The GIFs that keep on giving
How Domino's created a new pizza language in 'dark social'.

Executive Summary:

Millennials had become increasingly negative towards marketing; fed up of being disturbed, intruded and, frankly, bored by forms of digital advertising. 38% of desktop users and 30% of mobile users were actively choosing to switch it off with the help of Ad Blockers. With a core audience of internet-native, mobile-first Social Snackers, Domino's was also victim to this industry-wide challenge. With 75% of content being shared on dark social, the brand's audience was not only watching less TV, but also spending less time on Facebook. With existing formats and channels no longer cutting it, Domino's needed to find a new way to remain top-of-mind and drive penetration with this audience.

With the help of a bespoke tool, we conducted some clever social listening in places that others cannot reach (including dark social). We discovered that our audience was expressing their reactions to daily life and food in a more emotional, nuanced and abstract way than ever (memes, GIFs, emojis and the like). Yet, when it came to pizza, they were simply left lost for words.

We made it our creative mission to allow pizza fans to express the inexpressible. We would create a new Domino's pizza language.

Harnessing the growing power, popularity and availability of GIFs in 2016, we created an entire collection of Domino's GIFEELINGS. By working with GIF artists to ensure authenticity and lols, and through developing an always-relevant creation and distribution strategy, we gave Social Snackers a way to finally express their pizza love.

And they took to it in their droves. To date, we have had over 145million views, ranked number one on Google search for 'GIF' and infiltrated the mysterious world of dark social right across the UK. What's more, we've proven great business returns, delivering £3.2m of revenue at an ROI of 1:93.

The Problem:

Domino's is officially the biggest pizza company in the UK and over time has set its stall out as being the most innovative and famous in digital, too. On social media, the brand has accumulated millions of fans and followers, it sees a hugely impressive 5.2 ROI (based on Domino's Econometrics study) and has a distinctive brand tone that has led to the likes of Facebook Live Pizza Auctions and Pizza on Tinder. Despite it's past glory though, Domino's, much like the rest of the industry, has been facing an increasing problem… the rise of 'dark social'.
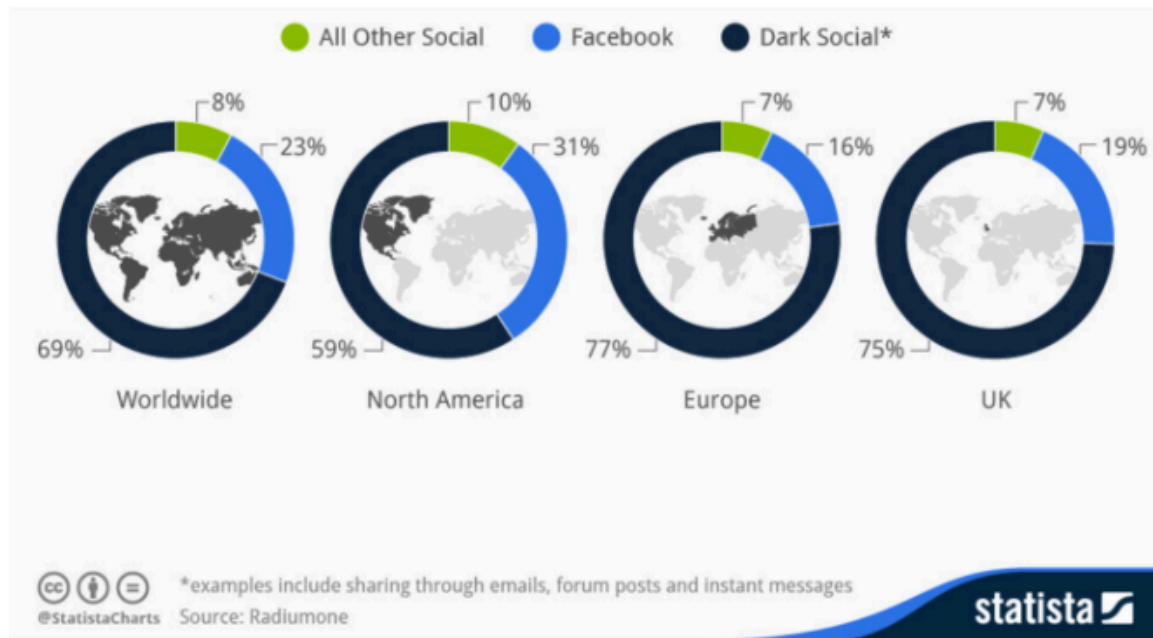

