

BCVoice Email Campaign Project

A close-up photograph of a person's hands writing in a white notebook with a yellow and black marker. The person is wearing a blue shirt and a black wristband. The background is blurred, showing other people in a meeting or workshop setting.

Group 1

Emoji → No Caps

Taylor Berard, Kelley Hilliker, Kaley Saxton, Kalli Walling

Executive Summary

This report is on an email campaign run for Bridgewater College's BCVoice, its news outlet for the truth. BCVoice "aims to give media production experience to its student participants while creating products of which we, as a community are proud. BCVoice strives to inform and entertain while remaining ethical and engaged" (BCVoice, 2019). Keeping in mind the organization's mission, its main goals for the year were to have individuals sign up for the BCVoice App in addition to providing truthful and relevant news to their audience.

The following report details the ways in which the first two groups conducted A/B testing for emails to half of the target audience and the results that came from it. In this report, we will refer to ourselves as the No Caps group and the comparative group as the All Caps group. Mentioned in more detail within the methods section, this type of testing allows for the subject groups to be randomly sorted into smaller groups to test different variations of a product, in this case an email. The groups found this method would be the best in this case for BCVoice.

Explanation of Organizational Priorities and Needs

After the initial class meeting with some of the BCVoice leadership team members, the groups were able to get a better sense of their priorities and needs to take into consideration moving forward. Some of those included getting individuals to sign up for the BCVoice App, continuing to create new content, and getting individuals to click on their live broadcasts. Although all of these priorities are important and vital to their organization, the four subject line groups chose to take on the need of getting individuals to sign up for the BCVoice App. By utilizing email, they were able to create content to send out to the entire student body population. This email content, subject line, and links were all crafted with the consideration of extensive research into what the best strategies for each element would be. Even though many unplanned things are happening in the community currently, this report emphasizes the general success the emails had comparatively and the ways in which the groups met the priorities and needs of BCVoice.

While keeping in mind the main priority of getting individuals to sign up for the BCVoice App, the groups made sure to take into consideration the organization's need for emphasis on "their news." In other words, BCVoice emphasizes maintaining a student-centric take on truthful news. Originally the groups created separate content for each audience that was targeted to their individual interests. However, after all of the changes that needed to be made, the final content of the final emails was streamlined into one message. More indepthly mentioned later, this single message allowed for the best strategy in the groups testing different subject lines.

Email Design Strategy

To begin, the four subject line groups split the audience into two groups for A/B Testing, the First-Year/Sophomore and the Junior/Senior audiences. Our group's target audience was the First-Year/Sophomore audience, so we generated content that would appeal to that target audience. The Coronavirus has caused a lot of adjustments for many organizations and individuals. Students found out that Bridgewater College would be moving to distance listening classes just before the groups planned to send out the emails. Due to the abrupt change, the four subject line groups also had to make an alteration in our messaging because with no students on campus, our original message of off-campus and campus activities no longer applied. The updated email message now targeted our audience to stay connected through the BCVoice App. This email can be found in Appendix B. The four subject line groups continued to use the Eagles graphic from the initial email because it represents the Bridgewater College as a community and grabs the attention of our audience with an image (Grimms, 2019). The A/B subject lines also changed to compare all caps or no caps. These groups' subject lines read, "Want to stay connected?" versus "WANT TO STAY CONNECTED?"

Subject lines are important in email marketing. Nearly half of consumers decide whether or not to open the email based on the subject line (Pophal, 2015). Even if the content of the email is fantastic, this study demonstrates that half of the audience will not bother to even look at it if the subject line is not appealing (Pophal, 2015). In order to get our audience to even click on the link that would take them to download the app, we needed them to open the email.

Methods

Between all four subject line groups and the email director, we chose to make the send out date Monday, March 16th at 10am. We chose this date because of three reasons. The first reason was because college students typically open task-related emails in the mornings during the week (Sedani et al., 2018). The second was that we knew students would be anticipating news about the evolving implications that COVID-19 was having on Bridgewater College. The third reason is that we did not want to schedule an email on St. Patrick's day due to the potential events that students could be engaged in that would take their focus away from checking emails. Each group of emails was sent out on March 16th at 10am, and data began to accumulate and be analyzed by both Google Analytics and Mailchimp.

