

**Let's Give 'Em Somethin' to Talk About**  
(Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, YouTube & More)

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The problem?



The solution?



# Mascot Search Communication Goals

- Open
- Inclusive
- FUN! (said the president)

Tribe spelled backwards = Ebirt



# Mascot Search Communication Principles

- Use the web
- Encourage conversation
- Build trust
- FUN! (said the president)

Seems reasonable, right?



“Most of our alumni don’t use the Internet.”

- Really?
  - **58%** of alumni who responded to the early email announcement and contact us form were **52 - 81 years old**
  - In 6 months, 18,500 unique visitors to the mascot search website
- Huh.

“This could (will) get ugly.”

- Well, yeah.
  - 550 in official facebook group; 20+ mascot-related facebook groups
  - Nearly 1,000 wall posts
  - Nearly 250 blog comments
  - 1,226 on Twitter
  - 839 submitted mascot suggestions
- Not so far.

# Mascot Communication Components

- The website is the hub - [www.wm.edu/mascot](http://www.wm.edu/mascot)
- Blog - <http://wmmascot.blogs.wm.edu/>
- Mascot Search group on Facebook
- Twitter - [@WMMascot](https://twitter.com/WMMascot)
- YouTube - <http://www.youtube.com/wmmascot>
- Just a bit of print (alumni mag, etc.)



# Laying the groundwork

- The first focus was “criteria” for mascot ideas. We used comments on our blog for the discussion.
- We built/reinforced online communities - leaked things early to Facebook and Twitter.

*Feel like getting a head start? You're the first invited...to submit a W&M mascot idea - <http://www.wm.edu/mascot/ideas>*



# Keeping it whacky

*“My relationship with W&M is complicated. So I usually just go along with it when I get introduced as the former mascot - it's easier that way. Most people really don't care.”*



Graphics from a video on the W&M Mascot Search on YouTube

# Offering 90 days of SurveyMonkey

- Online and paper submission of mascot ideas
- 839 submitted “the perfect idea”
- Used blog and twitter to keep momentum going
  - Mascot Idea #
  - Can you see me now?



**WMMascot**

W&M Tribe Mascot Idea #586 – Champ the Ampersand

2:28 PM Jun 27th from web



# Creating a buzz

- Lots of media coverage
- One of the crazier ideas got attention



# Surviving the lull

- Share Your Mascot Memories  
(Swem Library Special Collections wiki)
- In Committee (blog feature)

## “In Committee” - part 3

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When I was a kid, I envisioned intricate and complicated Halloween costumes for myself. I can remember my mother saying, “I’m not sure we can make that idea into a costume that you can wear.” Now that I’m on the mascot search committee, I know exactly why she said that and what she meant.



# Why it worked...

- We gave 'em somethin' to talk about
- consistent concept and brand
- multiple online community tools
- informal tone
- foundation of online community in place when announced (website, blog, facebook)

# Why it worked...

- We kept up our end of the conversation
- print offered the basics/web offered more
- detailed communication plan
- all campus mouthpieces involved
- momentum from new communities (twitter, youtube)
- when reporters got interested, there was a lot to offer

Questions and comments???