Contactless Connecting:

How we brought invasive species outreach online

There are many critical decisions needed to create an effective online presence. From the inception of COVID-19, many organizations, used to traditional means of outreach, were tasked with moving a very social task completely online. For the CRB Response, there was no online presence established before November 2020. With the world moving towards digital connection, it became apparent that creating an online presence was essential to keeping the public engaged.

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Affiliations

The CRB Response is an emergency response program and is a collaboration between the Hawaii Department of Agriculture, University of Hawaii, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and other partners.







Introduction

Coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) was first detected on Oʻahu in December of 2013. The CRB Response was established in February 2014 as a collaborative emergency response between the Hawaiʻi Department of Agriculture and the University of Hawai'i. Creating an online presence in the early days was not essential and would have given the sense that we were establishing ourselves as a long-term program. However, the Covid-19 pandemic underscored the importance of an online presence in multifaceted, resilient public outreach programs.

Standard public outreach activities include tabling at an event, school presentations, or neighborhood board meetings. Invasive species outreach also includes engaging stakeholders, planning meetings, creating print material, and curating messages for various audiences. Before the pandemic, the CRB Response outreach team covered all of these activities without having an online presence. Now, with an online presence, we are able to do most of these remotely and expand into new areas with social media and a website.

Social Media Engagement Rate

The information we capture informs new goals and refines our strategy.

Analysis

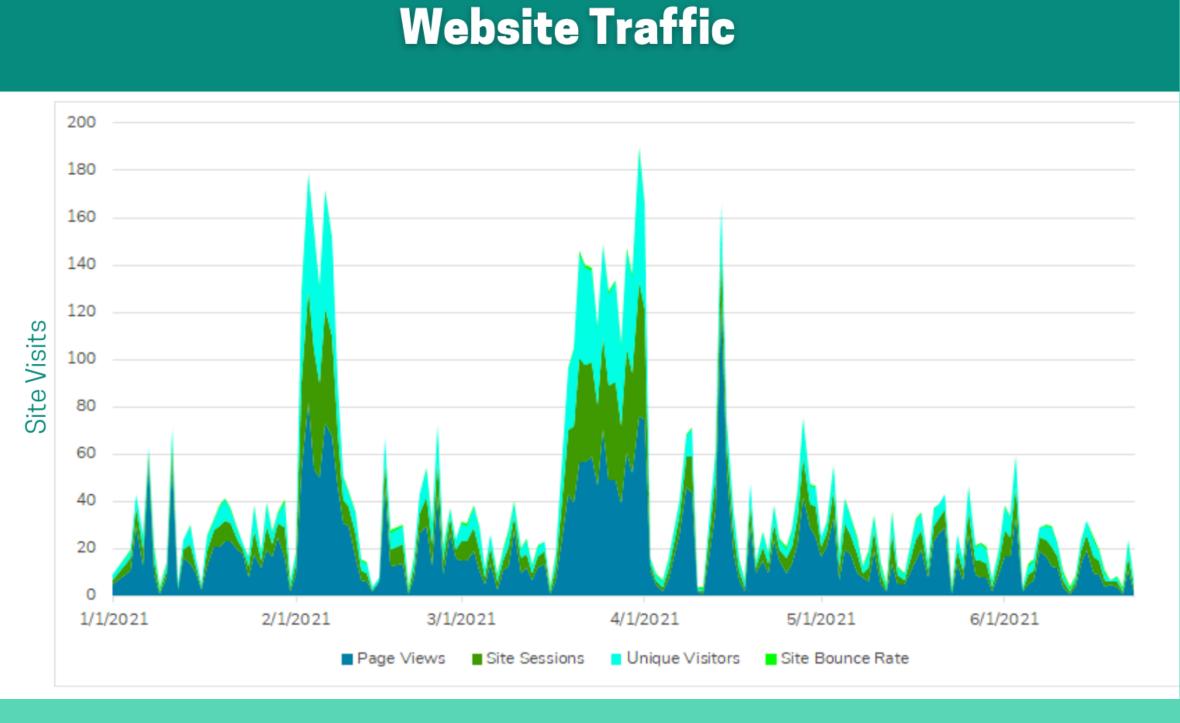
While we're still in the process of growing our online presence, the data we've collected over the past year shows that we are exceeding industry benchmarks. The median engagement Facebook and 1.22% for Instagram. Our engagement rate is skewed higher since we have fewer, more engaged followers.

