

Lessons Learned from the CDC Learning Connection Website Relaunch Campaign

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Introduction

The **CDC Learning Connection (CDC LC)**, launched in 2010, connects health professionals to training opportunities developed by CDC, CDC partners, and other federal agencies. CDC LC shares timely education and training information via website features, social media and an e-newsletter.

In the Spring of 2016, all CDC websites transitioned to a new Web Content Management System (WCMS), the perfect opportunity for a comprehensive CDC LC **relaunch campaign** in April 2016.

The **goal of the relaunch campaign** was to boost website visits and e-newsletter (GovDelivery) subscribers. It included:

- 22 social media messages on CDC channels (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest) with a new hashtag
- Outreach to 20 internal and 21 external partners
- E-newsletter communication with subscribers
- Print material distribution at public health events

Methods

Evaluation questions and methods:

1. How effective was the campaign at increasing website visits and e-newsletter subscribers?

- Compared overall CDC LC homepage visits pre- vs. post-campaign (April-June 2015 vs. April-June 2016) using Episheet (Rothman). Source: Omniture Site Catalyst (Adobe)
- Compared number of e-newsletter subscribers pre and post campaign. Source: GovDelivery

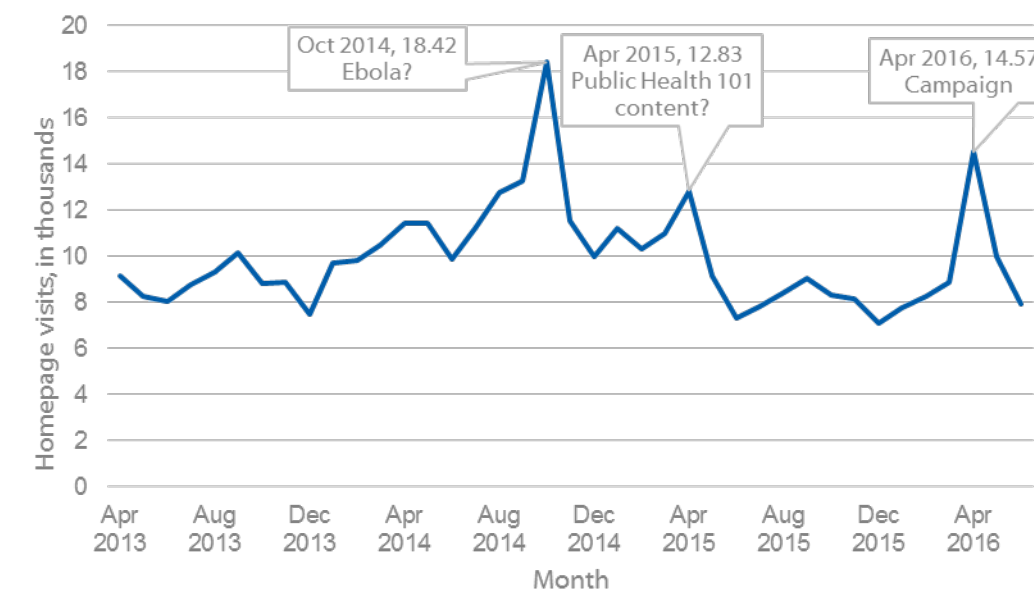
2. Which campaign elements were most effective?

- Compared CDC LC homepage visits by unique campaign keys.* Source: Omniture Site Catalyst (Adobe)
- Compared CDC LC homepage visits by entry domains. Source: Omniture Site Catalyst (Adobe)
- Conducted thematic content analysis of social media messages with highest and lowest URL click-throughs.

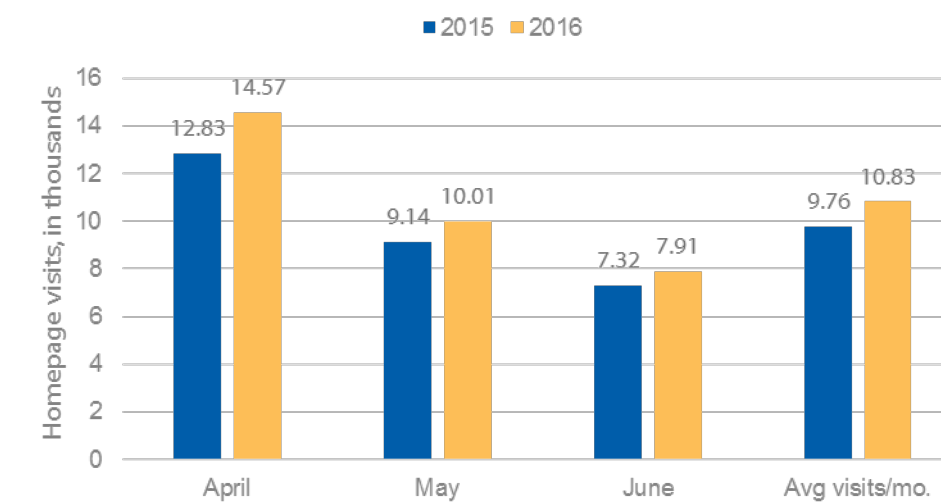
*Note: campaign keys are unique codes added to the end of a URL that enable tracking of how many people clicked on that specific link.

