

BMW collaborates creatively

To inspire consumers to find the BMW 1 Series model that's right for them, BMW has extended the concept of 'one' into an expressive online community of contributors, all sharing their own idea of what it means to focus on 'just One'.

Called 'The Gallery of One(s)', the BMW mini-site www.bmw1series.co.za, is powered by local video- and photo-sharing site, www.zoopy.com. Zoopy's technology allows users to upload videos and photos that capture the idea of One-ness in an image or video clip, all within a dedicated BMW 1 Series channel.

Winning

At the end of each week, contributors with the highest ratings and most views will each stand the chance of winning a 1GB iPod Shuffle. And at the end of the experience on 8 August, grand prize winners will walk away with a multimedia package that could include a Sony Harddrive video camera, a Canon EOS 400D digital SLR camera or a Sony DV video cam. Media editing software, carry cases and tripods are also up for grabs.

Good news for contributors and fans of any media uploaded is that everything uploaded into The Gallery of One(s) falls under a [Creative Commons South Africa Attribution-NonCommercial 2.5 licence](#). In other words, anyone viewing the videos or photos in the BMW 1 Series channel is free to share or remix the media, as long as they attribute the work to the original author (uploader) and as long as it's for non-commercial purposes.

Ethical

Heather Ford, public lead of [Creative Commons South Africa](#), has supported the project's approach to sharing and open collaboration. "We think that this is an example of great ethical online business practice. Not only has BMW thoughtfully developed intellectual property rules with a 'take only what you need' approach, but its partnership with Zoopy shows us how the company is thinking of itself in terms of a local ecosystem of Internet players, rather than believing that it can build everything from scratch and retain all rights just 'because it can'," says Ford.

BMW's interactive marketing manager [Scott Gray](#), and [Jason Elk](#), CEO of Zoopy.com, both agree.

According to Elk, "Our technology hooked in perfectly with Scott's vision for taking his brand a step further, at an exciting time in South Africa when more and more users are embracing sites that incorporate Web 2.0 functionality and the idea of co-generating content."

Virtual milestone

Gray believes that this campaign is an important virtual milestone for BMW and could pave the way for how it approaches online marketing in the future. But because the whole concept of the project depends on users creating the content by themselves, for themselves, a lot depends on how involved they become.

"We've taken a serious leap of faith into an unknown quantity. Will it be the beginning of a revolution – social media redefining the way we sell and market cars?" asks Gray. "I guess only time will tell!"

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