Using social media to engage young people: Guidance for Anti-Doping Organisations

Who this guidance is for

This guidance has been commissioned by the World Anti-Doping Agency[1] (WADA) for use by organisations interested in engaging young athletes in communications around the issue of anti-doping.

How this guidance has been developed

This guidance has been developed following a review of the research literature and interviews with academics, campaign managers, a selection of National and Regional Anti-Doping Organisations, and young athletes themselves. We have attempted to incorporate the perspectives of stakeholders from around the world within this review[2]. In particular we would like to thank Dr Brian Cugelman and UK Anti-Doping for their detailed feedback on this guidance.

A full report outlining how this guidance has been developed has been submitted to WADA for publication on their website.

Contents

What is social media?

Social media are modern forms of digital communication that allow for information sharing by helping users distribute and consume information via the internet. Social media can be a highly effective way of engaging in both one-way and two-way communications. Its flexibility allows for individually focussed and mass media campaigns, as well as campaigns which are focussed on communication or interaction.

There are a wide variety of platforms which fall under the social media banner. Below we outline the key forms of relevant social media.

Social networks

- Social networking sites are websites where users construct networks of virtual communities in which 'friends' share information and post regular updates of developments in their day-to-day lives.
- Social networking via sites such as Google, MSN, Mixi, MySpace and Facebook has increased exponentially in recent years and is a daily habit for at least one-quarter of young people. These sites are used primarily as a means of keeping in touch with friends. Only a small minority of young people would join a group or download an application.
- 64% of 13-15 year olds and 77% of 16-19 year olds visit social networks at least monthly.

Blogs and micro-blogs

- A blog is a website, or part of a website, in which information is posted in chronological fashion and updated regularly (by "blogging"). Many blogs are also interactive allowing readers to leave comments.
- Blogs can be used as personal diaries or as a way of providing commentary or news on a subject.
- Micro-blogs such as Twitter contain posts which are much shorter (e.g. Twitter allows for only 140 characters). These can be restricted to particular individuals (followers) and broadcast across other platforms (e.g. SMS-text messaging, emails or instant messaging).
- 54% of 13-15 year olds and 57% of 16-19 year olds read blogs at least monthly.

File sharing websites

- File sharing websites enable users to store and share a variety of content without having to upload or host files on their own servers.
- The most popular file sharing websites are for multimedia content. These include sites such as YouTube, Dailymotion, Hulu, Veoh, Vimeo and Youku. Multimedia sharing sites often enable users to post comments which can be moderated by the individual who posts the content.
- Other sites exist which enable people to share other files such as presentations (e.g. Slideshare) and photos (e.g. Flickr, Photobucket).
- 74% of 13-15 year olds and 66% of 16-19 year olds watch video posted by other users at least monthly.

Podcasts

- Podcasts are audio or video files which are automatically downloaded by subscribers. People subscribe to receive podcasts in the same way as they might a newsletter or magazine.
- Podcasts differ from multimedia sharing websites because the file is broadcast directly to the consumer via the internet, rather than streamed online, so it can be listened to/watched offline on a computer or a portable player (e.g. an iPod or MP3 player).
- 23% of 13-15 year olds and 22% of 16-19 year olds listen to podcasts at least monthly.

RSS feeds

- RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication. When people subscribe to an RSS feed it enables them to see when new content has been uploaded onto a website (including blogs and podcasts).
- An RSS feed would provide the latest headlines and articles (including images, audio and video files) in one place, as soon as they are published. They are used to keep people up-to-date with new developments.
- To receive RSS feeds, people need to choose a news reader (e.g. Newsfire, Bloglines, Newz Crawler etc.) which will check RSS feeds they have subscribed to on relevant websites/blogs and inform users when new content has been uploaded.

Online Forum/ message board

- An online forum is a virtual space created in which users with a particular interest in common can discuss their views. Forums generally exist in relation to a specific topic area, and users then either post up their own discussion points or respond to discussion topics posted up by others.
- Forums are generally open to all but some may require users to register, and subsequently log in, to post up their own content. Some forums also require content to be approved by a moderator prior to it appearing on the live site.
- Forums can sit within other websites, for example as a feature of a special-interest site, or can be set up with their own particular URL via a host platform such as Ning.com
- 28% of 13-15 year olds and 37% of 16-19 year olds visit online forums at least monthly.

Wiki tools

- Essentially a wiki is a website in which every page can be edited in a web browser by whoever is looking at it. The collaborative nature of Wiki's (such as Wikipedia) is what differentiates them from blogs where articles typically have a single author.
- A wiki is a bit like a reference book, such as an encyclopedia, in which topics are searched for and linked to related topics.

