Improving Safe Transportation and Alcohol Awareness Messages

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Problem Statement and Rationale ......................................................... 3

Literature Review ................................................................................. 5

Outreach and Research Components .................................................... 7

Outreach Project: Safe Transportation Videos ....................................... 8

Selected Video Results ......................................................................... 12

Research Project: Social Self-Efficacy and Alcohol Health Messages ....... 14

Discussion ............................................................................................. 18

References ............................................................................................ 20

Related Reports and Conference Papers .............................................. 23

Conference Panel: Teen and College Student Alcohol Use .................... 24

A Multilevel Perspective on Drinking in U.S. High Schools and Colleges ....................................................................................... 26

Appendix: YouTube Videos 2007 ......................................................... 30
Problem Statement and Rationale

According to the RI Strategic Highway Safety Plan, college age drivers (age 20 – 24) represent the “highest percent of total fatalities” (p. 29) Alcohol related deaths peaked in 2003, when Rhode Island had the highest percentage of traffic deaths resulting from impaired driving due to alcohol. The number of DUI related fatalities has decreased since 2003. But it is still one of the most prevalent causes of traffic fatalities. One of the key objectives of the Safety Plan is to “Reduce alcohol-related fatalities by ... 10 percent during the life of the plan” (p. 21). In addition, this Plan also emphasizes the need to address young drivers, who constitute a disproportionate share of fatalities. Public education campaigns aimed at drivers age 16 – 24 play a key role in the Plan’s recommendation.

This project was designed to address the high priority area of Transportation Safety by increasing awareness and behavioral dispositions among college students. Alcohol is a major transportation safety issue. It is a key factor in traffic fatalities, the leading cause of death for youths as well as college-age youth. The college demographic tends to be among the groups with the highest levels of risk. Traffic injuries resulting from alcohol intoxication are a leading cause of death, especially among adolescents and young adults. Awareness and behavior change among young people is critical for transportation safety. Attitudes and habits instilled during college age perpetuate long past graduation. But most existing strategies and campaigns fail to appeal to at-risk key segments of this age group.

Increased enforcement and awareness lead to a decline in alcohol-related fatalities both as far as absolute numbers and rates (as a percentage of Vehicle Miles Traveled) until the mid-1990s (GAO, 2003). But this encouraging trend has not continued in recent years. Alcohol-related traffic fatalities reached a high of 17,524 in 2002, with a slight decline to 16,694 in 2004 (NHTSA, 2005). Rhode Island had the highest percentage of fatal crashes that were alcohol related in 2003 (57 percent) and 2004 (50 percent), with some encouraging improvement apparent in 2006.

The high school and college age demographics are among the groups with the highest levels of risk due to Alcohol, speed, and lack of seatbelt use (GAO, 2003). Alcohol and drug abuse among college students takes a substantial toll on individual students, institutions of higher learning, their neighboring communities, and society at large. Awareness of this issue has resulted in increased research and administrative efforts in campus alcohol policy and preventive intervention domains.

Decades of campaigns geared towards high school and college students have reached a plateau. Their impact on safe drinking and transportation choices is severely limited. A number of interventions have been shown to be effective, in particular environmental and enforcement approaches, such as sobriety checkpoints, limits on alcohol sales to minors, Responsible Beverage Service training, stricter legal limits, and in particular reduction to .08 BAC, as well as zero tolerance laws for minors. However,
the effectiveness of educational interventions has been limited by a number of factors (DeJong & Wallack, 1992; Howat, Sleet, Elder & Maycock, 2004). One of the key problems with such educational interventions is the top down approach which most of them take (Graham et al., 2004), and the inability to capitalize on peer pressure and social proof (Cialdini, 2001). Results of conventional interventions have shown limited effectiveness; innovative, integrative approaches utilizing both media and classroom settings are needed. Often the young target audience is not actively engaged, and in many cases cannot even relate to the message.

At the University of Rhode Island we have integrated transportation related work into communication and media classes over the past five years. The resulting videos, messages, documentary pieces, and campaign proposals focused around Drinking and Driving and Transportation Alternatives produced encouraged students to get involved in these topics. The goal of these activities was to maximize student ownership. Students also apply basic research methodologies, including focus groups, observations and surveys. Some video production and editing capabilities and knowledge are available among the students. These tools become more and more accessible, and with the advent of YouTube are visible to a key target audience. Message effectiveness greatly benefits from a conscious integration into the curriculum and an improved match between knowledge of pertinent tools and student involvement in transportation safety projects.

Such interventions, in which students develop messages and campaigns with the intention to help their own peers are often better targeted and more appealing than those developed by professionals. Also, the mere fact that the students are involved in the process increases their ownership of these messages and underlying attitudes and thus decreases resistance (Graham, Tatterson et al., 2004).

This project represents an innovative approach towards transportation related behavior change. College and high school students have tremendous access to media and web-based communication. The major change during the past 5 years has been that young people increasingly become creators of web-based messages, a phenomenon often referred to as Web 2.0. Of course they are also consumers of these messages, which may be highly targeted and individualized.

In the course of the project, video communication underwent a major change with the advent and tremendous popularity of YouTube and other web-based outlets of user-generated video. Since it is difficult to reach college students with mainstream media, YouTube provides a low cost alternative, with great targeting potential. Students can send links to their friends via email or chat. Consequently, they have ownership in these videos, and they use their medium of choice to disseminate them. In addition, there is also significant exposure to these videos by other YouTube viewers as evidenced by number of views (see Table 1).

This project extended learning related to alcohol and other transportation risks from the students involved to their friends and peer group. User-friendly approaches to developing targeted and tested videos can be utilized for other risky transportation behaviors besides.
A key area in need of improvement that was noted by several authors (Davis-Joyce and Townes, 2003; GAO, 2003) is the dissemination of the final product to appropriate audiences. Conventional media have limited reach among college students. And since the advent of Web2.0 technologies, messages and videos are no longer primarily distributed via school newspaper, on-campus cable and closed-circuit TV. Reaching beyond the limits of one campus community by using YouTube and similar vehicles have broadened the audience for such tools.

Attitudes and habits instilled during high school and college age will perpetuate long past graduation. But most existing messages and campaigns fail to appeal to at-risk segments of this age group. Recent research has identified resistance to persuasion as a factor in limiting the impact of communication campaigns. New approaches are needed to reduce resistance and also increase the effectiveness of messages and campaigns. The impact of actively creating such messages (as compared to merely consuming them) is gaining importance. Students involved in message creation will display higher levels of attitude and behavior change compared to those merely consuming them.

The current project is innovative in a number of respects. It…
- focuses on the communication and media aspect of transportation behavior
- expands the reach of safe transportation campaigns
- addresses Resistance to Persuasion in the area of transportation
- integrates Social Norms and Stages of Change approaches
- permits hands-on application and message processing of academic learning
- connects to interdisciplinary URI projects on student alcohol consumption
- focuses on outreach, but has a foundation in theory

Literature Review

Persuasion research has addressed message strategies designed to optimize the impact of messages on the recipient. Persuasion scholars have worked to refine compliance gaining approaches (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981). Source and message factors took center stage. Communicator credibility may influence attitude change; high expertise is critical when extreme attitude change is the goal, whereas limited expertise may be sufficient for moderate attitude change. The intent to persuade can also make a difference when personal gain appears to be at stake (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981). Furthermore, communicator attractiveness, similarity, and power all can contribute to greater attitude change under certain conditions. Cialdini (2001) has reiterated these factors as the persuasive principles of authority and liking.

One particular feature of arguments that has been part and parcel of most risk avoidance messages is fear. Janis and Feshbach (1953) hypothesized that fear induces emotional tension, which is then reduced if the message recipient follows the recommendation in a speech or PSA. Fear appeals are not automatically effective. Their success varies with the level, immediacy, and likelihood of negative consequences, and the perceived efficacy of the recommended remedy. In particular, fear based messaged seem to have limited impact on teenagers and college age audiences.

Resistance

The dangers of adolescent and young adult drinking and driving have been widely documented (NHTSA, 2005). In spite of decades of behavior change messages the effectiveness of such interventions has been limited, in particular when teenagers and young adults are
concerned. Effectiveness of messages geared towards these groups has been severely limited, in spite of widespread exposure through media and school-based programs (DeJong & Atkin, 1995).

Several approaches are evolving, which attempt to gain acceptance among those segments which are either hard to reach, or who are reluctant to embrace change. Stage-based models have identified targeting and individualization of interventions towards different stages of change and other individual differences and personality traits.

