Think First Missouri

Final Report

May 12, 2011

by Paul Rolfe & Denisha Thomas
**Executive Summary**

ThinkFirst was looking for a way to increase engagement with young people after they visited the schools. Their Facebook page was the main tool we wanted to use. It had been operating for over a year, under the supervision of ThinkFirst coordinators Michelle Gibler and Jennifer Blair. They wanted to give ThinkFirst’s Facebook page a fresh voice, one that would appeal to high school students primarily, and college-aged young adults secondarily.

Since Paul and Denisha started working on the page at the end of January, there have been about 520 new “likes” which is up 89 percent from the previous rate over the same amount of time. Total “likes” at the end of our work came to about 2,600. Interaction in terms of post views are up 316 percent from the same comparison dates.

We began by doing some preliminary research, reading about social media habits of teens. Then Denisha and Paul divided the days of the week up to delegate who posts to the page, experimenting with different things like images, online games, and videos. Our goal was to examine what posts got the most interaction from the users.

This trial and error method provided us with a better sense of how to engage the students. We found pictures of the students worked, pictures of accidents, and personal posts by ThinkFirst VIPS (Voices for Injury Prevention Speakers) worked the best. Videos created by others didn’t do as well as we hoped, but when we posted videos from presentations with ThinkFirst VIPS in them, those received more feedback.

The key with these students is to remind them of the presentation they first saw at their school. We can do that by using the stories of the speakers more effectively. After students see a presentation, many will go to the Facebook page and “like” it, then if they hear from the people they just saw speak, it can form that personal connection that’s so important.

ThinkFirst has a built-in audience generator for the page because they always promote it at their events. The page is actually titled “thnk 1st”, which unfortunately means that most
people will have to see the presentation to be able to find it on Facebook. We wanted to change it, but the page has too many followers and we didn’t want to risk losing all of them by moving to a new page. As a side effect, if the group doesn’t present for a while, the Facebook page shows a lag in new followers and interaction. We hypothesize that we can overcome that lag by increasing VIP posts on the page during those times and using videos of VIPS.

In order to sustain the momentum with ThinkFirst’s social media efforts, they have hired an intern for the summer, to whom we will provide a handbook that explains what we’ve done and where we see ThinkFirst making the most improvements. Some future activities we recommend will be expanding twitter, creating new video of VIPS, and reaching out to high school student journalists at conferences over the summer.

We’ve recommended ThinkFirst VIPS begin grabbing short videos of students at their assemblies. Kids love to see themselves and friends as we learned with our Facebook trial and error period and our survey. These videos don’t have to be highly polished or professional, just reminders of the experience. The summer intern should also be able to attend more ThinkFirst presentations than we were, and then they can post clips of presentations on the Facebook page.

Twitter is generally better for conversations than Facebook, and from our survey we learned many people prefer to follow organizations with Twitter. But high school students did not show that same preference, but it could be worth devoting more time to Twitter for college-aged persons.

To gather more information on how to best create that personal connection with users that is so important, the intern may want to organize a wider survey of high school students. We wanted to use a survey handout at ThinkFirst school assemblies, but IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval is required for that. With advanced planning, that could give a more detailed look at high school students’ use of social media in regards to how they interact with their
favorite organizations.

**Research**

**Survey Conclusions**

In order to get our own sampling of views on social media, we conducted an Internet survey. We sent the survey out March 16th, and closed it April 3rd. In that time we received 60 responses, but 61.7 percent of respondents were college students, our secondary target. Our primary target of high school students only contributed 21.7 percent or 13 respondents.

The information on their social media use confirmed our previous theories on college students’ use of social media when it comes to following their favorite organizations. Fifty-eight percent preferred to get news related to organizations they like via Twitter rather than Facebook. However, only 3 of the 10 high school respondents said they used twitter, which we also expected.

When it came to preferences on types of Facebook posts, there were some surprises. People did not rate shocking or funny images very high; but in reality, pictures of car wrecks received some of the most feedback. Short videos, and pictures of friends, and themselves were rated highly as expected.

