

Implementation Report FHWA/MT-23-003/9832-766

More Info:

The research is documented in Report FHWA/MT-23-003/9832-766

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EFFECTIVENESS OF HIGHWAY SAFETY PUBLIC EDUCATION AT MONTANA MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION STATIONS BY STREAMING A VARIETY OF SAFETY CONTENT

<https://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/safety/safetyvideos.aspx>

Introduction and Purpose

State departments of transportation, including the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), are working towards eliminating roadway fatalities and serious injuries through initiatives like Towards Zero Deaths. To accomplish this goal, a multidisciplinary approach, like the 5E approach (engineering, emergency medical services, enforcement, education, and evaluation) is being employed by MDT.

One of the 5Es, educating the public can make a positive impact an area's traffic safety culture (the shared beliefs, including values and assumptions, of a group that affect behaviors related to traffic safety). This research project focused on deploying and evaluating an educational strategy. In this case, traffic safety video loops/sequences were used to educate the public and ideally change their beliefs and influence their behaviors.

There were two components to the project: first, traffic safety videos were displayed at Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) driver license stations and county treasurer offices (CTOs), and second, their use was evaluated to see if the strategy showed a change in the traffic safety culture of local drivers. These components were accomplished through the following three objectives:

1. Identify and secure already available traffic safety content (i.e., videos) (instead of creating new content), and purchase and display the appropriate equipment to display the traffic safety content;
2. Survey the public leaving MVD and CTO facilities to determine if they were paying attention to the videos and their content shown; and
3. Determine if the traffic safety messages had an impact on the behavior of the surveyed public.

While respondents did not report a change in behavior due to the traffic safety video loops/sequences, they did have an impact. First, some respondents suggested that they would be safer drivers while other respondents shared the information they watched with others. This is one step in the process of changing

beliefs which can lead to changing behaviors and growing a positive safety culture. Secondly, this system was found to be a low-cost solution (approximately \$450 per location for the technology), with minimal staff time required, for educating the public about traffic safety. Additionally, the video loops/sequences reached a broad demographic (old, young, and those in between; men, women and individuals identifying as non-binary), including demographics which are the focus of MDT's media campaigns (men, aged eighteen to thirty-four).

Implementation Summary

- MDT recognizes the benefits of continuing to utilize this method to educate Montanans and sees potential benefits in expanding the locations and partners.
- Recognizing the importance of the TV location on conspicuity and effectiveness of recall, MDT understands the need to have policies in place to review TV locations on a consistent basis and to have partner locations notify MDT of remodels or changes to room layouts that could affect the TV viewing.
- MDT sees value in creating new traffic safety videos stylized in a “shocking” (with a positive frame) manner or engaging the viewer’s empathy and has recently created several of these types of videos.
- MDT recognizes the benefits of aligning the content within the video loop/sequences to the season, so people more easily relate to them.

Implementation Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1:

MDT should continue to utilize this method to educate Montanans.

Overall, the traffic safety video loops/sequences, did have an impact. This was a low-cost solution (\$450 per location for the technology set-up) with minimal staff time required, and the ability to reach a broad demographic (old, young, and those in between; men, women and individuals identifying as non-binary), including demographics which are the focus of MDT's media campaigns (men, aged eighteen to thirty-four). It is likely that the benefits of using this method will be further seen over a longer period of time (if the approach is continued) and in conjunction with the other public awareness campaign strategies that MDT uses (e.g., radio ads, TV ads, rack cards, etc.).

It was recommended that MDT continue this educational strategy and consider expanding it to other locations. These could include additional public locations that have waiting rooms or private locations, like large employers that have waiting rooms or break rooms (where sound could be used). Other private locations that should be considered may be the media interfaces at gas pumping stations.

MDT RESPONSE:

The technical panel agreed that this strategy should continue to be utilized to educate Montanans and felt that it could be expanded beyond the current MVD and CTO locations to possibly include:

- Additional MVD and CTO locations;
- health related private organizations with waiting rooms like Blue Cross Blue Shield, urgent care offices, and hospitals;
- workplaces with break rooms;
- transportation related public/private partnerships like a tire shop, oil change location, or gas station; and
- national restaurant chains with table top technology already employed for games/trivia.

Although the technical panel felt there could be challenges getting partners on board, they also felt that locations where audio could be utilized may be more effective in the long run.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

If MDT continues to utilize this method to disseminate traffic safety information, MDT should review the location of each TV at least every six months, to ensure that the TV remains conspicuous.

The study findings showed that the location of the television significantly influenced whether or not the video loops/sequences were viewed. It was noted that locating the television behind staff that entered a visitor’s data is preferred. To ensure this method remains effective, a policy should be created to review the locations periodically.

MDT RESPONSE:

The technical panel felt that in addition to MDT reviewing the locations, that in the future there could also be a policy for the deployment location to notify MDT in the case where remodels or changes to room layouts that could affect the TV viewing occur. Additionally, it was suggested that the instructions and a contact list be laminated, and zip tied to the back of the TV to ensure they do not get misplaced.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

MDT should consider developing a video stylized in the “shocking” manner or engaging the viewer’s empathy to address another priority topic(s) within their Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP).

The videos that resonated most with the technical panel when selecting videos for the loop/sequence were those that had a “shocking” component or engaged a viewer’s empathy. Unfortunately, many of the ones chosen were international videos where permission was unable to be obtained for their use. The videos in this style that were included, were the ones most recalled by the viewing audience. Therefore, as MDT continues to create new videos in the future, they should consider focusing on these video styles. However, it should be noted, that any videos created in a “shocking” manner should be done so with a positive frame as they have been proven to make a bigger impact than those with negative consequences shown.

MDT RESPONSE:

The technical panel felt this was a great recommendation and noted that MDT Office of Safety recently developed some new videos utilizing a mascot named Andy (<https://www.youtube.com/montanadot>) that follow this recommendation on video styles.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

MDT should rotate out the video sequences as they relate to the season (e.g., don’t crowd the plow in the winter; watch for motorcycles in the summer).

While the timing of the project did not allow for the videos to be rotated seasonally, the researchers feel that in the future, this would be valuable for the viewers.

MDT RESPONSE:

The technical panel agreed with this recommendation stating that it is important for the videos to be in alignment with the season and what people can relate to.

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