Innovative angles often acknowledge severe impediments to reaching the appropriate and especially to the acceptance by the target of such a message. Some earlier persuasion work has addressed reactance (Brehm, 1966) and resistance. Knowles and his coworkers (2004a,b,c) developed an integrated model of resistance based on the approach-avoidance model of communication. Without resistance persuasion will not have to overcome obstacles and is thus moot. In order to achieve attitude and behavior change, the approach component has to outweigh its avoidance counterpart. Traditional persuasion has stressed approach, while neglecting avoidance.

Knowles (2004a,b,c) has labeled Alpha Strategies those upfront approaches designed to strengthen arguments, add incentives, increase liking of the source, and reach consensus. Incentives, reciprocity, commitment, consistency, social proof, source credibility/authority, and scarcity are key influence strategies used not only in marketing, but also in prosocial behavior change messages, such as PSAs (Cialdini, 2001). Alpha strategies are limited in their effectiveness when receivers are resistant to adopting them.

Omega strategies are designed to help this shortcoming. Omega strategies are designed to reduce Resistance. Several researchers are working on these in different settings. They are novel to health promotion or transportation, but show great promise:

*Acknowledging resistance* implies honoring the opposing point of view. Knowles found that acceptance was much greater if a request was prefaced by "I know you may not want to (agree), but..." The present authors have identified similar effects for attitudes towards alcohol consumption (Laforge, Mundorf & Skarvan, unpublished data).

*Changing the time frame* towards the future will decrease resistance; people are less concerned with immediate impact and with the how-to of the issue at hand. Since readiness for change is a long-term process it may be helpful to encourage visualization of safe behaviors in a long-term framework.

*Providing multiple alternatives* can gratify both the motive to accept and the motive to resist. Other approaches dealing with reactance to the influence attempt are to *minimize* or *depersonalize* the request, to *redefine* the relationship and to *reframe* from a negative to a positive message (Knowles, 2004).

Graham, Tatterson et al. (2004) presented the problem of high risk drinking away from the individual and toward caring for friends. Intention and Perceived Norms mediated drinking and problem outcomes at 14 months. Intent to intervene, intent to make general prevention plans, and intent to make vehicle-related plans all seem to be factors, which discourage risky drinking related behaviors. They also utilized perceived norms -- regarding levels of alcohol use, caring about friends, acceptability of risky behaviors, and willingness to intervene as a way to maximize the impact of peer influence.

**Designated Driver Programs**

Using a Designated Driver (DD) has become commonplace due to extensive formal and informal media coverage since the 1980s. Not all users will firmly adhere to the idea of a sober DD, though. A number of initiatives have been launched to encourage DD compliance and safety. They often include incentives to DD, from free coffee and soft drinks to food coupons. Public service campaigns have been devised and implemented to encourage DD use and safety. But issues still remain, from consistent use of DD, to the control of alcohol consumption by drivers and passengers. DeJong and Winsten (1999) found high, but inconsistent use of DD by college students. Barr and MacKinnon (1998) report that 86% of college students had used DD; those
who drink frequently tend to also use DD at high rates. However, they often choose DD who consume alcohol. By the same token, "less alcohol use among friends was associated with sounder methods of designated driver selection" (p.552). The key factor, which is often ignored, is planning ahead to prevent compromising situations and to encourage the use of safe ride options (Graham et al., 2004). In addition, several authors caution that interventions need to stress that the availability of DD is not a license for passengers to drink heavily (Harding, Caudill, & Moore, 2001).

Safe Ride programs

In order to address some of the shortcomings of DD use, including limited availability of DDs in some settings, safe ride [SR] programs were implemented. SR programs are often seen as a supplement rather than replacement for DD. Especially in a college setting they are particularly popular. Many students frequent a handful of locations on certain nights of the week and weekend. SR programs can target peak travel times (e.g. last call etc.). Several studies have explored the impact of SR programs on DUI or drinking behavior of SR passengers. The prevailing conclusion is that overall drinking does not increase significantly compared to a control situation.

The overall consensus seems to be that DD and Safe Ride programs can serve an important harm reduction function. Authors typically rely either on self-report measures ("would you have driven if...") or on estimates of lives saved. Such evidence (e.g. Wisconsin report) projects savings in traffic injuries and deaths based on the number of safe rides provided. The net impact is then calculated based on the percentage of accidents among DWI drivers. Obviously it is not known exactly what would have happened if it hadn't been for the safe ride. Very few stringent evaluations of SR programs are available. However, one can assume that most likely the user would have been in a more dangerous situation and that the chances of being hurt or killed would have increased considerably. Valde and Fitch (2004) analyzed communication pertaining to DD use and conclude that the relationship between driver and passenger is a critical resource. This analysis supports Graham's tenet that the focus on relationships and friends is pivotal in improving compliance with alcohol related behavior change.

Outreach and Research Components

The author was the P.I. on several Safe Transportation project focusing on DUI prevention. The first project centered on a Safe Ride program from the University of Rhode Island to the state capital, Providence using buses operated by the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA). A subsequent Safe Ride program, Rhody Rides, was modeled after a number of safe ride initiatives around the country, which used student volunteers and student drivers to pick up students who had been drinking at clubs and private parties. This project was part of a comprehensive Town/Gown Environmental Management approach, which worked with the surrounding communities to arrive at mutually acceptable solutions to student alcohol use, safe transportation, and entertainment choices.

The emphasis of these projects shifted increasingly towards attitude and behavior change. Primarily, students were involved in promoting transportation alternatives and safe transportation behavior. They utilized a range of communication tools and technologies to create awareness and attitude change about safe transportation and entertainment alternatives. Communication channels such as YouTube served to reach a various audiences.

Besides providing targeted and tailored content, it became clear that even the seemingly narrow demographic segment of college age young adults has significant subsets, which require careful analysis, and which will need to be addressed using specific interventions.
Outreach Project: Safe Transportation Videos

Video Development

The central activity during this project has been the development of persuasive videos addressing drinking and driving related issues. A large number of students were involved in background research and video production/editing at various levels. In particular, the sections of research methods course COM381 taught by Dr. Mundorf were redesigned to focus on college student transportation and entertainment issues. Students created new sets of videos targeting Drinking and Driving, Designated Driver Safety and Seatbelt Use.

After several semesters of work videos were greatly improved due to a greater emphasis on persuasion theory as well as editing and production training and the public exposure via YouTube. Students in this class conduct a range of research projects. In Dr. Mundorf’s sections 60+ students/semester were directed to focus their projects on:

- Student Alcohol Consumption
- Drinking And Driving
- Designated Drivers
- Alcohol And Seatbelt Use
- Creating And Testing Of Safe Transportation/Entertainment Videos
- Transportation Alternatives incl. Safe Ride

After reviewing failures of past campaigns, the following key goals were established:

- Improved Targeting and Persuasive Impact
- Reduced Resistance to Persuasion
- Appeal to College Students
- Improved Message Strength
- Use of Effective Message Delivery

Audience Targeting

A content analysis of PSAs by DeJong and Atkin (1995) also discusses the difficulty of reaching late teen/early 20s target audience. Their key conclusions are that: 1) messages should feature peers, not adults, 2) should not be preachy, and 3) should feature social, rather than life-threatening consequences. They found that by far the greatest percentage of PSAs (56%) focus on DD, followed by prevention of DUI and support for public action. PSAs focus on increased use of, and making prior plans for a DD, the rewards of being a DD (good friend, attractive, hero), and the friendship function of being a DD. Some of the ads also underscore that having a DD is not a license for excessive drinking by the passengers. Their paper suggests a need to emphasize prevention of DUI and support for public action in addition to promoting DD. Many of the policy changes postulated by DeJong and Atkin have been implemented; nevertheless DUI levels and resulting traffic fatalities have not declined sufficiently. While greater enforcement and environmental management is needed, effective individual behavior change and targeting of core at-risk groups remains the critical missing link.

Students were urged to heed the advice in DeJong and Atkin (1995) and focus on peers rather than adults, to avoid being preachy, and feature social rather than life-threatening consequences. Most Characters were actual URI Undergraduate students. Realistic settings were chosen based on audience experience. Production Techniques were consistent with audience preferences, and music was chosen to maximize targeting and emotional impact.

Since for most students the perceived likelihood of actually getting killed or killing someone in a drunk driving incidence is small, several groups were encouraged to focus on other more common realistic consequences, in addition to the fatal outcomes of drunk driving, such as getting a traffic citation and court date, a revoked license, incurring considerable direct and indirect costs to self and parents. Some projects also featured physical impairment and mutilation, a particularly undesirable outcome for younger demographics.
Resistance to Persuasion

Recent research has identified resistance to persuasion as a key factor in limiting the impact of communication campaigns. A number of strategies exist, which reduce resistance and also increase the effectiveness of messages and campaigns.