One goal was to figure out how often we should update ThinkFirst’s status. Our survey had the most responses for “once per day”, followed by “never”. That indicates that they don’t need to update everyday. Perhaps 4 or 5 times a week would meet the desires of ThinkFirst fans.
### Survey Data

#### 3. What's your current status (or grade) in your education?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7th-8th Grade</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th-12th Grade</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Student</td>
<td>61.7%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question: 60
Skipped question: 0

#### 5. Where's your favorite place to view videos?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youtube</td>
<td>91.4%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vimeo</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Preference</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question: 58
Skipped question: 2

#### 6. Do you use Twitter to follow your favorite organizations/businesses?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What's Twitter?</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question: 58
Skipped question: 2
4. How often do you like to see updates from the organizations/businesses you “like” on Facebook?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once per day</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 times per day</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As often as I can</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. How much would the following appeal to you, if you saw them in an organization/business status update?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Flash games</td>
<td>53.4% (31)</td>
<td>13.3% (8)</td>
<td>17.2% (10)</td>
<td>12.1% (7)</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shocking or Funny Images</td>
<td>37.9% (22)</td>
<td>21.1% (14)</td>
<td>20.7% (12)</td>
<td>8.6% (5)</td>
<td>2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures of you</td>
<td>20.7% (12)</td>
<td>10.3% (6)</td>
<td>29.3% (17)</td>
<td>19.0% (11)</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures of friends</td>
<td>13.8% (8)</td>
<td>12.1% (7)</td>
<td>22.4% (13)</td>
<td>29.3% (17)</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to online print stories</td>
<td>15.5% (9)</td>
<td>10.3% (6)</td>
<td>31.0% (18)</td>
<td>32.8% (19)</td>
<td>3.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short videos (30 seconds to 2 minutes in length)</td>
<td>3.5% (2)</td>
<td>10.3% (6)</td>
<td>28.3% (15)</td>
<td>35.1% (20)</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long videos (longer than 2 minutes)</td>
<td>22.4% (13)</td>
<td>27.6% (16)</td>
<td>27.6% (16)</td>
<td>15.5% (9)</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 58
skipped question 2
**Preliminary Research**

In order to effectively complete project, Denisha and Paul decided that it would be best to observe the habits of users of the Think First MO Facebook page. What was first noticed was that the page received its most visits right after one of the Think First VIPS visited a school. The interactions that were on the Facebook page included comments from faculty members of the schools, comments and likes on photographs, and even comments on post made by VIPS. The behavior was observed for approximately two to three weeks before any action was taken.

Paul and Denisha also took a look at the insight from the Think First Missouri’s Facebook page. Facebook Insight provides administrators with metrics of the page. The metrics measure and analyze the trends including user growth, demographics, content consumption, and content creation.

Facebook Insight assisted Paul and Denisha in knowing their audience. According to the first Facebook Insight, majority of the users were female. This was not surprising because the Think First presentations were very emotional, and we believed it would be safe to assume that this is the reason for majority of users being female. The Facebook Insight also showed that majority (40%) of users were the target demographic (13-17 year olds).
The Insight data from Facebook also provided us what users did when they visited the Facebook page. Most users were mainly post viewers. There were a peak of post viewers when a speaker from ThinkFirst spoke. Although Facebook Insight didn’t really catch this statistically, we could also see a jump in comments on post, especially when they were pictures of the audience.
We continued to use Facebook Insight throughout the remainder to track the usage of the Facebook page.

Another source for this project’s preliminary research was a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center. This research entitled *Social Media & Mobile Internet Use Among Teens and Young Adults*¹ was conducted between 2006 and 2009 and published in 2010. This research is apart of the Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project series. The focus of this research was a comparison of the usage of the Internet, social media, mobile devices, and blogging amongst teenagers (ages 12-17) and young adults (ages 18-29). This research was useful to our project because it broke down of what our demographics (teenagers & young adults) like nationally.

