

Southern Interscholastic Press Association Communications Overview & Assessment

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Organization Description

The **Southern Interscholastic Press Association** is a not-for-profit organization of middle and high school journalism programs. SIPA educates students and advisers on journalism standards, supports publications and programs and promotes journalistic values and freedoms in classrooms throughout the Southeast. Founded at Washington and Lee University in 1926, SIPA moved to the University of South Carolina in 1972. Members are from the District of Columbia and 15 states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.

SIPA's overarching goals can be summed up as:

- ▶ Offer well-rounded journalism education for advisers and students.
- ▶ Promote journalistic values and freedoms in the classroom.
- ▶ Provide members special services through email updates and publication evaluations.

- ▶ **Intended audience:** This assessment is intended for the SIPA director, board and staff to use as research and information for future communication strategies. All information is current as of May 2, 2019.



Communication Layout

- ▶ **Website:** SIPA.SC.EDU is housed on the sc.edu webpages for the College of Information and Communications at the University of South Carolina. The website is used for organizational information, membership registration, conference and summer camp registration, newsletter publishing and student award winner features.
- ▶ **Email:** Emails are sent regularly with high school and middle school members. The emails used are for the school adviser only, so a student journalist doesn't have access directly to the organization's staff or data. The SIPA director facilitates messaging as part of the listserv and sometimes she'll share information from other national organization listservs with SIPA members.
- ▶ **Twitter:** SIPA's Twitter account, [@SIPAtUSC](#), currently has 597 followers. The account is operated by the SIPA director. This account is used to promote SIPA events, conferences and education events SIPA employees participate in on the national level, as well as award winners to promote best practices across all journalistic publications.

- ▶ **Facebook:** The [Facebook page](#) is very similar to Twitter in that it's used to bridge the gap from email with member schools. Currently 555 people like this page. The page is also tied to the SIPA 100th anniversary group which is working to gather stories of past student journalists and advisers.
- ▶ **Instagram:** Each week receives an “Insta Post of the Week” from various member schools to feature student photography. The account currently has 313 followers.
- ▶ **Snapchat:** SIPA's Snapchat allows SIPA to connect with students instantaneously. Member schools can show off their production room to other SIPA members and run a SIPA Snapchat takeover for 48 hours. When SIPA events happen, the organization sets up a story option for users to engage with using a geofence.

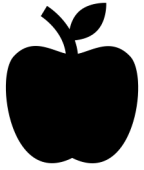
- ▶ **Pinterest:** Labeled “SIPAatUSC,” Pinterest is a visual opportunity for SIPA to feature photography, blogs and content that showcases best journalism practices. The account currently has 67 followers.
- ▶ **Spotify:** [Spotify](#) is an inside look at how the SIPA office works through their days, weeks and months. Playlists are also made for individual events. New playlists are usually promoted through #TuesdayTunes.
- ▶ **SIPA annual conference:** Held the first weekend in March annually, the SIPA conference engages about 600 student journalists and advisers from the southeast. The largest printed material for the conference is the event program. In addition to classes, location maps, detailed class descriptions and award entry directions, other organizations can purchase ads. Many college journalism programs will purchase ad space to promote enrolling as a college student in their journalism program.



SIPA Audience

- ▶ Journalism advisers
- ▶ Students grade 9-12

- ▶ For the purpose of this assessment, we'll focus on journalism advisers who manage SIPA memberships, contests and conference attendance.
- ▶ Many journalism advisers tend to come from English/Language Arts backgrounds and lead journalism programs as an elective at the school. It should be taken into consideration that many teachers in high school journalism curriculums don't have a journalism or mass communications degree, this research will focus on English/Language Arts. The following assessment of journalism advisers evaluates teacher demographics first.



About Today's Teachers

- ▶ In 2014-15, on average, 59.3 percent of the public school teaching population was female.
- ▶ In 2014-15, 75.9 percent of public school English/Language Arts teachers were female. Eighty-one percent of all English/Language Arts teachers were white.
- ▶ In 2014-15, the majority of English/Language Arts teachers, 57.2 percent, fell into two age categories that spanned from ages 30 to 49.
- ▶ In 2014-15, 42 percent of public school English/Language Arts teachers had 10-20 years of experience.
 - ▶ Evaluation can infer that a majority of communication sent from SIPA would go to English/Language Arts teachers who are white females and predominately members of Generation X or considered older millennials. These are not traditionally new teachers in their first, second or third year of teaching.

Source: (U.S. Department of Education, 2019; National Center for Education Statistics, 2019)



Communicating with Gen X and Millennials

▶ Generation X highlights

- ▶ Email marketing is still the best way to communicate with Gen X. They naturally react positively to emails that they can check at work or at home on their laptop, phone or tablets. (Lister, M., 2018).
- ▶ Gen X can be blunt and direct and they like to talk in short sound bites. (Galowich, D., 2018).
- ▶ 47 percent of Gen X members follow a nonprofit on social media. (Upleaf Technology Solutions, 2019).
- ▶ Gen X likes to be invited to participate on social media. (NonprofitMarCommunity, 2019).
- ▶ Gen X is not always easy to reach. Keep them in the loop by asking for their feedback and sharing information with them regularly. It is effective to approach them more as a consultant. Emphasize communication methods such as the Internet, e-mail, multi-media, word-of-mouth, social events and peer gatherings. (Next Wave Connect, 2017).

▶ Millennial highlights

- ▶ They are nearly always connected. They are incredibly tech-savvy. They sometimes have trouble with personal communication because of a heavy reliance on electronic communication means. The words you use and the way you use those words are under constant scrutiny. Millennials tend to be idealist and like prompt feedback and meaningful interaction. (Wheeler, 2018).
- ▶ 80 percent of Millennials report using their phones to read articles and e-mails from nonprofits. (Upleaf Technology Solutions, 2019).
- ▶ The best way to keep millennials engaged is to use responsive design. This allows emails, websites, and donation pages to format properly across mobile devices. (Upleaf Technology Solutions, 2019).
- ▶ Millennials are receiving thousands of messages each day and getting involved in multiple-cause pursuits. They are also distracted, multitasking and frustrated by the status quo. Speaking to them means adjusting messages to meet these conditions. (Wheeler, 2018).
- ▶ Find honesty, humor, uniqueness, and information important. Generation Y is tremendously image driven. (Next Wave Connect, 2017).
- ▶ Millennials crave authentic simplicity and high-quality experiences. (Wheeler, 2018).



Nonprofit Communication Strategy

- ▶ All generations like to stay connected through the website, emails and face-to-face events. (NonprofitMarCommunity,2019).
- ▶ Text messages are a low communications priority across the generations. (NonprofitMarCommunity, 2019).
- ▶ Nonprofits must adapt to the different social norms and values of the millennial generation. Social and web media allow nonprofits to provide millennials with the hyper-personalization and peer production that they desire through extreme customization .
- ▶ Social media focuses on building relationships and enabling conversations in the marketplace. Nonprofits cannot control what is said, but they can try to influence conversation. Having a decentralized network of social media influencers is an asset in that these individuals can assist with a nonprofit's social media presence and monitor what is communicated. (Crawford & Jackson, 2019).



