

April 2014

Living Ratings of Digital Intelligence

Digital content & social media communication in the Am Law 100.

We are in an era when leading UK and Australian law firms' digital communications, via websites and social media channels, are going from strength to strength¹. In this edition of Living Ratings we look at how leading US law firms are embracing the opportunities offered by a growing number of digital corporate communication channels.

100 firms, but where's the quality?

Although our study identifies some impressive examples from the Am Law 100² not one of the firms that made our Living Ratings top 20 scores more than 68% in our analysis. Disappointingly, just half of the 50 firms we rated scored 35% or less.

Across all ratings categories our analysis shows clear evidence of a need for higher quality design, user experience and branded content across corporate websites and social media.

1. Source: Living Ratings of Social Media & Brand Content in Professional Services, April 2013 and Social Media and Brand Content in APAC Law firms, October 2013.

2. The Am Law 100 report was published on 25 April 2013.

Top 50
Am Law 100
score rates:



Half the firms scored 35% or less



None scored over the 70% mark



Rating digital content and social media communication in the Am Law 100 Top 20 ranking by total criteria

RANK	FIRM	SCORE OUT OF 75	SCORE %
1	Reed Smith	50.71	68
2	Faegre Baker Daniels	49.89	66
3	Goodwin Procter	48.33	65
4	Nixon Peabody	48.17	64
5	Baker & McKenzie	45.77	61
6	Morgan, Lewis & Bockius	45.65	61
7	Holland & Knight	45.34	60
8	Squire Sanders	44.13	59
9	Hogan Lovells	44.12	59
10	Duane Morris	43.62	59
11	Latham & Watkins	43.35	57
12	Fulbright & Jaworski*	42.51	57
13	Pillsbury	42.27	56
14	Bracewell & Giuliani	42.25	56
15	Foley & Lardner	41.67	56
16	Perkins Coie	41.31	55
17	DLA Piper	40.78	55
18	Littler Mendelson	40.36	54
19	Seyfarth Shaw	40.04	53
20	Fish & Richardson	39.76	53

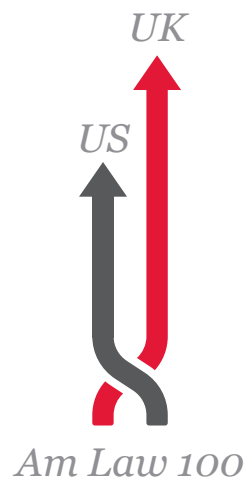
*now Norton Rose Fulbright – rated as Fulbright & Jaworski

A failure to differentiate

With the exception of the firms that lead our study the majority are failing to differentiate themselves through either an effective digital presence, client-centric user experience, relevant branded content, unique visual branding or clear messaging.

Leading US law firms fail to impress

In each Living Ratings category, Am Law 100 firms lag behind their UK counterparts.



The statistics are unflattering



70% of Am Law 100 websites and social media are dominated by an 'About Us' approach to communication.



Only 30% of Am Law websites demonstrate a client-centric approach to navigation and content.



The quality of social media content lags behind the quality of web content.



Just 36% of firms offer a device-agnostic web experience.

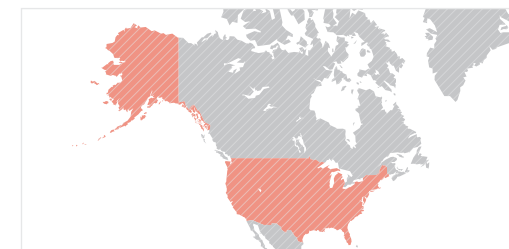


Just one firm in the Am Law 100 utilises responsive web design features in its website.

The top performers

Despite the relatively low scores overall, each of these five Am Law 100 firms delivers a unique and impressive digital experience. They offer useful case studies of how digital brand content and social media communication can form a key part of a law firm's corporate communications suite.

- 1 **Reed Smith**
- 2 **Faegre Baker Daniels**
- 3 **Goodwin Procter**
- 4 **Nixon Peabody**
- 5 **Baker & McKenzie**



Key digital challenges for Am Law 100 firms

Challenge #1: Clients come first. Time to walk the talk.

In common with many other firms in the legal and wider professional services sectors, Am Law 100 firms talk passionately about how clients are their No.1 priority – “Clients come first” is a familiar refrain. However, in terms of website structure rhetoric is not matched by reality.