Source: Radiumone, 2016

To continue to drive penetration, top of mind brand awareness and brand love, Domino's relies on its ability to participate with Social Snackers in digital channels and around occasions where Domino's did or could play a transformative role. This audience are internet-native pizza lovers. They constantly snack on social, whether it's sharing the funniest videos of the day or making their own memes for their mates to laugh at. However, this audience have dramatically shifted the way in which they share with their peers. Gone are the days of the 'Over Sharer'. Now it's all about sharing through private apps and messaging services to engage with friends. As a brand this poses great problems; not only are your audience less engaged with the traditional social channels which you have established, but they are also less likely to share your content in these spaces, making organic reach a thing of the past.

Adding to the problem for Domino's, Social Snackers have become increasingly more negative towards marketing, actively choosing to switch it off. 38% of Desktop users are now using Ad Blockers and 30% on mobile. Audiences have had enough of being disturbed, intruded and, frankly, bored by forms of digital advertising.
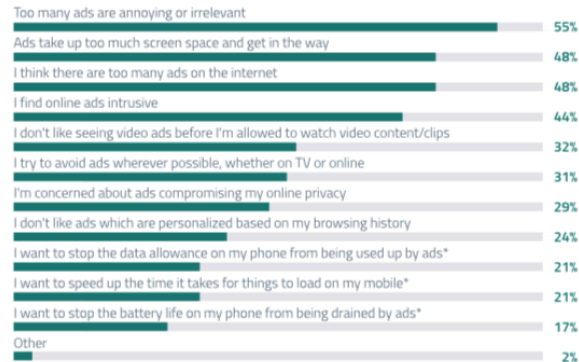
Desktop Ad-Blocking Over Time
% who are blocking ads on their main computer

27% (Q1 2015), 28% (Q2 2015), 28% (Q3 2015), 38% (Q4 2015), 37% (Q1 2016), 38% (Q2 2016)
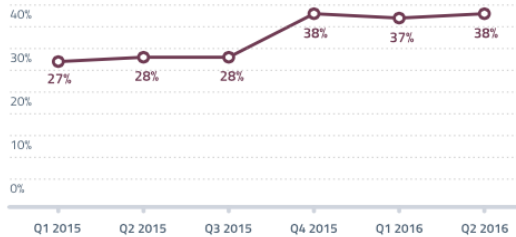
Question: Which of the following things have you done when accessing the internet from your main computer? ///
Source: GlobalWebIndex Q1 2015 - Q2 2016 /// Base: Internet users aged 16–64

Top Motivations for Ad-Blocking
% of ad-blocker users who say the following are their main reasons for blocking ads

Reason	%
Too many ads are annoying or irrelevant	55%
Ads take up too much screen space and get in the way	48%
I think there are too many ads on the internet	48%
I find online ads intrusive	44%
I don't like seeing video ads before I'm allowed to watch video content/clips	32%
I try to avoid ads wherever possible, whether on TV or online	31%
I'm concerned about ads compromising my online privacy	29%
I don't like ads which are personalized based on my browsing history	24%
I want to stop the data allowance on my phone from being used up by ads*	21%
I want to speed up the time it takes for things to load on my mobile*	21%
I want to stop the battery life on my phone from being drained by ads*	17%
Other	2%

Source: GlobalWebIndex, 2016

In a world with so many messages at our fingertips, it's becoming increasingly more difficult to be noticed, let alone not be switched off. The challenge, then, was clear. Domino's needed to find a way to stay relevant and engaged with this mobile-first, internet-native audience who now share the majority of content in the privacy of dark social. We needed to find a way to make the awesomeness of Domino's pizzas an authentic part of these conversations. It couldn't feel like advertising and yet it needed to drive a positive emotional response towards the brand.