SMS

- SMS stands for Short Message Service. SMS is the method by which text messages are sent to and from a mobile phone. Messages can be sent by other mobile phones, a computer connected to the internet, through landlines or through other handheld devices (e.g. a Blackberry).
- Messages can be sent to individual or multiple devices. As such SMS can be useful for broadcasting geographic or audience specific communications.
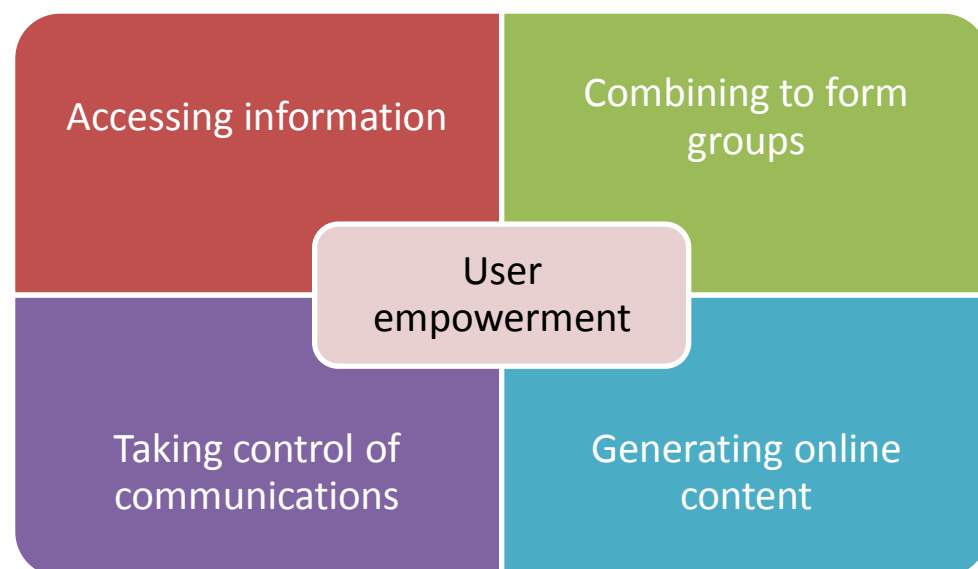
How do people use social media?

Social media platforms have grown significantly in recent years with 2009 estimates suggesting that, at a global level, 62% of people have joined a social network and 73% have read a blog. Young people aged 16-19 are among the heaviest consumers of social media and typically engage with blogs and social networking sites twice as often as the general population. Commenting on others' profiles or blogs is more popular than taking part in forums or using RSS.

The key difference between traditional methods of communication and social media, is that social media allows the user to interact with the communication/communicator and retain a degree of control over the communication. In other words, the user is empowered in a way that they are not in traditional top-down communications.

Young people, particularly those in more developed countries, are highly digitally literate. The growth in social media has led to a change in power balance with young people now expecting a different relationship with organisations - they expect interaction. This has implications for how organisations approach communication with young people.

Research suggests that users empower themselves online in four ways:

Accessing information	Combining to form groups
Taking control of communications	Generating online content

User empowerment

- **Accessing information**: the internet contains a wealth of easily accessible information (including misinformation). Increased access to information changes what has previously been a bi-directional relationship between an individual and a service/organisation to also incorporate the internet. The information that can be accessed and

compared using the internet can help to empower and inform decision-making and subsequent communications.

Anti-doping organisations must ensure that accurate, current, relevant information is available across a range of platforms.

- **Combining to form groups**: online social networking tools enable users to develop relationships with like-minded individuals and form peer support or pressure groups. These are easily accessible and convenient sources of information, as well as emotional and instrumental support. Group support can also be important to achieve sustained behaviour change.

Anti-doping organisations should consider providing space in which young athletes can form groups to discuss and demonstrate support for anti-doping.

- **Taking control of communications**: internet users are in full control over the websites they visit and who they communicate with. This has serious implications for communication. Traditional forms of mass media communications (including advertising), despite greater personalisation, are increasingly ignored by users. Users are typically highly selective as to who they engage with and base these decisions on the benefits this engagement will bring. For example a recent study of Twitter found that there were four key reasons why people followed other people's comments on the site:
    - social reasons (i.e. meeting and keeping in contact with friends)
    - substance reasons (i.e. tweets are of personal or professional interest)
    - style reasons (i.e. entertainment value of tweets)
    - status reasons (i.e. to see what other people were doing)

Anti-doping organisations should ensure they understand why young athletes would want to engage with their communications. Is it because their friends are or because the information is seen to be important?

- **Generating online content**: internet users are increasingly participating in the creation of online content. Marketing agencies have recognised that consumers can be strong advocates for a brand and that, harnessed correctly, consumers can produce and share their own content, including advertising and promotional materials.

Anti-doping organisations should consider whether they want to provide young people with opportunities to help with the co-creation of online content (e.g. games, videos, blogs or entire campaigns). They also need to put trust in members of any networks they set up to be advocates for the cause through the content they provide in the form of comments.

How can I use social media?

Using social media to tackle doping

Engaging younger athletes

Engaging more professional young athletes

Evaluation

**Considerations**

Using social media to tackle doping

Social norms (or group rules) often determine what people consider to be acceptable or unacceptable behaviours. These social norms can either be communicated through rules and regulations, or other people's behaviour. Social norms have been shown to play a key role in effective communication interventions attempting to influence behaviours which justifies the use of social media as a way to communicate messages around anti-doping.

