



ETHNOGRAPHY FOOD BLOGGERS

Saoirse Casey
Declan Keating
Gianlorenzo De Santis



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1.

METHODOLOGY

What we did.



WHAT WE USED IN OUR **ANALYSIS**

- ▶ Online Participant observation
- ▶ Web content analysis
- ▶ Semi-structured interviews

Engagement [in the case of blog] might simply constitute **regular readership** (Kozinets)

WEB CONTENT ANALYSIS

Blogs would also require a more visual style of analysis than the textual element. (Kozinets)

Paradigm	Example
Image	Photographs, icons, and banners
Theme	Tags on posts identifying them as containing information on subjects such as “dessert” or “poultry”
Feature	Website design elements including blogrolls, archives, and links to personalized Amazon bookstores
Link	Comments and posts that include links back and forth which snowball into a complex web of interaction
Exchange analysis	Comments and posts that turn into discussions, but also blog events, and bloggers using other media such as email, texting, etc. to communicate with each other
Language (discourse) analysis	Linguistic structures in posts and comments

Herring (2004)

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

- ▶ Interviewed **5** followers and **3** bloggers
- ▶ Best fit - participants happy to talk about their reasons for following food blogs. Food bloggers more than willing to answer any questions we had for them.



2.

TRAITS OF FOOD BLOGGING

Who are the
food bloggers?



SERIOUS LEISURE

The Pro-Am revolution

The **systematic** pursuit of a core activity that people find so **substantial, interesting, and fulfilling** that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a (leisure) career centred on acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience

Stebbins (1992)

“

*I started Bibliocook to **showcase my food writing**, which was an area that I wanted to move into on a full time basis. That happened in 2007.*

From the blog I have have gotten freelance work, amazing opportunities, a new circle of friends and the confidence to give up my permanent/pensionable job and move to a country cottage where I keep hens, the occasional turkey and two little girls.

Caroline Hennessy ([Bibliocook](#))

*Janice and I maintain full time careers, in industries entirely unrelated to our blog. Given how much we do with it, it's like a **second full time job** on top. It definitely started out as a leisure activity but it is certainly becoming more than that are we are pleased that it's like that.*

Wayne & Janice ([Irish Beer Snob](#))



CULTURAL CONVERGENCE

The **flow of content** across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who would go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of **entertainment experiences they wanted**.

Jenkins (2006)



CONTINUOUS CONVERGENCE

FIRST SHIFT

Food blogging was born as a convergent media.

Incorporating:

- ▶ *Cookbooks*
- ▶ *Personal Diary*
- ▶ *Photography*
- ▶ *etc...*

SECOND SHIFT

Now it has reconfigured itself toward **social media**.



“

*There have been a lot of changes in blogging **due to social media**, with – in some cases - people focusing on the social side and letting blogging fall by the wayside. This is a pity as you're putting all your efforts into something that doesn't belong to you and is ephemeral and just disappears down off the page*

...No one looks back to see what I said on Twitter back in 2010 whereas people can still look at 11 years of archive material on Bibliocook

...If I like/are loyal to someone's Instagram feed or their Twitter comments, I'm more likely to go to see what they're blogging about.

Caroline Hennessy (Bibliocook)

“

*Funnily enough, I find SnapChat the **best social media** to get information from the bloggers. If I was interested in what they're saying they always say link is on my Facebook, Twitter, etc.. So then I can **opt to go onto that link if I want to**. I think snapchat is a very good idea... you don't get those ads etc... snapchat is like you choose what you want to see and it's **quick and efficient** and there's no ads.*

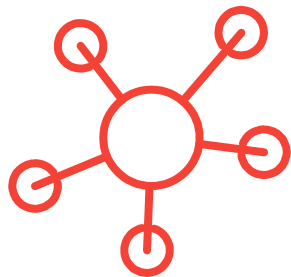
Follower 1 (female, 20)



3.

TRIBAL IDENTITY

Can be food blogging
configure as a
modern tribe?



POSTMODERN **TRIBES**

a network of heterogeneous persons -in terms of age, sex, income, etc. - who are **linked by a shared passion or emotion**; a tribe is capable of collective action, its members are not simple consumers, they are also advocates;

Cova (2001)