Results: Website Visits Increased

Trend in CDC LC homepage visits, April 2013-June 2016



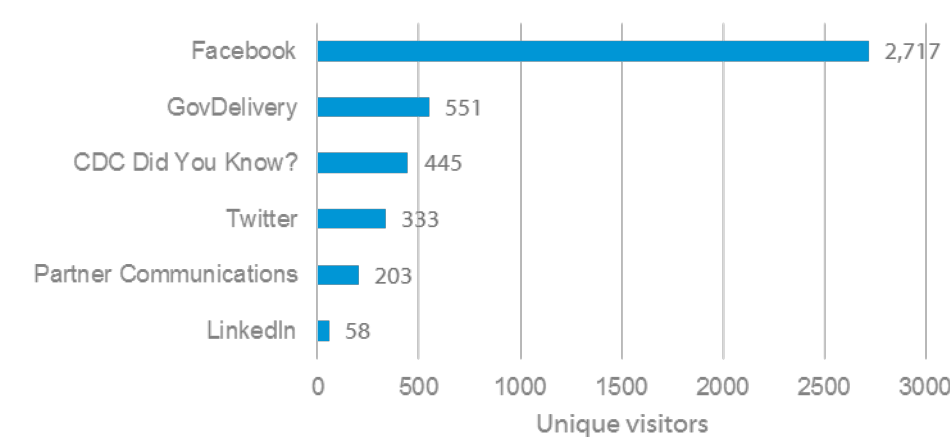
Comparison of CDC LC homepage visits, April-June 2015 and April-June 2016



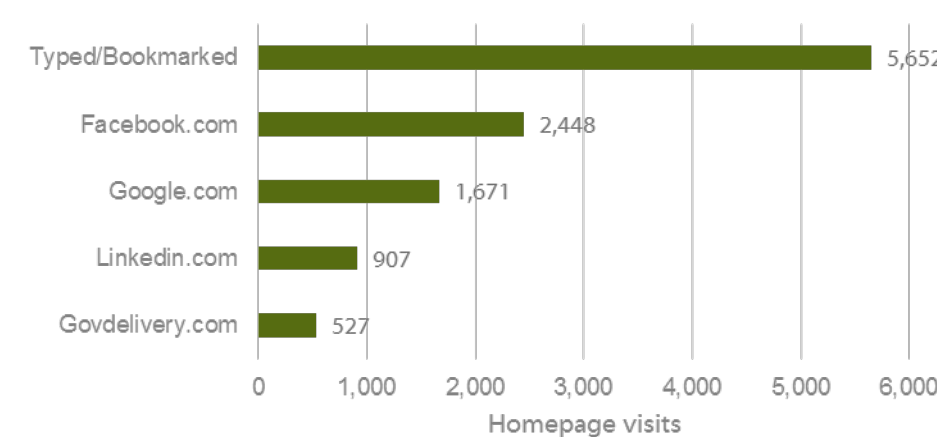
Statistically significant increase in homepage visits per month from 2015 to 2016 campaign period (see handout)

Results: Some Campaign Elements Worked Better than Others

Unique visitors to CDC LC homepage by top promotional channels, April 2016



CDC LC homepage visits by top entry domains, April 2016



Limitations

- Due to high volume of non-campaign messages on CDC channels used, could not feasibly analyze social media follower and network characteristics for CDC LC messages
- Findings may not be generalizable beyond promotion of a training and continuing education portal, an audience of allied health and public health professionals, and use of CDC social media
- Could not control use of campaign key URLs used to track social media and other outreach – some unintended use may have occurred

Conclusions

- Increase in homepage visits during the relaunch campaign was statistically significant.
- E-newsletter subscriptions showed an upward trend during the campaign period.
- Current trends indicate that campaign gains in website visits and e-newsletter subscriptions were not sustained, although engagement with CDC LC typically declines over the summer months.
- Facebook, GovDelivery, CDC e-blasts, Twitter, and partner outreach were most effective
- Most CDC LC homepage visitors get to the site directly by typing or bookmarking the page, via Facebook, or from Google

Recommendations and Lessons Learned

- Website visits for public health training and education are cyclical and context-dependent.** They vary by season and by emergent topic. It is important to pay attention to these patterns when evaluating a campaign in a single point in time.
- Campaign keys** are important for tying promotional messages to website clicks. They provide enduring data tracking to determine most effective promotional channels.
- It is important to know your audience and be deliberate about promotion. Content analysis of top social media posts revealed that **most successful messages on LinkedIn are those more technical in nature** while most **successful posts on Facebook and Twitter are more for the lay person.** Although it generated relatively few website hits, **LinkedIn may be an appropriate platform for reaching health professionals.**
- Graphic-centric social media channels, such as **Pinterest and Instagram, were not effective** for this purpose and audience.
- Owned social media** channels may provide more options for audience analysis.
- Google remains an important factor in how people find information. Explore ways to ensure **search engine optimization (SEO)** so that your content displays at the top of the search.
- The most common route to our homepage was from typing or bookmarking the URL, which may be partially due to learners typing in the URL from our print materials. It is important, therefore, to ensure that the **URL is easy to type and remember, and relates to the content of the site.**