A key strategy was that of Reducing Resistance. Resistance limits the effectiveness of behavior change messages. Recently some authors have proposed Omega Strategies (Knowles, 2004) to help reduce resistance. Laforge, Mundorf, and Skarvan (unpublished) tested several such strategies with regard to alcohol and found acknowledging resistance to be a promising approach in reducing resistance to messages encouraging responsible alcohol consumption and reduction of negative impacts.

Other Omega strategies in the videos include use of narratives (extended stories which have the ability to involve the viewer). One such example was a story about an evening in the life of a designated driver. In subsequent ratings, this story received high marks from college student respondents.

Another approach focuses on redefining the relationship between the source of the video and the implied viewer. While typically this relationship is one of authority, the focus on helping friends rather than oneself was shown to be effective in encouraging students to make ‘vehicle-related plans’ (Graham, 2004). Several of the videos focused on friends discouraging irresponsible driving after alcohol consumption. Also, designated driver use was shown as an attractive social and friendship activity.

Yet another strategy is to provide multiple alternatives to driving home drunk (rather than just one). These included Designated Driver, Safe Ride (i.e. buses, Rhody Rides), calling a taxi, walking home, staying over (under the right circumstances). A related approach focuses on depersonalizing the request combined with social proof, where many students are shown to engage in desirable behaviors.

Finally framing is used, when a message is reframed to positive from negative. For instance, rather than focusing on the dangers of drinking and driving, this approach dwells on the benefits of remaining safe. Salovey and others have shown the benefit of this approach for smoking, and it stands to reason that it will work for drinking, as well.

Innovative Video Distribution: Web 2.0

For years the Internet was static; information was not interactive or editable by the outside world. It has evolved into a dynamic, interactive, social experience. The term Web 2.0 was coined by O'Reily Media in 2004 to categorize the shift of the Internet from a static portal to a dynamic multi-media landscape. For a website to be considered Web 2.0 it usually uses technologies like RSS aggregation/syndication, XML, CSS, folksonmies (tags and tag clouds), and rich web technologies like SOAP, AJAX, and Flash. Websites which are implementing these technologies are Google, Youtube, Myspace, Facebook, Digg, Wikipedia, flickr, del.icio.us, etc.

The underlying premise behind these websites is to give the user the freedom to interact with the site in turn interacting with everyone who has visited and made changes on the site. These features lead to strong expectations of their demographic targeting potential.

Self Creation and Distribution of Messages

Web 2.0 has allowed people to broadcast themselves through text, pictures, audio, and video. And with Web 2.0 others can comment, summarize, reply, argue, and most importantly notify others. This interactive functionality is particularly appealing to college age demographics. These sites capture audiences which are difficult to reach by television and radio.

YouTube

YouTube is a video hosting site, which allows anyone to upload videos and submit comments about the video, rate it, or post video responses. These videos can be embedded and viewed on any web page. YouTube serves more that 100 Million videos a day, that is 60% of all videos watched online. One indication of the significance of this new channel is that Google
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bought Youtube from founders Chad Hurley and Steven Chen for an estimated $1.65 Billion in November of 2006.

YouTube has become a key communication channel; while postings originate from members of all age groups high school and college age demographics appear particularly active when posting to YouTube. Since there is no screening process for postings, a range of content of varying quality tends to be available. As far as length the limitation is 10 minutes. YouTube provides a count for number of views. Another measure of viewer reaction can be the labeling attached to videos and, in particular, viewer comments. Reports of the impact of YouTube videos are tentative. However, the common assumption is that as a channel it has a selective impact on specific demographics; in particular teens and young adults tend to gravitate towards online video consumption and production.

Technology and Audience
The original idea for YouTube came when the founders wanted to share videos of family and friends. File sizes were too large for email, and posting videos online on websites is cumbersome. YouTube users upload their web compatible videos directly to the website. The servers transcode the user videos into Adobe Flash Video (.FLV) and then display them in a flash movie player on the site. One of the benefits of this system is that the flash video player can buffer video faster than Windows Media or Real Player; also the quality is standard, regardless what computer or network connection is used. Another important aspect of the site is how the community can comment and rate each others videos. This allows users to gain valuable feedback for their videos and for others to track how popular a video has become. YouTube members will often argue about the message or purpose of a video. Frequent uploaders can also send out RSS links of their video list so that others can subscribe to their feed and catch the newest videos that have been uploaded.

YouTube has a broad audience, fairly evenly split between males and females. It holds a 60% market share of Internet video sites. In spite of its predominantly youthful content, self-reported ages of members cover a wide range. Demographic characteristics are difficult to determine since, due to the recent nature of this channel, limited formal audience research is available.

DUI Related YouTube Videos: Fear and Alternatives
Formal research on YouTube is virtually non-existent. However, in order to better understand the competitive environment an informal analysis was conducted focusing on two types of videos in the area of Drinking and Driving: threats and alternatives.

At least on the surface it is encouraging that a search for “Drinking and Driving” resulted in more than 20 pages of results and 7,000 videos on YouTube. This topic appears to be on the mind of many YouTube uploaders and viewers. YouTube provides a noteworthy multiplication effect. Even if many videos are not specifically created for YouTube they reach a substantially larger audience.

Typical videos contain shocking statistics, photos, and scenes such as car accidents, which might scare an individual away from drinking and driving. YouTube videos seem to reflect the general preference for fear-based persuasion. Compared to standard PSAs which are used in High School health education and in Drivers Education classes, YouTube videos are able to incorporate often extreme footage which can be found on the Internet. Videos are often very harsh and use graphic photos and footage.

Some of the popular DUI related videos have high production value. For instance one called Brain Drain illustrates what happens to the brain of an intoxicated driver. Parts of the brain are illuminated and the viewer can visualize what happens after one drink and after several drinks and how the driver can easily end up in a situation where control over the vehicle is lost.

Another typical ‘reality’ video which has generated thousands of views consists of surveillance camera footage of a sobriety test. The middle age male driver is so intoxicated that he drops his wallet, has trouble finding his driver’s license and can barely stand up straight. The
video probably comes across as humorous—even though it is not difficult to imagine this driver behind the wheel getting into a crash.

One typical, graphic video was called Every 15 minutes in the OC, part 2. This video showed exactly what happens at a scene of a drinking and driving accident: Injured drivers and passengers stuck in their car injured and the firemen trying to get them out; a field sobriety test on the perpetrator. The video even showed a hospital scene when the parents their child had been killed by a drunk driver. The video also detailed the resulting consequences for the perpetrator: going to prison and the experience of being in prison. The sad mood of the video was enhanced through fitting music.

A similar video showed a combination of statistics, pictures of those individuals hurt or killed by the drunk driving accident. The video highlighted the suffering of family members and the resulting DUI conviction. Another example was a first hand account of a drinking and driving accident and its consequences from a young man.

As part of the project, a student involved in the search found over 600 videos which showed graphic scenes of effects of drunk driving and car crashes. She watched many of them but reported that she “had to stop, they were too much for me to handle.” Many showed terrible car crashes and pictures of those individuals who did not survive, and—sometimes even worse—pictures of victims who did survive. These videos are intense and they might lead to heightened awareness or even behavior change.

A typical High School video is called HHA Health Drunk Driving. High school students used fear to get their point across. Their target audience was teens, college students who drink over friend’s houses and drive home. They focus on drinking and partying to ultimately pass out for a while only to wake up and drive home in the middle of the night, hitting someone while driving. Their acting in the video is not that good so it affected the content. The content was very serious and had a powerful message, but it was inconsistent.

A different view of drinking and driving focused on the guilty driver. They stress the damage to the vehicle, monetary damages, legal fees and other things, not to mention the guilt for the rest of one’s life resulting for causing harm to another individual. These videos are consistent with the idea of reducing resistance to change by changing the persuasive angle of a message. They appeal to the viewer’s emotions and might discourage viewers from driving under the influence.

In Memoriam Videos

A great number of videos were created to individuals killed in car accidents by a drunken driver. The search produced 620 such videos. They all seemed to have the same theme, to pay tribute to that individual who died. Most videos included pictures of that person and their friends and family, with sad music playing in the background. A few had pictures of the actual accident. One video I viewed called “In loving memory of Zachary Cable” had memories from his friends and family written in for people to read. It was very touching and showed how much he was loved. These videos were very sad and very emotional. Other videos were for Jason Coy, Kelsey Briggs, Zoe Rott, Carl Jones, and Miranda Richer. Most of these videos were entitled “In memory of...” and almost every video has over 20 comments on them for those individuals. These kinds of video have the potential to contradict the belief “It can’t happen to me.” Even though they may appear less powerful than the fear inducing ones, such videos can ‘strike a chord’ and get the attention of the target audience. The prevailing view is that, the more powerful the message and the more shocking the video, the more the viewer will stay away from risky situations.

