STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

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The purpose of this strategic plan is to increase overall application (app) downloads for the products that Digital Publishing Studio (DPS) creates. DPS is a Ball State University organization, specializing in digital magazines and educational resources on iPads. DPS has primarily worked on Ball State University related material, but also takes on projects for various clients in Indiana.

**Vision:** Ball State University’s Digital Publishing Studio strives to bring meaningful and innovative iPad apps to consumers. The primary vision of the organization is to increase application downloads.

**Issue:** The main issue with DPS is a lack of brand image and a lack of awareness of the organization and its work. If DPS continues to lack awareness, the exposure and usage of its apps will be minimal, thus resulting in minimal app downloads.

**Benefits:** Increasing awareness and app downloads for DPS can significantly benefit the organization. Because the team consists of Ball State students, the university will gain recognition. Students, either on Ball State’s campus or in the local community, can learn from each app and use them for various purposes. Each app offers its own unique advantages. Overall, each app promotes some type of thought provoking and learning action, benefiting a variety of current and potential users.

**Method:** This strategic communications plan will be used to solidify brand image, increase awareness, and increase use of the above mentioned applications. The plan will work to solve the issues stated previously as well as create further opportunities for brand awareness.
Digital Publishing Studio
DPS is led by Ball State University professor Jennifer Palilonis, and is currently composed of a student team of four Interactive Designers. The organization’s first active semester of work was in the Fall of 2012. DPS currently has five partners and has developed seven publication applications. DPS is in the beginning stages of developing a website. Social media for the organization is at a minimum, with only a Twitter handle (@bsuDigiPub). Managed by one of their designers, they have tweeted 23 times, have gained 38 followers and are following 48 other accounts. DPS does not have a Facebook page or a blog. The goal of DPS in working with Cardinal Communications is to establish a plan and to organize the systems already in place to further the success of the organization and to increase application downloads for their clients. All apps created by DPS are iPad compatible, free in the App Store and released under Frog Baby Apps LLC.

Cardinal Recap | current downloads:
Cardinal Recap is a Ball State University-focused annual report publication, which highlights the Cardinals athletics season. Currently, there is one issue with photos, videos and information for the 2012-2013 athletics season. The app features sections highlighting athletics and academics, work in the community and departmental successes.

Travel Indiana | current downloads:
Travel Indiana is an interactive, multimedia companion for travel in Indiana. Currently, there is one edition of this publication available with 136 pages of Indiana travel suggestions.

Chemistry Matters | current downloads:
Chemistry Matters is an interactive, multimedia app for elementary school students. This app was created under a partnership with the Virginia Ball Center for Creative Inquiry. It was officially released on May 26, 2013. Currently, the app consists of one unit covering matter, mass, volume, density and a quiz that covers each topics.

Sports Link | current downloads:
Sports Link is a student-run, immersive learning program covering Ball State University sports. Throughout the semester, students within this organization produce various media including live remote productions, live-to-tape events and student athlete features. The app publications feature highlights from the organization’s work with photos, videos and extensive information on BSU sports.
**Ball Bearings** | **current downloads:**
Ball Bearings is a student-led magazine produced within the Ball State University School of Journalism. It was first released on December 10, 2012 and has eight editions available for download to date.

**72 Hours** | **current downloads:**
72 Hours is a weekend entertainment publication with content developed by students in the Department of Journalism under the direction of Professor Ryan Sparrow. The publication was first released on February 21, 2013 and has 16 editions to date.

**Ball State Weekly** | **current downloads:**
Ball State Weekly is a weekly news app. It was first released on October 9, 2013 and has nine issues to date.

The following app concepts are currently in the early development process and are unnamed:
- Middle school history textbook (with a VBC class)
- Vietnam Memorial app (with an architecture class)
- Children's literature app
- (2) Indianapolis Children's Museum (one in early prototypes)

* Indicates an app published by DPS but produced by a student-run staff
SWOT ANALYSIS

**STRENGTHS**
- Creates functional, interactive iPad applications
- Clean, aesthetically pleasing design
- Applications offer interesting and relevant material
- Partnership with immersive learning
- Growing industry
- Recognition by Adobe
- Applications are available in the App Store

**WEAKNESSES**
- Not available for smart phones
- Little brand identity
- Website is incomplete
- No established voice on social media
- Clients are small and primarily local
- Name is difficult to search online
- Client costs and process description are not available online

**OPPORTUNITIES**
- Website offers the potential for a blog
- Breakthrough organization recognition
- Increased social media presence
- Branding is open
- Easy access to internal BSU media through personal relationships with members

