and the person who answered his phone scheduled a call for tomorrow morning."

United's Rob Bradford reached out to Carroll on July 8 to apologize for the situation and to ask if United could use the video internally to help change its culture.¹⁶ He offered him \$1,200 in cash, the amount Carroll had spent on repairing his guitar, plus \$1,200 in flight vouchers. Carroll declined the offer and suggested that United give it to a customer of its choosing who had been affected in a similar way. The airline chose instead to donate \$3,000 to a music school.

Meanwhile, the tweeting continued. United did not respond to taunting from Carroll's friends:

- At 1:46 p.m., on July 7: "Why'd you guys have to go and break his guitar? <http://bit.ly/rI2ef> Stop being a bully and fess up!"
- At 3:40 p.m., on July 7: "Learn from the United Breaks Guitars song that its NOT ok to treat any customer bad."
- At 9:50 p.m., on July 7: "You can say creatively that this has struck a chord with you but lets be real how do you plan on changing?"
- At 9:53 p.m., on July 7: "You realize that Dave Carroll is one of many people burned by your 'Airline' ~ how'd you plan to make things right 4them?"
- At 9:55 p.m., on July 7: "And since I'm on a roll, shame on you for taking over a year to bother . . . too much truth in your bad PR?"

On more than one occasion, however, United Airlines used Twitter to try to defuse the situation:

- At 3:00 p.m., on July 8, from Ryan Moore: "i posted a video for a client of mine monday night and it's like the biggest vid on youtube canada now. <http://bit.ly>."
- At 3:39 p.m., on July 8, United Airlines replied: "Love your client's video. Not all r as honest as he. That is why policy asks for claims w/in 24 hours. No excuse; we're sorry."
- At 4:56 p.m., on July 8, from a Twitter member: "I love this song about @unitedAirlines Check it out! <http://bit.ly/8RDMI>"
- At 5:02 p.m., on July 8, from United Airlines: "It is excellent and that is why we would like to use it for training purposes so everyone receives better service from us."

United Airlines continued to monitor references to the video and react to them:

- At 6:00 p.m., on July 9, from a musician in Cleveland: "Funny how @UnitedAirlines denies someone's claim until it's made public #UnitedBreaksGuitars—You COULD have made it right a year ago."
- At 7:59 p.m., on July 9, United Airlines replied: "Absolutely right, and 4 that (among other things), we are v. sorry and are making it right. Plan 2 use video in training."

Occasionally, United made comments about the incident that were not reactions to other Twitter members' tweets:

- At 6:44 p.m., on July 10: "Wud like Dave 2 sing a happy tune—as asked we gave 3K to Thelonius Monk Institute of Jazz 4 music education 4 kids."
- At 6:46 p.m., on July 10: "Can't wait 2 make music w/Dave 2 improve service 4 all."

For the rest of the week, the Twitter feed served as the channel by which United responded:

- At 9:34 a.m., on July 10, a Florida resident wrote: "United Breaks Guitars! LOL this is a funny vid! I hope you guys buy him another."
- At 10:13 a.m., on July 10, United Airlines replied: "As Dave asked we donated 3K to charity and selected the Thelonius Monk Institute of Jazz 4 music education 4 kids."
- At 7:31 p.m., on July 13, a Twitter member commented: "The sad thing is, I still don't think @unitedairlines really gets what they did wrong."
- At 3:56 p.m., on July 13, another member commented: "It should have been fixed sooner & not have happened in the 1st place."
- At 11:24 a.m., on July 14, the airline replied: "Should it regretfully happen to anyone, pls file a claim w/in 24hrs at airport, online or phone."

- At 6:45 p.m., on July 14, United Airlines continued: “That was a mistake that we made, have apologized for, have fixed, and most importantly, learned from too.”

United Airlines was selective in the media it used to discuss the incident. It responded to inquiries from journalists about the incident, but did not address it on its website or its YouTube channel. It posted a comment to Carroll’s band’s YouTube channel, but the message was deleted. By August 2009, United was responding to tweets with direct messages (private communications through the Twitter medium) inviting a longer e-mail communication.

These emails came from Robin Urbanski in United’s media relations group and read:

Yes, these videos have struck a chord with all of us here.

In recent statements on YouTube, Mr. Carroll described our baggage service representative as a “great employee who acted in the best interests of the company,” and I could not agree more with that.