Video Creation and Testing

A systematic approach was implemented so that Research Methods classes in Communication Studies were able to develop videos using a series of consecutive steps. These steps involve two cycles of development, testing, revision, and (in Cycle 2) dissemination.
Cycle 1. Students review and critique Videos from previous semester
Instructor discusses Audience Targeting, Persuasion, and Resistance
Instructor and students propose Topics
Students create Literature Review on selected topics
Student groups decide on Final Topics
Groups create Storyboards
Class critiques Storyboards
Focus groups view and critique Storyboards
Student groups revise Storyboards

Cycle 2. Each group creates 2 versions of Draft Videos
[e.g. male/female; humor/no humor; high/low information]
Class critiques Videos
Each group creates 2 finished versions of Video
Students in Communication Studies classes evaluate Videos (peer evaluation)
Instructor ranks Videos based on evaluation
Transportation and communication experts finalize critique and selection
Final edits incorporate evaluations and critiques
Videos are disseminated to appropriate target audiences (via YouTube etc.)

Peer Evaluation

A questionnaire was distributed to several Communication Studies classes. It consisted of questions pertaining to students’ individual demographics and drinking patterns. The questionnaire also had questions pertaining to being a designated driver, drinking while being a designated driver and being a passenger to a designated driver. The second part of the questionnaire focused on two different versions of the video shown and asked questions on what was liked and disliked about both. The questionnaire ended with open-ended questions which gave viewers an opportunity to express their views about the video.

Selected Video Results

The following description of some representative videos illustrates the breadth of content. It also illustrates some of the advancements made by the students in response to instructional feedback over time.

Sample Videos Spring 2005

Dress Up. This video features a group of young men (Version 1) or women (Version 2) “dressing up.” Then text then says “Would you rather dress up for this?” [video of prom night] than this: [Video featuring young people in a funeral setting]? Of two alternative music selections, the one with the song “Stand by me” was chosen by most respondents.

25 Years. This video features a courtroom setting. Presumably a drunk driver is sentenced to 25 Years in prison. The phrase “25 years of your life” is heard repeatedly in the background while personal and historical images from the last 25 years flash by. The clip ends with a young woman (presumably the victim’s girlfriend) sitting in the courtroom and holding a picture of the victim. The final voice-over says “…and who knows how many years of his life”

Cost of DUI arrest. This video was a testimonial by one of the students in the class who had been arrested for DUI. His testimony focused on the financial, psychological, and other costs of his DUI. While this video had some production flaws, it was effective in focusing on aspects of DUI which are often neglected—specifically the cost to the perpetrator.

Rewind. This video focused on the severe repercussions of one moment of bad decision-making (in this case the decision to drive after drinking) with the key idea that there is no rewind button in real life. In the first sequence of the video college students go out for a night of drinking and the driver is clearly shown as consuming alcohol. A severe accident results. Then
the Rewind sequence simulates a DVD or VCR rewind and shows a modified sequence, in which
the driver drinks water and everyone lives to enjoy the remainder of a fun night.

Faces. This video focused on yet another possible outcome of Drunk Driving: The
victim is not killed but instead mutilated and subjected to extensive suffering. This video
featured female accident victims and their mutilated faces on the backdrop of 911 calls. The
video then ends with before-after shots contrasting the attractive faces of the victims prior to the
incident with the mutilated faces. This video was deemed very effective by student judges.
However, when shown to transportation professionals it was considered overly repulsive and
shocking. There was concern that viewers might be overwhelmed by the footage and lose sight
of the message per se.

Sample Videos Fall 2005
Students in Fall 2005 had the benefit of reviewing the Spring videos. They also received a
training session in video editing and a lecture by a videographer involved in editing the earlier
videos. Persuasion and resistance were also discussed during the early weeks of the semester.
The following describes some of the resulting videos.

Victims. This video was ranked highest both by students and professionals. It focused on
the perpetrators and their victims. In particular, this video featured still pictures of the
perpetrators during and after their trials, clearly demonstrating their anguish and distress, while at
the same time juxtaposing it with images of the victims and their loved ones.

Matt. This video was controversial. It received very high ratings from student reviews,
but the message was judged to be confounded by students and professionals. This video was
longer than the typical PSA and featured the last night of a Designated Driver, who ends up
getting killed by a drunk driver. The video was considered very well done. It was strong at
developing the story and drawing in the audience. But the message about the ‘dangers of
designated driving’ was obviously controversial.

Night Arrest. Another video incorporated several realistic elements, including night
shots, police video, and even a local jail cell. However, it was judged to be ‘over the top’ because
the driver was so drunk that he was unable to find the right car. Also, the video was considered
less representative because the ‘drunk’ dimension was exaggerated.

Little Guy. This video focused on the element of distraction. An obviously intoxicated
driver is being distracted by his ‘inner voice’ represented by a little guy sitting on his shoulder.
The inner voice is suggesting a number of distractions, from changing CDs and lighting a
e-cigarette to picking up a lighter from the car floor, while the driver is taking an occasional drink
from the beer bottle until a sudden crash occurs.

Sample Videos 2006
One event on campus which influenced the content of several videos was the
establishment of Rhody Rides, a safe ride program modeled after a successful approach at Texas
A&M and elsewhere.

Students were encouraged to include Rhode Rides as one of the topics for their videos. A
typical scenario is a group of friends at a party who are ‘stuck’ because their Designated Driver
ended up drinking or leaving. Rhody Rides was offered as the solution. Other videos raised a
more concern about college student drinking and driving. The phone number for Rhody Rides
appeared on the screen towards the end of the video. Several of the videos incorporated humor;
for instance one showed a number of humorous, harmless, but ‘stupid’ incidents. The message of
the video was: there are better ways to get home (meaning Rhody Rides).

Humor was one of the strategies utilized by a number of videos. One, for instance, used a
low-budget Thai movie and dubbed over a segment of that movie where one character teaches the
other about the dangers of drinking.

In one series of videos the use of peers vs. celebrities convicted of DUI was tested. The
prevailing result was that using peers was more effective.

Another innovation was the “Video Survey” assignment. In this assignment students
interview their peers regarding issues related to drinking and driving. It was initially designed as
a ‘practice’ assignment to familiarize students with camera use, transfer of video footage, and editing software. Even though these videos resulted ‘merely’ in documentary style interviews, they revealed impressive information, which may be suitable for creating awareness of DUI related concerns.

- Underage drinking
- ‘Nothing to do on campus’
- Entertainment alternatives
- Designated Driver use (and problems)
- (Lack of) Awareness about Safe Ride choices

---Insert here: Table 1 YouTube 2007---

Impact

This project has made an impact on different levels: on the student creators, on viewers, and in terms of future instructional approaches.

Since the inception of the project roughly 500 students have participated in the creation and evaluation of videos. Each of them has played a—more or less significant—part. Not only did they have to think of a message and translate it into a PSA, they also had to put considerable effort into planning, creating sets, acting, video recording, editing, and evaluating. This hands-on learning experience not only leads to greater enjoyment of the activity (once technical difficulties are mastered), it also adds to processing the message at a deeper level.

Students were able to apply realistic scenarios often based on their own experiences, but resulting in a shocking outcome, which would get the audience’s attention. Students recreate situations they have all the time, but the end result is usually something horrible which they don’t normally think about when in those situations. Creating a video as a hands-on project leads to greater involvement than writing a paper. In the future comments on the videos should be encouraged as an additional measure of impact.

Some of the videos for this project were presented at a Communications conference and generated considerable attention. But the challenge is to get more attention from others in the target audience. A placement strategy would involve a video which is entertaining, informative, not too “preachy,” and leaves lasting impression. Many viewers will only spend 5 seconds on a given video to decide if it is worth investing more time. Consequently a video will need an attention getter. Traditional PSAs start off slowly. Also, viewers avoid traits associated with low production values, such as choppy, shaky videos. Originality needs to be combined with professionalism in order to counteract the viewers’ short attention span, with a focus on quick, highly visible production values.