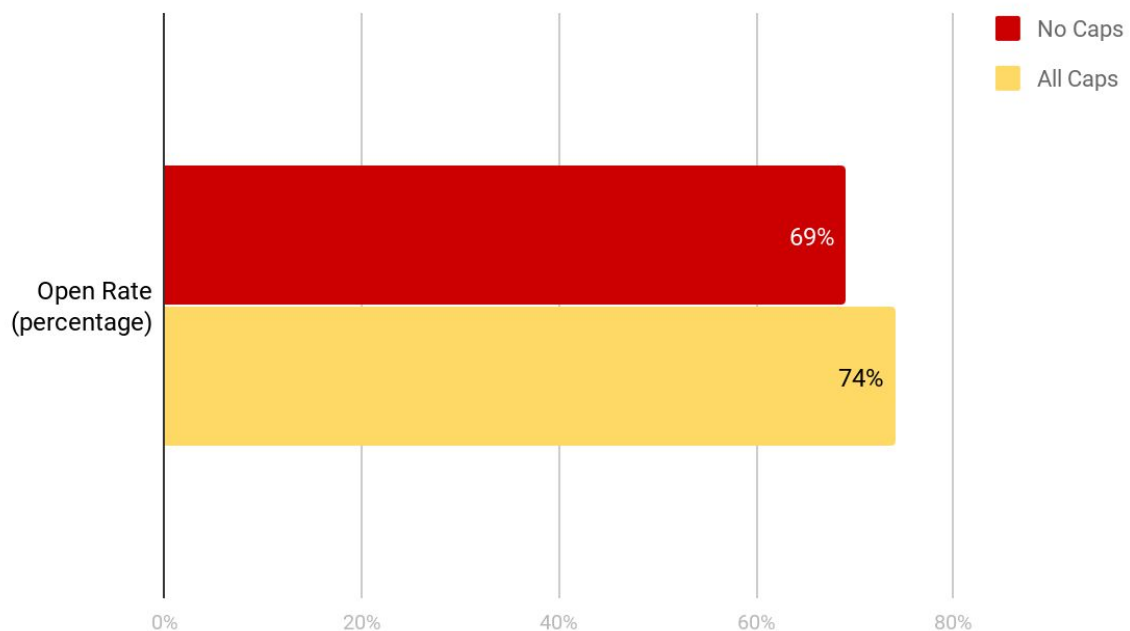
The No Caps group utilized Google Analytics to analyze the results of our email campaigns and goals. We also used Mailchimp data as a double check on recorded data in shared categories, such as open rate. To be able to distinguish data between each of the subject line groups, custom URLs were used. Each subject line group had a custom URL embedded into the images and button within their email. When a receiver would click on the custom URL, their

path and other data collected would be tracked under that particular subject line group. Without the custom URLs, it would be impossible to analyze different subject lines in comparison to one another.

The goal of these emails was to gain more app subscribers. To track this goal, our email director needed to tag the link on BCVoice's website which would take people to the app store. Due to this action involving an outbound link, our email director created a tag in tag manager so that the event would be visible in Google Analytics. Unfortunately due to an incorrectly labeled value, a conversion rate was unable to track correctly, however the event data still allowed us to analyze the collected data fully.