The major statistic from this research was that 73 percent of Internet using teenagers (12-17 years old) and 72 percent of Internet using young adults (18-29 years old) use social networking website. Besides knowing that our target demographic uses social networks, the

data that was most useful from this research was the content that our demographic, especially teenagers are using and creating on social media. According to the Pew Center, 38% percent of Internet-using teens say they share content online in 2009. Also, their research showed us that 21 percent of teens are “remixing” content they share. Remixing means that teens add their own twist to content they find online including songs, text or images. These statistics were relevant because it guided what we posted to the Facebook and eventually Twitter.

![Content creation activities chart]

(Source: Pew Research Center)

There were also other insightful stats that the Pew Center provided for our research. Because Twitter is a very popular social media network for college students, Denisha and Paul thought it may be good to start a Twitter account for ThinkFirst Missouri; the Pew Center said otherwise. As of 2009, only 8 percent of Internet using teenagers were using Twitter. Breaking that statistic down further, 10 percent of older teenagers (14-17) were more likely to use Twitter compared to 5 percent of younger teenagers (12-13). As far as young adults, one-third of them post or read status updates on Twitter.

![Eight percent of online teens use Twitter chart]

Some of the readings for class also served as good resources for our research. The
New media, new marketing strategies article by Amos Gelb provided great tips to address our decline in users and even new users. Three of his points that applied to our project were

- Understand the product: We had to understand the fact that measuring whether or not our social media campaign was effective is hard due to the fact that there are several factors that play into safe driving.

- Knowing what the target audience is: As the project moved along, we noticed that more college students were engaging with the Facebook page versus the primary age group, teenagers. We had to re-evaluate whether or not the new methods (i.e., posting pictures, videos, or status updates everyday) we were taken attracted more college students versus teenagers.

- Competition: Although Think First Missouri is not competing with any other organizations, we did have to take a look at what other companies that talk about injury prevention were doing on their Facebook pages. We took a look at AT&T and State Farm for some suggestions. Paul and Denisha saw online video games appeared to be popular on AT&T’s and State Farm’s pages.

The preliminary research was necessary for this project because although the Think First Missouri staff was helpful, they couldn’t provide with the statistics we needed to guide us on what path we should take.

Our Strategy

Trial and Error Facebook Posts

We posted 1 to 2 times per day for almost two months in an effort to see what people interacted with most often. We tried a range of links, images, and questions engage kids on safe driving and injury prevention. See sample posts below, in order of effectiveness.

**thnk 1st**
Here's a pic of Kevin & Madi with students from Oak Grove Middle School yesterday. Thank you for being such an awesome group of students!

1,149 Impressions · 0.96% Feedback
May 5 at 1:34pm · Like · Comment · Share

7 people like this.

View all 4 comments

**Madison Jaclyn** Kevin, all of our pictures together look soooo good!
Friday at 2:36pm · Like

**Kevin Beach** Well, duh. Lol
Friday at 10:56pm · Like · 1 person

Write a comment...

Pictures from school visits: These rely on speakers having time and permission to take pictures with students. These are also the most effective when it comes to reminding students of the powerful messages they saw at the assembly that day. Kids can also feel more like their friends with the VIPS.
Video of VIPs: These videos had more interaction than video from other groups. Keeping the personal connection that the speakers begin with students at assemblies is key.

Shocking images (car accidents): In the survey, people said they were no interested in these posts. But compared to feedback from other types around the dates of the post above, it was one of the better performing ones.
Online games: The lack of interest in games was surprising. We posted games from external sites that had games related to safe driving and that didn’t require signing in or registering to play.

Poll Questions: Denisha posted one of these as a test. It didn’t count answering the poll as feedback for some reason, but there were 40 responses on the top answer, to give a sense of scale for the blue bar graphs. It also had a lot of impressions, meaning it was viewed in 1,640 news feeds.

Created New Videos

The video for these was captured during one traffic offender’s program, it was the only presentation Paul was able to attend. The recording is courtesy of MU Hospital's audio/visual department. We made them both fairly short, under 2 minutes, because our survey indicated that was ideal for our audience.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2RmzBVT5dI (1:22)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5S2ijPCIPEg (1:50)
Expanded to YouTube and Twitter

Videos were a must, but we needed to find out how and where to post them. Our choices were between YouTube and Facebook video. YouTube offers the ability to easily share and embed videos across platforms, while tagging people in videos makes more sense with Facebook.