Research Project: Social Self-Efficacy and Alcohol Health Messages

Abstract

We propose that individual differences in perceived “social” self-efficacy, which are socially constructed and refined through daily interactions with others, may be a key to refining intervention efforts and warrant consideration. Specifically, we project that social self-efficacy reflects an individual’s confidence, comfort, and sensitivity to social norms and behaviors such as binge drinking or drinking and driving. Self-perceptions of social self-efficacy emerged along three distinct dimensions – positive, negative, and indifferent social self-efficacy.

Introduction

Heavy and episodic (“binge”) drinking by college students (Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, & Lee, 2000; Hingson et al. 2002) is an important, recurring public health problem. It has been estimated that 80% of college students drink, with 40% routinely engaged in “binge” drinking (Wechsler, Dowdall, Davenport & Rimm, 1995; White et al., 2002), despite widespread exposure to behavioral interventions through both the mass media and school-based programs (Godbold &
Pfau, 2000; Hingson, R., Berson, J., & Dowley K., 1997). This study explores the possibility that social self-efficacy moderates perceptions of binge drinking, receptivity to alcohol intervention messages, and, consequently, the potential efficacy of behavioral interventions.

Research shows that the alcohol consumption habits of adolescents and young adults often differ by characteristics such as gender, race/ethnicity, religiosity, Greek society membership, alcohol expectancies, normative perceptions, and individual variations in propensity toward sensation seeking and the ability to regulate negative emotional states (Baer, 2002). However, most conventional message strategies targeting these characteristics have encountered considerable resistance from adolescent and young adult consumers (Larimer & Crone, 2002). Indeed, although a few interventions have lead to a decrease in reported consumption (cf. Berkowitz, 2003), most have evidenced only limited success (Haines, 1996).

A recently developed strategy, for example for curtailing alcohol abuse among adolescents and young adults (Agostinelli, Brown, & Miller, 1993; Nye, Agostinelli, & Smith, 1999) involves provision of feedback based on accurate alcohol use social norm information to instill more conservative normative perceptions. This approach assumes that confronting individuals about deviations from normative standards will result in correction of behavior toward the perceived norms. The mechanism for this strategy is thought to involve self-regulation processes of behavioral self-monitoring and self-evaluation with discrepancies between one’s behavior and normative standards presumably leading to enhanced problem recognition and behavioral change (Miller & Brown, 1991; Baer, 1993). Initial research employing highly tailored messages structured to minimize recipients’ defensive reactivity suggests the potential effectiveness of this approach (Nye, Agostinelli, & Smith, 1999).

Against this backdrop, we propose that individual differences in perceived “social” self-efficacy (SSE; Bandura, 2001), which are socially constructed and refined through daily interactions with others, may be a key to refining intervention efforts and warrant consideration. Specifically, we project that social self-efficacy reflects an individual’s confidence, comfort, and sensitivity to social norms and behaviors such as binge drinking. Building from a diverse literature (Eysenck, 1990; Smith & Betz, 2000) we conceptualize self-perceptions of social self-efficacy (SSE) as emerging along three distinct dimensions – positive, negative, and indiffERENCE social self-efficacy. Within this framework, positive social self-efficacy (P-SSE) is seen as tapping individuals’ willingness to engage their social environment; such individuals approach social interactions with enthusiasm and confidence and seek out the company of others (Clark & Watson, 1999). Conversely, a negative social self-efficacy (N-SSE) reflects individuals’ perceptions that their social world is threatening and problematic; they often “desire the company of others” but are “rather fearful of it at the same time” (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985, p. 316). Finally, the indifferent social self-efficacy (I-SSE) personality dimension reflects egocentricity, autonomy, and a lack of empathy; individuals evidencing this personality dimension display a callous disregard for social interaction (Weaver, 2005).

These dimensions of social self-efficacy could illuminate and differentiate individuals’ sensitivity to social norms and perceptions of behaviors such as alcohol consumption and binge drinking (DiLorio, Dudley, Soet, & McCarty, 2004; Engels, Hale, Noom, & De Vries, 2005). Specifically, we anticipate that social self-efficacy moderates individuals’ perceptions of alcohol drinking behavior and receptivity to alcohol health messages (Graham, Tatterson et al., 2004; Knowles and Linn, 2004; Pirkle & Richter, 2006).

Method

Each participant signed an informed consent form at the beginning of the study. All participants first answered the same set 13 questions including demographic questions such as age, gender, ethnicity, residence, and smoking behavior. In addition, participants were asked about their past drinking behavior, including frequency and quantity of drinking and binge drinking episodes.

Undergraduate students (n=441) participated in this study. Most (93%) identified themselves as having had more than one drink in the past year (n = 410) and were included in
further analysis. The sample was predominantly female (64%); 89% were below the legal drinking age (M = 19.2 years old); and the majority lived in campus residence halls (64%).

Participants then completed a series of scales that assessed attitudes and perceptions about drinking, persuasion, and cognition. The Decisional Balance Scale (Migneault, Pallonen, & Velicer, 1997) consists of two subscales that assess attitudes about drinking: the Pros scale, and the Cons scale. The Barriers Scale assesses possible barriers to changing drinking behavior. This scale had an alpha of .806 in this study. Perceptions about alcohol consumption behaviors and social norms were assessed in a short self-administered questionnaire.

**Key drinking measures**

- **Daily Quantity**—average number of drinks consumed measured for each day of the week.
- **Frequency of Drinking**—the average number of days per week in which alcohol was consumed.

**Average Drinks per day**—this brief reliable and cross-validated measure is derived from adaptations of Cahalan and Room's Quantity/frequency/variability index (Brandsma, Maulsby, & Welch, 1987).

**Binge Drinking**. An index of binge drinking behavior, adjusted for respondent sex (Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, & Lee, 2000), was computed. Binge drinking is the number of times in the past month the person met or exceeded 4/5 (female/male) number of drinks in one occasion.

**Other Measures**

- **Decisional Balance**. Two 8-item orthogonal Decisional Balance (DB) scales with good internal consistency reliability and good construct validity were developed measuring scales—Pros and Cons of heavy drinking—assessing positive and negative outcome expectancies related to an individual's behavioral decisions, respectively.

- **Situational Temptations**. An 8-item scale assessing situational temptations four subscales: Peer Pressure (.75), Positive Social (.74), Negative Affect (.78), and Social Anxiety (.85). The scale is highly correlated with alcohol use and problems, and scores distribute across stage in a predictable manner. Situational temptations and are a variation of the self-efficacy construct (Bandura, 1986), and are important factors affecting drinking self-regulation and restraint.

**Social self-efficacy (SSE)** was operationalized through cluster analysis of a short form of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Weaver & Kiewitz, 2006).

**Results**

Initial analyses of the data revealed significant differences in binge drinking behavior as a function of both respondent sex [F(1, 400) = 8.98, p < .01; females = 4.8, males = 6.29] and SSE [F(2, 400) = 8.96, p < .01; positive (P-SSE) = 6.77, (N-SSE) negative = 4.9, (I-SSE) indifferent = 4.1]. The sex by SSE interaction [F(2, 400) = 2.8, p = .06] revealed that N-SSE males (M = 7.8) and both P-SSE males (M = 7.3) and females (M = 6.3) reported significantly more binge drinking than N-SSE females (M = 4.2) and both P-SSE males (M = 4.2) and females (M = 4.0).

Consistent with previous research (Pirkle & Richter, 2006), stepwise regression models computed for each social self-efficacy (SSE) dimension showed that cigarette smoking was strongly linked to binge drinking. Living off campus in unsupervised circumstances and white ethnicity were also included in all three models.

More importantly, the models revealed unique profiles of perceptions of alcohol drinking behavior and receptivity to alcohol health messages within each SSE dimension.

The regression model for N-SSE respondents [F(8, 103) = 16.96, p < .001], for example, explained 54% of the total variance. Items within the model included: "If I did not drink my social life would suffer" (β = .27), "Laws against drinking limit my rights" (β = .21), "Drinking too much can lead to many problems" (β = .17), "I am tempted to drink a lot when I'm offered a drink" (β = .15), and "After participation in an informal debate, I always have the feeling that I was right" (β = .18).

The regression model for P-SSE respondents [F(11, 88) = 11.23, p < .001] explained 53% of the total variance. Items within the model included: "Drinking too much can lead to many
problems” ($\beta = -.16$), “I feel happier when I drink” ($\beta = .27$), “I am more sure of myself when I am drinking” ($\beta = -.21$), “I feel that I need a real break from studying or working that only drinking can give me” ($\beta = .17$), “When someone has a different perspective on an issue, I like to make a mental list of the reasons in support of my perspective” ($\beta = -.16$), “I am strongly committed to my own beliefs” ($\beta = .22$), “When information contradicts my beliefs, I think of all the reasons in support of my beliefs” ($\beta = -.21$), and “I prefer complex to simple problems” ($\beta = -.15$).

