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Paula Santonocito

**The Age of Transparency**

After months, even years of speculation, the age of information and the age of technology seem to finally have their offspring. The age of transparency, weaned on Web 2.0, is doing quite well, thanks to so many dotting participants.

For those who have doubts, a picture is worth a thousand words--or, in this case, a [YouTube video](#) speaks volumes.

The video showcases "United Breaks Guitars," a song a Canadian musician wrote after United Airlines broke his Taylor guitar. The song gives new meaning to the term smash hit.

And it has been a hit on the information airwaves, receiving more than 2 million views the first week.

The new star, Dave Carroll, twangs a tale, sharing how he tried to address the problem of his broken guitar with the airline, only to be ignored for months following the incident.

Turns out he's no longer being ignored.

[The Chicago Tribune](#) reports that United is now working on a resolution and may use the YouTube video for customer service training.

United clearly longs for Carroll to sing a different tune, especially given his audience access.

And that, after all, is the point. In the age of transparency, an incident can create an image.

It's interesting to note that United Airlines isn't even close to being the worst airline when it comes to mishandled baggage. For the period January through December 2008, United was No. 10 on the list of U.S. carriers, according to the [Air Travel Consumer Report](#) from the U.S. Department of Transportation Office of Aviation and Enforcement and Proceedings.

But right now, fans of Dave Carroll and his band incorrectly believe that United breaks records with regard to breaking guitars.

It's a lesson about damage control for companies. To some extent, it's also about loss of control.

Whether it's a matter of customer feedback or [employee feedback](#), don't underestimate the power of the people now that they have technology at their fingertips.