TRIBES TRACES

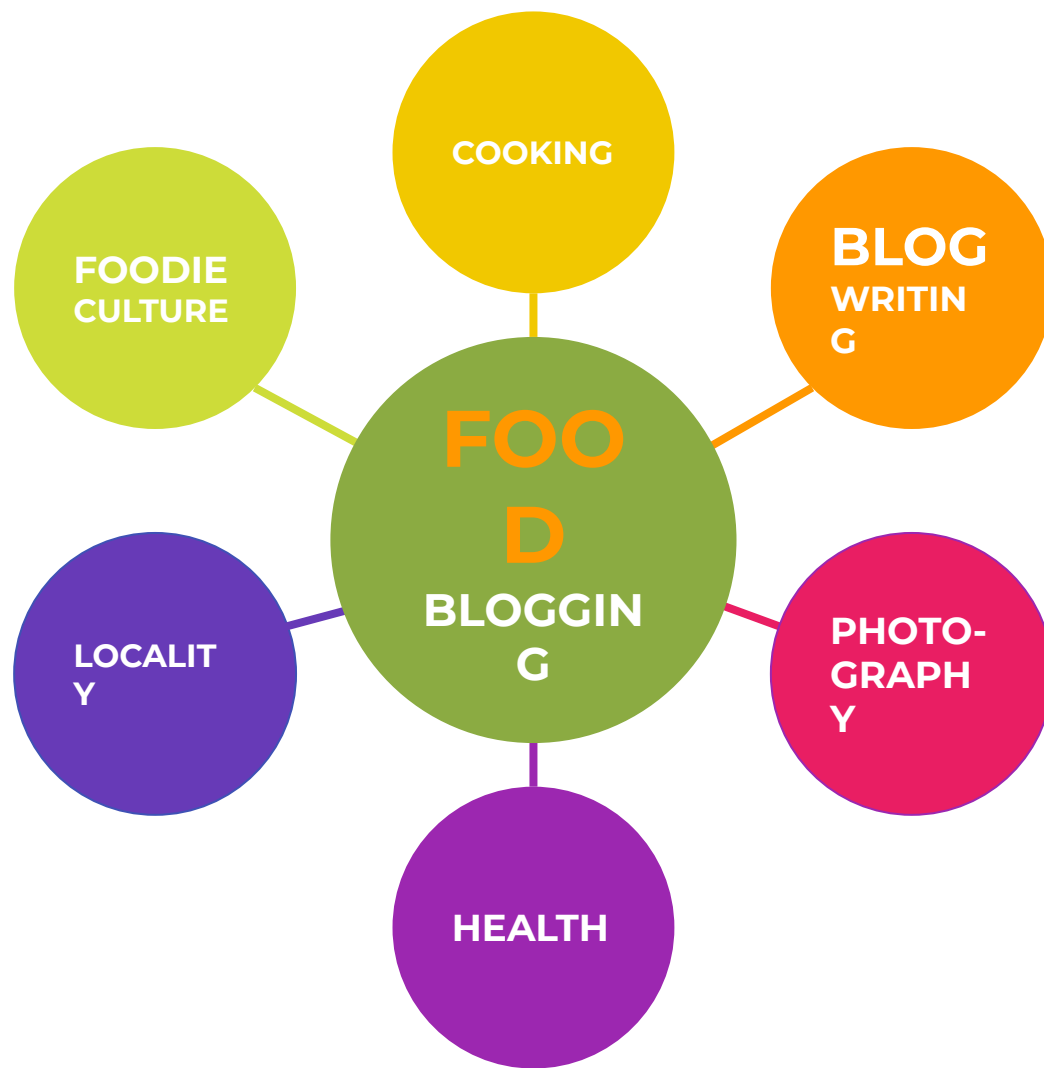
TEMPORAL

In temporal terms tribes emerge, grow, reach their zenith, languish, then dissolve or **reconfigure themselves.**

SPACIAL

Both virtual and physical.

Tribal members are never alone because they belong, in fact or virtually, to a vast and informal community.



A COMPLEX
INTERWAVING
OF INTEREST
AND
PASSIONS



COMMON PASSIONS

FOOD

"It's all about food - but, then again, life is all about food!"

**Caroline Hennessy
(Bibliocook)**

HEALTH

"I also follow the Body Coach... I follow him because he is very healthy."

Follower 1 (female, 20)

"I follow Roz Purcell, The Happy Pear, Rosanna Davison (kind've)... Can't think of anyone else. I follow them 'cause they post healthy recipes and stuff and I like the content they post."

Follower 2 (female, 21)

LOCALITY

"we should be supporting locally produced goods, whether that is food, beer, cider, or whatever. We seem to be returning to a more community feel like days gone by."

Wayne & Janice (Irish Beer Snob)



COMMON PASSIONS

PHOTOGRAPHY

"Here are some practical tips for you to improve your Instagram photography from the master himself..."

**Wayne & Janice -
irishbeersnob.com**

BLOG WRITING

"Kristin Jensen (Edible Ireland) and I set up the Irish Food Bloggers Association! [...] most interested in writing and communicating with both each other at and the general public about Irish food..."

**Caroline Hennessy
(Bibliocook)**

SHARING/COMUNITY

"I'd like to think we both have a strong, personal relationship with the majority of our followers"

**Wayne & Janice (Irish
Beer Snob)**

"TheBodyCoach definitely interacts with his audience more. If anyone comments a question he will answer it or if people just have something nice to say he will recognize their comment"

Follower 1 (female, 20)

TRIBAL THEMES ANALYSIS

Food blogging is a bundle of diverse and complex interests and passions but there are some **underlying themes/values** that goes across the various configuration that this phenomena can assume.



EXPERIENCING APPEAL & EXCITEMENT

- Refers to the degree to which visiting gastronomy blogs can drive readers to have mental vibration, including the feeling of **excitement**, curiosity, attraction and persuasion.

Visual media creates influence on individual perceptions of what is attractive, exciting, curious, and attention grabbing.

Feelings of excitement or curiosity can prompt expectation of food experiences since a need to taste **local food or regional** beverages may come from excitement seeking, thus pushing people to have exciting experiences.

Wang (2010), Rust & Oliver (2000)



*If the food **looks tasty**... would be straight away the main thing [that attracts my attention] and then stuff that doesn't look too hard to make and doesn't look too expensive and not too hard to get*

Follower 2 (female, 21, student)

***Vivid, vivid posts**...Mainly pictures of food. Or I love like pictures of them prepping the food.*

...I would be more willing to try something new if I had seen a **picture** of someone doing something successfully then I would be tempted to make it too cause I can see that it worked... if you get me...

Follower 3 (female, 24, student)

jennystack91 @sarahgleeson1 we can make these next week! 😊 Sunday baking sessions are a new thing. ❤️



The Happy Pear, Instagram

The Body Coach, Snapchat





HEDONIC **CONSUMPTION**

hedonic consumption is those facets of consumer behaviour relating to the **affective** aspects of the product usage experience [...] in **multiple sensory modalities** including tastes, sounds, scents, tactile impressions and visual images

Hirschman & Holbrook (1982)

“

*We quickly expanded our blog into other aspects such as food, and now the blog holds more of a lifestyle focus, we look to capture and give our readers a good insight into our **hedonic experiences of food and drink along with the atmosphere and culture these experiences carry.***

Wayne & Janice (Irish Beer Snob)