The Insight:

Before considering the means or the message, we needed to understand Internet native pizza-lovers better, particularly when it came to their feelings toward Domino's and how they expressed themselves. This would be key in helping us better communicate to Social Snackers in a natural and relevant way. We wanted to know how pizza-lovers would describe the taste and emotions of Domino's Pizza.

In order to get to the bottom of this, we developed a bespoke social research model to unearth the language and emotions used by Social-Snackers. Through analysing over a year's worth of Domino's (and competitor) social and dark social data (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Blogs and Forums plus 60,000 Domino's feedback surveys) we were able to identify the overriding emotions related to each brand on each platform – from anger to joy, anticipation to trust. The outputs allowed us to a) understand how our customers felt about the taste of Domino's pizza, b) discover the emotional opportunity in the market, and c) identify just how and where our audience communicate with their peers.

Source: Domino's & IRIS – Emotions Research, 2016
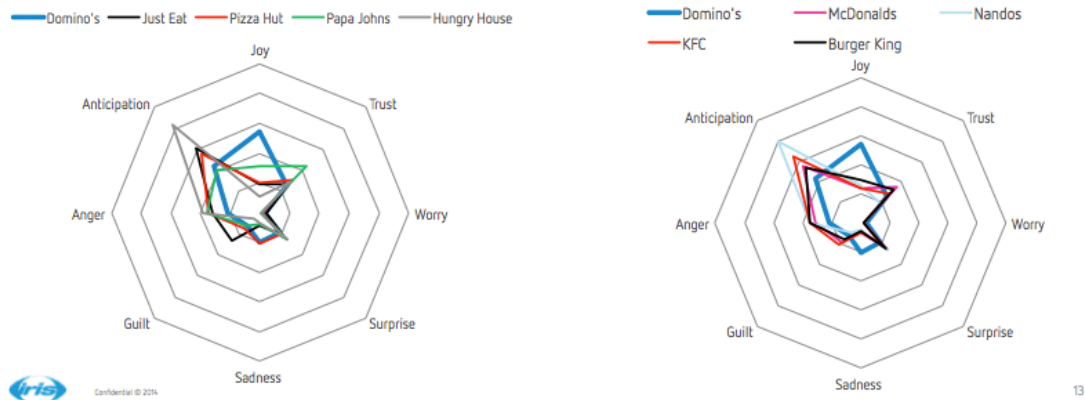
It was clear from the research that Domino's Pizza occupies the emotional territory 'joy', but just as interesting was the language our consumers used to communicate. It certainly wasn't English, in fact our fans couldn't and didn't put it into words, they used the emerging emotional language of the Internet – more so than any other brand – GIFs, memes, emojis and CAPSLOCK.

The Idea:

We saw this as an amazing opportunity to connect with pizza fans and all-round Internet natives in an entirely new way, or in fact, their way. And with this, our central idea was born, as was our way of expressing it. What if we could bridge the gap between the emotional joy Pizza Lovers felt about Domino's and the language available to them to deliver it?

Memes and emojis had already greatly developed the way in which Social Snackers expressed their pizza joy, yet it still appeared somewhat limiting. GIFs, on the other hand, had become the new language of the 2016/17 Millennial… so simple yet so emotive.

If a picture is worth 1000 words, a GIF is worth a million. Chung, the founder of Giphy, explains that 'GIFs are a language that allows ourselves to express complex ideas and thoughts in ways that we couldn't express before. It really is a digital language where we're able to take advantage of this new vocabulary.' This was exactly our creative ambition, to allow pizza fans to express the inexpressible. To create a new Domino's language.

And what better time to strike? In one year, WhatsApp, iMessage, Twitter and Facebook Messenger all incorporated GIFs into their platforms.

GIFEELINGS was born.

