

The KUAPress Project

Digital publishing for the KUA community

Miranda Anne Clemson

BSMIS Fall 2010

Marketing Plan

Executive Summary:

KUAPress is a web publishing platform available to students, faculty and staff of Kimball Union Academy. The platform makes it simple to create a website, electronic portfolio or blog.

The target market includes all students at Kimball Union Academy with an emphasis on students with a marketable talent and senior students who wish college applications to stand out from the crowd.

Marketing strategies reflect the nature of marketing to a demographic that is by nature rebellious and loath to accept school sponsored tasks in addition to the assignments they already have.

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• Situation Analysis

KUAPress is a locally hosted multi-user blogging installation, using the open source platform WordPress. At present the installation is used by some faculty in their classes. All the blogs, or sites (as I will refer to them from now on) are faculty owned. Students participate as Authors, but no student owns and administrates an active site.

Administration and most faculty are inexperienced with online tools in general. None use a blog platform for any personal exploration, learning or promotion (online CV). A few faculty do use the KUAPress platform for class discussions.

2.1 Product analysis

WordPress is a very user-friendly platform and creating and configuring a site is fairly easily navigated, even for those who are not particularly facile with technology. It is extremely versatile and can be used as a content management system, a web site, discussion site, electronic portfolio, personal or organizational website.

2.1.1 Marketing Objectives

Marketing objectives are to have students enthusiastic about creating sites that are useful and enjoyable to them, that in the process students learn how to present themselves and whatever information or interest they choose in a professional, well written, well designed format.

2.1.2 Screening Criteria

In evaluating new marketing opportunities among students prime screening criteria will be individual talent. Although it would benefit any student to create and administer an online presence, students with little to say will not be as enthusiastic and time spent on these students will not be as well spent. Technological aptitude will be a second screening criterion. WordPress is easy to use even for the technologically challenged yet students who consider themselves facile with computers will be more inclined to consider an online portfolio or website. A third screening criteria will be grade level. Seniors will be more focused on the college admissions process and more likely to consider alternative methods of self-promotion.

2.1.3 Resources

Resources include a functioning installation of WordPress, onsite technical support, faculty advisors and a great deal of available help from the WordPress forums, WordPress TV and the WordPress Codex.

2.1.4 Other Marketing Plans (Marketing Program)

None at present

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2.1.5 Present Marketing Strategy

At present, marketing of the KUAPress platform takes place on a casual, one on one basis in conversations with students and faculty. Five members of the faculty regularly use the platform in their classes and in classroom sessions with students I try to promote the idea of creating sites or blogs of their own to students.

2.1.6 Marketing Collaborators - Current and Potential

Members of the faculty are my prime marketing collaborators. However, there is a backlash effect in relying on this sort of promotion. Some students are more inclined to view something suggested by faculty as a task, rather than a pleasure.

Potential marketing collaborators are faculty advisors and college counseling staff.

2.2 Customer market analysis

My market is the student at Kimball Union Academy and as such they have certain demographic characteristics in common. The obvious common characteristic is their age group. Students range in age from 13 to 20. Within this particular age group however, enormous changes take place over a very few years in individuals and so we can't generalize as much as we might an older demographic who are more likely to be stable, that is their attitudes and characters are fully formed.

Most students are from affluent families. The tuition for a boarding student is \$44, 970. 47% of students receive financial aid bringing the average boarding student cost down to about \$30,000, still out of reach for median income households (\$52,029¹). So we can say that most have grown up as privileged.

There are some exceptions to the norm. A few are scholarship students and face the pressures associated with being in a group of people who have many more resources than they do.

Approximately 25% of the student body is from other countries and in this group students come from all sorts of backgrounds, from affluent Korean families to impoverished students from Africa. Many of the foreign students have very poor English skills, which tends to isolate them into groups from the same country.

2.2.1 Product Market

Product type: Electronic Portfolio

Student needs: An easy to use method of showcasing their work

Student types: Seniors, students with a specific talent

2.2.2 Demographic Data on the Target Market

¹ U.S. Census Bureau: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html>

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Aged 13-20, drive to excel, drive to promote themselves

2.2.3 Current Student Clientele

None

2.2.3.1 Database of current student prospects

Senior roster available through Whipple Hill report

2.2.4 Student Needs – Possible Segmenting Dimensions

- Seniors wanting an edge in college admissions process.
- Students who want to display a talent

2.2.5 Identification of qualifying dimensions and determining dimensions

- Qualifying dimension: students at KUA
- Qualifying dimension: students who want to showcase work
- Determining dimension: students with confidence.
- Determining dimension: talented students with confidence

2.2.6 Identification of target market(s) (one or more specific segments)

Seniors

- Seniors facile with technology
- Seniors who want to stand out from the competition for college acceptance

Students who want to showcase a talent

- Photographers
- Musicians
- Artists

2.3.1 Product Market

Product type: Personal Website

Student needs: A global voice, in-depth online sharing of views

Student types: Students with a personal passion, writers

2.3.2 Demographic Data on the Target Market

Aged 13-20, drive to promote themselves, drive to engage with the global community, social, civic minded

2.3.3 Current Student Clientele

None

2.3.3.1 Database of current customers

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N/A

2.3.4 Student Needs – Possible Segmenting Dimensions

- Students with an interest or passion they wish to share and discuss with others.
- Students who enjoy writing

2.3.5 Identification of qualifying dimensions and determining dimensions

- Qualifying dimension: Students at KUA
- Qualifying dimension: Students with good writing skills
- Determining dimension: Students with a desire to engage a larger community than a class or teacher
- Determining dimension: Students with a desire to learn how to present work or ideas online

2.3.6 Identification of target market(s) (one or more specific segments)

Students with a passion/interest

- Students involved with a cause or interest on campus

Student writers

- Students in Honors English classes
- Students who contribute to the student newspaper

2.4 Competitor Analysis:

College application documents: For the Senior student who wants to stand out from the crowd, many will be more comfortable working within with the “normal” college essay, personal letters of recommendation and application paperwork.