Organizational Goals and Conversion Metrics

Social media

- ▶ SIPA's success on social media channels includes building engagement and brand awareness. From #TuesdayTunes on Spotify, as well as Snapchat and Instagram takeovers, the SIPA social media tools move beyond the membership of just providing advisers with educational resources and support. It offers student journalists a chance to show off their skills. Social media builds transparency with the SIPA office staff and the director. Having an open-door policy with daily interaction builds trust with journalism staffs for when difficulties may hit, such as dealing with First Amendment rights, administration issues or ethical coverage dilemmas.

- ▶ Success on SIPA's social media has never had a baseline before. As we'll discuss in the analysis and assessment section, it's clear some baselines stand out. Metrics that offer the most robust information for SIPA include:

Metrics:

- ▶ Reach/Impressions
- ▶ Likes
- ▶ Engagement

Goals:

- ▶ Brand awareness
- ▶ Deadline Information
- ▶ Resources
- ▶ Convention promotion
- ▶ Showcasing student work

Web

- ▶ Like SIPA's social media presence, the website, sipa.sc.edu has never functioned as a window into what users are thinking as they click through pages. Along with the membership form analytics, metrics that will shape what works well for SIPA include:

- ▶ **Metrics:**

- ▶ Page visits
- ▶ Bounce rates
- ▶ Time on website
- ▶ Reference websites

Some overarching goals that aren't covered in this assessment, such as recruitment to the University of South Carolina's mass communication programs, should be discussed with SIPA's board to deem what looks like success on the website.

- ▶ **Goals:**

- ▶ Brand awareness
- ▶ Membership and conference registration
- ▶ Adviser education resources

Funnel

- ▶ With the focus on journalism advisers, SIPA's main funnel comes with the goal of getting advisers to become a member of SIPA. Membership opens up an online portal to education resources, as well as adds advisers to listservs and automatically opens competitions and conference opportunities for their student journalists.

STEP 1: Learn about SIPA

- Receive a mailing with sipa.sc.edu information to recruit prospective advisers
- Follow a link from a SIPA social media resource
- Saw an advertisement in another student journalism association publication
- Visited the sc.edu or https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/cic/index.php sites and clicked on the Scholastic Organizations tab and chose SIPA
- Were left materials from a previous adviser or teacher that list the sipa.sc.edu website
- Were forwarded an e-mail sent to a previous adviser from the SIPA listserv

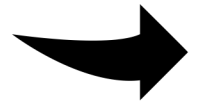




Funnel



- ▶ **STEP 2: Get to the SIPA website**
- ▶ Visit sipa.sc.edu where they'll see an "About" on SIPA
- ▶ See contests
- ▶ See scholastic media news
- ▶ See Tweets in the right sidebar
- ▶ See contact info below the Twitter feed.



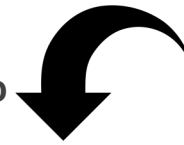
- ▶ **Step 3: Click on Membership**
- ▶ See the tab on the left sidebar on sipa.sc.edu that offers eight options



- ▶ **STEP 4: Read about membership**
- ▶ Here prospective members can learn

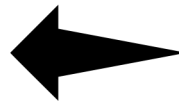
about the perks of having a publication as a member, including discounted conference costs, access to a network of advisers and contest opportunities for students.

- ▶ **STEP 5: Click on the membership form**



- ▶ The form membership page will offer the form on the right hand side and it will open in a separate window away from the sc.edu site.

- ▶ **Step 6: Complete form**



- ▶ **Step 7: Submit form**



Google scholastic journalism

All News Images Shopping Videos More Settings Tools

About 2,810,000 results (0.62 seconds)

Scholastic Journalism Week - Journalism Education Association
<https://jea.org/wp/home/news-events/scholastic-journalism-week/>
 The Journalism Education Association has scheduled **Scholastic Journalism Week** for Feb. 18-24, 2019. How you help promote this week is entirely up to you.

Principal's Guide to Scholastic Journalism | What administrators want ...
principalsguide.org/
 The American Society of News Editors (ASNE) is pleased to sponsor the publication of the Principal's Guide to **Scholastic Journalism** through the ASNE Youth ...
 About · Principal & Adviser · Law & Ethics · Philosophy

The Value of Scholastic Journalism | Center for Scholastic Journalism ...
<https://www.kent.edu> > Center for Scholastic Journalism > Research
 The Value of **Scholastic Journalism** Center for **Scholastic Journalism** | Path:csj/ value-scholastic-journalism | NEW STUDY SHOWS HIGH SCHOOL ...

NSPA - Awards - National Scholastic Press Association
studentpress.org/nspa/awards/
 Each year, the National Scholastic Press Association presents **scholastic journalism's** preeminent award, the Pacemaker. There is a category for each type of ...

Scholastic Journalism Organizations – SchoolJournalism.org
<https://www.schooljournalism.org/national-journalism-organizations/>
 Columbia **Scholastic Press Association** CSPA is an international student press association uniting student **journalists** and faculty advisers at schools and ...






Figure 1.

Google Search...

scholastic journalism

Recognizing the Importance of Scholastic Journalism - NCTE
<https://www2.ncte.org/blog/2016/04/recognizing-importance-scholastic-journalism/>
 Apr 28, 2016 - Over the past four years, my goal as an educator has evolved into advocating for **scholastic journalism**, by promoting its value in schools and its ...

Related search
 high school journalism organizations

 National Scholastic Press Ass...	 Columbia Scholastic Press Ass...	 Quill and Scroll	 Student Press Law Center	 Medill Chicago
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Feedback

Searches related to scholastic journalism

scholastic journalism definition	high school journalism organizations
scholastic journalism textbook	nsa pacemaker finalists 2018
high school journalism awards	pacemaker award winners 2017
pacemaker award 2018	nsa awards 2018

Gooooooooooooole >
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Next

Figure 2.



Barriers

- ▶ Some of the main barriers for journalism advisers come when trying to get to the main SIPA webpage. Once there, the left-hand sidebar clearly offers links to forms and information, but the routes to sipa.sc.edu are many.

- Reaching out to prospective advisers via print mailings may not lead them to the website.
- Having advisers change at previous member schools and information isn't passed along.
- The School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University is the first, second and third website when "SIPA" is searched on Google. That means the right hand sidebar with institution information that offers quick links for website, contact information and directions all link to Columbia University.
- The search for "scholastic journalism" does not yield SIPA in the first page of the search, or as an organization available in "related searches" at the bottom of the first page. SIPA also does not show up on the first page of Google results for "scholastic journalism organizations" or "high school journalism organizations." SIPA is also not part of the first page of Google results when searching for "University of South Carolina" and "journalism." (Figure 1 and 2)
- The SIPA membership form isn't tracked through Google Analytics, which means data isn't easily compared to other pages on the CIC server.
- Lack of membership services online. Advisers don't really know what they get until they become a member as far as Listserv services and there aren't many resources available to download even behind the member subscriber wall on the website.