Research indicates that marketing is one of three key ways to deal with issues such as doping. The other two options are education and legislation (including associated infrastructures), both measures that currently occupy key roles in respect to anti-doping activity. Social media marketing - the use of social media as a communication or marketing tool - is one aspect of marketing activity which, through creating opportunities for interaction and social norm appeal, has the potential to add a new dimension to the traditional marketing approach.
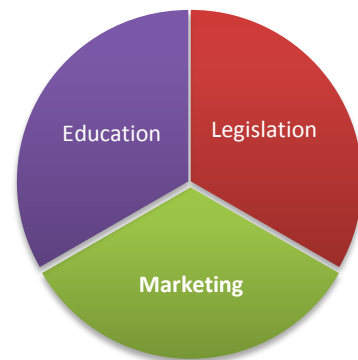
Social media marketing is an additional tool to be used in tackling doping and should not be used as a replacement for traditional educational outreach methods.
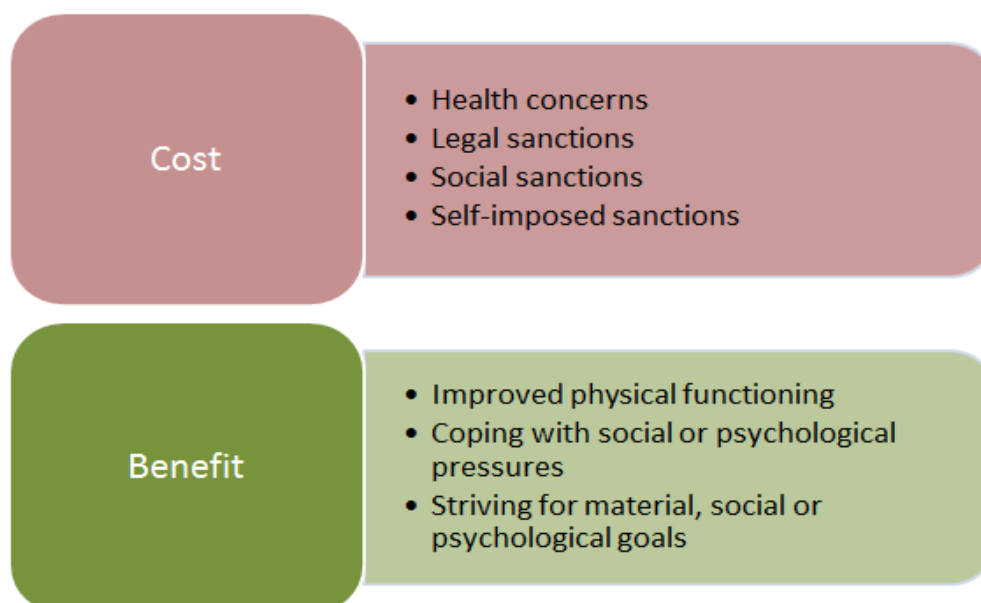
Anti-doping organisations seeking to use social media should ensure that social media marketing fits within the framework of existing activities. For young athletes the key aim of any activity is to reduce incidents of doping, and a secondary aim is to increase their sense of moral and personal responsibility for their choices.

Below we have illustrated an example framework which highlights the conditions for change (i.e. what needs to be in place to affect doping attitudes and behaviours), and the primary and secondary change agents (i.e. how this change can be addressed).

Creating a positive environment for drug free sports

| (1) Legislation | (2) Marketing and communications |

Promoting personal ethics and self efficacy

| (1) Marketing and communications | (2) Education |

Increasing knowledge of testing procedures and health/legal consequences of doping

| (1) Education | (2) Marketing and communications |

First and foremost, it is critical that there is a positive environment for rejecting doping and embracing drug free sports. This can only be achieved through legislation which is enforced and publicised at local, national and international levels. Following this, marketing, and specifically social media marketing, has a role to play both in promoting personal ethics and self-efficacy (through skill building), and in increasing knowledge of testing procedures and health/legal consequences of doping (through information dissemination). This role is complementary to existing education and traditional marketing/communications activities.

Motivation to engage with communications around the rules and regulations surrounding participation in sporting activities, and the potential impacts of doping, will increase as athletes move from amateur to professional levels of their sports. As athletes progress into professional competition they will be more inclined to engage with communications around the highlighting relative costs and dispelling benefits of engaging in doping behaviours.

Cost
- Health concerns
- Legal sanctions
- Social sanctions
- Self-imposed sanctions

Benefit
- Improved physical functioning
- Coping with social or psychological pressures
- Striving for material, social or psychological goals

In using social media to communicate with young athletes, anti-doping organisations need to differentiate between two levels of activities each targeted at athletes at different stages of their careers.

Ethics and self-efficacy → Rules, regulations and health consequences

It is important that social marketing differentiates between young athletes who are involved in sports at an amateur level and those who are moving towards professionalization. These audiences require different information and different approaches to motivate their engagement.

Online behaviour is driven primarily by motivation. As a result, social media is only going to be successful in engaging young athletes who are motivated to contribute or explore the issues raised. Those who are not engaged in an issue will ignore communications, not visit websites or micro-sites, not engage in social networks and not share comments.

Engaging younger athletes

Young athletes who are involved in sports at an amateur level have less reason to be interested in the rules and regulations that govern their sport. Furthermore young people, in general, are less concerned about health outcomes resulting from potentially harmful behaviours (including smoking, drinking and drug use) than adults. As a result issues of ethics and self-efficacy will be important for many organisations' anti-doping social media marketing activity.

Promoting a sense of moral responsibility amongst athletes is something that is core to the campaigning, education and outreach that NADOs, RADOs and WADA undertake. 'Play True', '100% Me', and 'Say NO! to Doping' are just some of the international campaigns that have focussed on the moral responsibility of athletes to reject cheating, embrace fair play and take responsibility for their actions.

Evidence from both psychologists and marketing companies suggest that focussing on personal responsibility and ethics is an effective means of influencing future behaviours. Gaining buy-in from athletes at a young age (and their wider networks) will significantly reduce the number who will consider using performance enhancing drugs.

This approach should always be combined with lighter touch information provision to ensure that younger athletes are able to make informed decisions. Some young athletes report searching for information about doping from a young age so it will be important to ensure that signposting to appropriate information is available.

Pledges of support

The key to gaining buy-in is to start small. Small, sequential requests for participation or action are important for engaging people in behaviour change. When people agree to a small request (such as signing a pledge) they are much more likely to agree to engage with subsequent communications or concede to a subsequent larger request (such as engaging in a forum). This is known as the 'foot in the door' technique and should be built into the development process of any social media campaign.