- In both website structure and navigation ‘About Us’ is the priority. Client-centric, issue or sector-related content appear way down the agenda.
- Social media content and messaging focuses mainly on law firms’ achievements such as new hires or awards. There is a lack of focus on relevant, client specific issues.

Challenge #2: Content. Time to make it ‘king’.

- As law firms fight for share of mind and share of wallet websites, social media, microsites and blogs are fast becoming key battlegrounds.
- Creative, engaging and substantive content is key to success. It is the one thing that can unite and enhance all the digital channels.



Creative / Engaging / Substantive



Living Ratings criteria

Our team analysed Am Law 100 firms’ digital communications across seven categories. A total of 75 points was available.



Social media influence (20 points): According to Kred, “Your Kred story shows off your most influential content”³. Every firm or person on Twitter has a Kred score made up of two parts; Influence and Outreach. Kred Influence goes up when somebody mentions, retweets or replies to you. Outreach increases when you mention, retweet or reply to someone else. Based on the Kred scores we created a shortlist of 50 firms from the AM Law 100.



Web presence (5 points): Scoring the quality of a website’s search, responsive design features plus its device agnostic capability to work across-platform, across web, tablet and mobile devices.



Web brand content (15 points): Scoring the client-centric nature, presentation and quality of web content and its alignment with a firm’s brand.



Social media presence (15 points): Scoring the number of channels a firm is using for social media, sharing, blogs and client apps.



Social media brand content (10 points): Scoring the client-centric nature, presentation and quality of social media content and its alignment with a firm’s brand.



Twitter frequency (5 points): The frequency and consistency of a firm’s Twitter output.



Twitter response (5 points): Time taken for a firm to respond to an enquiry through its Twitter channel. Note: So few firms responded to our enquiry that we are unable to show a meaningful league table for this category.

3. www.Kred.com

Five case studies: A cut about the rest.

Across all editions of Living Ratings it’s rare for any firm to succeed across all our benchmarking criteria. This edition is no different. Although we view high scores of 68% as a relative disappointment there are firms who are deserving of praise for some excellent work. The five firms profiled on the following pages head our league tables because they score well on different criteria in different categories. In 2014, will we see an Am Law 100 firm that succeeds across all our criteria? Watch this space!



Case study

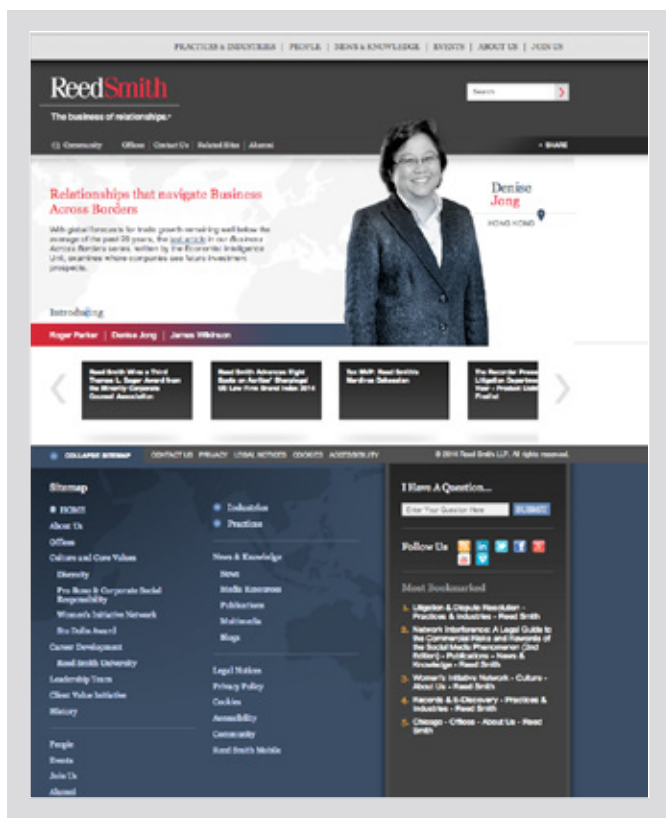
Reed Smith

“The business of relationships™”.