The regression model for I-SSE respondents [$F(8, 69) = 14.22, p < .001$] explained 58% of the total variance. Items within the model included: “I am tempted to drink a lot when I am with others who are drinking a lot” ($\beta = .32$), “I am tempted to drink a lot when I am feeling angry” ($\beta = .19$), “I often have doubts about the validity of my attitudes” ($\beta = .20$), “I like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking” ($\beta = -.22$), and “When information challenges by beliefs, I don’t like to actively counter-argue it” ($\beta = .18$).

Conclusion

Consistent with theoretical expectations, the findings reveal that individual personality differences moderate the relationship between binge drinking, perceptions of alcohol drinking behavior, and receptivity to alcohol related health messages. Further, we speculated that these personality dimensions might serve as cognitive heuristics of "social” self-efficacy differentiating individuals’ sensitivity to social norms and perceptions of alcohol consumption and binge drinking. The data at hand appear consistent with this projection. We will elaborate on these findings and offer recommendations for how messages within alcohol health behavioral interventions might be targeted to resonate with college students within each personality strata. Furthermore, these findings permit us to segment student populations with regard to drinking and driving messages.

The results of the current study support the view that college students are not a homogeneous group as far as their drinking and other risky behavior is concerned. College drinking and associated risky behaviors, such as drinking under the influence are unique as a rite of passage in our society; but within this demographic group individual differences and their impact are pronounced, and so are strategies which might be employed to target these psychosocial segments.

There seems to be an indication that social self-efficacy, the degree to which college students perceive themselves as comfortable and competent in social situations, plays an important role in how they look to alcohol as a social lubricant. In particular, negative SSE seems associated with the perception of drinking as a social concern.

We have shown that individual differences are related not only to drinking behaviors, but also to different levels of self-efficacy as far as social behaviors are concerned. Individual differences predict the extent to which college students look to others for guidance and approval in drinking situations.

Those high in negative SSE see others as a prime motivator for drinking. Drinking is seen as allowing them entry into social activities. They are concerned that not drinking could undermine their social life. They downplay potential problems resulting from alcohol consumption. Drinking is seen as a right, which should not be infringed upon, thus diverting to legalistic concerns. It is a means to an end, but it is not seen as an enjoyable activity per se. For this group, a particular concern would be that they will refuse to follow authorities who discourage their drinking and associated risks. Conversely, messages from peers might be particularly effective. These messages would emphasize the social benefits of safe drinking (and driving) behavior, and imply assurances of social acceptance for non-drinkers.

Gender differences are more pronounced among those with negative compared to positive SSE. Specifically, males in this group seem to be far more susceptible to the social drinking norms; they perceive to prevail among their popular (and presumably extroverted) peers. The implication for message design would be to target males in particular. And these messages geared towards males might emphasize role models of safe behaviors by ‘cool’ peers.
Positive and negative SSE individuals appear to share the mood management potential of alcohol consumption. While for those with positive SSE drinking itself is a primary source of enjoyment, negative SSE participants see alcohol as an entry-way to social situations and associated rewards. The might be willing to take risks associated with unsafe driving behavior in order to impress others. Message design should follow suit.

Little evidence of enjoyment of drinking is apparent among those with indifferent SSE. They are the least prone to binge drinking. The ability to drink without legal or other interference may be more important than the enjoyment or mood management factor of alcohol consumption. They appear very self-assured when drinking situations are concerned. They enjoy drinking and its social implications. Similar to the other groups they are unwilling to defend their drinking behavior. Again, authoritative messages or those focusing on legal consequences may lead to resistance in this group.

The differences mentioned also should inform messages and campaigns geared to sub-segments with different levels of SSE. While overall receptivity to behavior change messages may be low across our target audience, pronounced differences might exist in terms of the kinds of messages which are effective.

Those with high SSE may be the most difficult to target, because drinking for them is not associated with apparent problems or disadvantages. Those with negative SSE may be most receptive to messages which stimulate their sensitivity about social problems. Across all groups, counter arguing their beliefs can be expected to lead to greater resistance.

In spite of decades of drinking related behavior change messages the effectiveness of such interventions has been limited, in particular when teenagers and young adults are concerned. Several behavior change strategies are evolving, which attempt to gain acceptance among those segments which are either hard to reach, or who are reluctant to embrace change. The current approach holds great promise in explaining individual differences in alcohol consumption behaviors and associates risks—such as drinking and driving. It will also help target subgroups of high school and college age drinkers with suitable messages.

**Discussion**

This project highlights the importance of transportation in everyday campus life. It is designed not only to provide improved entertainment and transportation options for URI students, but also to create a model, which might inspire other colleges. When integrated into Environmental Management, collaboration of students, faculty, and external agencies will facilitate a model, which in the long run will gain sufficient momentum and direction to maintain itself. The project has touched student, staff, and faculty at various levels. It has raised awareness across campus, and it will provide opportunities to reach out beyond the URI campus to encourage safe transportation behaviors.

Other units at URI, such as the Cancer Prevention Research Consortium and the Office of Student Life, have received major funding from NIAAA to implement an Environmental Management approach towards student alcohol consumption; these projects are designed to reach beyond the campus into neighboring communities. After years of preparation, we are in the process of implementing measures pertaining to numerous aspects of student alcohol consumption. This project has played an important part in enhancing the transportation dimension of such other alcohol related work at URI. It provides a unique challenge and opportunity to stress the emphasis on transportation related risks and to develop tools to target high-risk demographics.

The changes addressed by this project are long-term in nature. Most fundamental change processes need years to evolve. Due to the 4-year cycle of college life, structures and messages need to be in place to target attitudes and behaviors early on, and to reinforce early changes throughout this cycle of college life. As part of a broad-based effort this project is playing an important role in campus wide initiatives, and it is expected to have long-term implications.

Experiences from this project could be disseminated to serve as a model for other educational institutions. Further research is needed to identify individual differences and their
impact on risky behavior, as well as ways to better target young people in the various segments. In addition, along the lines of prevailing Behavior Health work, future work needs to focus on multiple risk interventions. Presumably drinking and driving is also associated with other risks, such as lack of seatbelt use and speeding. Once we understand the combination of these factors we will be able to design interventions which address multi-risk segments and address several risk factors simultaneously.
References


Related Reports and Conference Papers

Reports


Conference Papers


Convention Panels (organized/chaired)


*Intersections of Communication and Risky Behaviors: Teen and College Student Alcohol Use*. Eastern Communication Association, Providence, RI (April 2007)


Selected Outreach

Drunk Driving and Seatbelt Video Demonstration. URITC Transportation Breakfast, Warwick, RI, May 19, 2005.

Activities related to Designated Driver and Safe Ride programs
- Thursday night bus service to Providence (supported by URITC project)
- Common Ground
- Narragansett Coalition
- Rhody Rides
Conference Panel: Teen and College Student Alcohol Use

Chair:
Wendy Samter
Communication Department
Bryant University

Program Copy

Interactive discussion of the role of communication in identifying and addressing alcohol use as a critical risk factor for teenage and college students. The focus will be on risky alcohol related choices and on approaches to intervene both at the individual and the environmental level. Analysis and preventive interventions focus on high-risk groups as well as high-risk situations within the high school and college environment. Innovative media and classroom approaches will be discussed.

Rationale
Alcohol abuse among college students takes a substantial toll on individual students, institutions of higher learning, their neighboring communities, and society at large. Awareness of this issue has resulted in increased research and administrative efforts in campus alcohol policy and preventive intervention domains. Furthermore, the concern with drunk driving, binge drinking, and other impacts of alcohol on the college and community environment has given rise to an environmental management (EM) approach augmenting on-campus policy and prevention efforts with environmentally based, interactive community interventions. EM strategies relate to alcohol access, policy/law enforcement, harm reduction, and marketing/promotion.

The work presented here is both applied, in that it presents effective tools which can be used by local and university administrators, and theory based, in that it aims to produce innovative prevention strategies. In particular, it reflects on recent research related to Resistance to Persuasion, as well as interventions which apply Social Norms theory.

The session fits particularly well into this year’s Convention theme Intersections, since it integrates health communication strategies with a broader view of behavior change. It also addresses the increasing need for interdisciplinary involvement of health communication researchers and the need to attract substantial funding for long-term health promotion research projects.

To maximize audience involvement each presenter will provide a brief overview and the panel will then primarily become a "Discussion Session." Participants will also address funding needs and opportunities in this area.