He has made his point, I have since been in contact with him to fix, and I am now his BFF.¹

The second video is suggesting we do something that we’ve already done — and that is to provide our agents with a better way to escalate and respond to special situations.

While his anecdotal experience is unfortunate, the fact is that 99.95 percent of our customers’ bags are delivered on time and without incident, including instruments that belong to many Grammy award– winning musicians.

As you know, in our business, how we conduct ourselves is important, and we do understand that treating each other and our customers in a courteous and respectful manner is a vital part of running a good airline.¹⁷

People who communicated with United Airlines’ customer relations department received the following written response:

Thank you for contacting United Airlines Customer Relations. I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your inquiry.

At United, we continually work to ensure the proper handling of your items when you fly with us, and we transport thousands of checked bags each day without incident.

We have had discussions with our customer to make what happened right, and at his request, we donated the money that would have gone toward a new guitar to the Thelonius Monk Institute of Jazz

that provides music education for kids with potential. The video provides us with a unique learning opportunity that we plan to use for training purposes to ensure all customers receive better service from us.

Your business is important to us, and I hope you will give us an opportunity to serve you in the future.

On September 14, Dave Carroll met with two senior vice presidents and a vice president as he was passing through O’Hare airport in Chicago. They gave him a tour of O’Hare’s baggage-handling

facilities and explained the challenges of shaping internal culture in an organization where many customer-facing employees spent most of their time traveling. They acknowledged that Carroll's claim should not have been denied and told him that customer service representatives were now being trained to use discretion in applying rules like the one requiring notification of damage to baggage within 24 hours.

The Aftermath

The path of Carroll's life had been upended by the success of his song. As the media began to call, he and his wife reached out to his wife's father, Brent Sansom, an international management consultant: "Dad, I think we need your help." Sansom responded by relocating from Moncton, New Brunswick, to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and set about handling the hundreds of e-mails and phone calls that arrived every day from around the globe. "For the past four months we've been getting three to four hours of sleep a night," Sansom said. "We are being offered new audiences and distribution opportunities for Dave's music. There are new business relationships with manufacturers like Taylor Guitars and Calton Cases, and service providers such as Mariner Partners and RightNow Technologies, which offered customer experience software. There are speaking and live performance invitations, and companies want to commission songs and video recordings. Dave has done over 200 media interviews with everyone from the Wall Street Journal to Oprah Radio, Rolling Stone to the Reader's Digest. The story is resonating with many people."

FlyersRights.org, a large nonprofit airline consumer organization, organized what it called a stakeholder hearing on September 22 in the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, D.C., on airline passenger rights, where Senator Barbara Boxer of California spoke and Carroll performed an acoustic version of "United Breaks Guitars." For a group of Canadian broadcasters lobbying against a proposed increase in cable fees, Carroll wrote "The Cable Song," which was broadcast after the local evening news across Canada for a week.

In October, Carroll traveled to Colorado to give the keynote address at the RightNow Technologies User Summit. He took a United Airlines flight operated by a regional carrier, SkyWest, whose baggage was being handled under contract to Air Canada. One of Carroll's two items of luggage was lost, providing him with fresh material for his speech. Reporting on the story, the New York Times labeled him "the Everyman symbol of the aggrieved traveler."¹⁸

Advertising Age columnist David Klein reflected on the meaning of the "United Breaks Guitars" incident for marketing and branding in the age of social media, "To really incite the full range of customer reaction to a brand, and by full range I mean everything from bitter rage at the low end to fantastic appreciation at the high end, traditional advertising is not the way to do it. In these postmodern times where every interaction with the customer is a marketing event, the real crunch point comes when the customer meets your customer-service department. Seriously, who didn't enjoy watching musician Dave Carroll's takedown of United Airlines for not only breaking his guitar but then refusing to make things right by reimbursing him?"¹⁹

