



D&M PUBLISHERS INC
DOUGLAS & MCINTYRE
GREYSTONE BOOKS
NEW SOCIETY PUBLISHERS
.....
www.dmpibooks.com

TAR SANDS ONLINE MARKETING CAMPAIGN - Report

Presented by
Alison Cairns
Emiko Morita
Jennifer Gauthier
Julie Morris

Presented to
Rob Sanders
Nancy Flight
Scott McIntyre
Mark Scott
Karen Gilmore
Richard Nadeau

Friday, April 24, 2009

Tar Sands Online Marketing Campaign - Report

During the week of March 16-20, the Marketing Department experimented with providing a free PDF download of the entire book *Tar Sands: Dirty Oil and the Future of a Continent*. (Please see *Online Marketing Campaign – Outline* attached.) We had four goals in mind:

1. To have as many people as possible download the book
2. To increase traffic on our site
3. To increase sales
4. To establish Greystone Books as a leading environmental publisher through the development of relationships with environmental bloggers and websites

Based on the measurement of these goals as tracked by Google Analytics, as well as through anecdotal evidence, we've deemed this campaign to be a success.

Goal 1

Over a five-day period, 6,000 people successfully downloaded the *Tar Sands* PDF, hugely surpassing our expectations.

One interesting part of this experiment was in conducting a 50/50 campaign or what is often called an A/B campaign. When visitors to the download page arrived, 50% were able to download the PDF directly, with no barrier to entry, and the other 50% were first asked to fill in their name and email address. These 50% were randomly selected through programming on the webpage. We did this to see how much resistance there might be to having to submit a name and address. We found that of the 6,000 people who downloaded the PDF, 3,350 people (56%) downloaded directly, and 2,650 (44%) were required to submit personal information. The barrier to entry presented had a very small effect on the number of people to download, resulting in the acquisition of 2,650 email addresses (i.e., potential readers and buyers of *Tar Sands* and our other books, and newsletter subscribers).

Goal 2

Through a series of strategies and tactics, we optimized the *Tar Sands* book page on our site to ensure high ranking on search engines, particularly Google. We also used key search words relating to the tar sands to create a series of paid Google Ads. The ads would show up on the right-hand column of a Google search results page when searchers typed in words we had identified as related to the issue, the book and the author. This was part of a larger campaign to draw the attention of Internet searchers interested in the tar sands in general to our book. (For a full report on the Google Ad Words campaign, please see *Google Ad Words Campaign Report* attached.)

These efforts, as well as the extensive outreach we did to environmental organizations and partners, and the various bloggers resulted in a huge increase in traffic on our site, and specifically on the *Tar Sands* book page. During the week of March 16-20, we had 11,502 unique visitors to our site, a 604% increase in traffic from the month before.

While the percentage drop was significant after the campaign ended, the comparison from a month after and a month before is telling. Table 1 shows key data for one month before the campaign; the week of the campaign; and one month following the campaign.

TABLE 1: BASELINE COMPARISONS

	PAGEVIEWS	% CHANGE	UNIQUE VISITORS	% CHANGE	AVERAGE TIME ON SITE	% CHANGE	PAGES/VISIT	% CHANGE
BASELINE (FEB. 16-20)	4,820	n/a	1,632	n/a	1:56	n/a	2.95	n/a
CAMPAIGN WEEK (MAR. 16-20)	29,623	+514.59	11,502	+604.80%	1:52	-3.50%	2.58	-12.80%
POST CAMPAIGN (APR. 6-10)	5,238	+8.67	1,786	+9.44%	1:50	-5.51%	2.93	-0.70%

Goal 3

In any marketing campaign it is extremely difficult to conclude that a particular effort directly resulted in sales. It is nearly impossible to know why someone buys a book. There is very little clear correlation between an ad in the *Globe and Mail* or a good review for example, and increased sales. With online marketing efforts, it becomes a little clearer by monitoring direct clicks from the *Tar Sands* download page on our web site or from a buy this book link on the PDF itself through to Amazon.ca or Amazon.com. However, it remains impossible to know whether someone made aware of the book through this campaign had the PDF on their computer for a week or two and decided much later to walk into their local bookstore and buy it.

Further to this, we cannot know if offering the free download deterred sales or increased them. But what we can confidently state is that by offering this download and spreading the word of the campaign to circles and markets we don't always reach, thousands of people have become aware of the book and the issue that otherwise may not have. By noting the number of new visitors to our website during the course of the campaign, we can see that we've attracted a new audience for our books. Again, this is a measurable that goes beyond just quantity sold.

All this said, however, we do have sales data for *Tar Sands*. According to BookNet Canada, sales of *Tar Sands* during the campaign week increased by 10% over the previous week. Sales dropped slightly in the US during the campaign week, but increased the following week by 46%.