Analysis

- ▶ After a short consult with the SIPA director, it was decided that this assessment should focus on the sipa.sc.edu website, the SIPA Facebook page and the SIPA Twitter account.
- ▶ Assessments for each platform includes data from the 2017-2018 school year and the 2018-2019 school year so meaningful comparisons can be made for high points in SIPA's school year, which include back-to-school membership registration initiatives and the March annual conference.
- ▶ The SIPA director noted that there was more undergraduate student assistance in the 2017-2018 year, so we both anticipated more posts and higher level of social media engagements in comparison to the current 2018-2019 school year.

Source to SIPA landing page

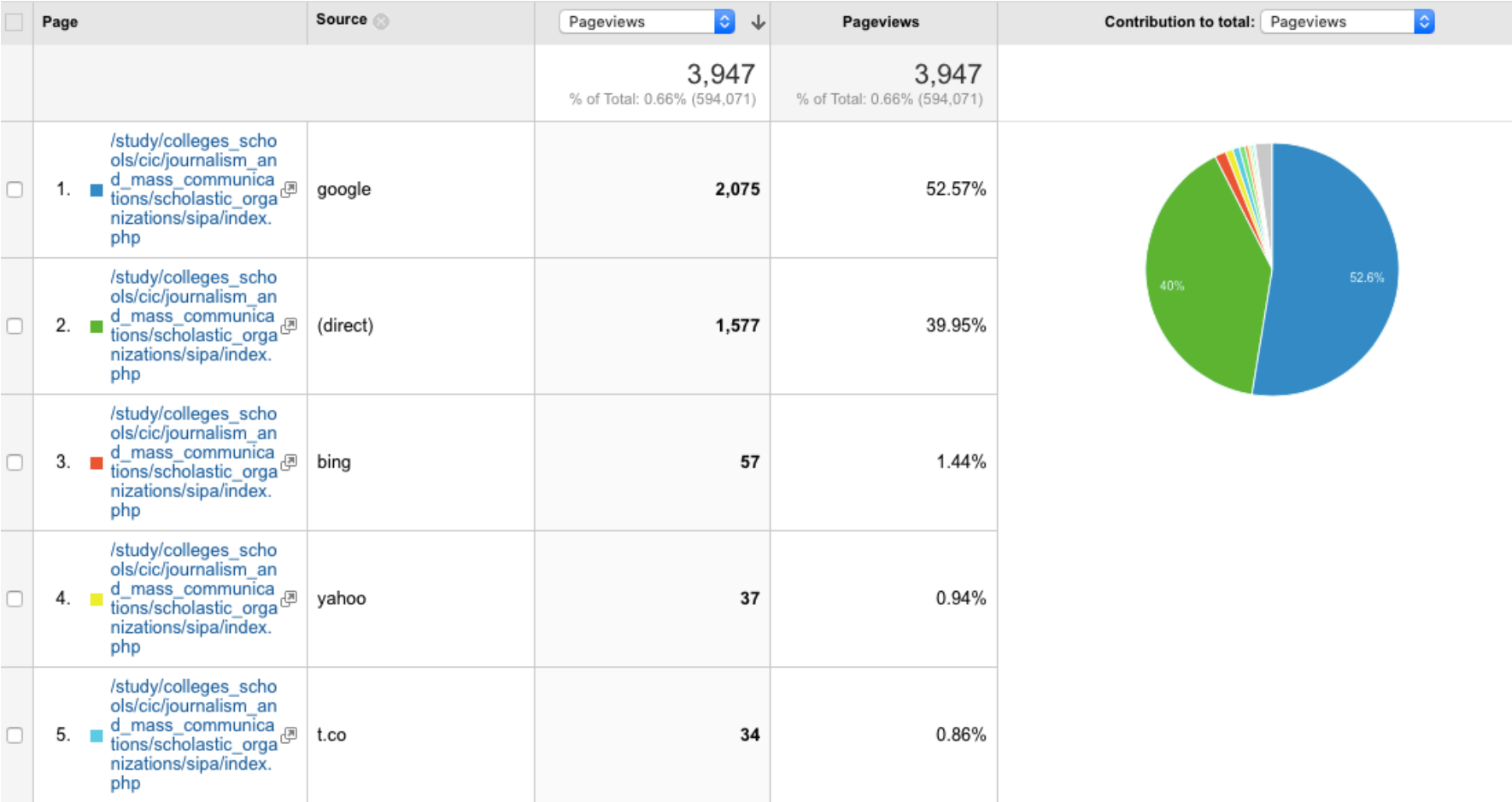


Figure 3.

Average time on SIPA landing page

ALL » PAGE TITLE: SIPA - College of Information and Communications | University of South Carolina

Mar 15, 2018 - Mar 15, 2019

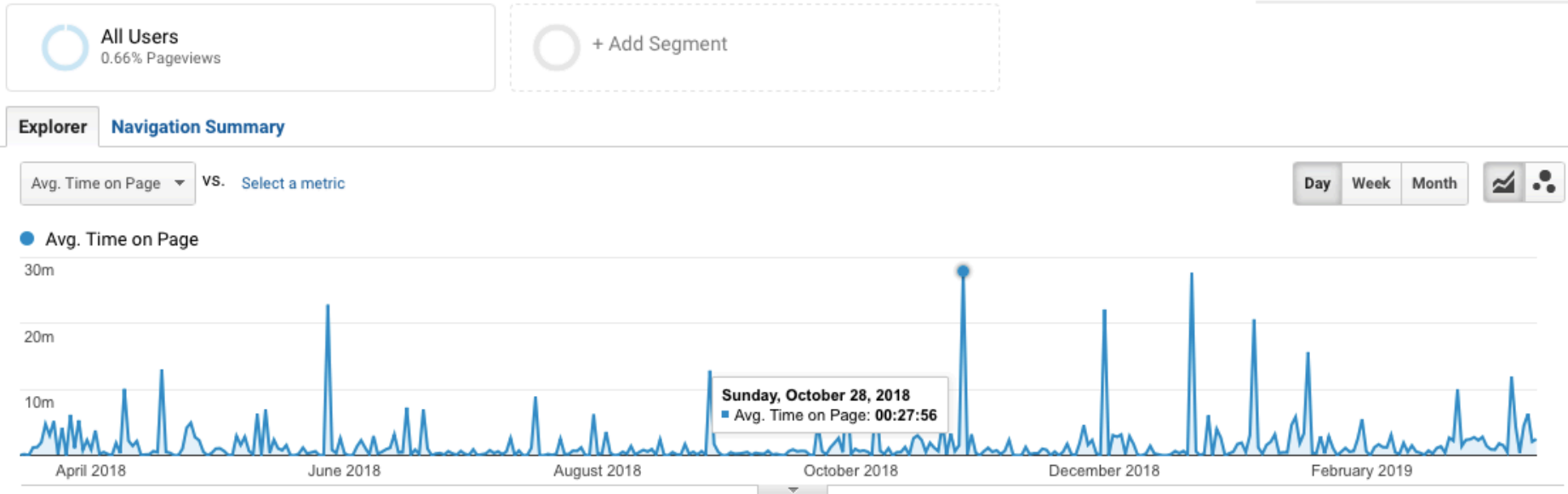


Figure 4.