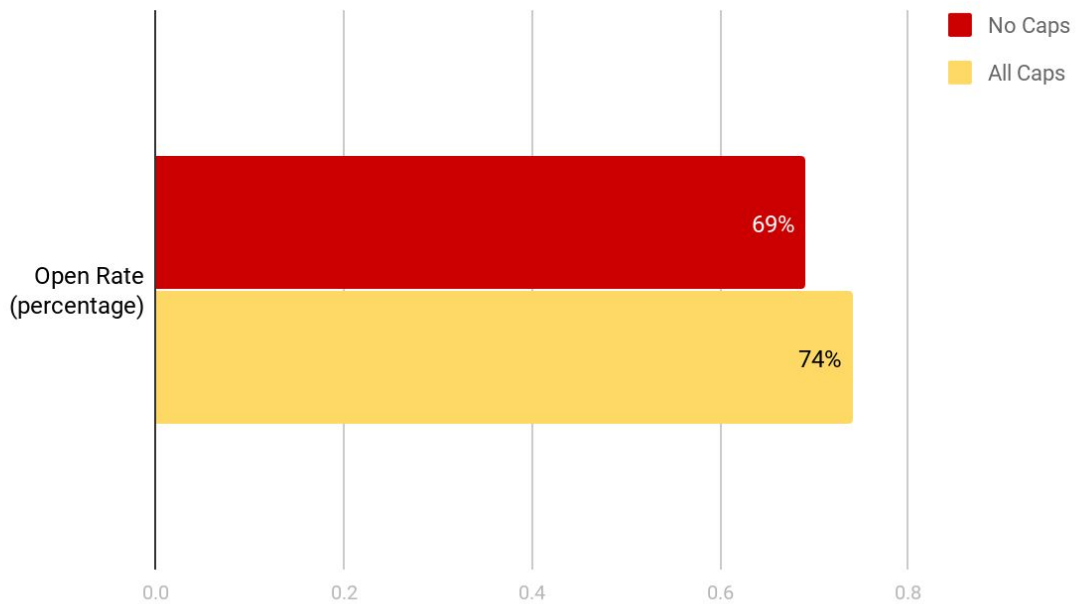
Results

Comparison of Open Rate Reported by Google Analytics



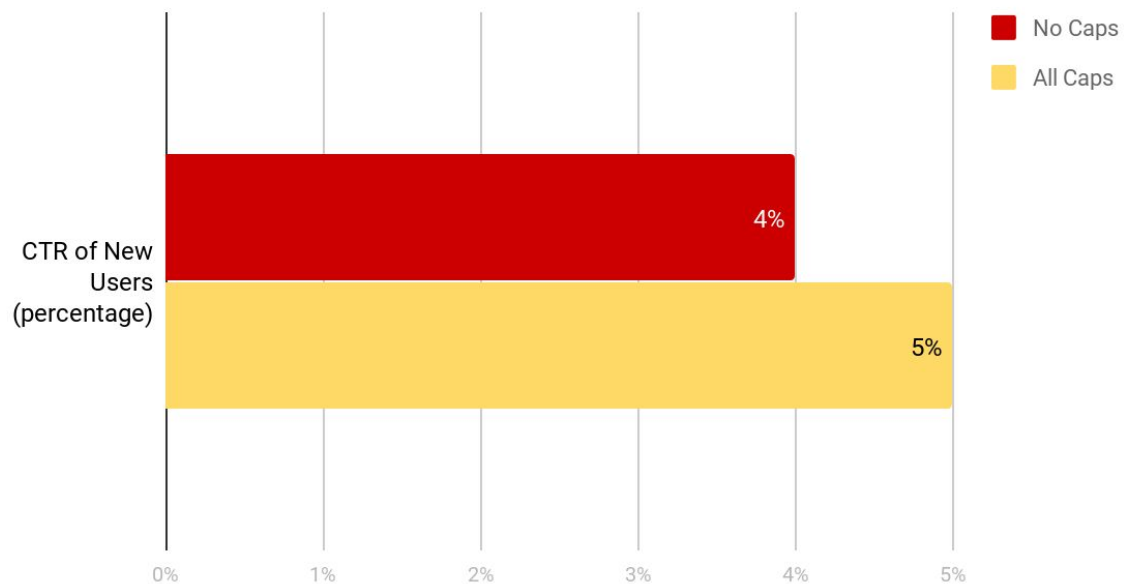
From the bar graph above, it shows that fewer people opened the No Caps email. Therefore, the All Caps had a better open rate. While the No Caps email appears to have a lower open rate than comparison email (All Caps). The difference between them of 69% and 74% is not significant in a sample this size. The p value = .129.

