



More universities waging war with digital media platforms and events

From virtual campus tours/open days and college application apps to Pinterest dorm decorating boards and themed Spotify playlists for varsity events, universities are developing and wielding an arsenal of cutting-edge digital technology to stand out from

In the wired world of digital communication, there is a war being waged to get messages across - from brand to consumer - in a manner which is relevant, meaningful and useful.

As brands, universities have treated this war of hearts and minds no differently.

Engaging the current generation of youths who have much shorter attention-spans, changing brand loyalties and a tendency to question what is presented to them is a challenge universities have had to contend with.

All this has compelled these educational institutions to adopt communication channels that facilitate open and honest communication, which has led to widespread use of digital and social media.

"Youths expect so much more from the brands they interact with, and this expectation extends to universities as well. This is why as a higher education and university admissions consultancy, we have chosen to drive our services with the use of new media and digital technologies - to better represent our university partners".

- Dr Chan Khai Leok, Director, theRightU

In fact, 86% of undergraduate admissions officers in the US have made plans to increase their investment in social media from 2012-2013, with 90% stating that their investment in social media efforts has yielded positive results.

From developing apps which will inform users of the status of their applications (University of Georgia) to Spotify playlists for college events (Boston University) virtual tours of faculty buildings and web-based open days, universities are not only using digital media effectively; they have become trailblazers within the realm.

For example, The University of Sheffield became the first university to bring Google Street View inside one of its buildings, allowing curious students and parents the world over to wander the halls of the Department of Physics and Astronomy and take peeks into classrooms.

Another leader in the field, the University of Atlanta's John Marshall Law School was the first among law schools in the US to develop a mobile app to aid prospective students in submitting applications via their smartphones with a simple five-minute procedure.

Monash University is also a pioneer in this field. The visionary Australian university will be organising the inaugural Monash Live Chat 2013, a virtual open day and live chat event integrating the technologies of Google+ Hangouts on Air and Moot it into the interface of a specially-developed microsite. Singaporean students, who are slated to be the first in the world to participate in the Monash Live Chat 2013 thanks to Monash University's Singapore-based admissions partner theRightU, will be able to get a feel for the Monash University experience from the comfort of their homes.

The main component of the Monash Live Chat 2013 is a Google+ Hangout on Air live chat session, which will be held on the 8th of October from 5pm-7pm (Singapore time), accessible via <http://monash.therightu.com>.

During the live chat session, students will be able to ask Monash University representatives (from four featured faculties - Arts, Engineering, Information Technology and Science -, the international admissions team as well as selected student ambassadors and alumni) questions about studying in and applying to Monash University.

Pre-event, students will be able to gain access to essential facts and figures, attention-grabbing videos and participate in contests.

"Universities are constantly competing to attract the best students, and to do so, must find innovative ways to stand out. Monash University is excited about being able to connect with students and have meaningful conversations with them through new digital platforms, and we hope the Monash Live Chat 2013 achieves just that.

- Tanya Lyon, International Marketing, Monash University

As the education sector embraces digital media technologies to win the internet generation over, the war for prominence, relevance and reach will only become fiercer, with battles fought across an increasing number of platforms and channels. However, with the innovation that has ensued, it seems that another revolution of positive change is in the making.

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