SIPA.SC.EDU analytics

OVERALL

- ▶ 30th most viewed landing page on College of Information and Communications site
- ▶ .46% of all College of Information and Communications visitors
- ▶ Top sessions are from Columbia, Atlanta, Charlotte and Charleston

Usage from March 15, 2018-March 15, 2019

- ▶ 73.5 percent of users access the SIPA landing page from desktop
- ▶ 52.57 percent of users accessed the SIPA landing page from Google
- ▶ 55.08 percent of visitors are organic
- ▶ Only 4.15 percent of visitors are from referral sites
- ▶ Membership section ranks as 8th most used page in SIPA web section
- ▶ Average time on Membership page at its highest was 31 seconds across all analyzed months.
- ▶ Highest average time on any page that's part of the SIPA site was 27:56.

Landing page audience year-over-year comparison

<input type="checkbox"/>	Landing Page [?]	Age [?]	Sessions [?] ↓	% New Sessions [?]	New Users [?]	Bounce Rate [?]	Pages / Session [?]	Avg. Session Duration [?]
			51.78% ↓ 950 vs 1,970	15.91% ↑ 55.22% vs 47.64%	37.95% ↓ 484 vs 780	3.58% ↓ 61.19% vs 63.47%	10.28% ↑ 2.16 vs 1.95	6.33% ↓ 00:02:16 vs 00:02:26
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. /study/colleges_schools/cic/journalism_and_mass_communications/scholastic_organizations/sipa/index.php	65+						
	Mar 15, 2018 - Mar 15, 2019		169 (17.79%)	10.65%	18 (3.72%)	82.25%	1.38	00:01:37
	Mar 14, 2017 - Mar 14, 2018		365 (18.53%)	4.93%	18 (2.31%)	72.60%	1.65	00:04:03
	% Change		-53.70%	115.98%	0.00%	13.29%	-15.91%	-60.00%
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. /study/colleges_schools/cic/journalism_and_mass_communications/scholastic_organizations/sipa/index.php	25-34						
	Mar 15, 2018 - Mar 15, 2019		151 (15.89%)	54.30%	82 (16.94%)	47.68%	2.53	00:02:13
	Mar 14, 2017 - Mar 14, 2018		255 (12.94%)	38.04%	97 (12.44%)	49.02%	2.84	00:04:17
	% Change		-40.78%	42.76%	-15.46%	-2.73%	-11.02%	-48.20%
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. /study/colleges_schools/cic/journalism_and_mass_communications/scholastic_organizations/sipa/index.php	18-24						
	Mar 15, 2018 - Mar 15, 2019		148 (15.58%)	58.11%	86 (17.77%)	39.19%	3.47	00:04:39
	Mar 14, 2017 - Mar 14, 2018		290 (14.72%)	53.10%	154 (19.74%)	45.17%	2.85	00:03:12
	% Change		-48.97%	9.42%	-44.16%	-13.25%	21.79%	45.54%

Figure 5.

Landing page new users year-over-year comparison

Landing Page		Age	New Users	Sessions
			37.95% ↓ 484 vs 780	51.78% ↓ 950 vs 1,970
1.	/study/colleges_schools/cic/journalism_and_mass_communications/scholastic_organizations/sipa/index.php	18-24		
	Mar 15, 2018 - Mar 15, 2019		86	15.58%
	Mar 14, 2017 - Mar 14, 2018		154	14.72%
2.	/study/colleges_schools/cic/journalism_and_mass_communications/scholastic_organizations/sipa/index.php	25-34		
	Mar 15, 2018 - Mar 15, 2019		82	15.89%
	Mar 14, 2017 - Mar 14, 2018		97	12.94%
3.	/study/colleges_schools/cic/journalism_and_mass_communications/scholastic_organizations/sipa/index.php	35-44		
	Mar 15, 2018 - Mar 15, 2019		64	11.16%
	Mar 14, 2017 - Mar 14, 2018		108	11.62%
4.	/study/colleges_schools/cic/journalism_and_mass_communications/scholastic_organizations/sipa/index.php	45-54		
	Mar 15, 2018 - Mar 15, 2019		63	11.16%
	Mar 14, 2017 - Mar 14, 2018		125	12.74%
5.	/study/colleges_schools/cic/journalism_and_mass_communications/scholastic_organizations/sipa/index.php	55-64		
	Mar 15, 2018 - Mar 15, 2019		29	4.53%
	Mar 14, 2017 - Mar 14, 2018		54	6.45%

Figure 6.

Average session duration year-over-year comparison

Summary Site Usage Ecommerce

Avg. Session Duration vs. Select a metric

Day Week Month

Mar 15, 2018 - Mar 15, 2019: Avg. Session Duration

Mar 14, 2017 - Mar 14, 2018: Avg. Session Duration

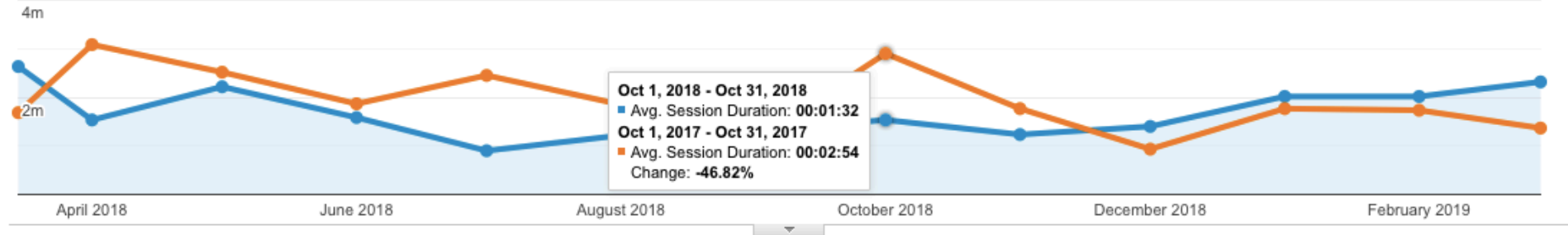


Figure 7.

Usage comparison from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019

- ▶ Average time spent on the page for 2017's highest month, July, dropped by 65.62 percent in 2018 to 1:21. (Figure 7).
- ▶ Average time spent on the page for 2018's highest month, December, increased by 22.98 percent to 2:29.
- ▶ Jan. 2019 page views dropped 45.22 percent to 430 page views from Jan. 2018.
- ▶ Both school years saw dips in sessions on the website in December.
- ▶ Session engagement highs were in February of both years, which is one month before the annual convention.
- ▶ While February was a high in both years, in 2019, sessions dropped 19.54 percent to 729 page views from 906 in 2018.
- ▶ A slight increase happened in new sessions in 2018-2019, as well as pages viewed per session, but overall web usage was down in 2018-2019.
- ▶ Users starting sessions on Membership page went up 74.07 percent in 2018-2019.
- ▶ New users were up 64.29 percent in 2018-2019. (Figure 6).