TABLE 2: SALES OF TAR SANDS IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES FROM MARCH 1, 2009 – APRIL 17, 2009

POINT OF SALE DATA	UNITS SOLD		
	WEEK PRIOR TO CAMPAIGN	WEEK OF CAMPAIGN	WEEK AFTER CAMPAIGN
BookNet Canada	147	162	146
BookScan (USA)	32	28	41

AMAZON CLICKS	CLICKS THROUGH TO TAR SANDS BOOK PAGE, WEEK OF CAMPAIGN
amazon.ca	116
amazon.com	52

Goal 4

Through targeted emails to bloggers working in the environmental realm and through our partnerships with the David Suzuki Foundation and the Boreal Songbird Initiative, we had a wide reaching email, blog and Twitter campaign that ultimately led to the 11,502 visitors to the site that week. By building on the momentum we had started with initial blogger outreach for other marketing efforts, and establishing new contacts, we are expanding and solidifying key relationships in this important online community. Building trust with these bloggers heightens our chances that our other books will be looked on favourably and possibly reviewed. Having direct one-on-one and personalized communication with these influential bloggers is extremely important to our online marketing efforts.

See the attached table outlining our blogger outreach and correspondence and the resulting links, interviews, hits, and reviews.

Another way that we have tried to establish Greystone Books as a leading environmental publisher is through our newsletter. In March, we announced the campaign to our 500 newsletter subscribers, and saw the most click-throughs to the PDF page that we have ever seen in a newsletter (see attached campaign tracking grid). We also sent out a newsletter half way through the campaign reminding our subscribers to download. Again, we saw a huge click-through rate. After the campaign ended and we had collected the email addresses of almost 2,700 people, we sent out an email thanking them for their interest, reminding them to buy the *Tar Sands* book if they wanted the printed or ebook editions, and an extensive list of other books Greystone publishes on the environment, science, nature and travel. Because this contact list was so large, the open rate percentage-wise is not very impressive. However, when we look at the numbers – 701 people opened the email, 98 people clicked through to the website – they are much higher than our usual rates, implying that we have reached new, interested and potentially loyal readers and customers. The value of this is immeasurable.

For a list of the 143 traditional print media recipients of our press release announcing the campaign, see the attached grid *TradMedia PR Recipients*.

Anecdotal Evidence

This report wouldn't be complete without sharing some of the anecdotal evidence we've collected along the way. The response overall was extremely positive, with numerous emails thanking us for making the book available and congratulating us on the campaign. A few quotes below:

"Thanks for making [*Tar Sands*] available as a free download. It is excellent so far. Scary, mind numbing stuff... but excellent." –*Kelly Hunt*

"Andrew's *Tar Sands* book is an important treatise for our times. Thanks for making the digital edition of it available too and the updated front matter." –*David Finch*

"Thank you for allowing us to download *Tar Sands*. We went to a talk by Andrew but never bought the book. We worked on the tar sands 30 years ago - in fact it got us into the country. It is a different scene now. It should never have come that far. We'll read the book now and see where we went wrong. We have noted some of your other books! Some worth purchasing." –*Rob and Tjarda Barratt*

"I just downloaded Andrew Nikiforuk's "Dirty Oil" from your website, for free - thank you! However, I feel an obligation to both the author and the publishers for creating this valuable book, and to ensure that works like this are created in future. Is there any mechanism or a suggested payment I could make to support Andrew and yourselves? Thanks again." –*Ian Theaker*

Also interesting to note are the only two negative comments we received, both from booksellers and both in the same tone, concerned that making available the book for free would cannibalize sales in their own bookstores:

"What a great idea - take away sales from booksellers for a book that is selling fabulously. Thanks for your support, business must be great!" –*Gail G*

"Geez, this is really great... now our customers won't have to buy the friggin' book!" –*Deb*

In response, Richard Nadeau emailed both personally to explain the campaign in more detail. The following was sent to the booksellers:

We are hoping that this U.S. promotion (a free PDF of *Tar Sands*) will help raise the profile of the book south of the border where it just released. It is limited in time to only 5 days, but it should, we hope, increase the profile of the book, especially in the blogosphere. This is a marketing experiment that has been tried by a number of publishers and we think it could create an extra buzz for Andrew's book. I can understand why a bookseller might be nervous about it, but we too make our living selling books, so that's our ultimate goal - to keep *Tar Sands* front-and-centre in the mind of the public, and to sell more copies in the U.S. and in Canada through bookstores like yours. Most people will prefer to read *Tar Sands* in book-form rather than in a large PDF, especially since the book is inexpensive.

Summary

To conclude, we've deemed that all goals were successfully met to the degree that we were able to measure them. Overall, the campaign was an experiment in providing free content and the knowledge, contacts and web presence we gained from that has proven extremely valuable.

Please see the following appendices for more in-depth data, examples of correspondence and a full report on Google Ad Words (this information is for internal use only and has not been provided to interested parties outside of D&M Publishers).