



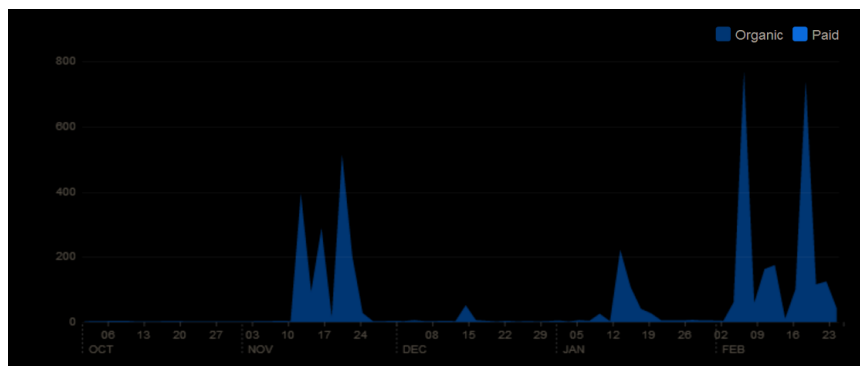
2014 MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION AWARD L&N STEMPUNKS FIRST TEAM 3966

INTRO

The L&N STEMPunks in Knoxville, Tennessee, have developed a comprehensive digital media strategy for branding, promoting, and sharing information about our team and FIRST. Through our various channels of social media and our website, our mission is to get students and the greater Knoxville community interested in our FIRST Robotics team and its programs. Our primary mission through media and technology this year has been to reflect the ideals of FIRST and to inspire a new generation of engineers and scientists.

OUTREACH

Our team utilizes the YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Google+ social media platforms, along with operating a website. Facebook and Twitter are the two largest social media networks available, which help us deliver our content and message to a wide audience. Typically, users on Facebook are older (parents, relatives, friends of team members) while Twitter is a younger audience. Instagram is popular among people our age (14-17) and are our target audience for building interest in STEM and FIRST. Instagram is valuable because the simplicity of sharing a photo with a short caption makes our content more consumable. Google+ has been useful to us for appearing in Google search results and making us easier to find on the web. YouTube helps us host and gain valuable analytics on our professionally produced video content, whereas quick videos of things like the latest test of our robot go on platforms like Facebook or Instagram, where people are more likely to see this content and view it in its short form. Our website serves as a hub to discover more about our team and connect them to our social media. It has been extremely beneficial to our team that one person has taken charge of social media to make sure we have a consistent strategy across each. Before we had one member assigned to the role of social media manager, we only had huge spikes in interest and interaction when we made some sort of big announcement post. After this change, interaction and interest



Our Facebook's total user reach

After this change, interaction and interest

have increased dramatically at a steady pace.

BRANDING

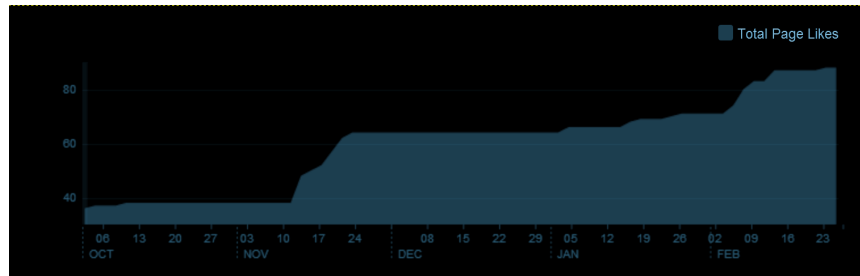
This year we've put a lot of focus on making ourselves more recognizable. The way we're achieving this is by developing an easily recognizable brand. The goal of our recognizable brand is to help spread the message of FIRST and awareness of the STEM fields. Our new logo, as well as our new steampunk branding and attire, has created significant buzz that makes us more recognizable in our local community and sets us apart from other FRC teams.

FUNDRAISING

Early in the 2013-2014 season, our business team embarked on a bold strategy to engage the greater Knoxville community and the students and faculty with a broader mission: to restore an iconic, historic sign hanging outside of our school, which is located in the historic L&N train station. This was a key strategy that gave a larger mission and purpose to all our digital media and fundraising efforts, and made more people aware of FIRST and STEM education. We were able to utilize our social media outlets to reach out to the community and ask for their support in our efforts.

RESULTS

Our strategies have been increasingly successful. Since ramping up our frequency and variety of posts across networks, we've seen more interaction with our posts and our followers, subscribers, likes, etc have gone up across all platforms (see figures 1 and 2). Students in our school have become more aware of FIRST and have been more interested in the team. Participation in local community events like the Knoxville Veteran's Day Parade and even hosting our own tailgate party to raise money have proven as successful ways to gain attention for the team across all fronts. Our sign campaign has struck a cord in our community and beyond; in one case we've received a donation from as far away as Nevada.



Our increase in Facebook page likes from October to the end of February

CONCLUSION

Our focus this year on branding, fundraising, and outreach has been extremely beneficial to the team as a whole. Around this time last year (post-build season) we were out of funds because we had spent them all on robot construction. This year we have \$11,000 to "spare." Our reach and interaction has dramatically increased this year compared to past years. Our campaign to restore the L&N sign has struck a cord in our community, earning us media recognition. Overall, our team has made significant strides this year, and we are even internally discussing mentoring other teams during the next FRC season. For the L&N STEMpunks' Business Team, this has been a highly successful year.

LINKS

Website: Instempunks.org

Google+: <http://goo.gl/MFU6S7>

twitter.com/LNSTEMPunks

facebook.com/LNRobotics

instagram.com/LNSTEMPunks

YouTube.com/LNSTEMPunks