Living Ratings

#1



Reed Smith put their brand proposition, “The business of relationships”, at the heart of their digital experience. It informs everything from the natural and approachable photography of the firm’s partners and the excellent “I Have A Question” mechanism on the home page, to the Practices & Industries-focused navigation and the News & Knowledge based social media output. Reed Smith wraps the user in a client-centric experience. Their proposition is not a label, it’s an operating principle.

Their proposition finds further expression on social media. On Twitter, Reed Smith are; “Focused on client relationships, driven by quality and value”. LinkedIn is “Your link to a lasting relationship”. On their Facebook pages we learn that, “Great relationships (are) built here”. This is a firm that walks the talk on every step of the user journey.

visit: www.reedsmith.com

“This is a firm that walks the talk on every step of the user journey”.

Living Group



Case study

Faegre Baker Daniels

A full service website for “The full service law firm”.

Living Ratings **#2**



This is a seriously confident website. It's an action-packed smorgasbord of engaging content about legal services, solutions and industry specialisms. Faegre Baker Daniels' home page offers numerous direct access points to relevant and useful content, legal updates, news and media and upcoming events. The carousel mechanism links to insight, expertise and symposiums. At faegrebd.com the priority is to link clients with industry-specific legal expertise, advice and solutions.

Faegre Baker Daniels' social media is a fulfilling experience too. At LinkedIn the user can link to pages dedicated to their practice areas; Energy & Resources, Food & Agriculture and Health & Life Sciences for example. On Facebook their pages combine conceptual visual engagement with pragmatic narrative, useful detail and updates.

But here's Faegre Baker Daniels' real success: They talk so clearly and engagingly about clients' issues and sectors that "About Us" is almost an irrelevance.

visit: www.faegrebd.com

“An action-packed smorgasbord of engaging content about legal services, solutions and industry specialisms”.

Living Group

Case study

Goodwin Procter

A unique web presence for a growing international presence.

Living Ratings **#3**



Goodwin Procter don't mess around. This website does the simple thing really well. It's useful. It's also unique, both in terms of its no-nonsense approach to visual branding and design, and in its approach to web content. Starting with a highly graphic home page Goodwin Procter adopts a client-first, directory-based approach that speeds the user on their way to drop-down menus of People, Practices and Offices. One click and users are offered alpha lists to access the specific information they require supported by a super helpful sitemap. "Our firm" content is presented lower down the main navigation.

Goodwin Procter's visual branding made a big impression on our analysts. Punchy layouts, clear typography and relevant messaging make it straightforward and pragmatic but with an ability to raise the volume when necessary. Check out their careers content for example. It's informative, visually engaging, exciting and ultra-reassuring.

They've taken a similar approach to social media. LinkedIn features a lovely video, "Santucci Explains How Operating Partnership Units Changed REITs". It's simple, well produced and easy on the eye and linked to a fledgling YouTube channel.

This is digital communication with a 'does what it says on the tin' philosophy. Hard to beat.

visit: www.goodwinprocter.com

"Goodwin Procter don't mess around. This website does the simple thing really well".

Living Group

Case study

Nixon Peabody

A standalone digital experience “jostles traditional thinking”.

Living Ratings **#4**



This is a 21st century website for “21st century law”. Nixon Peabody’s website launches a new brand, a new visual identity and refreshingly – for the Am Law 100 – a new approach to web design. It’s creative, engaging and exciting – and very green!

Nixon Peabody’s success in our study is notable for two specific achievements. Of all the firms in the Am Law100 Nixon Peabody’s website is the only one to utilise responsive web design features and a device-agnostic user experience.

Nixon Peabody’s rationale for their new logo signals their intent; it’s “a dynamic spark that symbolizes both our innovative ideas and actions and the collective intelligence of the whole firm thinking ahead for our clients”.

No area of the website or social media has been neglected in the search for a new digital experience. Content, design and typography are all relevant and purposefully integrated. The new brand influences the written word too, using “21st century law as a tool to help shape our clients’ futures”. The logo stands out like no other on busy Twitter feed. The typography and photography on Facebook is a simple but winning combination.

If you want a pointer to the future of responsive web design, this is it.

visit: www.nixonpeabody.com

“Of all the firms in the Am Law 100 Nixon Peabody’s website is the only one to utilise responsive web design features and a device-agnostic user experience”.