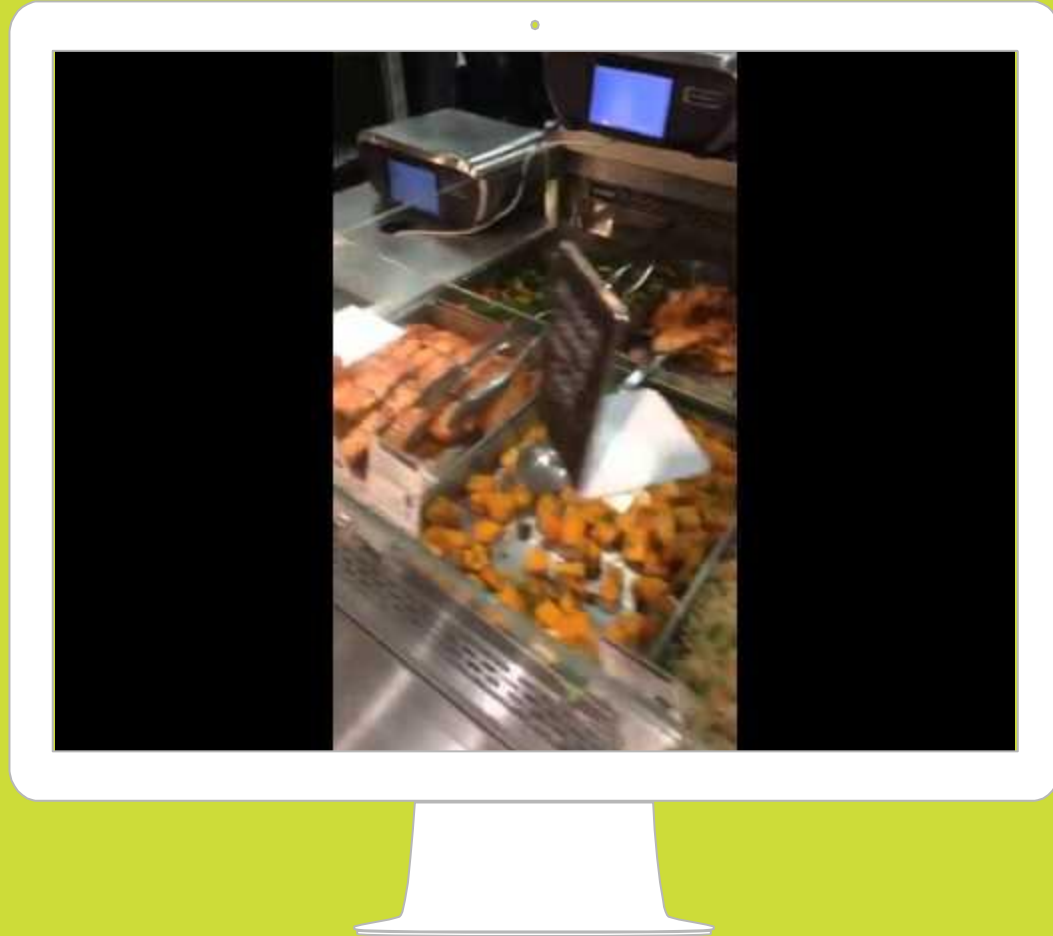
catherineeager What time do you serve this until @thehappypear ? Divine.

