

Re:act – Swinburne students challenged by businesses to create behavioural change in their peers around truck safety

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Abstract

Re:act is an annual behavioural change project that aims to make 18-25 year olds consider their actions by increasing awareness of the dangers they may face on the roads. This year's Re:act project challenges final year Swinburne University Communication Design students to create a campaign to change behaviour in their peers around safe interactions of young road users with trucks. The winning campaign is chosen by Re:act partners and rolled out on Swinburne campus during 'O-Week'. This paper explores the Re:act process, results and the types of messaging students identify to achieve cut-through with their peers.

Background

Now in its third year, the Re:act working group has demonstrated how organisations can collaborate to influence road safety. Re:act was established by Hard Edge, a National Road Safety Partnership Program (NRSPP) Partner, in collaboration with Swinburne University to engage communication and design students in developing a campaign to change behaviour among their peers around key road risks.

The campaign gives students an opportunity to engage with leading businesses in a 'real-world' learning experience. The students receive a brief and must then research safe systems, design a campaign and pitch it. The winning campaign is executed across campus and surrounding transport nodes during 'O Week'. Local high schools have also adopted previous campaigns. In addition to Hard Edge, Swinburne and NRSPP, other Re:act founding partners include RACV, TAC and Transurban. The 2018 theme – safe interactions of young road users with trucks – has seen Australian Trucking Association (ATA) and Melbourne Metro Transport Authority join the working group. Both are eager to understand and incorporate project outputs to engage vulnerable road users with road safety messages. ATA plans to use campaign messaging to 'remodel' its Safety Truck to better target this age demographic.

Method

NRSPP and Hard Edge, with Re:act corporate partners, developed a campaign brief. Re:act formally commenced February 27 when students received the brief and a chance to interact with the ATA Safety Truck at the Automotive Centre of Excellence in Melbourne. The aim is to provide students a 'real world' experience with corporate clients, campaign development within specified resources, and introduce them to road safety.

The students' course, which runs for 10 weeks, involves:

- Re:act partners provide campaign brief to Swinburne students (10 groups of 3) and facilitate Q&A around parameters, safe systems and course expectations.
- ATA Safety Truck gave the students an opportunity for insights into traditional education and engagement methods. Students provided opportunity to travel through Melbourne in a truck to understand the challenges of facing drivers.

- Students conduct their own research, begin developing a campaign and testing it with peers.
- A Q&A session provides an overview of background research and safe systems to students and Re:act partners. Students test campaign ideas with corporate partners for constructive feedback.
- Two weeks later, students submit a one page summary for further critique.
- Students present to Re:act partners on April 3 for judging. The winner and runner-up present their campaigns at ATA's National Conference, illustrating shifts in communication mediums and messaging to a high-risk demographic.
- The winning student/s work with Hard Edge to refine the winning campaign, which is then executed in Swinburne's 'O Week' and shared with other campuses and partner networks.
- The reach and effectiveness of the campaign is evaluated.

Results

A representative from the top three finalists attended ATA national conference in Canberra in April where they presented their campaigns. The winning campaign will be launched in August as part of Swinburne's 'O Week', so the findings will be summarised during the 2018 ARSC conference.

Conclusions

These will be confirmed in April with the top three campaigns summarised.