A completely unique yet simple idea… We would leverage this brilliant consumer-to-consumer platform in a bold and fresh way, untapped and untarnished by brands and marketers. We set about launching a mouth boggling collection of GIFs, where fans could finally pinpoint the exact way the deliciousness of Domino's made them feel, facilitating their conversations online (and in private).

To ensure these GIFs hit the spot and felt authentic, we worked with top GIF artists (yes there are such people), guided by the Internet, to create our bank of GIFEELINGS. The craft of these GIFs was vital, ensuring the perfect balance between lol-worthy and appetite appeal. What's more, we needed to carefully consider branding in the GIFs. This would vary from a watermark logo to the inclusion of Domino's pizzas, always conscious that one step too far would deem the GIF as 'advertising' and therefore not cool nor shareworthy.

GIPHY had become the heart of Social Snacker culture, so by launching on their platform we gave Domino's a legitimate, purposeful and seamless way into these mysterious 'dark social' conversations. Then, as part of our distribution strategy, we later worked with Tenor to become the first brand to have GIFs on WhatsApp.

Kicking off in April 2016 with a fully loaded GIPHY channel (http://giphy.com/dominosukroi), we created GIFs of all styles. From animation to pizza porn, memes to product shots. Our channel armed Social Snackers with the perfect tools to finally express their love for their favourite pizza. And, so popular were the GIFs with fans and GIPHY alike, that we were featured (free of charge) on GIPHY's trending channel, homepage and mobile homepage within our first week.

In order to ensure that our GIFEELINGS platform remained popular, resonant and LOL-worthy for Social Snackers, we created an 'always-relevant' creative strategy for publishing. Within this, we continuously tested the performance and sharability of our GIFs to identify any key trends and capitalize on them. We also created GIFs for each campaign window, further demonstrating the delicious taste and great joy of the brand. We introduced the new Domino's Italiano range, for example, with fun GIFs from the advert alongside extra mouth-watering pizza shots.

We created gaming and football GIFs, aligning to the brand's key passion points, giving Domino's an extra reason to be involved in those 'Football Bantz' group chats and Gaming Night Twitter exchanges.
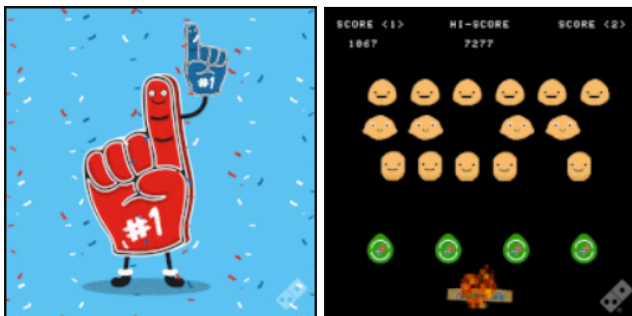
And, most recently, anticipating that the New Year would create a demand for GIFs as Social Snackers look to send messages to friends and loved ones, Domino's was there to help. We brought to life a collection of Domi New Year GIFEELINGS especially for the occasion. On Tenor, with zero paid media, the GIFs were viewed a staggering 21,434,531 times between 26th December and 3rd January, representing a media value of $150,000.

Time after time, these GIFEELINGS have been at the heart of Social Snacker conversations. They have well and truly broken into culture.

Results:

Beyond creating a traditional campaign that talked AT Social Snackers, we armed them with content that they could participate with and share with their mates. We provided the right tools to allow our market to do the marketing. Using our fans as the ultimate media channel, and GIFs as the fun, tasty advertising, we broke into Internet culture.

Pizza lovers, nationwide, told us that we'd given them 'the GIFs they'd been looking for' – successfully providing them with bite-sized ways to express their GIFEELINGS in any pizza-fuelled occasion, as they so wished both privately and publicly.

Participation Performance:

Since launching GIPHY in April 2016, our GIFs to date have been viewed 145,736,857 times and counting.