Exhibit 1 American Customer Satisfaction Index Airline Rankings, 1996–2009

Airlines

	Base- line	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	Previous Year % Change	First Year % Change
<u>Southwest Airlines</u>	78	76	76	74	72	70	70	74	75	73	74	74	76	79	81	2.5	3.8
<u>All Others</u>	NM ^a	74	70	62	67	63	64	72	74	73	74	74	75	75	77	2.7	4.1
<u>Continental Airlines</u>	67	66	64	66	64	62	67	68	68	67	70	67	69	62	68	9.7	1.5
<u>Average Airline</u>	72	69	67	65	63	63	61	66	67	66	66	65	63	62	64	3.2	-11.1
<u>Delta Air Lines</u>	77	67	69	65	68	66	61	66	67	67	65	64	59	60	64	6.7	-16.9
<u>American Airlines</u>	70	71	62	67	64	63	62	63	67	66	64	62	60	62	60	-3.2	-14.3
<u>US Airways</u>	72	66	68	65	61	62	60	63	64	62	57	62	61	54	59	9.3	-18.1
<u>Northwest Airlines</u>	69	67	64	63	53	62	56	65	64	64	64	61	61	57	57	0.0	-17.4
<u>United Airlines</u>	71	70	68	65	62	62	59	64	63	64	61	63	56	56	56	0.0	-21.1

Source: American Customer Satisfaction Index, http://www.theacsi.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=147&Itemid=155&i=Airlines, accessed November 2009.

^a Not measured.

Exhibit 2 United Airlines Stock Price, 2009



Source: *Wall Street Journal* Market Data Center, <http://online.wsj.com/mdc/public/page/marketsdata.html>, accessed January 2010.

United Airlines Stock Price Compared with S&P Index, February to December 2009



Source: *Wall Street Journal* Market Data Center, <http://online.wsj.com/mdc/public/page/marketsdata.html>, accessed January 2010.

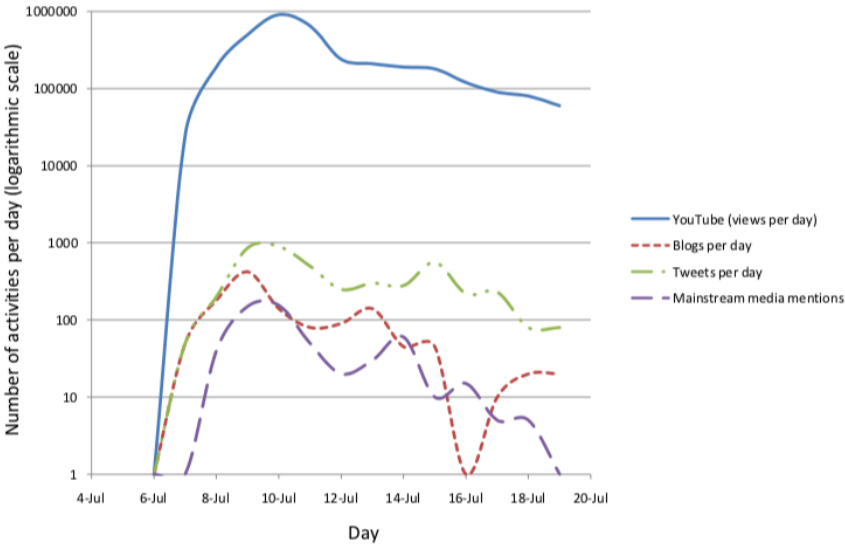
Exhibit 3 Media Activity

	YouTube Views per Day	Blogs per Day	Tweets per Day	Mainstream Media Mentions
6-Jul	0	0	20	0
7-Jul	25,000	50	50	0
8-Jul	190,000	180	200	40
9-Jul	500,000	420	860	150
10-Jul	910,000	140	900	155
11-Jul	650,000	80	500	50
12-Jul	240,000	90	250	20
13-Jul	210,000	140	300	30
14-Jul	190,000	45	280	60
15-Jul	180,000	45	560	10
16-Jul	120,000	0	220	15
17-Jul	90,000	10	230	5
18-Jul	80,000	20	80	5
19-Jul	60,000	20	80	0
20-Jul	70,000	40	60	5
21-Jul	95,000	10	20	0
22-Jul	50,000	0	30	40
23-Jul	180,000	30	350	40
24-Jul	190,000	60	200	30
25-Jul	120,000	40	150	5
26-Jul	100,000	45	140	5
27-Jul	80,000	50	160	0
28-Jul	90,000	45	140	0
29-Jul	70,000	60	100	0
30-Jul	70,000	80	110	5
31-Jul	50,000	50	80	0

Source: Compiled by casewriters.