**THREATS**
- Freelancers and agencies are huge competitors due to credibility
- Lack of public awareness for the organization could potentially mean a lack of credibility in the minds of consumers
KEY PUBLICS

**Internal:**
Current application users  
DPS Interactive Designers  
Current DPS clients

**External:**

**Ball State University Students**
Digital Publishing Studio creates a variety of publications for Ball State University with students in mind as the target audience. Ball State has approximately 21,000 students with nearly 18,000 of those taking classes on campus, according to the Ball State University Fact Book. While most all students are likely to find something of interest to them among the current DPS publications, it is most likely that those who make up the College of Communication and Information Media (CCIM) will be most drawn to DPS publications due to their common interests in multimedia publications and technology. CCIM consists of 2,291 students. The Teacher’s College, which has 1,309 students, may also find the educational-based DPS applications useful. With the growing use of iPads among college students, these relevant and trendy applications like 72 Hours, Ball Bearings and SportsLink are easily accessible to this key public.

**Media Consumed**

**Newspaper:** The Ball State Daily News is the student-run newspaper that circulates approximately 8,000 papers Monday through Thursday with a digital edition on Friday. This publication is distributed only at Ball State University.

**Magazine:** Ball Bearings is a student magazine that is printed four times per year and has a weekly online publication with multimedia stories. The publication has received more than 50 awards in the past two years.

**Radio:** This key public is most likely to listen to top, contemporary radio stations. The following are local stations with large followings by Ball State University students:
- 91.3 FM WCRD: a nationally recognized Ball State University student run, FCC-licensed radio station
- 104.1 FM WLBC: broadcasts a hot, contemporary blend of 90’s music and today
- 99.5 FM WZPL: Indy’s hit music station
**Social media:** This is likely the best source of information and awareness for this key public. According to the findings from Alloy+Marketing (November, 2009), college students spent an average of 12 hours each day engaging with media. In 2013, a study conducted on the use of social media in schools showed that 96% of college students with internet access reported using social media. A separate social media plan is included (Appendix 1), and should be considered in improving the social media presence for DPS.

**Key Messages**
- Digital Publishing Studio is a source of quality content because of the time and effort put into their creation. Apps like 72 Hours and Ball Bearings are not only entertaining to read because of the interactivity, but beneficial to be a part of academically.

- Stay connected to your Ball State Cardinals all season long by downloading Cardinal Recap and Sports Link on your iPad.

- Digital Publishing Studio provides an immersive experience in app-development that cannot be found anywhere else on campus.

- Digital Publishing Studio is a Ball State University application developer that publishes issues of Ball Bearings, 72 Hours, Cardinal Recap, Sportslink, and many more apps relevant to Ball State and Indiana.

- Digital Publishing Studio creates iPad applications that matter to the Ball State community. Stay informed with trendy, relevant publications created by students for students.
**Ball State University Alumni**

Digital Publishing Studio has created iPad applications that appeal specifically to this group in their marketing efforts to keep alumni connected to Ball State. Alumni can utilize the apps to feel connected and updated on organizations, events and successes of the university. Apps such as Cardinal Recap, Sportslink, 72 hours and Ball Bearings can more easily bridge the gap in keeping alumni connected to their alma mater. For instance, Ball Bearings often writes about remarkable students and how their lives are affecting those around them. It gives updates on trends and even recaps extraordinary things that may have happened at the Ball State University that semester.

According to Ball State’s Alumni Fact Book, there are more than 160,000 active alumni that hold positions as leaders in business, education, government, science, design and entertainment across the country and abroad. It is these professionals who will be interested in staying connected to their alma mater through athletics, publications, immersive learning and financial statistics.

**Media Consumed**

**Magazine:** The Alumnus publication is compiled six times per year and is mailed to more than 132,000 households. The 40 page publication provides information on a variety of topics for alumni to stay connected to their alma mater.

**Social media:**
- Twitter (@BallStateAlumni): This medium can be utilized to tweet at and reach a high response rate focusing on the clients and work DPS is currently doing at Ball State.
- Facebook (Ball State University Alumni Association): Through a personal connection with the page manager, we could have them publish creative posts about what DPS is doing and how the work is a new, innovative and immersive tool students are learning from.

**News from the Cardinal Nest:** This is an e-mail information service for alumni to remain connected with the successes of the university.

**Key Messages**

- Redefining what can be accomplished, Digital Publishing Studio is taking students at an early development stage and allowing them to unlock the possibilities with crystal clear applications that show just what tablet based apps were meant to do.

- Digital Publishing Studio is taking application development to the next level with aesthetically pleasing and interactive apps, like 72 Hours and Ball Bearings, that are filled with rich content and vibrant design.