Comparison of Open Rate Reported by Mailchimp



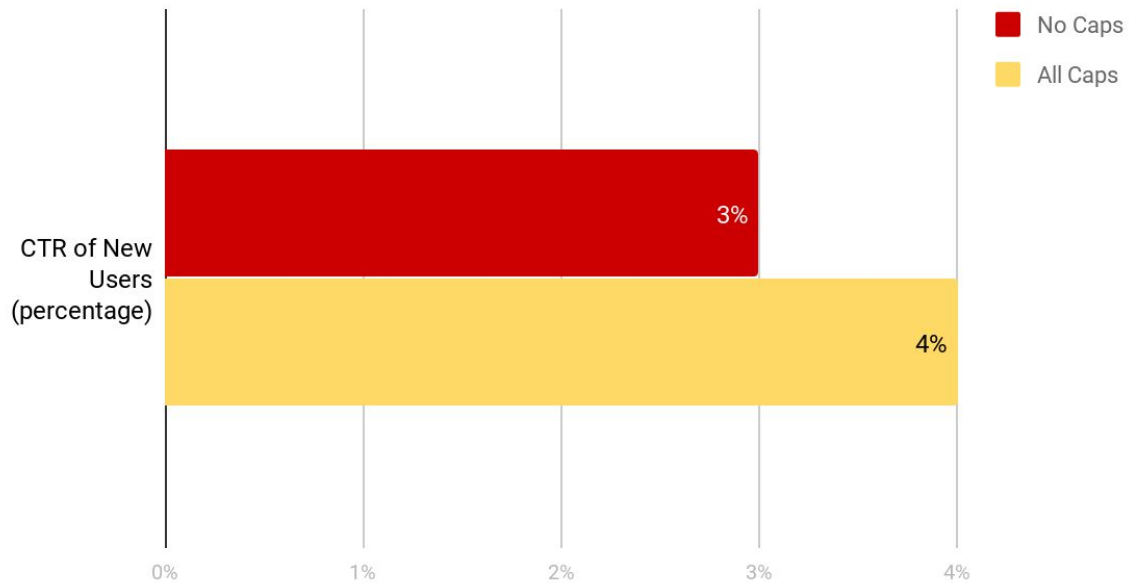
When comparing the open rate for both emails on MailChimp, we rounded to the nearest whole percentage, which determined the same open rate as reported in Google Analytics. Therefore, there was no need to report on anything lost between the two reports.

Comparison of Click-Through-Rate of New Users Reported by Google Analytics



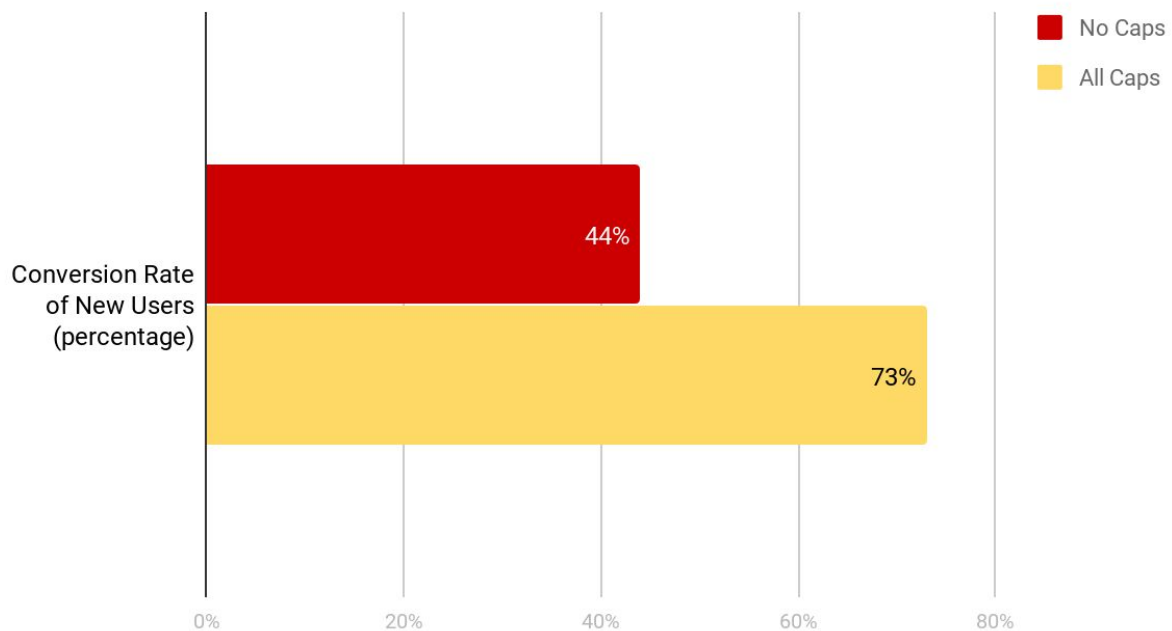
For the bar graph above, it shows that fewer people clicked on the custom URL from the No Caps email than the All Caps email. Therefore, All Caps had a better click-through rate of new users. The difference between the 4% and 5% is not statistically significant in a sample this size. The p value = .280.