On a scale of potential involvement, making a pledge requires relatively little effort from people but can be the starting point for on-going engagement with an issue.

Anti-doping organisations could utilise a social media platform such as a social networking site, their own website or that of national federations to establish a pledge page. They could also encourage advocates to create linked blog pages that feed into 'liking' scores.

Young athletes should be targeted via the NADO (where relations exist) or Sport National Governing Bodies and asked to pledge support to the anti-doping agenda. It may also be appropriate to engage local sports clubs who are in a stronger position to gain their young athletes' support for the pledge.

In talking with young athletes it is apparent that many would prefer to sign a pledge within their social networking space than on a sport-specific or anti-doping site. The pledge page could be tailored to incorporate a variety of different levels of response, from personal names and clubs, through to pictures and open box responses. Involving 'champions' (high profile athletes who could act as ambassadors for the anti-doping campaign) is an effective way of raising the profile of pledge sites and gaining a higher media profile.

Engagement with pledge pages could provide anti-doping organisations with a valuable insight into levels of engagement with the anti-doping agenda across clubs/sports, contact details of individual athletes, and a stepping stone on which to engage athletes and clubs in future activities.

- See Case Study One (USADA pledge site)
- See Case Study Two (Time to Change pledge site)

Case Study One: United States Anti-Doping Agency

Website: http://www.usada.org/icompeteclean/

Background: 'I compete clean because…' is the fourth campaign addressing anti-doping and builds on last year's 'My Victory' campaign. The US Anti-Doping Authority used ambassadors, in the form of seven Olympic athletes, to explore the depth of clean sport commitment, and find out why athletes compete clean. The multi-media campaign was launched in the run-up to the 2010 Vancouver Olympic and Paralympic Games, and incorporated video messages, posters, public service announcements, and online elements.

How social media is used: The biggest online element of the campaign is a microsite for athletes and coaches to pledge to compete clean. Athletes are invited on the site to pledge support to the following beliefs:
1. I compete clean for the love of my sport, respect of my competitors, honor of my country, and respect of myself.
2. I know sports make me a better person.
3. I believe that a victory obtained by cheating is a counterfeit and hollow win.
4. The only sport I believe in is clean sport, sport that is free of all cheating, including doping.

The pledge idea is intended to resonate with young people and also includes actions which athletes can make pledges to undertake. These include talking with others about their commitment, acting as a role model and making ethical decisions in relation to the choices open to them. People pledging can also enter their own personal reasons for their pledge. The pledge page holds a searchable list of each person pledging which includes names, sports, locations and comments.

Impact: 1,100 athletes have pledged to compete clean since the campaign was launched. USADA have not specifically investigated the effectiveness of their social media campaign, however there is a belief that social media can have the power to change social behaviour and attitudes.

Key learning points for anti-doping organisations
- Engage national sports clubs to gather buy-in from coaches and young athletes. Young people are more likely to sign a pledge if their peers are also doing so.
- Using 'champions' helps raise the profile of anti-doping activities and creates a buzz which engages young people.
- Social media activities are one tool to be used as part of a wider campaign.

Case Study Two: Time to Change

Website: http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/

Background: The UK mental health charities Mind and Rethink are partners in the 'Time to Change' campaign which aims to end the stigma and discrimination that still have a huge impact on the lives of people with mental health problems. The campaign includes local community projects, a high-profile anti-stigma campaign, a mass-participation activity week, legal challenges, training for student doctors and teachers, and a network of grassroots activists combating discrimination.

How social media is used: Rethink manage the 'Time to Change' pledge site which enables people to pledge to act to end mental health prejudice. Individuals can upload photos alongside their pledge. The idea is that through making a positive commitment to a pledge around behaviour, that attitudes and behaviours can be influenced. The pledge started on the 'Time to Change' Facebook page which has over 31,000 members and moved across to a standalone site in 2010 in order to capture a wider audience. The campaign has received coverage across a variety of national media and has a number of celebrity supporters.

The site itself requires little moderation and was relatively inexpensive to establish. Inappropriate pledges can be reported by other users and removed by moderators.

Impact: Over 3,000 individuals made pledges on the campaign's Facebook page. Since moving across to a standalone website this has increased to almost 5,000 in four months.

Key learning points for anti-doping organisations
- Social networking sites can be useful platforms from which to build a network of supporters. Their information can always be captured and transferred elsewhere.
- Using 'champions' helps raise the profile of pledge sites and creates a buzz which engages people.
- Users can moderate sites themselves and report negative feedback to the host organisation.

## Publicising what other young athletes think and do

Using supplements, both legal and illegal, involves a choice on the part of the athlete. Building on the idea of a pledge, another approach open to anti-doping organisations is to use social media to address this issue of choice directly.

Social norms (or group rules) play a strong role in influencing behaviour choice. Through exposure to actual social norms and alternative viewpoints it is possible to increase the sense of moral responsibility in young people, their sense of self-belief and to influence their subsequent behaviour.

One of the key aspects of a social media intervention is that it should be fun, relevant and engaging. Attempting to facilitate social interaction around the topic of doping alone is unlikely to succeed in engaging young people. Broadening the issue out to include personal views on other topics (including moral choices) may be a more successful approach. Anti-doping organisations could provide additional information linked to these choices which can support individuals' sense of control over these choices (for example, providing support around negotiation skills – how to say no).