- Students get hands-on experience in creating professional iPad applications through Ball State University’s Digital Publishing Studio with the help of Adobe software.
• The applications that Digital Publishing Studio is creating are showing the true potential of development and challenging bigger opponents to step up their game in the fast-paced world of app design.

• Digital Publishing Studio is a developer to watch as they use Adobe specific programs to make sleek and beautiful apps like 72 Hours, Ball Bearings and Cardinal Recap, all at the hands of students on Ball State University’s campus.

**Technology Media Consumers**

The technology media community, consisting of both media consumers and content creators, is a key public for DPS due to their ability to help increase awareness for DPS apps. This key public could be utilized to write positive reviews about the apps, as well as introduce new apps to the technology industry. The tech media community makes contributions to blogs, magazines, YouTube channels, newspapers, iPad and iPhone applications, television shows, podcasts and radio stations. The content that the technology media community creates encourages a groundswell effect on how people view and use different creations and the reviews of prominent content creators can make or break a company depending on the number of followers/readers.

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GOAL 1: TO INCREASE APPLICATION DOWNLOADS

Objective: Increase application downloads by 15 percent each month
  - **Tactic:** Push application downloads through social media (see Appendix 1)
  - **Tactic:** Partner with BSU orientation sessions and engage new students and parents through an interactive iPad session
  - **Tactic:** Create a promotional video to be shared in CCIM classrooms
  - **Tactic:** Include promotional materials about the apps in the welcome bags that new students receive at orientation
  - **Tactic:** Set up booth in the atrium where students can try out the apps themselves. Make sure to have DPS collateral giveaways, i.e. t-shirts
  - **Tactic:** Host an app release party for the two Indy Children’s Museum apps for sponsors and season pass holders

Evaluation:
- Monitor and record the number of downloads for each app using DPS monitoring system
- Compare month to month downloads and analyze data (i.e. If a specific month had more downloads than usual, what was done differently?)
GOAL 2: TO INCREASE DPS BRAND AWARENESS

Objective 1: Increase brand presence by December 2014
   Tactic: Create and implement a unique logo across all digital media platforms and promotional materials.
   Tactic: Complete an informative and interactive website
   Tactic: Promote Cardinal Recap and SportsLink at all home sporting events during the spring (flyers, interactive booth, announcer, big screen)
   Tactic: Create a “Who We Are” informative video that tells the story of DPS history
   Tactic: Integrate the DPS branding on all promotional and media materials
   Tactic: Research and apply for at least one industry-related award per month

Objective 2: Educate key publics about relevant apps and the DPS mission
   Tactic: Work with Department of Journalism to organize a Professional in Residence about the application development process, its importance, etc.
   Tactic: Set up an interactive station with iPads and incentives in high-traffic areas for students to explore the applications and ask questions (Atrium, Student Center)
   Tactic: Participate in SuperParty (Spring ’14, Fall ’14)
   Tactic: Include DPS office in potential new student tours and CCIM organizations tour
   Tactic: Promote the DPS and apps at alumni events and luncheons
   Tactic: Work in conjunction with the athletic department to advertise Sports Link at the end of athletics promotional videos
   Tactic: Contact visitor’s bureau branches across Indiana about leaving promotional materials for the Travel Indiana app

Evaluation:
• Send out a survey to all BSU students through the Communications Center email database.
• To encourage greater participation, implement a drawing for a valuable prize; i.e. iPad
• This can be completed at the beginning, middle and end of the implementation period to measure growth and effectiveness of tactics
• When a booth is set up in the Atrium for students to try the apps, ask them to complete a short survey about their experience, interest and satisfaction level.
GOAL 3: TO ESTABLISH A TRADITIONAL MEDIA PRESENCE

Objective 1: Obtain media hits by BSU internal media
   Tactic: Utilize Ball State community members/personal connections who use applications regularly
   Tactic: Create an extensive media kit for distribution among all BSU internal media
   Tactic: Interview organization members of DPS app clients; i.e Ball Bearings, Sports Link, 72 Hours
   Tactic: Pitch a story about how a client organization has experienced increased awareness and success with the creation of their app
Evaluation: Monitor and record media hits from Ball State internal media. Cardinal Communications will conduct follow-ups.