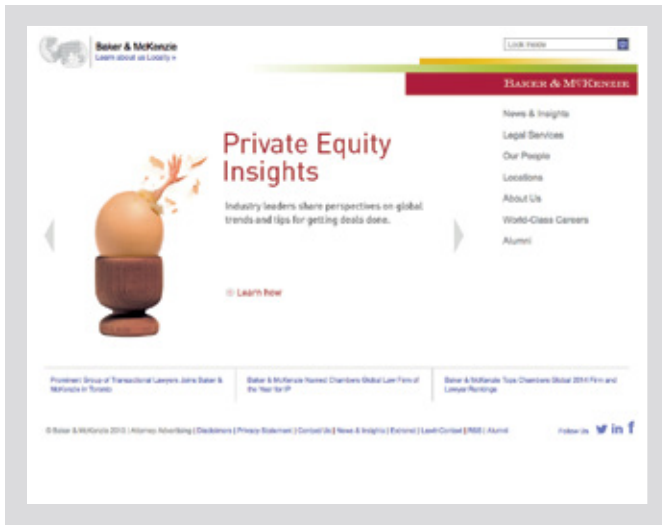
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Case study

Baker & McKenzie

Defining what it means to be global.

Living Ratings **#5**



Baker & McKenzie use the term “fluency” to describe the way they work, think and behave. It’s also a great way to describe their global website.

This is a rare example of a website that makes sense of an overused “we are global” proposition. They do this by inviting users to “Learn about us locally” from the outset. In other words, there’s no point in being global unless you can fulfill clients’ expectations closer to home – wherever they are in the world.

It would be easy to overwhelm users with a global offer as powerful as this but they handle the delivery of some comprehensive and outstanding content really well. With a client-centric approach to navigation and user experience, the site leads with ‘News & Insights’ (leading with a great feature: “The Companies You Keep; Global supply chain management: Five steps to managing third-party risk”) “Legal Services” and “Our People”.

This is an ultra-confident website that manages to deliver a calming and reassuring experience to users through precise content and a focused use of visual identity. Unlike many Am Law 100 websites, if you cover up the logo every page is still, unmistakably, them.

visit: www.bakermckenzie.com

“This is an ultra-confident website that manages to deliver a calming and reassuring experience to users through precise content and a focused use of visual identity”.

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Rating digital content & social media communication in the Am Law 100

Category leaders

Web presence

Scoring the quality of a website's search, responsive design features plus its device agnostic capability to work across web, tablet and mobile.

Category leaders

Web content

Scoring the client-centric nature, presentation and quality, of web content and its alignment with a firm's brand.

Rank	FIRM	SCORE OUT OF 05	%
1	Nixon Peabody	5.00	100%
2	Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld	4.00	80%
2	Baker & McKenzie	4.00	80%
2	Bracewell & Giuliani	4.00	80%
2	Faegre Baker Daniels	4.00	80%
2	Foley & Lardner	4.00	80%
2	Hogan Lovells	4.00	80%
2	Jones Day	4.00	80%
2	K&L Gates	4.00	80%
2	Little Mendelson	4.00	80%
2	Mayer Brown	4.00	80%
2	McGuireWoods	4.00	80%
2	Perkins Coie	4.00	80%
2	Pillsbury	4.00	80%
2	Reed Smith	4.00	80%
2	Seyfarth Shaw	4.00	80%
2	Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton	4.00	80%
2	Squire Sanders	4.00	80%
2	Venable	4.00	80%
2	Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati	4.00	80%

Rank	FIRM	SCORE OUT OF 15	%
1	Goodwin Procter	13	87%
2	Reed Smith	12	80%
3	Baker & McKenzie	11	73%
3	Faegre Baker Daniels	11	73%
3	Little Mendelson	11	73%
3	Morgan, Lewis & Bockius	11	73%
3	Patton Boggs	11	73%
3	Perkins Coie	11	73%
9	Bracewell & Giuliani	10	67%
9	Duane Morris	10	67%
9	Fish & Richardson	10	67%
9	Latham & Watkins	10	67%
9	Seyfarth Shaw	10	67%
9	Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom	10	67%
15	Cooley	9	60%
15	Holland & Knight	9	60%
15	Nixon Peabody	9	60%
15	Pillsbury	9	60%
15	Squire Sanders	9	60%
20	Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld	8	53%
20	BakerHostetler	8	53%
20	Bryan Cave	8	53%
20	DLA Piper	8	53%
20	Greenberg Traurig	8	53%
20	Hogan Lovells	8	53%
20	Pepper Hamilton	8	53%

Rating digital content & social media communication in the Am Law 100

Category leaders Social media presence

Scoring the number of channels a firm is using for social media, sharing, blogs and client apps.