Our first two videos were uploaded to YouTube, but when we shared the first on Facebook the VIPS wanted to be tagged. In order to do that, we will have to start uploading videos to both sites because we really want to make use of the best qualities of both hosts.

We expanded to Twitter because our secondary targets found it better than Facebook for keeping up with their organizations. It also has a unique way of conversation that can draw in others and spread news quickly. We didn’t devote much time to the Twitter account, but we did give it a start and have some recommendations for the new intern.

@Think1stMO Shout out to the Schuyler Co R-1 RAMS! What was your favorite part of our presentation?

@dewaydandelion5

@Think1stMO Can I just say I enjoyed it all? Altho it freaked me out a bit, how real that stuff is and how easily it can happen to anyone.
Moving Forward

Recommendations (from Intern Handbook)

The ThinkFirst Missouri social media campaign is ever-changing. The trends that appeal to our demographics is consistent for the most part, but there are somethings that work better than others. Here are suggestions for what will help you get a jump start on the campaign.

- Create and produce more videos and audioslide shows of VIPS:
  - It is no mystery that the VIPS are the heart of the ThinkFirst campaign. It is their stories that get people to initially come to the Facebook page. To keep that same effect, it would be good to have clips of the VIPS telling their stories, both humorous and serious. These clips should be both video and audio slide shows.

- Expand the use of Twitter:
  - Try a better linking system between Facebook and Twitter, perhaps Hootsuite or TweetDeck that let you better customize which pages receive which updates. Be active and follow as many high school students as you can find.

- Increase video and photos of ThinkFirst Facebook users and Twitter Followers:
  - VIPS should be equipped with cameras and grab as much video and photos as they can. Then they should post them quickly while the experience is fresh in their minds. Try commenting on older ThinkFirst photos that have users tagged, to remind them of ThinkFirst’s message.

- Repost old videos:
  - Don’t be afraid to post videos from the past. These videos still have the opportunity to be powerful and could reach a new audience.

- Encourage more user-generated content:
  - According to the Pew Center’s research, teen tend to share content they created more than anything else on social media networks. Find ways to incorporate this into ThinkFirst’s social media campaign through contests, gift give-aways, etc.

- Reach out to High School Journalists:
  - For many high schools, the school newspaper, radio station, and/or television station represents the voice of the students. Why not use that voice to promote the ThinkFirst mission? Find ways to reach out to high school journalists to get them to either do a pre-presentation story on ThinkFirst or post-presentation story. Also, during the summer the University of Missouri’s School of Journalism
hosts many journalists from across the state of Missouri. Contact Doris Barnhart (barnhartd@missouri.edu) and Anna Romero (RomeroA@missouri.edu) for more information on the summer journalism camps.

- Get IRB (Institutional Review Board) permission to survey minors:
  - Although there was an online survey taken by ThinkFirst Facebook users’ on their social media habits, it didn’t reach the target group of 13 to 18-year-olds. To get a better look at the target group, find a method to give surveys to ThinkFirst Facebook users after presentations. In order to pass out surveys to minors you must receive permission from IRB (Institutional Review Board). Work with the ThinkFirst consultants on the necessary steps to obtaining IRB’s permission.

- Take informal surveys:
  - During presentations, encourage VIPS to take informal surveys. The surveys could be as simple as asking a question about social media usage and having the audience to raise their hand.

- Reach out to community youth groups:
  - Interviewing and surveying students is harder in the public school systems, but reaching out to community groups may be easier. See what community groups (churches, civic clubs, etc.) will allow you to speak with their teens and get their imput on social media usage.

- Changing Facebook page:
  - Consider gradually changing from old Facebook page to new Facebook page. Keep old Facebook page in tact, while encouraging users to like new page. Entitle the new Facebook page as ThinkFirstMO. After the new Facebook page has 50% of the number of users of the old Facebook, shut the old Facebook page down.