A multimedia approach to communicating objective, science-based risk information about pesticides

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Background

In 2006, a government survey reported that at least 80% of people reported using the internet to find health information.[1] The amount of information available to the average consumer is expanding exponentially. For example, YouTube reports that over 72 hours of video are uploaded every minute.[2] With this increasing wealth of information, the public is looking for outlets where they can obtain information efficiently. A recent survey found that health information seekers spent 2-4 seconds, on average, deciding whether a web page was going to be useful. [1] The challenge for health and environmental educators is to develop material that is actionable, engaging, and to the point for new medias of communication.

In 2012, the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC) website received more than 2 million page views, representing a 78% increase compared to 2010. This poster will discuss the following 1) Techniques for developing effective written content, 2) Alternatives to traditional written forms of communication, and 3) Tools that can be used to effectively measure successful outreach through these media formats.

Chemical Hub Pages

NPIC Hub pages are organized to allow quick access to specific topics related to a pesticide. Rather than presenting long fact sheets with headings, NPIC presents the headings as stand-alone hyperlinks. Visitors can easily click on their choice of questions, ranging from general to highly technical.

General content in the first column is intended for those with limited scientific backgrounds. Language was written at or below the 8th grade reading level using tools in MS Word. Related topics and Podcasts are also accessible from the page.

References:

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (2010). Health literacy online: A guide to writing and designing easy-to-use health Web sites. http://www.health.gov/healthliteracyonline/Web_Guide_Health_Lit_Online.pdf

2. "Statistics." *YouTube*. Accessed 11 Apr. 2013.***http://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html***

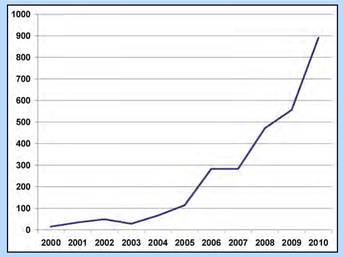
3. "Mobile Marketing Statistics 2013." *Smart Insights*. Accessed 11 Apr. 2013. ***http://www.smartinsights.com/mobile-marketing/mobile-marketing-analytics/mobile-marketing-statistics/***

Inquiry-Driven Resources

Recently NPIC created a podcast on bed bugs and pesticides in response to an increasing number of bed bug inquires.

NPIC branded its collection of podcasts as "Pestibytes." They are 1-2 minutes interviews with pesticide specialists on common pesticide questions received from the public. All podcasts are recorded using free recording software. NPIC uses web hits on our podcasts to monitor popularity. Podcasts have become one of the most frequently accessed tools on our Spanish website.

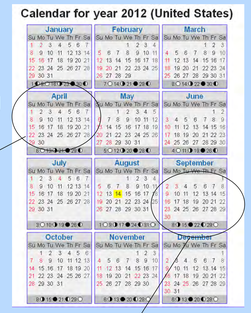
Bed Bug Related Inquiries Received by NPIC



Social Media

Social Media is a part of the continuing evolution of our communicating with the public. Using internet based tools and platforms we are sharing timely information about pesticides, ways to minimize risk, and IPM. Social media has enhanced our ability to share information in various forms, including text, images, audio, and video with an expanding audience. The English and Spanish NPIC homepages feature a New and Notable space, which is frequently reflective of social media themes for the week. Using these principles, NPIC has continued to see an upward trend in the number of likes shares and retweets.

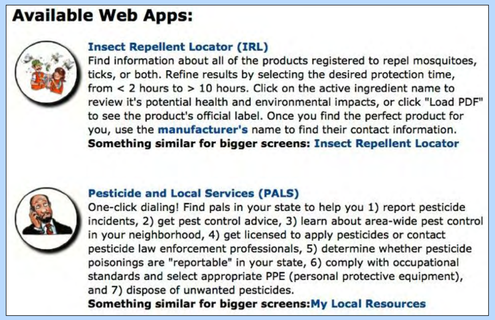
Garden Planning



Back to school

m(NPIC) Mobile Apps and Videos

Many marketing companies predict that by 2014, mobile internet usage will overtake desktop usage.[3] At NPIC, mobile phones are the second most popular way that users access NPIC social media. To meet the need for greater accessibility on mobile devices, NPIC has developed several apps. The apps are designed for quick accessibility with a user friendly interface and de-emphasized text. NPIC created 1-2 minute video tutorials demonstrating how to use each app. These apps were created using free QuickTime screen recording software.



Lessons Learned

1. Engagement with audiences on social media is greater with pictures than text or links. Timing is also key for social media posts. More posts were shared in the mornings than in the afternoons.
2. Audio files are some of the most popular Spanish resources NPIC makes available. Podcasts can be created using free software.
3. Web data can be a powerful tool for determining the information your audience needs, measuring outreach success. Many social media sites also have easily accessible tools to monitor your organization's expanding reach.

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