The panel represents a range of successful approaches to dealing with College Student Alcohol Consumption. Linda Lederman will discuss a decision making game, which has been successfully integrated in a range of college communication classes at Rutgers and Arizona State University, and its conceptual framework. Frances Fleming Milici will discuss the extent to which youth perceive they are targeted by alcohol ads along with variables that predict the perception of oneself as a target of alcohol ads, and the impact of such self perceptions on exposure and attention to alcohol ads. Dan Berman will provide the practitioner’s point of view about teen and college age alcohol use and highway safety. Norbert Mundorf will elaborate on the environmental management approach with special emphasis on drinking and driving prevention among college students. Jointly with student Steve Barbera selected DUI and safe ride related videos will be discussed. In particular the issue of resistance to behavior change messages will be addressed.
Alcohol Decisions and the Power of Immediate Information about the Choices Others Make

Linda C. Lederman
Arizona State University

In a study of the use of immediate response technology (IRS) conducted at Rutgers University and Arizona State University, researchers presented different classes of students majoring in Human Communication with an alcohol decision-making game designed by Lederman, Powell, Stewart, Goodhart, Laitman (2000) and modified to include IRS by Lederman, Stewart and Goodhart with Greenberg, Bates, LeGreeo, and LaValley in (2006). Preliminary findings, both qualitative and quantitative, indicate that the technology enhances rather than detracts from interaction, compared to the original version of the game, and also, that the insertion of prescriptive information about college campus norms in addition to the norms that present in the game are influential and indicate a trend toward healthier choices that is statistically significant.

Is this ad targeting me? The Effects of Feeling Targeted by Alcohol Advertising for People under the Legal Drinking Age

Frances Fleming Milici
University of Connecticut

In the current study we measure the extent to which teens perceive they are targeted by alcohol ads; examine predictors of the perception of oneself as a target of alcohol ads; and test if the perception of oneself as a target predicts exposure and attention to alcohol ads.

In a longitudinal panel design 4 waves of data (baseline N = 2083) were collected from youth aged 14-19 using telephone interviews. Respondents rated the extent to which they felt targeted by beer, liquor and premixed (a.k.a. malternative) drink ads.

Controlling for prior drinking, age, and gender the perception of oneself as a target of alcohol ads increased exposure and attention to alcohol advertising.

Though alcohol advertisers have publicly stated that youth are not intentionally targeted by alcohol ads this study shows that youth feel targeted by alcohol ads and feeling targeted increases both exposure to alcohol ads and attention to alcohol ads.

A National perspective on Teen Alcohol use and Highway Safety

Dan Berman
Federal Highway Administration

Alcohol, speed, and lack of seatbelt are key factors in traffic fatalities, the leading cause of death for youths as well as college-age young adults. The high school and college demographic tends to be among the groups with the highest levels of risk. Awareness and behavior change is critical for transportation safety.

While the US Highway System is among the safest in the world, each year over 40,000 deaths and 3 million injuries occur. NHTSA reports that teens have the highest fatality rate in motor vehicle crashes that any other age group. National occupancy surveys have been conducted since 1994 and identify high risk behaviors such as speeding and or use of alcohol or drugs and none use of seatbelts as some of the reasons for the high fatality rate. As the youth population continues to increase (more than 12% since 1993) the societal cost will also rise.
Overcoming Resistance to Safe Transportation Messages

Norbert Mundorf and Steve Barbera
University of Rhode Island

Attitudes and habits instilled during high school and college age will perpetuate long past graduation. But most existing messages and campaigns fail to appeal to at-risk key segments of this age group. Recent research has identified resistance to persuasion as a key factor in limiting the impact of communication campaigns. New approaches are needed to reduce resistance and also increase the effectiveness of messages and campaigns.

At the University of Rhode Island, a series of initiatives have targeted student alcohol consumption. We will report on a series of targeted and tested videos geared towards high school and college student drinking and driving, speeding, and seatbelt use. The impact of active creation of such messages (as compared to merely consuming them) is being assessed. It is expected that those students involved in message creation will display significantly higher levels of attitude and behavior change compared to those merely consuming the messages.

A Multilevel Perspective on Drinking in U.S. High Schools and Colleges
Normative Behavior, Harm Reduction, and Resistance

Chair: Charles Atkin
Michigan State University

Abstract
Solving problems associated with excessive alcohol consumption among high school and college students requires adopting a multi-level, multi-pronged approach. It requires an understanding of the role that various factors – at the individual, societal, commercial, and political levels – play in promoting risky behaviors. The panel represents a range of successful approaches to dealing with and understanding student alcohol consumption. It integrates health communication strategies with a broader interdisciplinary view of behavior change.

Description of Panel Theme
This panel is designed for an interactive, audience participation discussion of Communication research related to underage drinking. Alcohol abuse among high school and college students takes a substantial toll on individual students, institutions of higher learning, their neighboring communities, and society at large. Prevention of underage drinking and its harmful consequences has long been an important domain in the area of Public Health. Communication research has considerable potential in developing an understanding of the factors which encourage excessive drinking as well as the strategies which can be employed to prevent it or to at least minimize harm resulting from alcohol consumption among high school and college students.
The work presented here is both applied, in that it presents effective tools which can be used by local and university administrators, and theory based, in that it aims to produce innovative prevention strategies.

The panel represents a range of successful approaches to dealing with and understanding student alcohol consumption. Rimal and Orrego focus on individual-level behaviors, Snyder and Milici analyze the impact of commercial marketing efforts. Both Mundorf and Atkin and his coworkers present “bottom up” solutions which help potential victims of alcohol related harm counteract threatening temptations.

A 2005 panel related to this theme was very well received and drew a large audience. The session addresses the increasing need for interdisciplinary involvement of health communication researchers. To maximize audience involvement each presenter will provide a brief overview and the panel will then primarily focus on discussion.

Using the Theory of Normative Social Behavior (TNSB) to Understand Alcohol Consumption in a Commuter Campus Setting

Rajiv N. Rimal
Johns Hopkins University
&
Victoria Orrego
University of Miami

The theory of normative social behavior (TNSB) posits that the effect of descriptive norms on behaviors is moderated by four classes of cognitive mechanisms: injunctive norms (pressures people feel to conform), group identity (the extent to which people aspire to become like or perceive affinity with members of their reference group), behavioral identity (perceptions of self with regard to the behavior in question), and outcome expectations (perceived benefits of engaging in the behavior). We tested the central propositions of the TNSB in a theoretically conservative setting – an environment characterized by relatively weak social ties – at the University of Miami, which has a large body of students who commute to school. Whereas the primary hypotheses derived from the TNSB have been supported in a number of residential university settings – where interactions among students typically occur more regularly – they have not been tested in settings where social interactions occur less often. Data (N = 386), collected from students through a Web-based interface, were mostly supportive of the predictions derived from the TNSB across two outcomes – self-reported alcohol consumption and intentions to consume alcohol in the future. Findings for commuter students did not differ significantly from those for residential students. Overall, the model explained as much as
68 percent of the variance when intentions took into account prior behaviors, and 57 percent when they did not. This presentation will draw distinctions between findings from this study and those observed since the first leg of the study was conducted in 2001.

**Underage Drinkers Feel Targeted by Alcohol Advertising**

Fran Fleming Milici  
Leslie Snyder  
University of Connecticut

About half of 12-20 year olds drink alcohol (Foster et al., 2003), which can lead to car accidents, suicides, homicides, risky sex, and poor grades (Chassin & DeLucia, 1996; Cooper, Pierce, & Huselid, 1994; Johnston & Backman, 1998; Windle, Miller-Tauzauer, & Domenico, 1992).

