

New Media Cases in *Cases in Public Health Communication & Marketing*: The Promise and Potential

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Among public health communication and marketing professionals, there is a growing sense of excitement about new media. New media—defined as those media that are based on the use of digital technologies, such as the Internet, computer games, mobile phones, and digital television—are seen as potentially valuable tools for implementing public health communication campaigns. By increasing interaction and engagement, new media may aid traditional public health campaigns in raising awareness, spreading influence, and ultimately, changing behavior.

The use of many forms of new media has become widespread among the U.S. population. According to recent surveys by the Pew Internet and American Life Project, three out of four American adults use the Internet,¹ and of those, 48% visit video-sharing sites such as YouTube,² 39% read blogs,¹ and 16% use social networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace.¹ Furthermore, 75% of U.S. adults have cell phones, and of those, 62% use their cell phones for accessing the Internet and/or participating in other digital activities such as texting, taking pictures or recording a video.³ These use statistics provide a strong argument for

the integration of such media into traditional communication campaigns.

Yet, despite the widespread use of new media by the public, there are few instances where new media have been used in the context of public health campaigns and even fewer which have been documented in the published literature. This volume of *Cases in Public Health Communication & Marketing* is devoted to addressing this gap. In this volume, we have solicited case studies which represent instances of new media being used in the development, dissemination and/or evaluation of public health media campaigns.^{4–8} By bringing together a collection of such cases into one volume, it is our hope that these cases can serve as models which inspire the design of future public health campaigns. Furthermore, by bringing together such cases, we hope to elucidate both what we already know and what we need to know about using new media effectively in public health media campaigns.

The campaigns described in this volume ranged in budget, scope and media platforms used (See Table 1, next page, for an overview of campaign media). The Verb

Campaign was a national, government-sponsored campaign with a multimillion dollar budget,⁴ while the campaign waged by Sustainable Table was sponsored by a small non-profit with much more limited resources and budget.⁷ Yet, despite differences in size and scope across all campaigns, there were many commonalities. All campaigns made use of new media in combination with traditional forms of media. Most

campaigns had new media efforts which consisted of a website, a profile on various social networking sites, videos posted to video sharing sites, and a blog or vlog (video blog). Additionally, a couple of campaigns — the Verb Campaign and It’s Your (Sex) Life — made use of text messaging and interactive games. These two campaigns also embraced the functionalities of user-generated content (UGC), and allowed the target

Table 1. Overview of Media and Support Tools Used in New Media Campaigns from Volume 2*

Campaign (Sponsoring Organization)	Behavioral Goal	Traditional Media			Website				Social Networking		Other New Media			Support Tools: Evaluation & Monitoring							
		Print Advertising	Television/Cable Programming or Advertising	In-person Communication	Information	Download Materials	Games & Interaction	Blog/Vlog	Video	Facebook	MySpace	Flickr (photos)	YouTube (videos)	Wikipedia	Desktop Agent	Text Messaging	Newsletters (e.g. Constant Contact)	Analytics (e.g. Google Analytics, NetTracker)	Google Alerts	Survey Tools (e.g. Survey Monkey)	Web-based Panels (e.g. Knowledge Networks)
Parents Speak Up National Campaign (U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services)	Increase parent-child communication about delaying the onset of sexual activity	X	X		X	X		X													X
VERB™ campaign (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)	Increase physical activity among tweens	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X			X	
It’s Your (Sex) Life (MTV/Kaiser Family Foundation)	Increase HIV testing and awareness about HIV prevention among youth		X	X	X	X	X	X		X					X						

Table 1. (cont.)

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		Print Advertising	Television/Cable Programming or Advertising	In-person Communication	Information	Download Materials	Games & Interaction	Blog/Vlog	Video	Facebook	MySpace	Flickr (photos)	YouTube (videos)	Wikipedia	Desktop Agent	Text Messaging	Newsletters (e.g. Constant Contact)	Analytics (e.g. Google Analytics, NetTracker)	Google Alerts	Survey Tools (e.g. Survey Monkey)	Web-based Panels (e.g. Knowledge Networks)
RE3.org (North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources)	Increase recycling among young adults	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X		
5th Guy (Florida Department of Health)**	Increase hand washing in adults	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X									
Sustainable Table (Grace)	Increase sustainable food practice among adults	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X		

* The contents of the table reflect aspects of the campaign reported in the case study published in Volume II of *Cases in Public Health Communication & Marketing*. Each campaign may have used additional modalities beyond those indicated here.

** The 5th Guy Campaign is a student-authored peer reviewed case included in Volume 2 of *Cases in Public Health Communication & Marketing*, which made extensive use of new media.

audience to be the creators of parts of their new media campaign content.

Most encouraging was that all campaigns were, in fact, found to be successful — at least with some of their efforts — in using new media to expand the dissemination of their campaign messages. Whether measured with page views to websites, downloads of cam-

campaign videos, or numbers of text messages sent, all campaigns were able to generate significant exposure to their campaign materials with new media. This was found to be true even for the campaigns with tightly restricted budgets for ad distribution such as RE3.org which by posting its ads on YouTube was able to generate over 30,000 additional views of its campaign ads.⁶ In addition to dissemination,

new media proved to be valuable in increasing the longevity of campaigns. For example, Verb was able to significantly prolong the life of its campaign after the campaign budget ended, as the ads posted on YouTube and its website continued to receive many downloads and views after the campaign officially ended.⁴

The ability of new media to increase dissemination or extend campaign length speaks to the fact that many of the tools for creating and serving new media are available free on the Internet or for a nominal price (See Table

2 for a description of new media resources). While some of these may take only seconds to make use of (e.g. posting an existing ad on YouTube), other applications may consume many human resource hours for their creation and maintenance (e.g. creating and maintaining a blog). That said, in general, once traditional campaign materials are developed, the additional resources required for new media appears to be comparatively minimal, and those efforts may have long-lasting effects.