Membership form 2017-2019 views

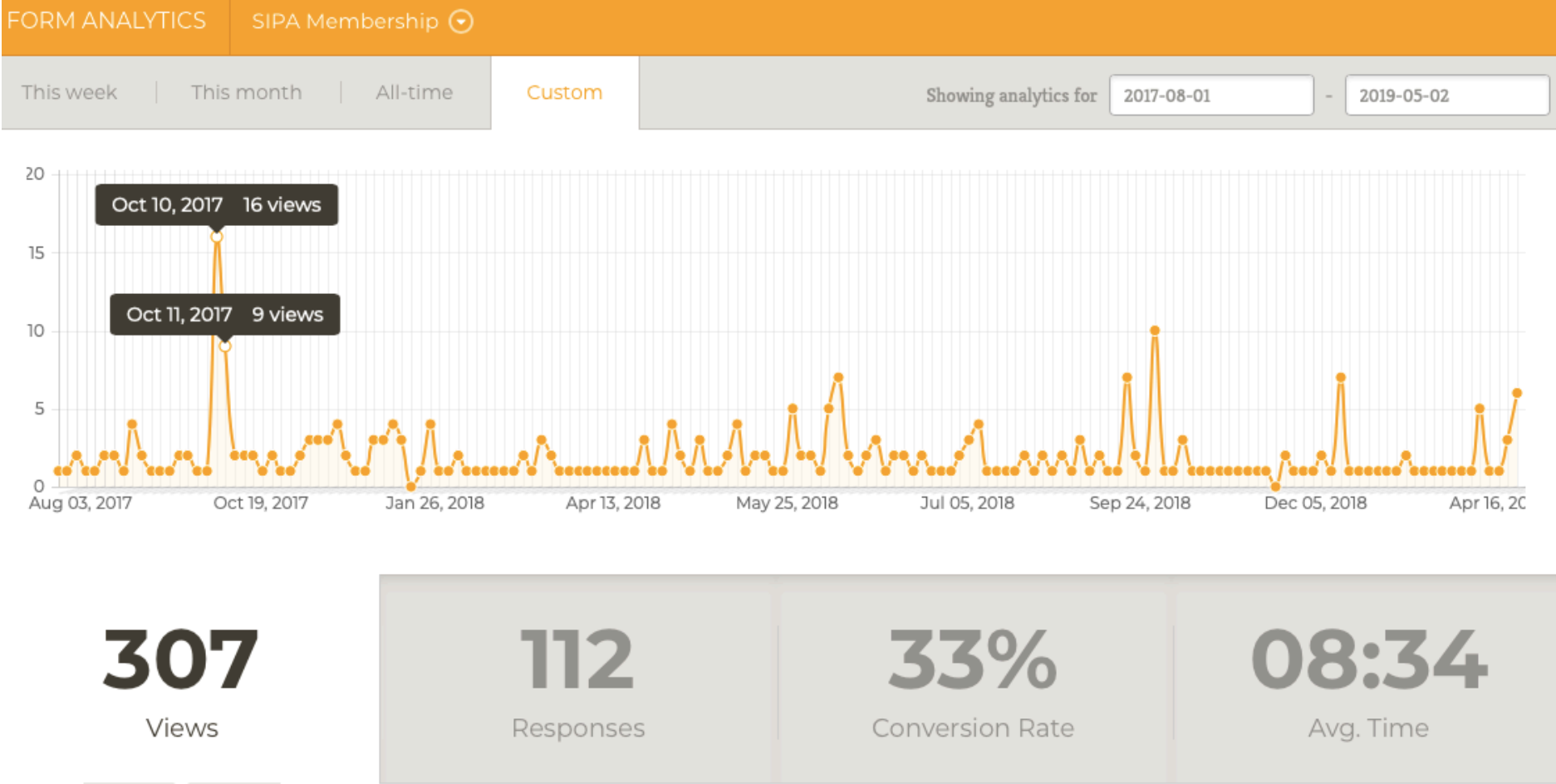


Figure 8.