The 'Heart Hugging Pizza' GIF (our most popular) has now been viewed 33,158,213 times and is the number one search return for 'GIF' on Google.
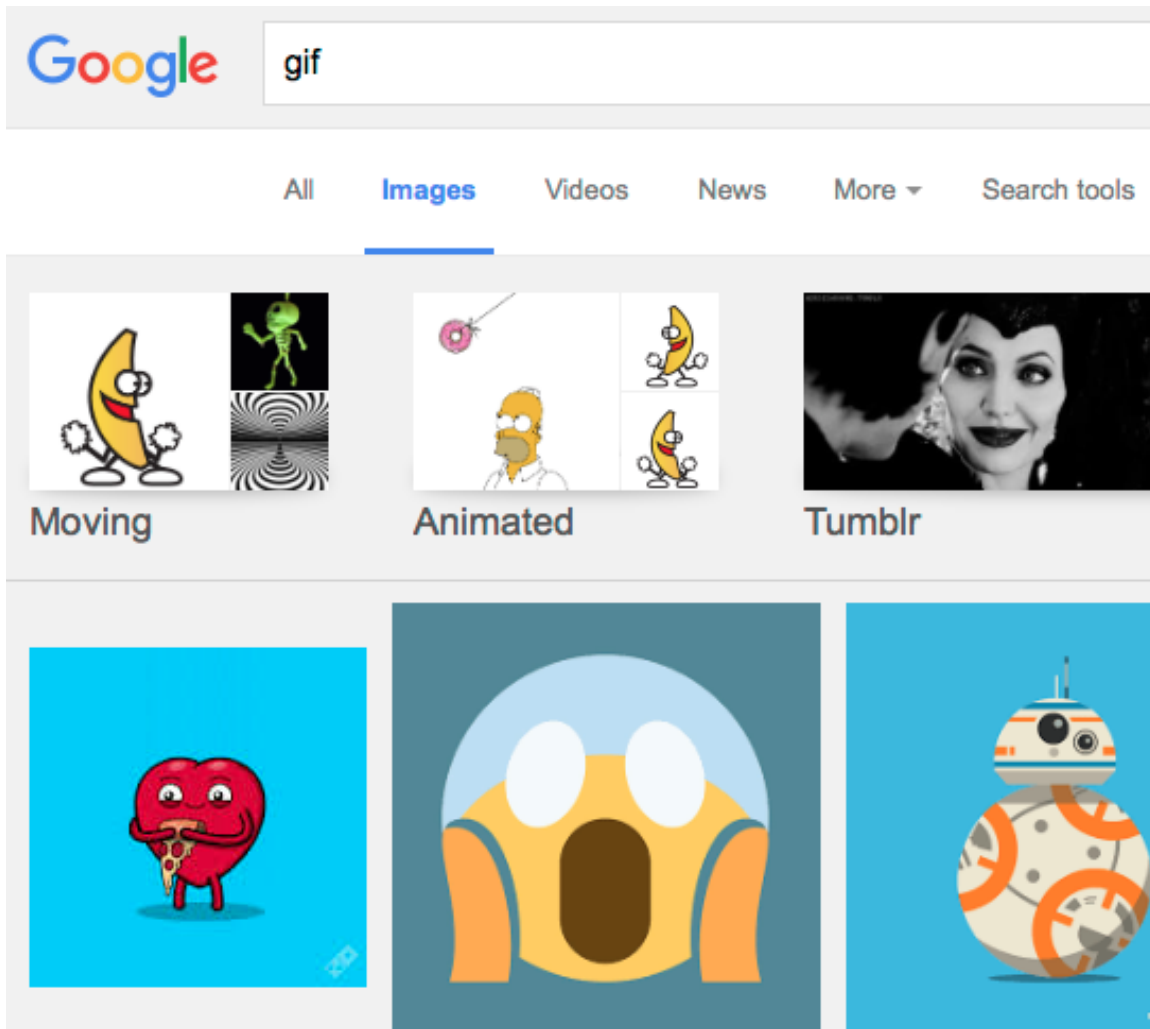
Domino's has pioneered its way into a completely new platform and communications format in order to better entertain, serve and participate with its social audience. Since our introduction to GIPHY in early 2016, a number of brands have followed suit with the most recent being Sainsbury's, but Domino's remains where it should be, an innovative and daring comms leader.