Table 2. New Media Resources for the Creation, Implementation, and Evaluation of Media Campaigns

		Description	Campaign Application	Resource Name and Website
Creating content and implementing campaign	Blog	Website maintained by an individual, where the author can post regular entries of commentary or other material such as graphics or video	Opportunity for key issues in a campaign to be raised and discussed	Blogger www.blogger.com Live Journal www.livejournal.com TypePad www.typepad.com
	Social networking	Website where users or organizations can create personal pages and interact with other users; Information posted includes: personal information, blogs, videos and music	Opportunity to use viral marketing to connect individuals and members of their social network to campaign's cause	MySpace www.myspace.com Facebook www.facebook.com
	Video sharing	Website where videos are shared; Users can post video clips, view clips, and comment on clips	Campaign ads can receive additional exposure; Users can view ads, share with contacts, and comment on their content	YouTube www.youtube.com/ MySpace Video vids.myspace.com Yahoo Video video.yahoo.com
	E-Newsletters	A newsletter sent by email; Tools available to create email newsletters and manage contacts	Campaigns can keep audience posted about developments in campaign and communicate key messages	Constant Contact www.constantcontact.com

Table 2. (cont.)

		Description	Campaign Application	Resource Name and Website
Measuring campaign reach and process (Process Evaluation)	Keyword alerts	A service which monitors mentions of keywords on the Web, including on news sites	Campaign planners can track mention of campaign issues or campaign name on the Web	Google Alerts www.google.com/alerts
	Website Analytics	A service which monitors visitor traffic to a website and behavior of website visitors	Campaign planners can track visitors to campaign websites, and associated blogs, video and other materials posted on the web	Google Analytics www.google.com/analytics NetTracker netinsight.unica.com/Products/Net-Tracker.cfm
Measuring campaign impact on beliefs, attitudes and behavior (Outcome Evaluation)	Survey tools	A tool for conducting surveys of users via the web or email	Campaign planners can survey members of the target audience; The sponsoring organization needs to have its own sample of users and their emails	Survey Monkey www.surveymonkey.com Zoomerang www.zoomerang.com
	Web-based panels	A services which offers a probability-based sample or convenience sample for research purposes	Campaign planners can survey members of the target audience. Company provides access to the sample	Knowledge Networks www.knowledgenetworks.com Harris Interactive www.harrisinteractive.com e-Rewards www.erewards.com

A second lesson from these cases is that not all new media platforms are equally successful. One of the components with mixed reviews was the blogs. While most of the campaigns created a campaign blog, blogs varied significantly in their ability to attract traffic and generate interaction. The vlogs (video blogs) created by MTV viewers for the It's Your (Sex) Life campaign generated over 60,000 views in one week when they were featured on the homepage of MySpace.⁸ However, both the RE3.org and the Sustainable Table blogs were not highly

trafficked and received few comments per blog posting, with more postings occurring for action-oriented items.^{6,7} Data on blog use need to be carefully considered in designing public health interventions, and significant attention may need to be paid to the promotion of blogs.⁷ For example, Sustainable Table was able to increase blog traffic from 2,800 to 10,000 users per month by introducing guest bloggers and increasing their online and offline blog promotion efforts.⁷

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, these cases illustrate that there is a need for evaluations which inform campaign planners not only about how many times a given component of a campaign was viewed (e.g. total page views), but by whom it was viewed and to what effect. Attention needs to be paid to whether those consuming new media are in fact members of the intended target audience and, more importantly, to whether new media efforts are reaching a large proportion of the target audience. Furthermore, outcome evaluations which measure changes in beliefs, attitudes and behaviors are necessary to understand whether new media efforts are in fact contributing to the intended campaign effects. This kind of measurement goes beyond tracking the reach of the campaign, which continues to be the most common monitoring and evaluation parameter for new media-based interventions.

One campaign in this volume, which went beyond tracking reach was the Parents Speak Up National Campaign sponsored by the U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services.⁵ This campaign used an existing, commercially-available Internet panel to conduct an outcome evaluation. The Internet panel was surveyed on multiple occasions to evaluate whether ads from the campaign changed beliefs and behaviors related to parent-child communication

about sex. Campaign planners can evaluate campaigns, as in this case, by buying access to an existing Internet panel or, in cases where they have direct access to the target audience and can create their own sample, by using Internet-based survey tools like Survey Monkey to conduct surveys. Using either methodology, future studies should seek to document the impact of online activities on behavior in order to assess the cost-effectiveness and efficacy of new media efforts. Granting agencies should encourage smaller organizations to conduct these kinds of evaluation studies by providing dedicated funds for the measurement of behavioral results.

We hope that readers of these cases will see the early signs of success and be inspired by them and motivated to develop the next generation of new media public health interventions. As researchers and practitioners, we should continue to monitor data on new media use, establish standard protocols and guidelines for its use, and generate measurable and replicable outcomes of its use. With the explosion of UGC, we should also continue to explore campaigns where the target audience is an integral part of the health communication and marketing process. Through these steps, we will be able to help public health professionals and organizations take full advantage of the opportunities presented through new media.

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