Membership form 2012-2019 conversion rate

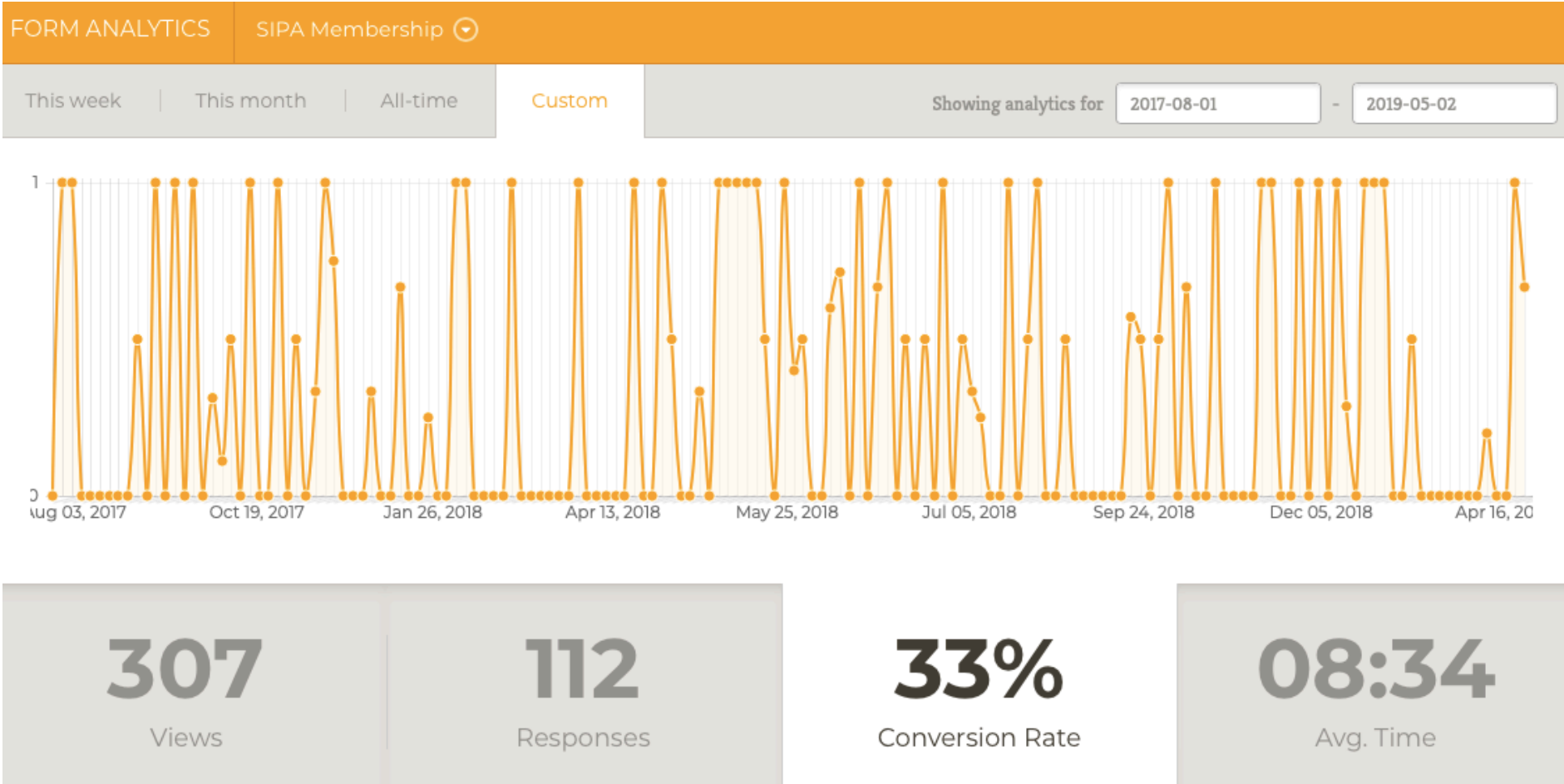


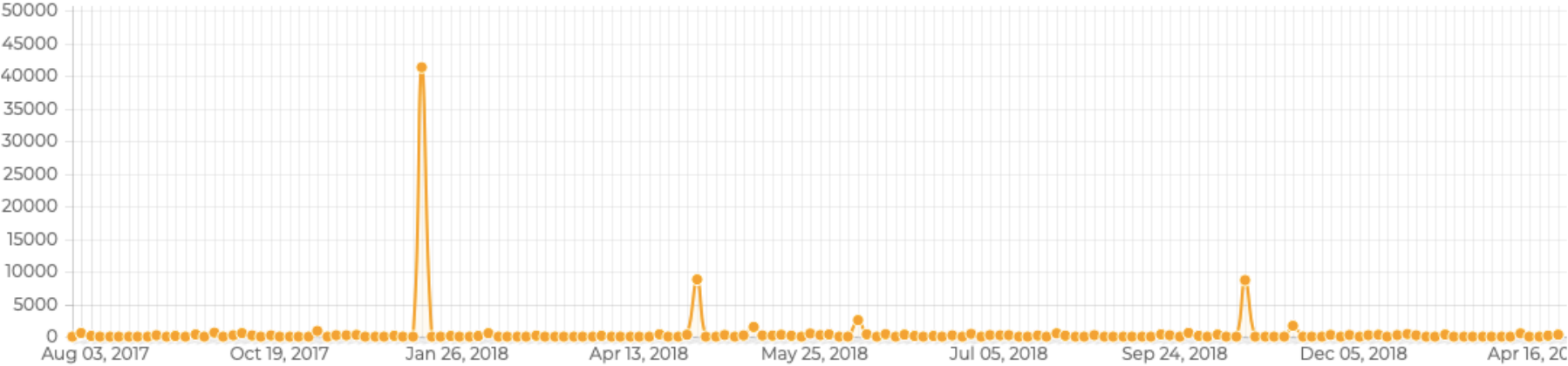
Figure 9.

Membership form 2017-2018 average session time

FORM ANALYTICS SIPA Membership

This week | This month | All-time | Custom

Showing analytics for 2017-08-01 - 2019-05-02



307 Views	112 Responses	33% Conversion Rate
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08:34
Avg. Time

Figure 10.

Membership form 2017-2019 review

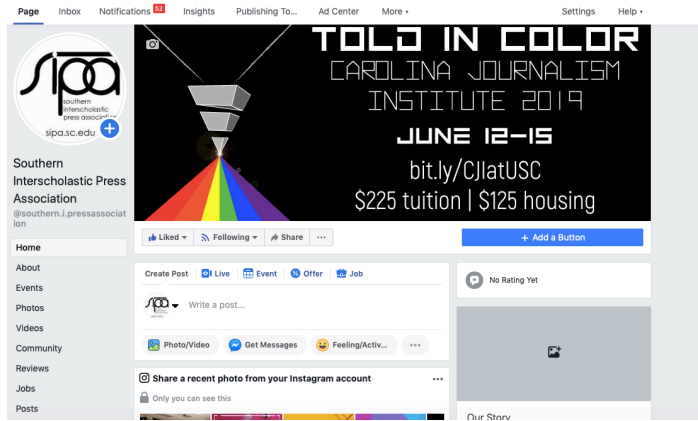
- ▶ 307 views with a high of 16 views on Oct 2017. (Figure 8).
- ▶ Lowest number of views was on Dec. 3, 2018 with 0.
- ▶ Most used platform was Edge, with the average user spending 39:42 on the form in that platform.
- ▶ The average user time on the membership page across all platforms is 8:34. On Jan. 28, 2019, the membership form was used for a high of 28:11. (Figure 10).
- ▶ Conversion rate is 33 percent and ebbs and flows across all months throughout all years. (Figure 9).
- ▶ Membership responses is 112.



Website Analysis

- ▶ Overall, the website doesn't initially look as engaging as maybe other social media options, but **social media should not be misconstrued as a replacement for this website.** The site is definitely needed to cull basic information and give new members an idea of how they can take a deeper dive into the scholastic journalism world by joining the organization. The SIPA website lives on the University of South Carolina's College of Information and Communications collection of pages since SIPA is housed at the University's campus. The SIPA website doesn't attract even 1 percent of CIC's overall traffic. In order to learn more, the SIPA website can't really be evaluated in the perspective of CIC, but has to be looked at as a collection all to itself.
- ▶ SIPA's organic visitors boasts 55.8 percent. Most users reach the site via Google. SIPA's director was correct in the assessment that having more staff in the 2017-2018 school year affected the site's traffic. While there was a slight increase in the number of new sessions and pages viewed per session in 2018-2019, the analytics overall measured lower than standards set in 2017-2018. **The site's traffic mirrors the highs and lows of a typical school year. December figures on page views and sessions take a deep dive to barely any use. In February, a month before the annual March conference, the usage of the site surges.**
- ▶ The truest picture of what's going on with SIPA's web presence exists beyond Google Analytics though in the web form membership page that is analyzed through a separate site. Where the membership info page only had sessions averaging as long as 31 seconds, the membership form engaged users for an average of 8:34 from 2017-2019. The most time spent on completing the membership page ever was in January 2019 for a total of 28:11. **The conversion rate averages 33 percent.** As mentioned in the conversion and metrics section, as well as the communication layout, to make this assessment truly well rounded, the print, mailing and email material statistics also need to be analyzed. **The positive perspective on this assessment though is 74.07 percent of users on the membership landing page were new users, which bodes well for at least getting the advisers to the site.** Turning those new users into actual registered members may prove more difficult depending on if the user feels they have all the information available to complete the form in the first look and first engagement of it on the website.