Rank	FIRM	SCORE OUT OF 15	%
1	Nixon Peabody	10.00	66%
2	Baker & McKenzie	9.00	60%
2	Bracewell & Giuliani	9.00	60%
2	Hogan Lovells	9.00	60%
5	DLA Piper	8.00	53%
5	Drinker Biddle & Reath	8.00	53%
5	Fulbright & Jaworski*	8.00	53%
5	Goodwin Procter	8.00	53%
5	Greenberg Traurig	8.00	53%
5	Holland & Knight	8.00	53%
5	K&L Gates	8.00	53%
5	Morrison & Foerster	8.00	53%
5	Patton Boggs	8.00	53%
5	Perkins Coie	8.00	53%
5	Reed Smith	8.00	53%
5	Troutman Sanders	8.00	53%
17	Faegre Baker Daniels	7.00	47%
17	Latham & Watkins	7.00	47%
17	Pillsbury	7.00	47%
17	Squire Sanders	7.00	47%

*now Norton Rose Fulbright – rated as Fulbright & Jaworski

Category leaders Social media content

Scoring the client-centric nature, presentation and quality, of social media content and its alignment with a firm's brand.

Rank	FIRM	SCORE OUT OF 10	%
1	Duane Morris	8	80%
1	Foley & Lardner	8	80%
1	Morgan, Lewis & Bockius	8	80%
4	Goodwin Procter	7	70%
4	Hogan Lovells	7	70%
4	Holland & Knight	7	70%
4	K&L Gates	7	70%
4	Latham & Watkins	7	70%
4	Pepper Hamilton	7	70%
4	Pillsbury	7	70%
4	Seyfarth Shaw	7	70%
12	Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld	6	60%
12	Cooley	6	60%
12	DLA Piper	6	60%
12	Faegre Baker Daniels	6	60%
12	Fulbright & Jaworski*	6	60%
12	Kirkland & Ellis	6	60%
12	McKenna Long & Aldridge	6	60%
12	Nixon Peabody	6	60%
12	Patton Boggs	6	60%
12	Perkins Coie	6	60%
12	Reed Smith	6	60%
12	Squire Sanders	6	60%

Category leaders Social media influence

Scoring social media influence on Kred.com. "Your Kred story shows off your most influential content". Every firm or person on Twitter has a Kred score made up of two parts; Influence and Outreach. Kred Influence goes up when somebody mentions, retweets or replies to you. Outreach increases when you mention, retweet or reply to someone else.

Rank	FIRM	SCORE OUT OF 20
1	Fulbright & Jaworski*	14.51
2	Duane Morris	13.62
3	Greenberg Traurig	13.42
4	Goodwin Procter	13.33
5	Cooley	13.22
6	Nixon Peabody	13.17
7	DLA Piper	12.78
8	Reed Smith	12.71
9	Dechert	12.69
10	Morgan, Lewis & Bockius	12.65
11	Patton Boggs	12.48
12	Latham & Watkins	12.35
13	Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld	12.2
14	McKenna Long & Aldridge	12.17
15	Squire Sanders	12.13
16	Faegre Baker Daniels	11.89
17	Baker & McKenzie	11.77
18	McDermott Will & Emery	11.77
19	Fish & Richardson	11.76
20	Morrison & Foerster	11.75

Living Ratings delivers the evidence-based insight that enhances our understanding of our specialist sectors.

About Living Group

Living Group specialises in integrated branding and communications

We help clients in the financial, professional services, property and technology sectors to enhance their corporate brands, communications and reputations.

Our team integrates industry expertise and insight with award-winning creativity, cutting-edge technology and outstanding client service. The outcome is brand, design, digital, marketing and PR communications that are engaging, relevant and achieve results.

Connect with us about planning or enhancing your digital & social media communication.

To talk with our team about any of the issues in this study or organise a meeting to discuss how you could benefit from developing a social media and digital brand content strategy:



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