



A Great Idea

use of technology

June 2004

Using Web Films in a Call for Action

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Summary:

The [Children's Action Alliance in Arizona](#) (CAA) produced a short, [web-based film](#) to motivate its constituents to contact their elected officials regarding the need for child care subsidies. Entitled "End the Child Care 'Waiting List'", it drives home the message that the state budget's provision for child care subsidies has a critical influence on the lives of Arizona's children, families, and employers.

Background:

In March 2003, Arizona began turning eligible families away from the child care subsidy program due to state funding shortfalls. Currently, more than 7,000 children from working families are waiting for child care subsidies. CAA released a short, web-based film on child care subsidies in February 2004 to get CAA constituents to contact their legislators and bring attention to the issue.

Key Elements:

- CAA had seen the vendor produce a similar project for another organization, and believed it would be worth the investment (\$2500). CAA was able to obtain funding through a technical assistance grant related to a larger family assets initiative.
- The film blends statistics, documented quotes from working mothers, still photos, and instrumental music with a call to take action. At the conclusion, the visitor is taken to a page on CAA's website containing relevant facts on the topic and links to Arizona state legislative districts and legislators.
- The film employs Macromedia's Flash streaming video technology, commonly used on the Web, which requires a one-time installation of the company's Flash Player. The installation requires 60 seconds before the 90-second video can begin.

- A link to the film (which actually resides on the vendor's website) was initially placed on CAA's home "splash" page, and has since been moved to another page covering late-breaking news.
 - The vendor, a leading public and political affairs consulting firm in the West, developed the creative concept and produced the film. The firm had skill in framing messages and media advocacy, and had broad experience with Arizona's political environment. CAA brainstormed with the vendor on the basic concept for the film, providing issue expertise and specific content. The vendor helped CAA to translate the concepts behind the issue into a compelling film that would move constituents to action.
 - The film was used as a "splash" page on the website to greet first-time visitors. CAA also sent a link to the film in e-mails to its Action Alert Network, and promoted it film during public presentations and speeches.
 - CAA's primary target audience was its constituents, i.e., individuals registered for CAA's Action Alert Network. The intent was to get activists to contact state legislators, a secondary target audience, and create a buzz that would bring the issue to the forefront of discussion in the legislature.
 - CAA timed the film to appear early in the 2004 legislative session, with a plan to remove it from the website only once budget decisions were completed.
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Outcomes:

- Reactions from CAA's constituents have been overwhelmingly positive. CAA plans to produce another web-based film, should it be deemed an appropriate effort for another children's issue.
 - The vendor tracks the numbers of visitors, reporting to CAA on a regular basis. The initial spike brought in over 6,000 visitors to view the film, with approximately 60% of recent visitors connecting through the "splash" page and the remainder through a CAA e-mail alert.
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Staff Time:

- CAA's Vice President of Policy and Communications worked closely with the vendor, mostly via e-mail and telephone. The organization's Executive Director was not directly involved.
 - Approximately two weeks were required for development and production.
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NOTE: Other Voices members have also created issue-based videos, but not primarily for viewing through their respective websites. Video clips or television promotional spots can be found, among others, at Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth (CA): www.colemanadvocates.org; Connecticut Voices for Children: www.ctkidslink.org; and Voices for Illinois Children: www.voices4kids.org.