- See Case Study Three (Own Your C site)

Case Study Three: Own Your C

Website: http://www.ownyourc.com/
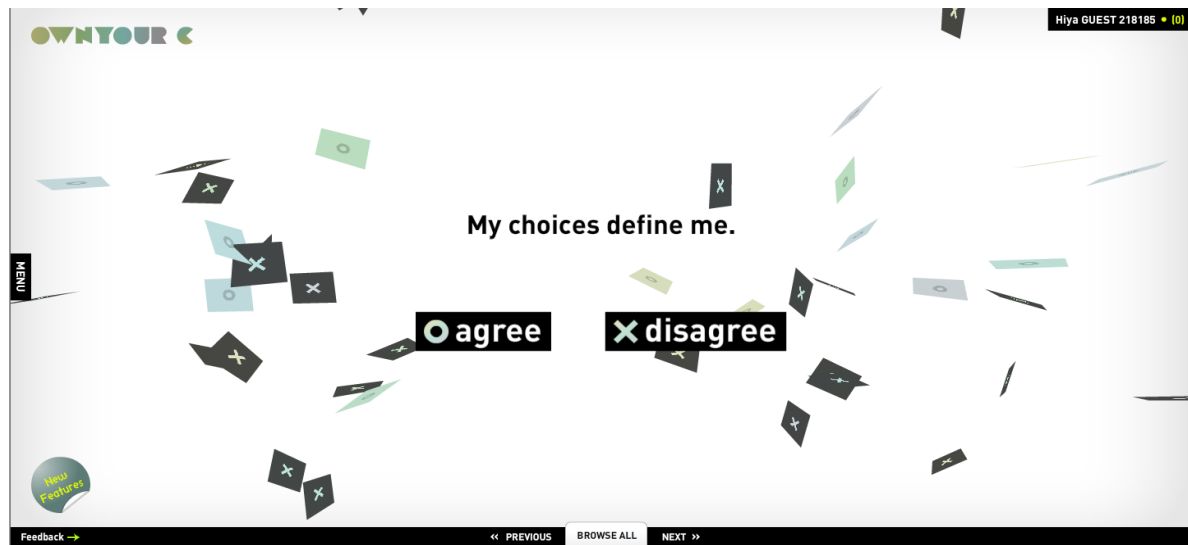
Background: The Own Your C (Choices) campaign was developed by Cactus Media and the Colorado State Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership to support tobacco prevention amongst young people (aged 13-18). The campaign, which incorporated education outreach activities, mass media and viral advertisements, online cessation tools and an experiential website (C-Ville), began running in 2005. Rather than focus solely on smoking, the Own Your C campaign aimed to empower young people to make educated choices and to own the consequences of those choices (both good and bad). As such it can be seen to focus on building self efficacy and personal ethics through publicising social norms.

How social media is used: The original C-Ville website was developed so that young people would interact with the site like they would a game. The site helped establish the Own Your C brand, making it cool and "youth" with videos and social media content. Recognising peer pressure as a key influencer on young people's choices Cactus Media built a new website, Own Your C 2.0, which incorporates a polling tool that allows people to create profiles, express their choices around anything from boyfriends to fast food, upload supporting content, and connect all these choices.

"If you preach to teenagers, they will naturally resist it. If you give them the power to choose, have them influence one another, and create a social norm of the healthy choice the norm, we felt that that was going to be the positive choice." (Joe Conrad, Cactus Media)

The site was promoted through the outreach activities that were undertaken and through peer-to-peer viral communications. All registered users of the original Own Your C site were invited to join Own Your C 2.0 and can be seen to have championed the redeveloped site amongst peers.

Impact: Own Your C, developed for young people in Colorado, has received over 70,000 unique visitors from 176 countries, and over 11,000 profiles have been created. As a health campaign "Own Your C" has received a number of national and international awards. The impacts of the campaign upon young people have been subject to various short-term, mid-term and long-term measures. These include campaign metrics, attitudes and reported behaviour towards smoking amongst young people. In 2005 the teenage smoking rate in Colorado was 17%; it is now the lowest in the USA at 11.9%. Whilst this cannot be attributed to Own Your C alone, the campaign can be seen to be an important contributor to this success.

Key learning points for anti-doping organisations
- Engaging young people about choices in general, whilst ensuring key messaging around tobacco was incorporated, promoted their interest and engagement.
- It is important to create a movement based around a motivating message.
- The most effective means of marketing Own Your C 2.0 was through peer-to-peer viral communications.
- Curating a dedicated website can require a significant amount of time.
- Engaging in a variety of research enables successes to be measured against objectives.

Engaging more professional young athletes

As young athletes become more serious about progression within their sports and begin to participate in more professional competitions it will be necessary to ensure they have access to the appropriate regulatory information. Traditional forms of outreach and education by anti-doping organisations and Sport National Governing Bodies will be the primary form by which this information is delivered. However, a social media presence will help complement this approach and provide opportunities to motivate young athletes' engagement with this information.

Raising knowledge and awareness of health and legal consequences

As highlighted previously, people are more motivated to engage with communications and issues which they perceive are of direct relevance to them. Young athletes who are progressing into professional competition will therefore be more inclined to engage with communications around the relative disadvantages and benefits of engaging in doping behaviours.

Anti-doping organisations can utilise social media to outline the various costs of doping in order to combat any existing beliefs in the benefits.

The communications would aim to create discomfort at the discrepancy between what an athlete may already believe (e.g. doping will help me win) and new information (i.e. by doping there is a strong risk I could be banned and never compete professionally again).

