

Overview

The communications department completed a very successful year. There were a few minor issues which are addressed in the report. The bottom line is the website is growing, and we would love for all parishes to get on board and join in.

www.doepa.org

Traffic to the website continued to grow and saw record numbers for the year. There were 83,690 visitors to www.doepa.org, the highest for a year ever. More importantly, UNIQUE visitors numbered 26,943 - the most ever in a year. The website is now in a position to do real work for the Diocese. Currently it's primary function is to relay the news of parishes throughout the diocese. The goal moving forward should be to make it a helpful point of reference, a repository of information to Orthodox Christians and those interested in Orthodoxy. For the second Diocesan Council, the Communications Department proposes a redesign of the site, so that it reflects our Diocese particularly. There were simply not enough hours in 2013 to do this, but it will be pushed to the forefront in 2014.

Statistics

The website had RECORD page views in 2013. Somewhat surprisingly, the month of August had the second most views ever, behind only the month of October 2012, when the big announcement regarding His Beatitude, Metropolitan TIKHON was made. As already mentioned, 26,943 unique visitors viewed the website. That is the highest amount ever, and the goal is to make that grow.

Content

Content submission has picked up greatly from last year, but could and should be better. If we stop to look at the statistics of daily visitors, we can average a number of 6,534 visitors per week. If we assume that just ONE PERCENT of that number - 65 - are non-Orthodox, your parish may be missing out on delivering the Orthodox Message to potential converts. That is based on ONE PERCENT, a decidedly conservative number. Where else do you have the opportunity to Preach the Message to 65 potential converts every week?

The point is the same as the report of 2012, and 2011 for that matter. The same 4 or 5 parishes are responsible for 80% of the content. Your parish absolutely needs to have a person responsible for photographing and submitting events to the Diocesan website. There is no question in this - the numbers prove it.

During the course of the year, Aric Gingo received 2 phone calls and 3 emails asking if photos of an event that took place at a parish were available. In each case, the answer was "Nothing was submitted." There is interest, and you are truly missing out if you are not a REGULAR contributor. Both analytically AND anecdotally, the website is a terrific tool for spreading your message.

It should also be pointed out that Parishes are encouraged to submit photos to the OCA website. The webmaster Aric Gingo attempted to do "double duty" in regards to this, and submit photos sent to him to the OCA, but there was a lot of overlap as some parishes already do this. Submitting info and photos to the OCA website will be left up to each Parish in the future.

For the record, EVERYTHING submitted has been posted - we have never run into a case where anything was questioned or held back. If the situation ever occurs, the parish will be contacted. Typically items are posted within a day of receipt. If there is no information provided the Parish priest is usually contacted. Items are held back until information - who, what, where, when and why - are provided. Please keep in mind that there are many parishes, and it is unreasonable to expect the webmaster to write the article. They will be polished up to follow our format, but information must be submitted to get a full article.

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A comprehensive “best Practices guide” has been posted to the website regarding submission of information. Furthermore, Aric Gingo is available to answer any questions regarding this topic.

Moving Forward

Looking to 2014, the plan is for a re-design, that is, change the look of the site and personalize it for The Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania. We would like to be able to revolve themes around the different feasts that occur during the year. We would also like to get content submissions regarding “hot-button” issues from our experts in the diocese - topics such as revitalization, Evangelism, proportional giving and so on. Currently we search for these articles or are directed to post by His Grace, Bishop MARK. We would like to take advantage of the knowledge, experience and wisdom of our own Diocese. This will also enable us to use the website as a tool for teaching. The opportunity is there, we just need to take advantage of it.

When investigating the Social Media aspect of the internet - ie Facebook - it appears someone currently runs a “Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania” Facebook page. The OCA uses Facebook magnificently, and the communications Department would like to model our usage on theirs.

Alive in Christ

Alive in Christ has been completely re-designed and revamped. Feedback has been very positive. The magazine has been published regularly, behind schedule only minimally this year. Content submission has been so successful that we were “forced” to expand to 16 pages for each issue this year.

Content

For the Record, the Communications department makes every effort to feature EVERY parish in the magazine. Every submission may not be featured, but every parish will have a news item or photo that they submitted. As long as the news item is submitted before the cut-off date, the item will appear in the magazine. The communications department realizes that not all parishioners are “web-savvy” and rely on the Diocesan Magazine for news, and that “Alive in Christ” is an important tool for getting the Diocesan message out. If your parish submits information, at least one of them WILL appear in the magazine. Due to the success of the magazine, it is simply not possible to fit every last tidbit in without expanding the page count even further.

Miscellaneous

In mid-2011, (then) His Grace, Archbishop TIKHON approached the communications department regarding a logo for the diocese. Some samples were provided but nothing ever came of it, due to obvious reasons. In 2014, it is the goal of the Communications department to “brand” the Diocese with a proper logo.

Conclusion

The Communications Department had a very successful year in getting the word out. The results can be summed up analytically with hard data and anecdotally with positive feedback. The continuing idea behind our communications is “Evangelism” - both online and print. We have made great strides this year, but again, there is much work to be done. A re-design of the website, getting ALL parishes in the Diocese involved with submissions on a regular basis, and incorporating Social Media will be explored. The magazine will continue to evolve. Both items will be updated regularly and look the best they can – the key is content. If only twice the number of parishes submitted photos and stories regularly, the results would be impressive. The core belief of the Communications Department is to spread the word, create excitement and interest, and make people sit up, take notice, and want to get involved with the good works that are happening. Be a part of it!

Website Statistics Comparison 2011/2012/2013

