



July 1, 2009

That's Not Cool Campaign: Observations for Navigating the Teen Online Space *Prepared by the Family Violence Prevention Fund*

Situation:

Launched in January of 2009, the That's Not Cool campaign has experienced six months of campaign activity. These initial months have greatly helped us understand how youth use the online space and how we, as social marketers, need to exist within this space to make the most impact.

The Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF) thought it helpful to share some learnings around the opportunities *and* challenges with teens and the online world, specifically with regard to:

- Developing web-based social marketing plans
- Soliciting and moderating real-time teen postings
- Utilizing Social Networking sites, like Facebook, to increase campaign participation

Overarching Truths:

Through extensive research on both the teen target and the online medium, as well as through our six months of campaign activity, we have encountered three overarching truths about engaging teens in the online space:

1. Being committed to engaging this target in a meaningful way, we **MUST** exist where they are, and offer them a voice/role in your campaign
2. Clutter is rampant... We must break through to survive
3. Authenticity is key... Teens can smell a fake from a mile away

In light of these truths, the That's Not Cool campaign has taken the following actions to engage teens online:

1. Being committed to engaging this target in a meaningful way, we **MUST** exist where they are and offer them a voice/role in your campaign → ***Our site was developed to allow for and prioritize feedback from teens. All web elements can be commented on, and a section called Talk It Out is a dedicated forum for teens to talk about the Digital Dating Violence issue. Further, the campaign exists on Facebook and MySpace (and will soon include a presence on Twitter and Flickr) and we encourage local chapters of the campaign to develop their own Facebook/MySpace groups in support of the campaign.***
2. Clutter is rampant... We must break through to survive → ***Our campaign elements maintain a consistent look and feel throughout all executions and media, and our tonality is irreverent and surprising, allowing us to stand out in a crowd.***
3. Authenticity is key... Teens can smell a fake from a mile away → ***We leveraged input from Teens throughout all phases of the campaign (development of the name, creation of the web elements, etc.) and our tonality and language have been greatly informed by what we hear from these teens on a daily basis.***

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Clearly, the above presents challenges/risks for social marketing initiatives. But, we have found that rewards such as instant feedback and information that inform campaign authenticity greatly outweigh the risk and liability involved. Steering clear of sites/tools like Flickr and Facebook or developing an online presence that does not reach out in this way will not generate strong results with today's tweens/teens. This begs the question, **"If these 'risks' are a MUST, how do we manage them most intelligently?"**

How To Manage Online Risk:

- Third-Party Monitoring Service
- COPPA Compliance
- Social Networking Tools

Third-Party Monitoring Service:

As mentioned above, a fundamental element of the That's Not Cool campaign is its reliance on feedback/comments from teens, both on our website and Social Networking sites (as well as via off-line activities).

To keep this feedback in line with our campaign standards, the Campaign employs the services of a third-party monitoring service, responsible for trolling the site 4 times per day, to remove posts with inappropriate language or malicious intent and to flag those posts that require follow-up.

Key Note: When interacting with a website, young people want to see the results of their actions immediately, e.g., posting a comment, sending a "callout card". While we considered a "holding period" during which we'd review/approve posts prior to allowing visibility on the site, we knew this would frustrate and possibly even alienate users. Thus, we allow posts to be visible immediately, in real time, and enlist our monitoring service to check the site multiple times per day, to eliminate inappropriate comments.

Specifically, our filter for inappropriate content is as follows:

1. To eliminate glaring, inappropriate content but to uphold the candor of our target as much as possible:
 - a. Remove expletives/profanity/curses (across all languages), although we DO allow expletives and acronyms like LMAO, as long as they're used in an exclamatory fashion and NOT directed toward another user/person
 - b. Insults/Abusive Language (explicit insults, name-calling, racist/sexist stereotyping)

COPPA Compliance:

The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 2000 applies to the online collection of personal information from children under 13. The new rules spell out what a Web Site Operator must include in a privacy policy, when and how to seek verifiable consent from a parent and what responsibilities an Operator has to protect children's privacy and safety online. (For further information, visit www.coppa.org.)

Thatsnotcool.com complies with all COPPA regulations.

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Social Networking Tools:

Social networking sites, and Facebook specifically, are extremely powerful tools when it comes to engaging today's tweens and teens. Many such websites actually have tools, filters, and privacy settings that can be enabled to assist with ensuring that the comments and/or uploaded content adhere to your organizational standards.

That's Not Cool uses these tools to help keep our pages on these social networking sites under control. However, we also have our third-party monitoring service troll these pages to ensure that inappropriate content is identified and omitted.

Of note is that Facebook even offers a tutorial for organizations wanting to learn how to use the site to increase interaction with their campaigns. This tutorial is a way for organizations to become familiar with the site and its services.