qwerkymiss Breakfast of dreams ♥



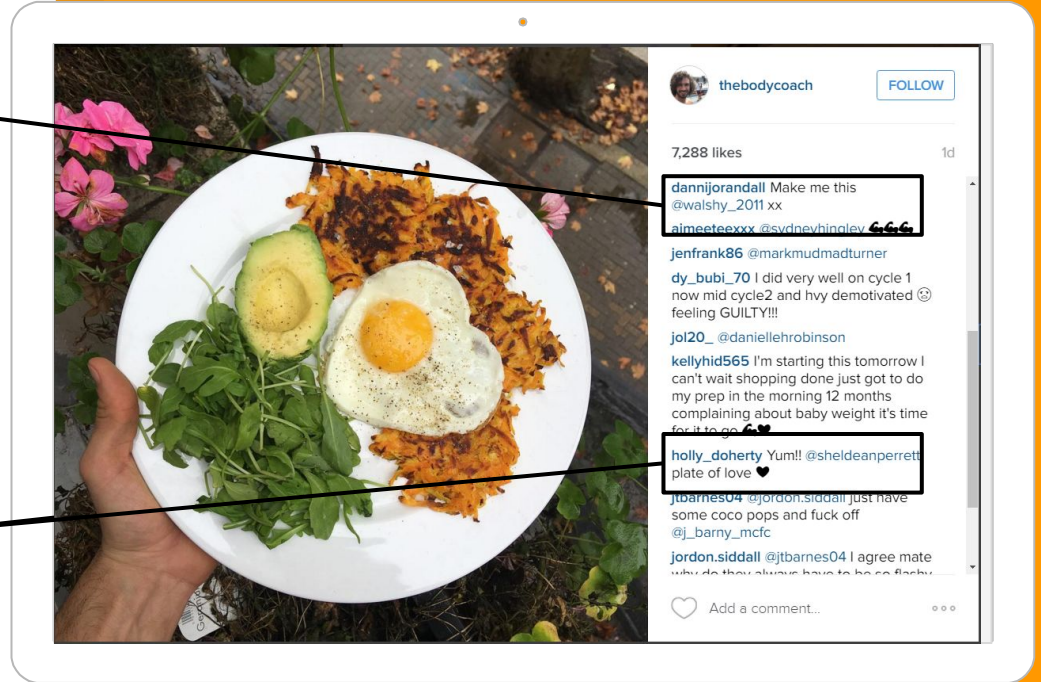
The Happy Pear, Instagram

The Body Coach, Snapchat



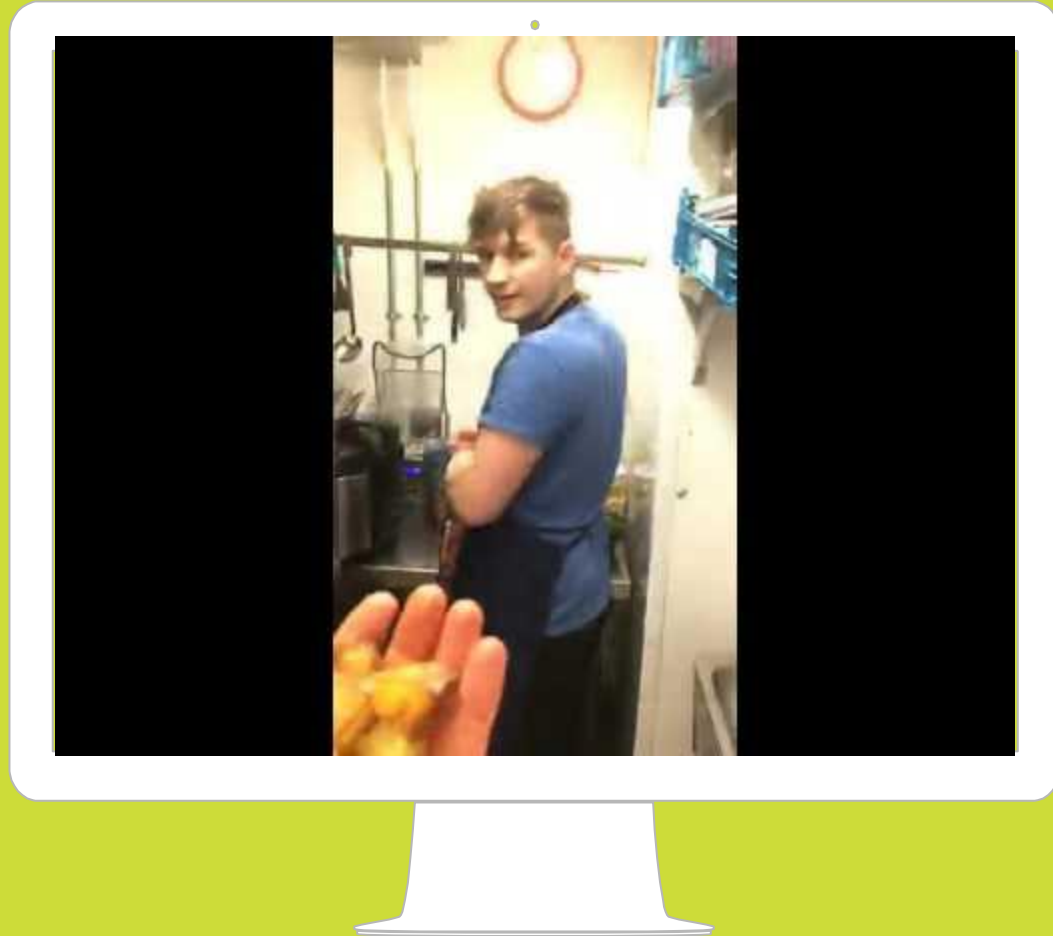
dannijorandall Make me this
@walshy_2011 xx