Social networking pages and multimedia sharing websites are both platforms which can be successfully used to communicate the costs of engaging in doping behaviours. Again, social norms are a key way in which this information is communicated. Young athletes are able to relate to other athletes, professional and amateur, especially those who engaged in the same sport as themselves. Targeted communications can be extremely effective in raising awareness of the consequences of doping at the point at which young athletes are likely to begin weighing up the costs and benefits.

- See Case Study Four (Choose a different ending)

Case Study Four: Choose a different ending

Website: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFVkzYDNJqo

Background: The Drop the Weapons campaign was launched in 2009 by the Metropolitan Police Service in London, UK. The campaign, which involved both print and online media, aims to help break the circle of youth violence and stop knife and gun crime. The campaign website (www.droptheweapons.org) aims to show how real people can turn away from violent crime.

How social media is used: 'Choose a different ending' is an interactive film, hosted on YouTube, about the consequences of carrying a knife that allows the viewer to decide what happens next. The viewer can interact with it, choose what to do and decide how it ends. The film aims to show young people the consequences of carrying a knife – the loss of control, death and prison sentences.

The film was promoted during the school summer holidays to create intrigue and curiosity which would drive people to YouTube. This included television advertisements on MTV, radio spots, trailer links sent via Bluetooth to mobile phones in cinema foyers and online bloggers. The primary form of social interaction occurred via the YouTube comments page on which people debated the message. Providing the freedom for people to express their opinions about the message directly and so become active participants can be seen to be empowering. The power of social norms was evident, with inappropriate comments dealt with by other users and input from the Metropolitan Police only needed where direct questions were posed.

Interest in the film was maintained through the young people involved in making the film communicating the message through their networks and through the use of intermediaries, such as bloggers who were paid based on the number of people who followed the link.

Impact: The YouTube video has received over 588,000 plays since it was uploaded in July 2009. Furthermore, over 200 people have commented on the video and responded to other user comments enabling the site to utilise social norms. It has not been formally evaluated.

Key learning points for anti-doping organisations
- Hosting an interactive video on a multimedia sharing website enabled people to interact with the issue of knife crime and personal choice on a number of levels.
- Allowing freedom of expression increases levels of engagement and enables the publication of social norms.
- Monitoring of comments pages to respond to queries can be resource intensive.

Raising knowledge and awareness of rules and regulations

One of the primary roles of anti-doping organisations is to provide athletes with information. This includes information about anti-doping rules, substance information, therapeutic use exemptions, testing, and athlete responsibilities.

Providing information is often the first step in influencing the behaviour of individuals who are motivated to engage. Young people will have a variety of preferences for how they wish to engage with anti-doping communications, therefore anti-doping organisations should seek to use the full range of platforms available to them in order to communicate with young people. This includes NADO/RADO websites, social networks, file sharing websites, blogs, RSS feeds, SMS and emails.

The anti-doping organisation website should be the key source from which young athletes can access all relevant anti-doping guidelines. These websites should be easy to navigate and offer clear signposting to appropriate information. Any other platforms which anti-doping organisations use to engage young athletes (e.g. social networking sites) should include clearly referenced hyperlinks which will take people back to the organisation's website.

Relevance is one of the key motivators which prompt engagement. It is important that anti-doping organisations utilise upcoming events as opportunities to engage young athletes with important updates. This could include using RSS feeds on Sport National Governing Body sites, SMS messages, personal email, Twitter and social networking sites.

Information is crucial. However it is also important that communications help increase an individual's sense of self efficacy. Communications should provide clear instructions making particular behaviours easier to achieve.

- See Case Study Five (UK Anti-Doping)

Case Study Five: UK Anti-Doping
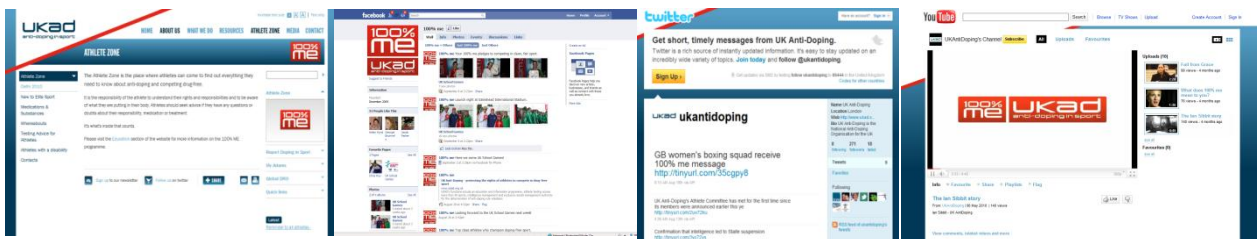
Website: http://www.ukad.org.uk/pages/athlete-zone/

Background: UK Anti-Doping was established in 2009 and has responsibility for implementing and managing UK anti-doping policy. UK Anti-Doping tends not to work directly with coaches or athletes – instead they work through intermediaries such as coaching organisations and Sport National Governing Bodies. Their website contains an athlete zone section which provides information on medications and substances, whereabouts, testing advice, and essential contacts.

How social media is used: UK Anti-Doping see social media as a valuable addition to the core face-to-face education activities which are delivered to athletes. They currently use a number of platforms to communicate directly with athletes and other interested organisations. These include:
- a YouTube channel which is used to upload videos relevant to anti-doping. This is currently seen as a catch-all platform and is not directed at any particular group of users. The channel has not been updated regularly. See: http://www.youtube.com/user/UKAntiDoping
- a Twitter account which is used to deliver more corporate communications to Sport National Governing Bodies and the media. See: http://twitter.com/ukantidoping

- a Facebook page which has been recently re-launched as a platform to communicate with young athletes directly. This includes pledges, outreach event photos, and events updates and information. UK Anti-Doping report that they will be seeking to engage more athletes through Sport National Governing Bodies and other key organisations.