Business Performance and ROI:

We have been unable to isolate the business impact GIFEELINGS has had. However, during the key campaign window in which we launched GIPHY, Domino's saw 18% YOY growth and 26.6% YOY Total eCommerce Sales growth.

What's more, during our New Year GIF activation, Domino's UK recorded an 18.6% YOY increase in online value. And within our New Year activation, we gained 21,434,531 views on Tenor, which they calculated to be worth $150,000 of media value. But in order to demonstrate a more robust return, we have utilised two more tested metrics.

Domino's 2016 Econometrics Study shows that Social Content delivers a ROI of 5.2. Using this modeling, and considering a more conservative and recognised CPM base (Facebook UK's standard CPM) we have been able to calculate that GIFEELINGS delivered a revenue of £3,182,893. To deliver the same volume of impressions on Facebook, we would have had to spend 18 times more. Our ROI equates to 93, which is 18 times better than the ROI multiplier of 5.2.

Facebook UK CPM*	GBP to USD Exchange rate	Facebook UK CPM
£4.20	1.26	$5.29

	Impressions	GBP	Social ROI multiplier**	GIFEELINGS revenue
		Equivalent advertising cost		
NYD	21,434,531	£90,025	5.2	£468,130
Total	145,736,857	£612,095		£3,182,893

	Impressions	USD	Social ROI multiplier**	GIFEELINGS revenue
		Equivalent advertising cost		
NYD	21,434,531	$113,432	5.2	$589,844
Total	145,736,857	$771,239		$4,010,445

OVERALL MEDIA RETURNS £2.50 FOR EVERY POUND INVESTED – BUT THE ROI EXCLUDING MENUS IS £4.40

Channel	Revenue	Cost	ROI	Franchisee ROI*
Menus	£55.1m	£53.5m	1.0	0.4
TV and VOD	£87.2m	£17.1m	5.1	1.8
Text	£20.9m	£7.5m	2.8	1.0
PPC	£25.0m	£4.3m	5.8	2.0
Hollyoaks Sponsorship	£17.6m	£3.6m	4.8	1.7
X Factor Sponsorship	£6.4m	£1.9m	3.3	1.2
OOH	£3.6m	£1.8m	2.0	0.7
Social	£7.5m	£1.4m	5.2	1.8
Radio Tactical	£2.1m	£0.6m	3.3	1.2
Press Tactical	£1.3m	£0.5m	2.8	1.0
Radio Campaign	£1.6m	£0.4m	3.8	1.3
Direct Mail	£0.8m	£0.3m	2.4	0.8
Email	£1.5m	-	-	
Overall	£230.5m	£93.0m	2.5	0.9

National marketing (exc. Menus) generates £153.8m of revenue at an ROI of 4.8

Local marketing (inc. Menus) generates £76.7m of revenue at an ROI of 1.3

HMG DATA SCIENCE Part of HAVAS MEDIA GROUP

* 35% profit margin assumed
Source: Domino's, Arena, HMG econometric models
Aggregated Order models – Revenue, Cost & ROI of marketing activity

Domino's

Source: Domino's, Arena, HMG econometrics models
Source: Salesforce 2016 Advertising Index Report

Conclusion

We set out to find a solution to our audience's shifting media and consumption habits, but in doing so learnt that there was more to be gained through embracing their new behaviours. Traditional channels, along with traditional language had become outdated and unsophisticated. Social Snackers were looking for new, native and fun ways to express themselves – particularly when it came to Domino's Pizza. So we jumped in with both feet.

We created a new language for pizza fans. We made a marketing channel out of a playful consumer-to-consumer platform. And, ultimately, we got our market doing the marketing in places brands can't access.

Domino's shaped Internet culture and created an entirely new language... one GIF (one pizza) at a time.

Word Count (including executive summary): 2217