Facebook page analytics



Most quick data available for Facebook was only the last 28 days. The following information is based on the last 28 days, ending May 4, 2019.

- ▶ 9 p.m. is the most popular time for fans to be online with a 28-day high of 283 fans.
- ▶ Average post type is a link.
- ▶ Average reach is 139 fans.
- ▶ Average post clicks by 9 fans.
- ▶ Average reactions, comments and shares by 7 fans.

Facebook posts July 2017-May 2019

- ▶ Analyzed 78 posts (All posts that turned up in the Insights search for that time period.)
- ▶ 19 of those 78 posts achieved a reach of over 250 fans
- ▶ The most posts, 19 of 78, were posted on Tuesday
- ▶ Sunday received the least amount of posts with two
- ▶ 48 of the 78 total posts were posted in the afternoon, which is considered noon-6 p.m. for this assessment
- ▶ Of the posts achieving a reach of over 250, Wednesday and Thursday were the most popular post days
- ▶ Of the posts achieving a reach of over 250, 11 were posted from noon-6 p.m. with 1-3 p.m. being the sweet spot for most of those posts
- ▶ Of the posts achieving a reach of over 250, “resource” and “news” were the most popular post themes



Facebook Analysis

- ▶ None of the posts were boosted in any way, so looking at this data shows what SIPA is capable of with a \$0 budget. Of those 78 posts, the most common post date and time was Tuesdays between noon and 6 p.m.
- ▶ It felt as if 78 posts were a little robust to dig into meaningful analysis. To come up with a baseline of narrowing down posts to evaluate, I used the last 28-day statistics as a barometer. In the last 28 days the height of fan engagement was at 283. With 555 fans on the page, aiming for 283 fans for each post was a little more than half of the fans. I backed off the 50 percent mark and settled on highlighting posts that had at least a 250 fan engagement. That baseline helped narrow down the 78 posts to a manageable 19 posts.
- ▶ Because SIPA has never worked with a baseline goal on any metrics before, I wanted to start with looking at common usage points across those 19 posts. Where **Tuesday was the most common post day for all 78 posts, the sweet spot for the best 19 posts was actually Wednesdays and Thursdays.** Five of the best performing posts were made on both Wednesday and Thursday. Between noon and 6 p.m. was the best performing time window, with the best posts of the 19 going live between 1-3 p.m. Each post was tagged with a common theme from resources to convention promotion to tips on coverage topics to news and awards. **The best performing posts had a theme that focused on resources and featured at least a thumb nail or photo of some kind with the post text and accompanying link.** Pairing the resource with news or coverage topics made posts perform even better.

An example of a post just going over the top and hitting all the right notes is the March 8, 2018 post. The post shared tips on student coverage of tough topics such as the March for our Lives rally to support more restrictions in gun legislation. The link automatically generated an image to go with the post. The post went up on Thursday at 2:51 p.m., which is the prime spot in day of the week and time. The post was labeled “[COVERAGE]” so the purpose was clear to fans. The post achieved a 4.2K reach, 553 clicks and 142 engagements.

While the analytics show what can happen on the best of days, a post from 2017 shows that what works well doesn't always fit the mold. On Oct. 20, 2017, a Monday, a 10:45 a.m. post promoting the March conference registration hit 1.3K reach, but only 2 clicks and 1 engagement. This example shows that sometimes the most useful information for the high school advisers doesn't necessarily require engagement on their part. It doesn't mean the information isn't being used or shared, it just doesn't need explanation. For this reason, **SIPA should always aim to look at more than just the initial numbers returned on Facebook Insights.** The usefulness of the information really dictates how well it will perform better than the predictor of date and time. What prime day of the week and well-timed posts can do is just make good content have a better chance to reach SIPA advisers who are looking for resources.

Twitter page analytics

TOLD IN COLOR
CAROLINA JOURNALISM
INSTITUTE 2019
JUNE 12-15
bit.ly/CJlatUSC
\$225 tuition | \$125 housing

SIPA
@SIPAAatUSC
empowering and education future
journalists and journalism advisers
across the Southeast. Retweets are not
endorsements. Email:
dennisc@email.sc.edu

Tweets **1,471** Following **354** Followers **596** Likes **441** Lists **1** Moments **1** Edit profile

Tweets Tweets & replies Media

Pinned Tweet
SIPA @SIPAAatUSC · Feb 20
Convention program ✓ one more thing off our "to do" list. It's online and ready for your views. Find it and all your #SIPA2019 info here sc.edu/study/colleges...

1 1 6

Your Tweet activity
Your Tweets earned **3,302 impressions** over the last **28 days**
View your top Tweets

Who to follow Refresh View all

- ▶ Since August through October is popular for back-to-school membership registration, and January through March is popular for convention information and deadlines, this assessment focused on each of those three-month windows for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 year.
- ▶ Overall impressions average 508.5 impressions across all segments from 2017-2019.
- ▶ Overall engagements average 11.05 engagements across all segments from 2017-2019.
- ▶ Tweets can hit as many as 35 one month and as few as five or six other months. On the whole the SIPA Twitter account hits about 20 tweets per month.

Top Tweets

- ▶ Using the overall impressions and engagement averages, Tweets across both school years were highlighted if the tweet reached 508 impressions or 11 engagements.
- ▶ 82 Tweets met the threshold of 508 impressions or 11 engagements.
- ▶ The impression average was 818.8.
- ▶ The engagement average was 24.97.
- ▶ The most common type was a link.
- ▶ 3- 4 p.m. was the most common post time.
- ▶ Most of the posts were made on Friday.
- ▶ Out of those 82 top tweets, I went back and highlighted the best of the best posts based on the average high impression average of 818.8.
- ▶ 26 posts met that 818.8 threshold
- ▶ 6 p.m. was the average time of the best posts.
- ▶ Tuesday and Wednesday were a tie for best performing post days.
- ▶ Most popular theme was about awards

Lowest Tweets

- ▶ Using the overall engagement average of 11, I went through and chose to highlight any tweets that didn't meet 5 engagements - or a little less than half of the best of the best
- ▶ 87 total posts did not meet at least 5 or more engagements
- ▶ Impression average for these 87 posts was 244
- ▶ Engagement average was 1.8
- ▶ Lowest posts average time was after 9 p.m.
- ▶ Most common post type was a link
- ▶ Lowest common post day was Wednesday
- ▶ Out of those 87 total lowest posts, I went through and highlighted the ones with zero engagement.
- ▶ Lowest post day was Wednesday
- ▶ Lowest post common theme was about awards