holly_doherty Yum!! **@sheldeanperrett**
plate of love ❤️



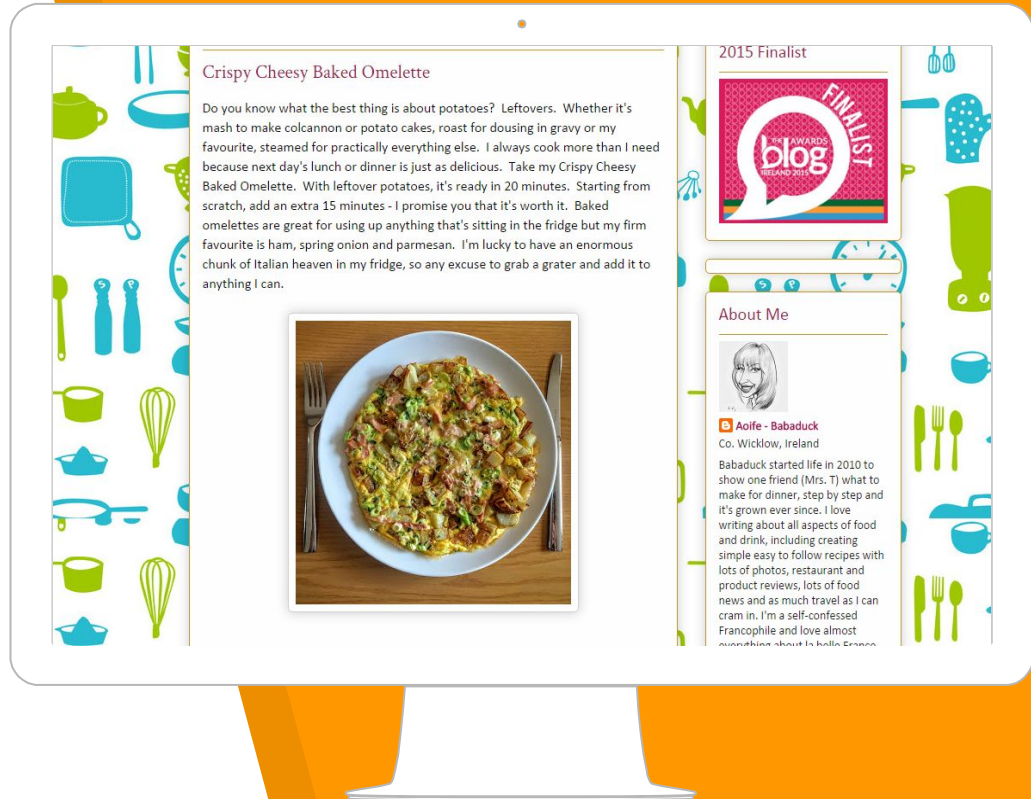
The Body Coach, Instagram

The Happy Pear, Snapchat

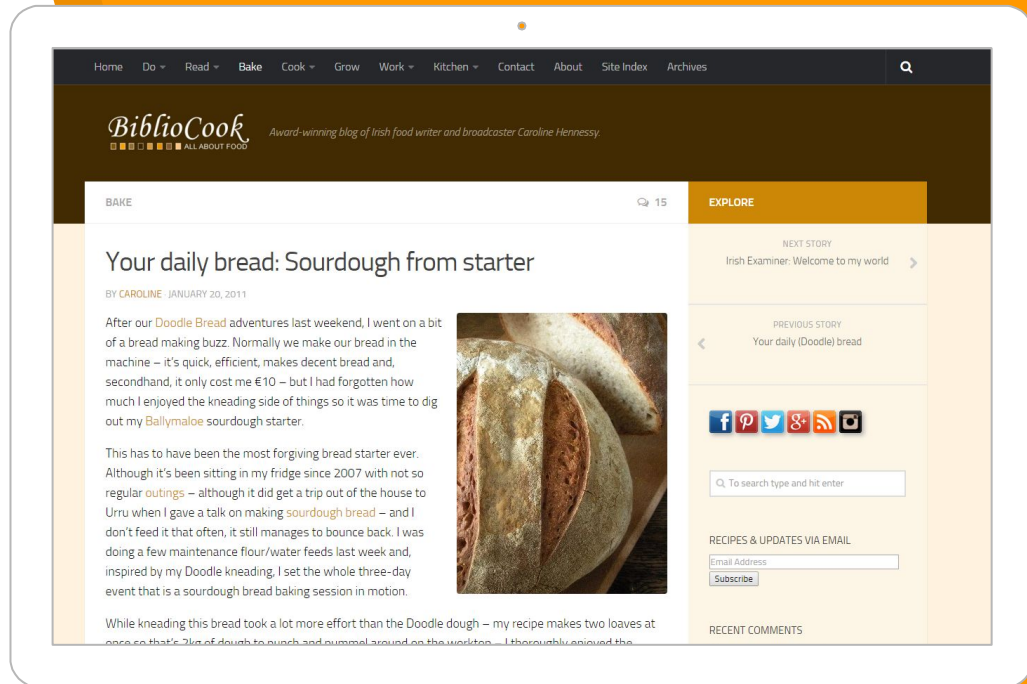


...Baked omelettes are great for using up anything that's sitting in the fridge but my firm favourite is ham, spring onion and parmesan. I'm lucky to have an **enormous chunk of Italian heaven** in my fridge, so any excuse to grab a grater and add it to anything I can.

Aoife - Babaduck.com



*I **adore sourdough bread but am very intimidated** with baking in general. But your step-by-step directions are making me think it's possible! I want a sourdough starter mainly for pancakes; there is a restaurant in LA that serves silver-dollar sourdough pancakes and **I dream of them.** Will have to attempt my own starter now!*



Clare - comment on bibliobook.com



SKILLED **CONSUMPTION**

& CULTURE CAPITAL DIFFUSION

Blogger search for **personal significance and identity** through “skilled consumption” experiences, shared with a “community of consumption”, other bloggers.

[Blogger] are exhibiting their skilled consumption. The time and effort expended allow them to move up their **Serious Leisure career ladder** in the eyes of their **community of consumption**.

Cox & Blake (2011), Watson (2013)

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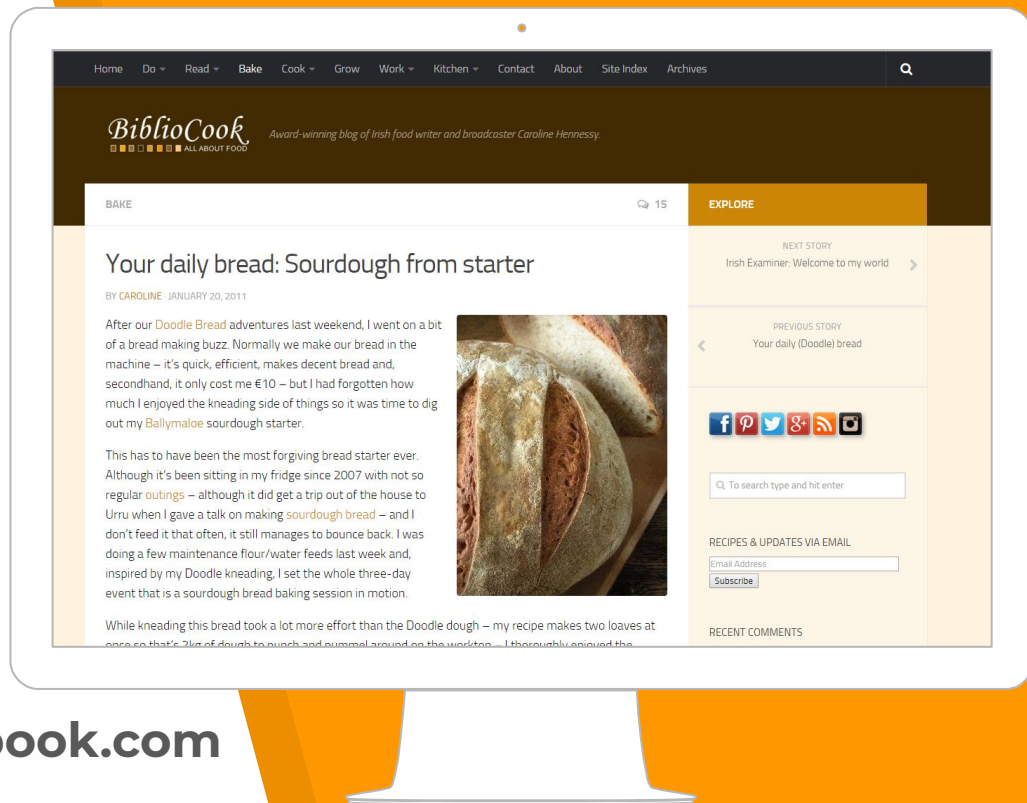
*I place a lot of trust in them. I think they're all genuine... I think they eat what they post to eat... Food bloggers started off as nothing like... **They have to build a good reputation so that's why I would trust them. They are clearly passionate about what they do!***

Follower 3 (female, 24, student)

I would really trust what The Body Coach says 'cause **he is a personal trainer and he's a nutritionist** so like I feel food would be **his area of expertise**... Whereas Roz has kind've just like picked it up... so...like some of the stuff she does post I would believe **but then other things I wouldn't be so sure about...**

Follower 1 (female, 20)

Click on the link below to see the notes that **I wrote up for my sourdough talk**. These are adapted from the recipe that I started **working with more than three years ago** in Ballymaloe. **Have you ever tried making sourdough yourself?** If you do decide to try this out – it truly is worth it! – **please do let me know how you get on**.



Caroline Hennessy - bibliobook.com

Our third course was a baked sweet potato and cumin soup with sweet potato crisp and home-made bread. Young Dave Guilfoyle of Bo Bristle brought along a **specially brewed beer for the evening**. A simply stunning Strong Amber at 7.8%. **I thought this was the perfect match.** There was a **slight kick to the soup that was complemented by the sweet caramel goodness of the beer.**



Wayne - irishbeersnob.com



FOOD AS A SOCIAL CONNECTOR

Sharing food is very characteristic of **ritual consumption** behavior, and in that function food performs as a symbolic way of sharing **group identity and bonding through food**.

Belk (1988)

TWO DIMENSION OF **SOCIAL SHARING RITUALS**

VIRTUAL

The act of **share**, tag or reblog/retweet contents from a blog or a social media

PHYSICAL

The act of consuming food in a social dimension, that includes preparing and then enjoying food with other people.