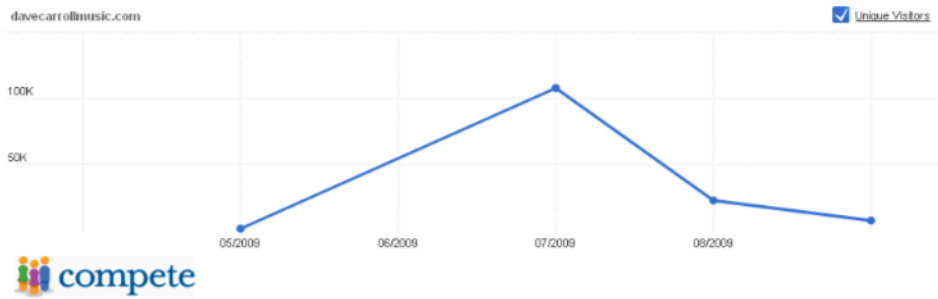
Exhibit 3 (continued)

New and Traditional Media Activity per Day, July 2009



Source: Adapted from Media Miser website, http://www.mediamiser.com/resources/archive/090821_united.html, accessed October 2009.

Exhibit 4 Website Traffic at www.davecarrollmusic.com, May–August 2009



Source: Compete website, <http://www.compete.com>, accessed November 2009.

Exhibit 5 United Airlines Website Traffic, 2007–2009



Source: Compete website, <http://www.compete.com>, accessed November 2009.

Endnotes

¹ Chris Ayres, "Revenge is best served cold – on YouTube," *The Times* (U.K.), July 22, 2009, via Factiva.

² CNN, *The Situation Room*, July 8, 2009, <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0907/08/sitroom.03.html>, accessed November 2, 2009.

³ Dave Carroll, "Statistical Insignificance," *AdWeek*, November 25, 2009, http://www.adweek.com/aw/content_display/community/columns/other-columns/e3ia7f0e1dcab3176840f88bf567f95ce7d, accessed December 5, 2009.

⁴ Peter Cochrane's Blog: "United breaks guitars?," October 14, 2009, <http://networks.silicon.com/webwatch/0,39024667,39574741,00.htm>, accessed October 23, 2009.

⁵ United Airlines website, <http://www.united.com/pressreleases/0,7057,1,00.html>, accessed October 22, 2009.

⁶ CBC News, "World airline woes: Carriers hit financial turbulence," January 29, 2004, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/aircanada/airlinewoes.html#a6>, accessed October 26, 2009.

⁷ "United Airlines Plans to Lay Off 11% of Its Salaried Workers," *New York Times*, June 15, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/15/business/15air.html>, accessed October 27, 2009.

⁸ George Raine, "United Airlines to drop free snacks," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 20, 2008, <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/08/20/BUCS12E8DR.DTL#ixzz0VA YnTk18>, accessed October 26, 2009.

⁹ Dave Carroll blog posting, July 7, 2009, <http://www.davecarrollmusic.com/story/united-breaks-guitars>, accessed October 23, 2009.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Linda Laban, "Dave Carroll Smashes YouTube Records with 'United Breaks Guitars,'" July 14, 2009, <http://www.spinner.com/2009/07/14/dave-carroll-breaks-youtube-records-with-united-breaks-guitars/#>, accessed October 26, 2009.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ MktgCliks website, <http://mktgcliks.blogspot.com/2009/07/united-breaks-guitars-united-airlines.html>, accessed October 28, 2009.

¹⁴ Laban, 2009.

¹⁵ "Taylor Guitars Responds to United Breaks Guitars," YouTube video, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n12WFZq2_0, accessed October 25, 2009.

¹⁶ Dave Carroll, interviewed by Beverly Thompsom, "Online broken guitar video gets airline's attention," July 9, 2009, Canada AM, CTV, transcript via Factiva.

¹⁷ Brett Snyder, "United Aggressively Responds to 'United Breaks Guitars Part 2,'" BNET Travel website, <http://industry.bnet.com/travel/10003236/united-aggressively-responds-to-united-breaks-guitars-part-2/>, accessed December 8, 2009.

¹⁸ Christine Neggroni, "With video, a traveler fights back," *New York Times*, October 29, 2009, via Factiva, accessed November 4, 2009.

¹⁹ David Klein, "Your most crucial moment comes when the customer calls," *Advertising Age*, July 27, 2009, via Factiva, accessed November 2, 2009.