ABSTRACT
This poster focuses on how consumers learn to use marketing automation software, what types of documentation they prefer, and why. Interviews with U.S. and U.K. marketers demonstrate that implementing marketing automation software requires users to re-learn their jobs, and requires companies to reconfigure organizational structures and workflows. Accordingly, users are interested in knowing how counterparts apply the software, despite raising concerns about privacy. Based on these findings, the poster illustrates the advantages that software companies—especially those operating on a Waterfall development model—can gain by allowing users to participate in creating and refining documentation. In addition to reducing the learning curve for users, participatory documentation enables companies to gather feedback that is critical to making documentation and software more usable.

Categories and Subject Descriptors
H.5.2 User Interfaces

Keywords
Documentation, instructional design, marketing automation software, participatory culture, technical communication.

1. INTRODUCTION
Digital media are facilitating the development of a “participatory culture.” Unlike consumers of print media, users of digital media can annotate, appropriate and share content, playing a more active role in shaping and distributing information. As media scholar Henry Jenkins notes, “Rather than talking about media producers and consumers as occupying separate roles, we might now see them as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understands” [1]. He counsels corporate leaders to reconsider the ways in which they relate to these more demanding, fickle, and socially connected customers. Studying how consumers learn to use complex software offers an opportunity to explore the relevance of this advice. For instance, citing cyber theorist Pierre Levy, Jenkins argues that “the dynamic, collective and reciprocal nature of [digital] exchanges undermines traditional forms of expertise,” including “static forms of writing” [2]. Print documentation exemplifies such a static form. Rather than allowing readers to define a task or decide how to execute it, print documentation predetermines their course of action.

2. DOCUMENTATION USABILITY
This poster presents the initial results of a nine-month research project concluding in August 2013. The study addressed how customers learn to use marketing automation software, including the contexts in which such learning takes place. It also explored the types of documentation that users found more or less helpful, and why. Data were gathered through interviews with U.S. and U.K. marketers in multiple industries, all using the same type of software. Interview transcripts were coded using a grounded theory approach [3]. Key findings include:

- Implementing marketing automation software requires marketers to do more than learn how to use a tool. Like other complex software [4], it requires individuals to re-learn their jobs, and requires companies to reconfigure organizational structures and workflows.
- Accordingly, users are interested in learning how counterparts in their own and other industries work with the software, despite also raising concerns about the privacy of data sets.

3. TYPESET TEXT
Based on the above findings, the poster illustrates the advantages that software companies can gain by allowing users to participate in developing task-oriented documentation. Participatory documentation is especially well-suited to organizations operating on a Waterfall development model. Compared to the iterative Agile software development lifecycle, the Waterfall lifecycle offers clients fewer opportunities to learn firsthand from developers. Participatory documentation offers one way of compensating for this relative lack of interaction. For users, it offers a way of gaining insights into best practices, as well as an increased likelihood of getting the help they need quickly and in an easily negotiable format. For companies, it offers an inexpensive means of gathering frequently updated feedback that can improve the usability of both documentation and the software itself. Essentially, participatory documentation enables companies using the Waterfall model to garner some of the benefits that Agile development provides, without having to reconfigure their organizational structures or profit models substantially.

4. REFERENCES
http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?doid=1400214.1400239