Twitter Analysis

- ▶ Tweets were pulled from August to October for 2017 and 2018, as well as January to March for 2018 and 2019. The August to October window is when advisers are heading back to school and sending in the first of the membership forms and data to SIPA. The early fall is also when SIPA has their annual board meeting and useful conference information usually comes out of that weekend session.
- ▶ Each month was analyzed to reflect a review of tweets for the month, total impressions, average impressions, total engagements, average engagements, retweets, likes, follows, media views, replies, as well as day of the week and time of the post, the theme of the post and whether the post featured a link, photo or other media.
- ▶ With 12 months of data to compare, I took the average impressions and average engagements from each month and came up with an overall average for impressions and engagements. The average impressions across 2017-2019 was 508 and the average engagement was 11. Using those two numbers as baselines, I pulled tweets that met either a 508 or higher impression or a 11 or higher engagement. Of the 12 months of data, 82 tweets met that baseline of “best tweets.” The most common type of post was a link. **The most common post time was Friday between 3-4 p.m.**
- ▶ I wanted to narrow down those 82 tweets to review the best of the best. Of those 82 tweets, the average impression was 818.8 and the average engagement was 24.96. I made a new baseline and highlighted posts meeting either of those criteria and narrowed the 82 tweets down to 26 best of the best tweets.
- ▶ **Of the 26 “mega post” tweets, the average time of the best posts were those that went up around 6 p.m. and were posted on Tuesday or Wednesday.** The most common theme among those 26 posts was about awards. A string of “greatest hits” happened in January 2018 where four posts performed well. The posts highlighted an award for the SIPA Director from Columbia University Scholastic Press Association, celebrated the new year, recruited businesses to partner with the SIPA summer camp and promoted supporting the First Amendment with hashtag #FirstAmendment.

Because Facebook posts had several revelations of “everything doesn’t always meet the mold,” I wanted to look at low performing Tweets to see what themes were there. Again, using all the posts from 12 months, I knew the average engagement was at 11. Knowing that SIPA aims for brand awareness, but also having these social media channels so advisers can have quick access to the office, I chose to look at just engagement and not impressions, too. I chose to use fewer than 5 engagements as my baseline to keep in line with the Facebook baseline of choosing an engagement goal of a little less than half of the best performing posts.

- ▶ Eighty-seven posts had fewer than five engagements. The average total impression for these 87 posts was 244. The average engagement was 1.8, a complete end of the spectrum from the best performing posts. The worst post time was after 9 p.m. and posts on Wednesdays didn’t do well either. I wanted to see why posts really bombed, so I decided to highlight posts that had zero engagement. That threshold narrowed my posts to evaluate from 87 to a manageable 19.

- ▶ Of those 19 posts, the lowest posts went live on Wednesdays. But the weirdest development was that the lowest performing tweets also had the theme of touting awards. I couldn’t understand how awards could be the most popular and least popular theme at the same time.

- ▶ Digging some more, I went through and wrote out the times, day of the week and theme for all of the 19 tweets to see if I could see some correlation compared to the best tweets that promoted awards. **Several of the lowest performing tweets went live on Wednesdays between 8-9 p.m. But beyond that, it was clear the content for the best performing award tweets and the worst performing award tweets varied widely. The best performing tweets offered photos and had more context with pings to the publication, common hashtags and other organizations giving out the awards to SIPA members.** The tweets that didn’t perform well had minimal information and maybe just tagged the adviser but didn’t include the larger audience of other scholastic press organizations who use common hashtags to promote these bests of the best publications.



Assessment

- ▶ The biggest overall assessment is to aim for more consistency across all platforms. These metrics offer guidelines that will give SIPA some direction on how to schedule content to go live based on prime-time use.
- ▶ Adding access to Google Analytics will allow the organization to measure how well social media posts are routing users to the website to use resources there. Also having these baselines will give the new assistants something to measure easily and create reports regularly for SIPA to keep track of how it is building its audience through various resources.
- ▶ In addition to more consistency, I again recommend the organization evaluate its email and print analytics to provide a comprehensive view of how each communication piece plays off each other. A concerted effort now could save lots of time in planning and scheduling.

Website

- ▶ Columbia University has the top search for “SIPA” and “SIPA.org” is used by another organization, so even buying a common page for redirects isn’t a clear option. The best suggestion to offer is an investment in search engine optimization. The organization knows what \$0 buys, but it is worth exploring how targeting ad words to states or metro areas SIPA would like to recruit member publications from could help. **Targeted ad words would especially go over well when it comes to promoting SIPA’s scholarships** to the University of South Carolina, as well as just showcasing stellar student work.
- ▶ Another solution to driving web traffic is to use the sc.edu staff to assist in **creating some A/B testing** to see what drives traffic from e-mails and social media to web pages.
- ▶ Posts that list a bigger category like, “Features” or “Sports” don’t do as well as the posts that lists schools by name. Make an effort to call out individual work rather than just sending all audiences to a page dump hoping they’ll click around the site. **The web analytics show they aren’t clicking around the site** and need to be pointed directly to the page you want them to see.
- ▶ Pull analytics more often. Working with A/B testing will make that a necessity but pulling stats at the beginning or end of each month will give better detail than trying to revisit several months or whole years at a time.

Facebook

- ▶ From the Insights page SIPA can compare its page to pages of organizations like SIPA. Up to five organizations can be used and regular public engagement data from those organizations is curated in a nice graphic.
- ▶ Labels at the beginning of posts like [RESOURCE], [NEWS], [DEADLINE] was a part of many of the posts that did well. Also, **“resources” was the most popular theme for Facebook posts.** Optimum timing with these posts would be a coup in engagement. I’d also recommend promoting more digital resources that showcase the variety of technical skills needed for a newsroom today.
- ▶ **Easy posts that went over well and can also be scheduled were holiday posts with photos or gifs.** Holiday posts weren’t consistent from 2017-2019, but when everyone is home for the holiday staring at their phone, SIPA should make sure they pop up, too.
- ▶ Use more Facebook tools, such as polls to build engagement. SIPA has this great resource in Quiz Bowl for its convention. Facebook polls offers a way to quiz people on current events, grammar and AP style guide. Giving away an AP style guide online subscription to a publication for winning or participating in so many weeks of polls would probably be a welcome resource for an adviser.

Twitter

- ▶ Building consistency is most important. What's worse than just not being on social media is looking like it hasn't been updated and is a dead account. Planning content in advance and picking and choosing what's worth live tweeting, such as other conferences or SIPA board meetings, will free up time overall.
- ▶ Don't forget to tag other organizations, especially in hot topic discussions. SIPA is great at tagging advisers, but **Twitter should also be about engaging in the collective good of scholastic journalism and journalism at large.** Be the one to initiate conversations and ask other organizations how students can join them in coverage of national issues.
- ▶ Use the connection to the University of South Carolina to SIPA's advantage. The #UofSC social media accounts offer big, bold photos of campus regularly. Sharing these photos and taking the time to showcase campus perspectives more often will give some additional content to share frequently. And everyone loves talking about the weather. Comparing how hot Columbia is or sharing the first dust of snow is something almost every school in this conference can relate to.
- ▶ Last, don't forget old school #FollowFriday posts. Twitter is an excellent way to reach professional journalists and professional organizations. Let journalists know you have students who want to break into the industry and that they're watching the news around them. I'm sure it will make the journalists feel reassured about what they do matters, and if a conversation starts with a fellow publication or student, that mentorship possibility will only serve to build SIPA's network.

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