UK Anti-Doping recognise that social media has a potentially important role for opening direct lines of communication with young athletes. They have recently recruited a member of staff who will have responsibility for managing the UK Anti-Doping website and developing a digital marketing strategy to incorporate social media activities.

Impact: The UK Anti-Doping YouTube channel has received just over 1,800 views since it was established in February 2010 but currently has just 10 subscribers. The UK Anti-Doping Twitter feed is much more popular with over 300 followers (people currently signed-up to receive new updates). Finally, their new Facebook page has 51 followers since it was established in September 2010.

Key learning points for anti-doping organisations
- Social marketing should form a considered part of the wider framework of anti-doping activities. Having a member of staff with responsibility for taking this forward can help ensure a coherent approach is taken.
- Differentiating audiences is important to ensure the communications within social media platforms are clearly directed and appealing.

Evaluation

There is a common view that social media is an important form of communication which must have some influence upon the people who engage with it. However, there is a distinct lack of evaluation of social media campaigns as many people are unsure how to measure the success or impact of such an intervention. Whilst it would be extremely difficult to isolate the impact of one particular strand of activity (i.e. a social media campaign) from the impact of all the other potential sources of influence, it is nevertheless crucial that anti-doping organisations factor in evaluation activities from the beginning of social media marketing activities.

Before implementing any social media strategy it is important that anti-doping organisations are clear on the following:
- The objectives of the social media activities, and any targets or key performance indicators related to these objectives
- Who are the target audience for these activities and what will motivate them to engage in communications
- What measures and tools will be used to evaluate the impact of these activities (to gather both qualitative and quantitative feedback)

Qualitative research is used to understand issues such as how the social media activities have impacted on people and why. This type of research can be undertaken by anti-doping organisations themselves (for example during outreach activities or through online dialogue) or through commissioning a specialist company.

Quantitative research is used to understand who is engaging in the social media activities, where they are based and when they engage. There are a variety of free and paid-for analytic tools and social media monitoring services to support the evaluation of social media programmes. Monitoring tools are each developed to undertake specific tasks therefore it is important to consider which are suitable for evaluating the activities being undertaken. For example, if you decide to use Twitter as a method of engaging an audience it will be important to select a monitoring tool that is strong in Twitter.

Examples of some free tools that may be a useful staring point include:
- **Delicious:** a free social bookmarking web service which can be used to determine the number of times people that bookmark your content.
- **Google analytics:** a free service which generates detailed statistics about visitors to your websites and return on investment.
- **Google feedburner:** a free web feed manager which enables you to measure numbers of RSS and email subscribers.

- **Google alerts:** a free service which lets you measure the daily, weekly and monthly trend of a particular keyword.
- **Google Insights for Search:** a free service which allows you to compare search volume patterns across specific regions, categories, time frames and properties.
- **Twitter Search:** a free Twitter function which allows you to explore how your organisation is being mentioned. You can also use Tweetbeep to receive automated alerts.
- **Tweetburner:** a free service which enables you to track the number of clicks on the links that you send out via Twitter.

Considerations

- **Resourcing:** The internet is live 24/7 and changes rapidly. It is important that anti-doping organisations recognise that social marketing, using social media, requires buy-in and sufficient resourcing. The greater the number of platforms which are utilised, and the greater the level of depth within these, the more time will be required to establish, monitor, moderate and update these.

- **Safeguarding online communications:** Where anti-doping organisations are planning to use social media platforms to encourage interpersonal communication it is crucial that clear protocols are in place to protect those young people participating. This includes developing clear policies and procedures on ethics and data protection.

- **Multiple approaches:** Social media is ultimately about human interaction. While technology has enabled us to do this on a bigger scale and with a greater variety of people than traditional methods, it has not removed the need for these offline methods. The best examples of social media have offline elements to them and it is important not to just replicate the same communications across all platforms.

- **Language:** It is critical that young people are engaged in their native languages, particularly in relation to information provision. Sporting rules and regulations are of key importance and must be translated so as to be understood accurately.

- **Message source:** The source of any communication should be seen as credible and trustworthy, however it should also be seen as relevant and engaging. Anti-doping organisations, whilst credible and trusted are not seen to be engaging sources of information by young athletes. So, messages around anti-doping delivered via a third party (e.g. a sporting body) may be more effective than one delivered via a NADO directly.

- **Content and design of communications:** People often make emotional judgments when interacting with a website, as they would during face-to-face communication. Engaging content, attractive and interactive website design are important features of platforms used to communicate messages; these features will determine whether, and how often, young people will access the platform and, consequently, access anti-doping messages.

- **Personalisation:** Young athletes will be more receptive to messages relevant to their lives; personalisation and tailoring of messages are potentially powerful components of influence specific to social media interventions. Social media campaigns should also incorporate some elements which allow for direct communication between themselves and the NADO/RADO, as well as with high profile ambassadors.

- **Skill development:** To actively change behaviours social media should involve some elements of skill building (providing information on the consequences of doping behaviour, coaching to strengthen refusal capabilities and feedback on performance). This could come through an interactive test or game.