One factor that potentially contributes to youth alcohol consumption is alcohol advertising. Although the Federal Trade Commission (2003) did not find any evidence that alcohol companies intentionally target youth, content analysis has shown that alcohol advertising is present disproportionately in magazines and radio and television programming with greater youth as opposed to adult audiences (Mosher & Johnson, 2005; Jernigan, Ostroff, & Ross, 2005). The present study provides a more direct link between targeting and alcohol ad exposure and behavior than that shown by the content analyses by directly assessing the impact of youth perceptions of being targeted by alcohol advertisements. We conducted a national longitudinal telephone study of youth 14-19 years old at baseline (N = 2083; 4 waves total). At baseline, 93% of the youth felt targeted to some degree by alcohol ads. Youth who drank more alcohol at baseline felt more targeted. Controlling for prior drinking, youth who felt more targeted were exposed to more alcohol ads. The study provides evidence that, regardless of the intentions of alcohol advertisers, youth perceive themselves as targets of advertising, and the degree to which they feel targeted impacts their exposure and attention to alcohol advertising and their drinking behavior. The implication for policy is that the FTC and alcohol companies should consider the viewpoint of protected product users such as youth, taking into account the audience’s own perceptions of being targeted by advertising. In terms of interventions, media literacy approaches should be examined to see whether they can alter the relationship between targeting, exposure, attention, and behavior.
In Their Own Words: Student Characterizations of Protective Behaviors to Prevent Alcohol Harm

Katherine A. Klein
Ed Glazer
Sandi W. Smith
Charles K. Atkin
Michigan State University

Recent social norms drinking campaigns feature descriptive and injunctive norms focusing on protective behaviors as well as alcohol consumption patterns. Alcohol researchers have created lists specifying certain protective behaviors that undergraduate college students use to prevent harmful alcohol-related consequences, such as using a designated driver and keeping track of drinks consumed. While these listings are usually generated by the experts, this investigation posed an open-end question in an online survey of more than 1,000 students, asking them to express in their own words which types of protective behaviors they typically use. Preliminary results reveal new types of protective behaviors that are often used by students but were not previously included in prior studies, such as watching their drinks to make sure no one puts anything in it and staying with the same group of friends all night. A second web survey asked students to rank what they thought are the most severe consequences from consuming alcohol and what behaviors they enacted to protect against those harms; new categories of high-priority behaviors and harms were generated. These findings will provide the basis for more refined social norms campaigns promoting protective behavior.

Using Peer to Peer Communication for DUI related Behavior Change

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Peer to peer communication has gained increasing momentum during the recent phase of the Internet (Web 2.0). Corporate takeovers of Skype by Ebay, MySpace by News Corp, and recently YouTube by Google point to the economic potential of personal networking. But at the same time nonprofit groups as well as community organizations have realized the tremendous capacity of the Web to mobilize networks or people at an affordable cost level.

Many conventional message strategies have encountered considerable resistance among their teenage and college audiences, who are reluctant to listen to top down messages from those who ‘know better.’ A promising alternative is peer to peer communication.
We have utilized a number of P2P strategies for our behavior change project; but the current discussion will focus on YouTube.

The goal of our larger project is to encourage college students to pursue transportation alternatives and safe entertainment choices. Specifically, students have been creating videos designed to promote safe entertainment and transportation alternatives for college students, and to mitigate the impact of student alcohol use. Along the lines of recent research on resistance, the premise of our work is that if these kinds of messages stress peer communication, resistance to persuasion will be reduced.

Since individualized online viewing is expected to substitute conventional television viewing, using YouTube or other P2P vehicles as a distribution mechanism may be more effective than conventional PSAs. Not only will they better target the intended audience, the messages will also have greater efficacy since they are ‘pull’ rather than ‘push.’

Students create short video clips addressing various dimensions of DUI and behavioral alternatives (such as use of Safe Ride and designated driver programs). After peer review they are posted in YouTube. Students use their own network of friends and acquaintances to promote viewing. Feedback is collected online. The project has the goal of impacting the target audience viewing the video clips. But primarily it is designed to achieve lasting attitude and behavior change of the of 100+ student communicators who create the messages. With more and more people using YouTube as a way to get a message across the potential for lasting change is considerable.

The paper will present an overview of the theoretical approach of Resistance to Persuasion, and it will present P2P, in particular YouTube in this behavior change framework.

Appendix: YouTube Videos 2007
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>YouTube link</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Views</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drinking and Violence</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SP091/emjxQ">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SP091/emjxQ</a></td>
<td>The video begins stating a statistic about violent acts that happen when drinking is involved. It also gives a statistic about sexual assault saying that you don't always get a DUI and to think before you drink.</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jgu1835mU4">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jgu1835mU4</a></td>
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<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sober up for Facebook</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Yeoo98mg0W1">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Yeoo98mg0W1</a></td>
<td>The video starts off showing a clip of a party. Then some students looking at pictures of themselves on Facebook. They were so drunk at the party that they didn't remember the pictures. The next scene is the student at a job interview. The interview went well but the student didn't get the job because of the drunk pictures of him posted on Facebook.</td>
<td>88</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Br0WYz9mWg0">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Br0WYz9mWg0</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends don't let Friends...</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efYrYe9e6Yc">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efYrYe9e6Yc</a></td>
<td>The video starts off with a girl at her computer doing homework when her friends call her to come out. She tells them she can't because she has homework. The next scene is all the girls partying with no designated driver. Then one of the drunk friends volunteers to drive to the party. They finally convince their friend who is staying in to come out but they end up hitting her in a drunk driving accident.</td>
<td>87</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOfscXWYwK4">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOfscXWYwK4</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drunken Fools</td>
<td>Video on DVD, Not Available on Youtube</td>
<td>The video begins by stating that this video is one of the many reasons you should not binge drink. It shows three friends celebrating a 21st birthday by taking shots. The video is meant to be calming.</td>
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<td>Injuries</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odNXPQZS88">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odNXPQZS88</a></td>
<td>The video begins showing statistics about driving injuries alcohol related, then later a statistic about driving deaths alcohol related. In between the statistics there is a group of friends shown partying. Then the friends are shown in the hospital and also crippled due to drunk driving.</td>
<td>84</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4R3g9e_VE">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4R3g9e_VE</a></td>
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<td>204</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ancillary Damage</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1aZwZq2U7GQ">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1aZwZq2U7GQ</a></td>
<td>Starts with a single girl giving narration of how her and her father were in a car accident when a drunk driver came into their lane and hit them. She was fine but her father was seriously injured having a leg and foot injury. The video tells a true life story of what can happen when someone drinks and drive.</td>
<td>180</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DgaXZIkiI8g9">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DgaXZIkiI8g9</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers and Pictures</td>
<td>video 1: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaZf2ZEJ7J0">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaZf2ZEJ7J0</a></td>
<td>The video consists of frames showing friends binge drinking with statistics telling the dangers of alcohol related deaths. The next shots in the video are car crashes and crash sites with flowers showing the audience what can happen if you drink and drive.</td>
<td>186</td>
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<td>video 2: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyJt3ySS4H">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyJt3ySS4H</a></td>
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<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dreams</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hKg">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hKg</a> stressesXj5M</td>
<td>This video was about a young man who had big dreams to become a professional basketball player. The video was in black and white and there are different shots of his face being shown wearing a basketball tee as he tells his story about how he was celebrated entering in to college. The last shot shows</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mom and Dad</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eslC9ifsAWD9">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eslC9ifsAWD9</a></td>
<td>The video is about a young man who died in a drunk driving accident. The video starts by showing police going to inform parents of their son's death. The next scene shows the kids partying and then getting into the car and driving leaving the audience to know the end result.</td>
<td>63</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elU9sFBWc94">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elU9sFBWc94</a></td>
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<td>77</td>
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<td>Irresponsible DD</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7g11Z2vRc">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7g11Z2vRc</a></td>
<td>The video starts by stating the importance of having the designated driver stay sober. The next scene shows all the friends drinking and having fun. The designated driver is alone in the hallway sneaking shots. When the friends realize that the</td>
<td>95</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1g11Z2vRc">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1g11Z2vRc</a></td>
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<td>Alternatives</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7z0gZ-DY">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7z0gZ-DY</a></td>
<td>The video gives options to people when there designated driver 45</td>
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<td>Rewind</td>
<td>Version 1: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVH54">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVH54</a></td>
<td>The video shows a night of drinking played in reverse. It starts with a car crash and then rewinds to show the friends partying, drinking and driving and not being responsible. The video ends saying that you can’t rewind a night in real life. 83</td>
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<td>Version 2: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQvAap5E7L">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQvAap5E7L</a></td>
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<td>Not Always a Car Crash</td>
<td>Version 1: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWjOAap5ZL">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWjOAap5ZL</a></td>
<td>The video begins telling college students to drink responsibly. The first scene shows some friends drinking and then fooling around wrestling when one of the friends gets a neck injury. 99</td>
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<td>Version 2: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EThJ-Wy/">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EThJ-Wy/</a></td>
<td>The friend that hurt him goes to jail and the friend that was hurt ends up dead. The end of the video gives some statistics about drinking related injuries/casualties. 49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yO8NvzWY8B0">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yO8NvzWY8B0</a></td>
<td>The entire clip plays within a video game. 154</td>
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<tr>
<td>More Games</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=be3cFaw5zB">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=be3cFaw5zB</a></td>
<td>The drinking game Beer Pong is the context for this clip. 87</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hi85OAIWE">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hi85OAIWE</a></td>
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