VIRTUAL

“

...I would **tag** or comment my friends name under a blog post if I found it interesting or whatever... So I would **share it**.

Follower 1 (female, 20)

Like I would often **tag my boyfriend under the posts** but that would be about it

Follower 4 (female, 24)

I gradually got to know other NZ food bloggers - at the time Ernie Whalley (forkncork.com) was the only other Irish person writing online about food - and people like Barbara (from Winos and Foodies) and Bron Marshall **became online friends** and they gave me a **sense of connection and a sense of place** in my new home. I also got the feeling – very exciting for a long-time food lover – that I'd just joined in this world wide conversation about food.

Caroline Hennessy (**Bibliocook**)



PHYSICAL

“

A lot of my childhood was spent at my grandparents' busy mixed farm near Kildorrery where everyone **was expected to do their share**: collecting eggs, shutting up the hens, feeding turkeys and calves...

...This was the kingdom ruled by Nana [...] It was where I learned how to transform simple raw ingredients - field mushrooms, crab apples, fruit from the orchard - into **something that everyone would appreciate**.

At home, **Saturday mornings were for baking**. [...] As a result, I always had an interest in food and was determined to be a chef, until – aged 16 – I worked in a hotel kitchen and had that knocked out of me.

Caroline Hennessy (Bibliocook)

Yea, whenever I make something I **always invite my friends over and share it with them**. And they might end up making it themselves then. Me and my boyfriend always cook for each other and stuff and sometimes there would be recipes I find on blogs. I always have baked goods that I **share with my family**.

Follower 2 (female, 21, student)

...With **six children** our days and weeks are very busy and time appears to fly by. It was so lovely to wake up this Sunday morning to a beautiful crisp blue spring sky and the knowledge that I didn't have to drive anywhere today other than to get supplies for dinner and tomorrow's school lunches.

Sunday generally either means a huge fry-up brunch and a lighter tea later in the evening or a Sunday roast.

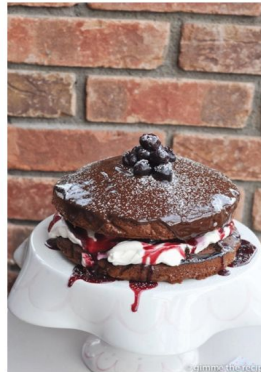
Sheila Kiely - gimmetherecipe.com

28
MAY
2015

Black Cherry Gateaux

posted in [Baking Day, Recipes](#)

Mother's Day is a week away and if you're stuck for funds a homemade cake is always a welcome and special gift. Combining chocolate, cherries, liquor and cream makes this a grown-up cake that everyone will enjoy.



With six children our days and weeks are very busy and time appears to fly by. It was so lovely to wake up this Sunday morning to a beautiful crisp blue spring sky and the knowledge that I didn't have to drive anywhere today other than to get supplies for dinner and tomorrow's school lunches. Sunday generally either means a huge fry-up brunch and a lighter tea later in the evening or a Sunday roast. Today was a day for a beef roast and I was also in the mood for baking and we all dug into this delicious Black Cherry Gateaux with extra cream, cherries and syrup for dessert.



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ENJOY!

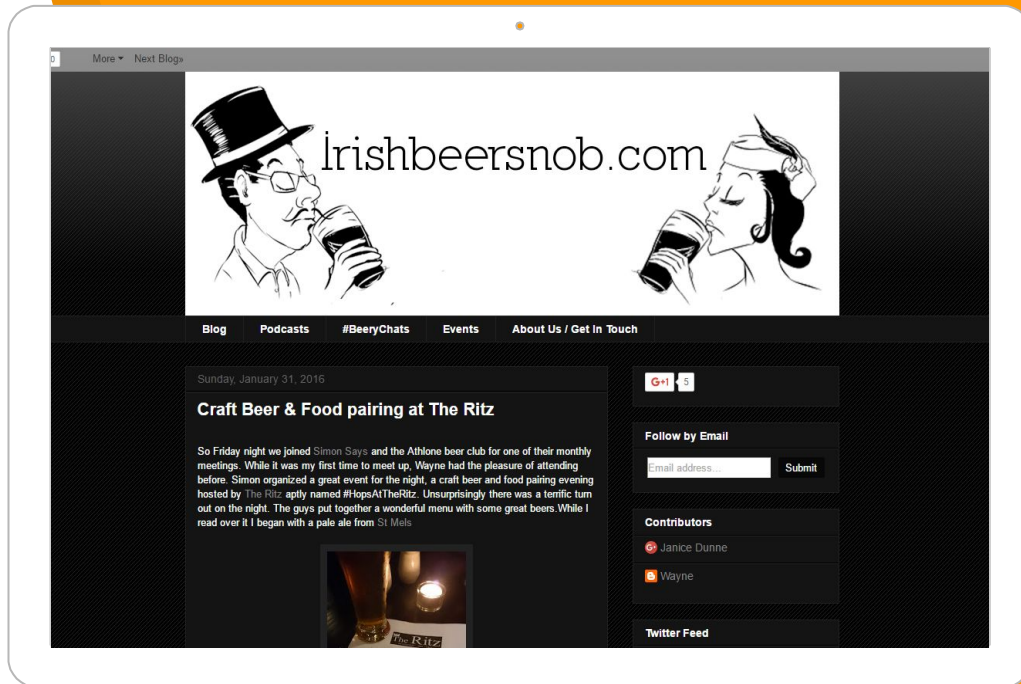


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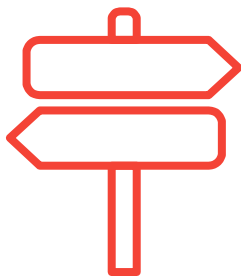
SHEILA KIELY

So Friday night **we joined** Simon Says and the Athlone beer club for one of **their monthly meetings**. While it was my first time to meet up, Wayne had the pleasure of attending before. Simon organized **a great event for the night**,[...] The guys put together a wonderful menu with some great beers.