Comparison of Click-Through-Rate of New Users Reported by Mailchimp



When comparing the click-through-rate for both emails on MailChimp, it shows that fewer people clicked on the custom URL from the No Caps email than the All Caps email. Similarly to the Google Analytics report, All Caps was reported to have better click-through rate, but the percentages were slightly different. The difference between the 3% and 4% is not statistically significant in a sample this size. The p value = .503. Neither of the p values from the Google Analytics and Mailchimp reports are significant, causing us to refrain from further investigation.

Comparison of Conversion Rates of New Users by Google Analytics



The bar graph above depicts the comparison of conversion rates of new users between the two email campaigns. It shows that the All Caps email achieved a conversion rate of 73%, higher than that of the No Caps email at 44%. The p value is .089, however, which is not statistically significant for this sample size.

According to our email supervisors, the BCVoice app had around 40 subscriptions before the email campaign. After our email campaigns, around 15 new subscribers were gained.

Conclusion

Although the All Caps email seemed to perform better when comparing the two disseminated emails, neither the difference in conversion rates nor CTR proved statistically significant in such a small sample size. As a result, neither email was statistically more successful than the other. Out of the 374 students who received the No Caps email, only 4 students (or 1% of students) clicked the link to download the app on the BCVoice Website. Additionally, we cannot be sure that the 1% of students who clicked the link to download the app actually followed through in subscribing to BCVoice on the app. Despite a small gain in app subscribers after the email campaign, the email was not successful.

As there was no statistical significance in the differences of conversion rates and CTR between the No Caps and All Caps email, one cannot be considered more successful than the other. However, the subject line in general may have not conveyed an importance in opening the

BCVoice email. Since there was a drop-off between users who opened the email, users who clicked the button, and users who clicked the link to download the app, the email design or message may not have been persuasive enough. Perhaps students felt there were too many steps to follow to actually get the app and did not follow through.

An issue persists in the disparity between users who clicked the link in the email to the BCVoice app web pages, users who clicked the link on the web page to take them to their app store, and users who subscribed to BCVoice within the app. As a whole campaign, only 41 new users clicked to download the app, and only around 15 (or 37%) of those users may have followed through in subscribing to BCVoice in the app. The question that arises is at what point did these users bounce or drop-off? Many steps compose the process of clicking the link to download the app and subscribing to BCVoice within the app. To start, one must click the link in the email which takes them to a page on the website instead of directly to the app store. The idea of a longer app download process might have been daunting enough to users to cause them to bounce off the subscription page on the BCVoice website. While this was an intentional extra step so that users could be tracked through Google Analytics, it may have inadvertently discouraged users from converting.