rate across all industries is 0.09% for

Incorporating Facebook Ads in our strategy has shown impressive results. The spikes seen during February and the end of March/ early April correspond to paid Facebook ads driving traffic to our website.

MISSION STATMENT

"Our mission is to protect Hawaii's communities, industries, and natural environment from the threats and impacts of the coconut rhinoceros beetle."



Technology Must-Haves*

Canva

- Online graphic design program
- Intuitive features, easy collaboration, free vector artwork and templates
- Save brand elements for easy branded content creation

Facebook Business Suite

- Easily manage Facebook page and Instagram account
- Message inbox across platforms, analytics, run ads, schedule posts for FREE!

'Olelo Community Media

A special shoutout goes out to the team at 'Ōlelo Community Media. Their basic media production course equipped us with the tools to produce, film, and edit engaging digital content. If you're on Oahu and want a crash course in film, check out their various classes.

HubSpot

- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software.
- Allows our two-person team to stay in the loop about essential communication with important partners
- Tracks all emails, phone calls, meetings, and notes for contacts
- Allows you to create task reminders to follow up with specific people

Google

- Absolutely essential for remote work and collaboration
- App tool add-ons allow for task automation and optimization

Zoom

Virtual meetings are critical for contactless outreach. We use Zoom daily for internal meetings with our team and external meetings with partners.

Assess Your Readiness

Do I have the: Staff? Funding? Time? Training? to maintain over time

Establish a Brand Kit

A brand kit complies visual information for your brand identity into one document

Includes: logo

color

fonts photography rules brand tone

mission statement organization story

Program Tone Honest & Trusted We are transparent, elicit confidence, and are

the authoritative agency on CRB in Hawaii. Informative & Urgent We provide information, services and active to remove CRB from Hawaii. Friendly & Helpful We act with respect and are kind



Ability to fully customize The standard for most organizations

Research Options*

We designed our online presence

around the website as a foundational

information source. Three website

builders were considered:

Coding required for optimization (training



- Affordable Intuitive drag and drop

Standardize Data Collection

- Track metrics with a Google spreadsheet
- Create S.M.A.R.T. goals
- Re-evaluate goals every quarter and adjust based on data

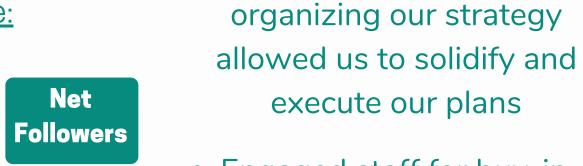
Calculating Engagement Rate:











 Engaged staff for buy-in Approval from leadership

Approval

Many components were

unofficial policy, but

execute our plans

Conclusion

We believe that the CRB online presence is a worthy investment because it enables us to reach new audiences, provides a reference for those who wish to follow up on CRB information, and establishes legitimacy in initial outreach conversations. With the likelihood of another pandemic or disruption in traditional means of communication, creating an online presence helps preserve the flow of information to the public. Without many resources available on how to create an entire online presence, we are documenting our process.

Recognizing that online platforms are constantly evolving, in our second year online we plan to tweak our strategy. Noting the success of our video posts including Instagram reels, Facebook ads, and content featuring larvae, we plan to increase the number of these posts. We will also revisit our website to include more in-depth resources. Our flexible goals allow us to keep up with the everchanging digital landscape.