- **Using multiple interfaces:** Young people are highly digitally literate and have preferences for which social media they access. It will be important to ensure that anti-doping organisations utilise a range of social media sources and platforms to engage young people. If they don't see the video on the NADO website, they might see it on YouTube or Facebook, or hear about through an email. Conduct research with young athletes to see where they "hang out" digitally and focus your attentions on these platforms. As an example, approximately half of young people aged 11-17 years old use Facebook as compared to around one-in-ten for Twitter. It is important to know your audience.

"Digital natives exist in places online that suit them, not you. It's necessary to reach out to them."
(Alex Balfour, The London Organising Committee)

- **Risk management:** Organisations often believe the biggest risk of social media is the potential for people to say negative or inappropriate things. However the core risk is to create a social media presence in which no-one participates. It is crucial that anti-doping organisations offer a clear incentive for participation which includes the opportunity for debate.

- **Dealing with inappropriate comments:** Forums which allow people to upload their own content (including words, pictures or videos) could be open to inappropriate use. It is important that anti-doping organisations carefully monitor any open forums. Content which is abusive or inappropriate should be removed as soon as possible and the user posting this should be banned from further participation. Where content is challenging (e.g. pro-doping) there are several

options: (i) leave the content live and allow other users to comment therefore enabling social norms to take effect and strengthen resolve of contributors, (ii) leave the content live and make an official response, (iii) remove the content and get in touch with the individual directly via email to provide information and point of contact for personal discussion. The research would indicate that leaving content live for official and peer responses not only increases engagement but increases the likelihood of changing attitudes and behaviour through social influences.

- **Responding to queries:** Through opening up a direct channel of communication with young people, anti-doping organisations have a responsibility to provide prompt, accurate responses to queries posted publically or sent directly. This should be factored in when considering time required to manage social media activities. Social media is a platform for engagement so ensure you are able to respond quickly, positively and pro-actively.

- **Engaging other audiences:** Whilst engagement with social media is highest amongst young people, anti-doping organisations should recognise that there are a variety of other audiences who could be engaged through social media platforms. These could include:
    - Sport National Governing Bodies
    - Other anti-doping organisations
    - Media contacts
    - Parents of athletes
    - Coaches

Consideration should be paid to the approaches and interfaces used, and the content and design of communications. These will need tailoring to the specific needs of the audiences which are to be engaged.

A 10-step programme for using social media successfully

1 **Listen to/observe what young athletes are doing in social media**
Understand who you are targeting, what factors influence their online behaviour, and how they prefer to use social media. Speak to young athletes directly and test your ideas.

2 **Develop a clear social media strategy with achievable goals, linked to existing programmes of work**
A social media campaign should be developed to complement your existing intervention and engagement strategies. Within this strategy you should set goals your social media activities can be measured against. In the first instance these could include anticipated reach, awareness and engagement.

3 **Make sure you have the resources to manage your community and refresh the content**
Social media requires on-going moderation and management to keep content fresh and promote engagement across the variety of platforms. A named individual/s should hold responsibility for managing the delivery of the social media strategy with support from colleagues.

4 **Create a "social object" that is relevant, fun and of genuine interest to young people**
Social media platforms provide the opportunity, and expectation of dialogue. Young people will only engage in interpersonal communication where there is a relevant and interesting point of discussion around which to communicate. This may be doping, or it may include moral/social choices more generally. Keeping "social objects" topical can increase relevance.

5   **Allow them to engage via their preferred platform of choice — create multiple interfaces**

Young people will all engage in different social media platforms for differing reasons, at different times, and with differing regularity. Anti-doping organisations should ensure they have some form of presence across multiple platforms to reach the widest audience possible. Content should be tailored appropriate to the platform (e.g. promoting new video's through Twitter) so young people have a reason to increase their engagement over time.

6   **Segment young athletes into groups. Give them something of relevance they can join**

Doping is more prevalent in some sports than others. Anti-doping organisations may wish to identify those sports they wish to target and engage young athletes in targeted communications. Motivation to engage increases where communications are seen to be relevant so tailoring social media interventions to specific groups will enhance engagement.

7   **Take advantage of extreme targeting offered by social networks**

Social networks enable you to identify individual users by their preferences, demographics and interests. Personalised communication is one of the key mechanisms for increasing engagement. Utilise the targeting opportunities offered by social networks to engage young athletes in communications which bear increased relevance for them individually.

8   **Optimise content for sharing—particularly via newsfeeds and Twitter**

Content uploaded onto social media platforms should be easy to read and written in plain language. If it appears hard to read then people will look elsewhere. Headlines should be kept brief to ensure they can be easily shared via Twitter and RSS newsfeeds.

9 **Use outreach opportunities to get the ball rolling**
Developing an internet presence will not happen overnight. It can take a long time to build up a profile and user base. Use educational outreach activities and existing contacts as a starting point from which to drive traffic to your social media platforms.

10 **Trial and error**
Social media is here to stay and is where many young people spend much of their time. It is important that anti-doping organisations begin to establish a presence and see what works. Review campaign metrics to understand who is engaging. Find out why, or why not and alter your approach as necessary.

Further reading

Statistics of social media use quoted in this report were sourced from:

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Additional research related to doping and social media:

- Butler, C. (2009) *Determining the best e-tools for the IAAF and its Member Federations to communicate with elite track and field athletes.* International Association of Athletics Federations. Available from: http://www.sportingpulse.com/get_file.cgi?id=604579
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- Dahl, S. (2009) *Using Social Media for Social Good – A conceptual overview.* Middlesex University.

Keeping up to date with social media:

- http://www.socmedia101.com/
- http://www.mashable.com
- http://thesocialmediaguide.com.au/
- http://www.socialnetdaily.com/
- http://www.socialmediatoday.com/