Once users reached the app store, perhaps they felt confused when they found that the app was not specific to BCVoice. It may have helped to have a mention of BCVoice on the app download page in the app store, though this was not possible as the app does not belong to Bridgewater College. Users then have to sign-in or approve the app download to allow the download to their phones to occur. Though this step is not one BCVoice can control, any mistake or delay in this step could have frustrated users. A misstep at this point in the process might add additional procedures needed to complete the download, which would have discouraged users from doing so. After that, it takes time for the app to download. During the download period, students could have been distracted or lost interest while waiting for the app to load. Even once in the app, users must go in and look for BCVoice to finally subscribe. Unfortunately, we do not have access to any data past the point in which a user clicks the link to take them to the app store, so this is educated speculation.

If the problem with the campaign begins with a lack of interest in the news source, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, it may be helpful for BCVoice to asking the students of Bridgewater College what article topics about which they would like to read during this time, let the students inform the news. This may increase appeal in the organization as a whole, as the student body could have a hand in deciding the news and might relate to it more. Polling students may also aid in campaign design and targeting, as any future campaigns could be tailored more to the students' interests.

An alteration that could be made to a future email campaign focused on the BCVoice app is to include links in the email that take users directly to their app store. Although this email would provide less specific data, it may lead to a greater increase in app subscriptions by terminating on step of the process. Unfortunately, there is little BCVoice can alter about the app

download and subscription process, as this is dictated by external sources. If BCVoice created its own app, theoretically, their subscriptions would likely increase at a greater rate. For one, the app description within the app store could be written by the organization, increasing the connection to BCVoice and clarity for the students looking to hear news from their specific school. Additionally, a BCVoice-specific app would allow the organization to track the number of downloads, thereby increasing the organization's understanding of any bouncing that may occur in the download process and the location of the bouncing. While a BCVoice-specific app may seem like a pipe dream, it may be an action worth looking into for the organization.

Appendices

Appendix A: Pre Pandemic Email

Subject:

  Need a Study Break This Weekend?  



Do ALL The Things

The Bridgewater community has more to offer than you might think. Download the BCVoice App to see all the activities you're missing out on. EP events, game highlights, the best restaurants in town — check out all the things to do around Bridgewater.

[Get the App](#)



The initial message encouraged our audience to download the BCVoice App to check out all the activities they can do around town. Our group decided to have our content focus on activities because as a First-Year you are trying to participate in new clubs and meet new people. Within our message our group also created a fear of missing out (FOMO), which “builds a sense of urgency” (Grimms, 2019). Our group wanted to create a graphic to be the first things students would see when they open the email. According to research, including something interactive such as a video or GIF, or even an image will ensure that audience members look forward to hearing from BCVoice (Grimms, 2019). The subject line for this email was to test emoji versus no emoji. The two subject lines read, “**golf emoji, skier emoji** Need a Study Break This Weekend? **mountain, hiker**” and “Need a Study Break This Weekend?” Bridgewater College does not use emojis in their email subject lines, so we wanted to test to see if emojis in the subject line would stand out in the audience's inboxes. Using emojis in the subject line was

also listed as one of the best to boost the open rate, as, “According to a report by Experian, using emojis in your subject lines can increase your open rates by 45%” (Fernandez, 2020). The creation of the button was originally designed by Kaley, but after some obstacles each group ran into when uploading it to MailChimp, the four subject line groups decided to use the button option that is offered in MailChimp. A requirement for the button was to have it above the fold as the call to action (Pophal, 2015). It was also positioned at the center bottom across all emails to maintain consistency while keeping it above the fold.

Appendix B: Post Pandemic Email

Subject:

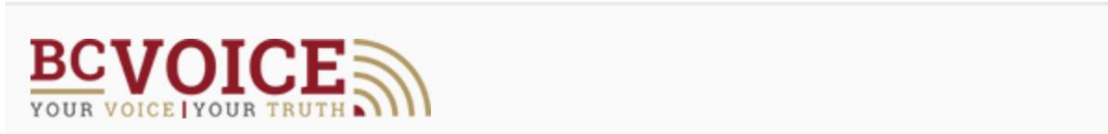
Want to stay connected?



Stay connected! BCVoice is on it. We will be reporting remotely in the coming weeks.

Don't rely on rumors to keep you informed. Get the facts.

Download the BCVoice App today.



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