Objective 2: Obtain 1 media hit by technology media and/or blogs
   Tactic: Utilize HARO pitch requests as they pertain to our mission
   Tactic: Foster relationships with application-based publications
   Tactic: Contact Adobe to write an update feature about DPS growth
   Tactic: Create and utilize relevant videos in media pitches
   Tactic: Become familiar with technology-based conferences, i.e. Technology Conference and Expo 2013
Evaluation: Utilize Google Alerts to monitor and record media hits

Objective 3: Increase website traffic by 100 percent by December 2014, ultimately reaching approximately 30 visits per month
   Tactic: Create and manage a blog with both internal and external contributors
   Tactic: Invite members of client organizations to blog about the advantages of their DPS-created app
   Tactic: Create an interactive message board that allows users to ask questions, leave testimonials and give feedback about their experiences with the applications
   Tactic: Archive all media hits and university recognition on the website
   Tactic: Integrate keywords and SEO into the site, thus allowing it to rise in Google Search
Evaluation: Monitor website traffic with Google Analytics
APPENDIXES
APPENDIX 1

SOCIAL MEDIA PLAN

Executive Summary
The Digital Publishing Studio supports immersive learning by enabling students to design, develop, and publish digital content and tablet applications. Using Adobe Suite, undergraduates gain practical experience developing digital apps under the guidance of faculty and industry professionals. They have requested a basic social media plan that will further their social media efforts and raise awareness for future application releases and overall exposure of the organization.

Client Objectives
1. Reach 100 likes on Facebook
2. Reach 100 Twitter followers
3. Increase interaction via Facebook through comments and shares

Goals
1. To increase application downloads
2. To create a solid digital media presence
3. To increase awareness of Digital Publishing Studio

Key Publics
1. Ball State students
2. Ball State Alumni
3. Technology writers and consumers

Current Status of Social Media Platforms
Facebook: 2 likes
Twitter: @bsudigipub
    49 following
    47 followers
Implementation

Goal 1: To increase application downloads
- Tactic: Create a promotional video of the apps
- Tactic: Share current reviews of apps on Facebook and Twitter
- Tactic: Create mini Instagram videos of apps in use
- Tactic: Create a promotion video of how a DPS application could be used in daily life

Goal 2: To create a solid digital media presence
- Tactic: Manage and share a blog space on website
- Tactic: Interact daily with at least one on-campus organization
- Tactic: Interact daily with at least one external person or organization in the industry
- Tactic: Share achievements, awards and media features

Goal 2: To increase awareness of Digital Publishing Studio
- Tactic: Create links between various online presences
- Tactic: Create a consistent social media design for Twitter, Facebook and Instagram profiles
- Tactic: Highlight members of DPS. Each post should include a photo, year in school, major what their job is in DPS and a fun fact
- Tactic: Highlight current and upcoming projects

Measurement
To measure the progress via Facebook, we will use Facebook Analytics to see how many people each of our posts reach. Because the page currently only has two likes, how many people like the page after the campaign will be a good indicator of our progress. The number of likes and shares for different posts should be monitored as the campaign continues to look for trends in what reaches the most people. For Twitter, we will measure the progress by the number of Retweets/favorites our tweets receive. We will also track the number of followers we gain throughout the campaign.
APPENDIX 2
PROMO VIDEO SCRIPT

Digital Publishing Studios Commercial Script
First Draft
2/11/14

Clay Gillespie
Christina Steiner

INT. KITCHEN – EARLY MORNING

Young WIFE sits at the table looking at Travel Indiana on her iPad while stirring her coffee.

Young HUSBAND enters, holding a newspaper, and walks behind her to the counter to pour himself a cup of coffee.

Wife smiles at him and signals him over to look at the app.

Husband leans over her shoulder to see the Children’s Museum of Indianapolis displayed.

Wife clicks the link, and is directed to the Children’s Museum’s site.

INT. CHILDREN’S MUSEUM (SCIENCEWORKS)

Husband and wife stand side-by-side, iPad in hand, as their DAUGHTER sits on the husband’s shoulders.

Outside of the ScienceWorks exhibit, the husband runs towards a science-styled room hand in hand with his daughter. The wife excitedly follows.

Squatting down, the wife shows the daughter the Industry Children’s Museum app as they marvel at the ScienceWorks exhibit.
INT. LIVING ROOM – LATE AFTERNOON

Walking in the door, the wife hands the husband the iPad as she carries her tired daughter to the bedroom.

Husband sits on the couch, wearing a Ball State t-shirt, and turns on the TV. He opens up the iPad SPORTSLINK app and checks on the Ball State Cardinals football score.

A smile appears on his face as he sees the Cardinals are winning.

INT. BEDROOM – NIGHT

Wife sits in bed, reading a print magazine with the lamp on. The husband walks in the room, sits up in the bed and begins scrolling through the 72 HOURS app.

The wife looks up at him, grabs his hand, and they share a loving smile with each other.

FADE OUT - DPS LOGO FADE IN, APP LOGOS UNDERNEATH

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