This was a **fantastically well organised event** [...] Well done to Simon and all the staff at The Ritz. **We'll definitely see you again!**



Wayne - irishbeersnob.com



LOCALITY

[Tribes] do not rally people around something rational and modern - but around non rational and archaic elements - **locality**, kinship, emotion, passion;

Cova (2001)

“

*Both Janice & I have a strong passion for food. We are very lucky to live not far from a regular **farmers market**, and have always been keen to try use **local produce** in the food we cook at home*

*The primary focus of our blog was always to highlight great craft beer, and cider **products in Ireland**. There are so many **excellent small local producers** of craft beer around the country in particular since the beginning of this decade.*

Wayne & Janice (Irish Beer Snob)

It was **all about buying local** at last night's Tipperary Food Producers Cookery Extravaganza in Clonmel. Tipperary produce – local cheese, preserves, meat and fruit – was used for the elegant nibbles on offer at the start of the night, during the cookery demonstrations and for the rapidly hoovered up deserts which finished off the evening.



Caroline Hennessy - bibliobook.com



4.

TRIBAL CONFIGURATION

Is food blogging a
modern tribe?

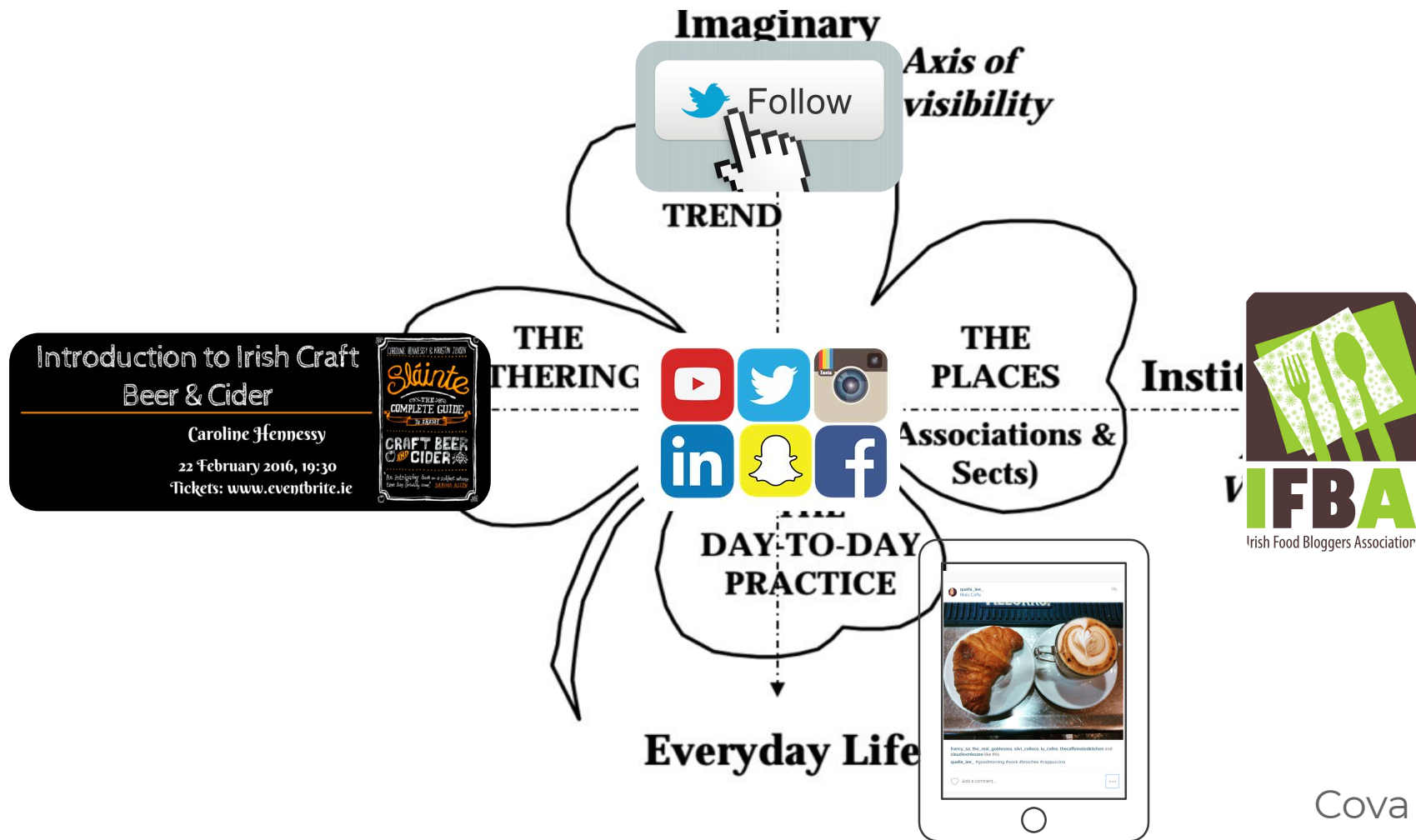
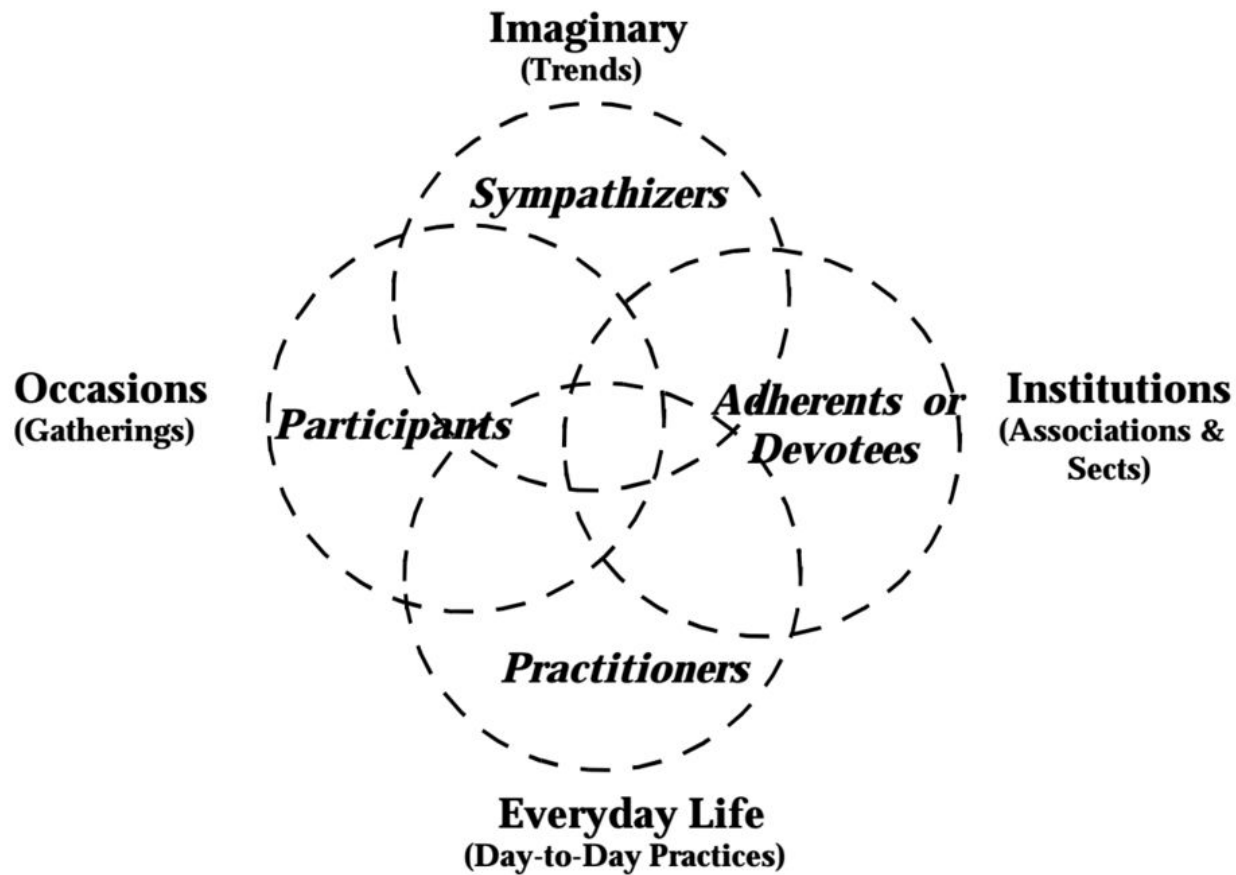


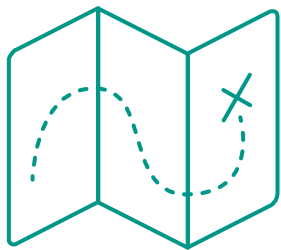
Figure 2: The Tribal Clover

Cova (2001)

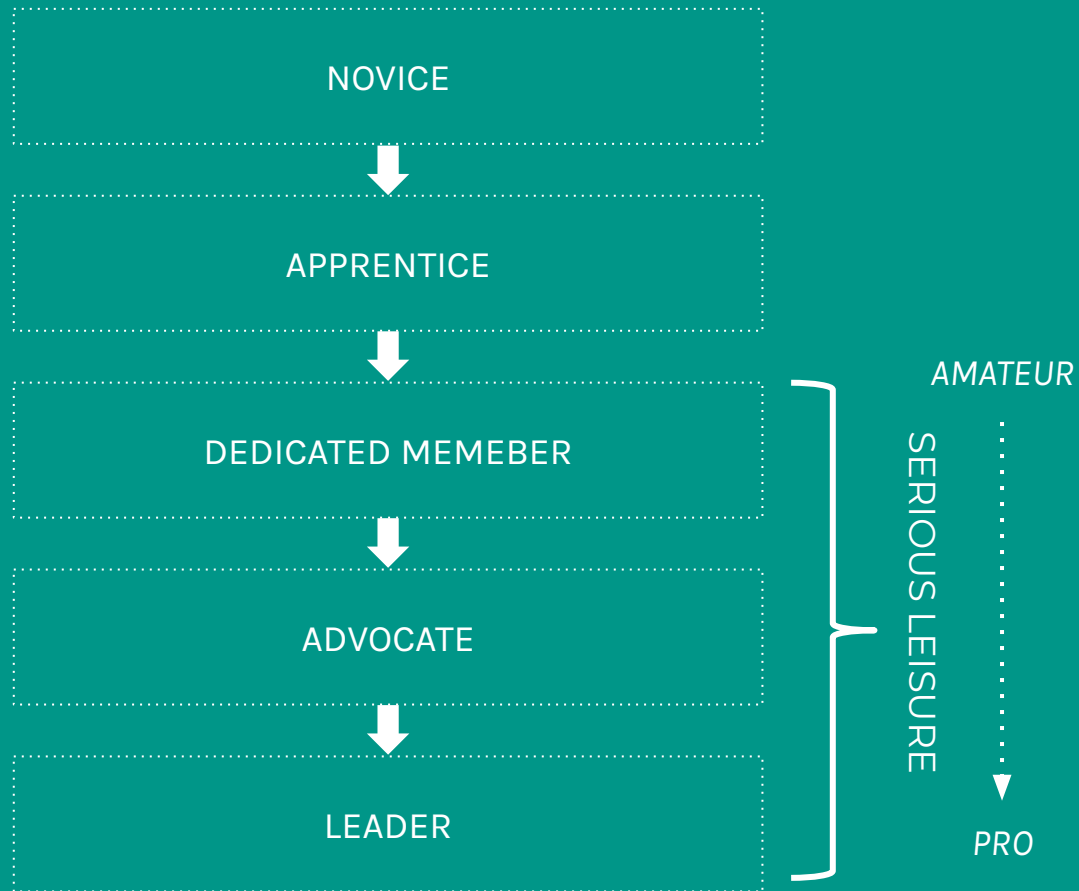


Cova (2001)

Figure 3: Roles of Tribe Members



FOOD BLOGGING CONSUMPTION CAREER PATH





5.

A VALUE BASED MARKETING PROPOSAL

Experiential campaign
for co-creation and
reinforcement of value

WHAT WE FOUND ABOUT FOOD BLOGGING ?

- ▶ Although it is a heterogeneous mix of diverse “cosmos” can be still analysed and approached with the **precepts of tribal marketing**.
- ▶ Despite being a relatively new form of communication, it has been **continuously evolving** and has already **reconfigured itself** (toward social media).

MARKETING CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL

- ▶ Food festival - invite 20 influential food bloggers - each have their own food stall - 4 times a year (themes around each season)
- ▶ Marketing will be conducted primarily using social media
- ▶ Aim: Further enhance the tribe in terms of communication and engagement
- ▶ #FoodieFest16



THANKS!

Any questions?