Facebook: For the student with a talent, some publish to Facebook and consider that their online presence, the only online presence they need. Although many personal marketing efforts will include Facebook, and one can set up reciprocal interfaces with Facebook and KUAPress, the two serve different functions.

Wordpress.com and other free blogging sites: It is easy to get an account at wordpress.com, blogger and similar sites. These might have an advantage to students in that the school will not be aware of any personal sites or what they contain. KUAPress, on the other hand, is school-hosted and under school control.

Competitive Disadvantages for KUAPress

- KUAPress is school sanctioned and school hosted and so may not be the preferred venue for students who are highly intelligent, passionate and somewhat rebellious. (also listed under Competitive advantages)
- Some students have had experience with KUAPress in classes and view it as an assignment.
- Some students have had poor introductions to posting due to faculty inexperience.

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Competitive advantages

- KUAPress is school sanctioned and hosted and it may be easier for students to request help with it if they need it.
- A local installation is more amenable to special requests in the way of themes and plug-in
- When integration with the Whipple Hill SIS and website is complete (December 2010-January 2011), students will not even need to create an account, as their sign in to KUAPress will be identical to their "Portal" login.
- With integration with Whipple Hill, a KUAPress channel will be integrated with their class portal, giving easy, no bookmark access to the installation and any individual sites

2.4 Analysis of the Market Context – External Factors

2.4.1 Economic Environment

N/A

2.4.2 Technological Environment

The Kimball Union Academy technological environment is well equipped for an imitative of this kind. All students have personal computers. Access to public computers is available in several locations on campus. Internet access is available from 6AM to 11PM. Bandwidth is provided through a Comcast cable connection, giving students a maximum of 25 MB up and – down. The KUAPress installation is local, meaning that bandwidth to it is greater: a 1GB connection.

2.4.3 Political and Legal Environment

Kimball Union Academy is responsible for any violation of copyright by students, or anyone using the local network to publish to the web.

2.4.4 Cultural and Social Environment

KUA does not have a culture of encouraging students to use web publishing. As with many schools, the administration tends to view engagement online with a great deal of suspicion and some fear. Facebook is viewed solely as a time waster for students, although it can be used to very good effect in a personal marketing strategy. Blogging, if it is considered at all, is viewed as an online journaling mechanism. Some faculty are interested in Web 2.0 tools, few have time to explore them. Many in the administration and among faculty do not have any facility or understanding of the tools available to the students. The students lack guidance in managing their online presence, and managing their online interactions. KUA counsels students in cyberbullying, guarding their privacy and the like. The school brings in outside speakers who present on the dangers of online interaction but fails to offer much concrete instruction in how to interact in a responsible manner.

We teach our students what to avoid, but not what to embrace. We teach them about the dangers, but we don't teach them about the rewards.

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2.5 S.W.O.T. and Key Factors from Situation Analysis

2.5.1 Strengths

- Local installation and local technical support, some illusion of a “walled garden”, (safety).
- Some faculty, having used the platform, will be able to offer encouragement and support
- Ease of use for technologically inexperienced users
- More complex configuration available to experienced users

2.5.2 Weaknesses

- Organizational culture not oriented toward engagement with general public (web publishing)

2.5.3 Opportunities

- Possible integration with Whipple Hill SIS already in use at the school
- International student enrollment growing

2.5.4 Threats

- KAA has no web publishing policy, other than the Acceptable Use Policy

3. Marketing Plan Objectives

- The marketing plan for KUAPress focuses first on reaching a selected section of the student body, those who are above average in intelligence and understanding of the power of online publishing and presentation. Once a few student sites are in place, promotion efforts in the local KUA community will build positive feedback for the student site owners and demonstrate the possibilities to the student body at large. In conjunction with this effort, a marketing presentation to the College Counseling staff is planned.
- A secondary focus is that of promotion of KUAPress as a platform to the school community at large, steering interest toward class sites such as the Wildlife Biology, Environmental Science and Digital Photography site. Interaction in the way of comments is vital to the understanding of web publishing as an interactive medium.

4. Differentiation and Positioning

- Most students are unaware of web publishing possibilities, other than uploading photos to Facebook so differentiation from other site building or blogging platforms is simplified. The first one they know about is the one they’ll likely use.
- A personal site at KUAPress is much more versatile and customizable than a Facebook profile page.

5. Marketing Strategy

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I believe that marketing to students will have to be low-key, a “soft-sell” in order to succeed. The students at Kimball Union Academy are very scheduled, their time very regimented. Anything that appears as a school task will be resented. Students must see web publishing as a chance to own the site and publish content chosen by themselves.

5.1 Target Market–Students who want an edge in the college admission process

5.1.1 Product – Digital Portfolio

A digital portfolio of school work (written and graphic) can be included with college applications and will give polish and professionalism to the usual application.

5.1.2 Promotion – Present to College Counseling Department

A presentation to the College Counseling department is planned. The presentation will include a sample portfolio and example of how easy it is to set up (demo: five minute site)

5.1.3 Promotion – Example portfolio site

The example portfolio will include sample essays in English, fine arts work, History papers and projects, Wildlife Biology posters and research papers.

5.1.4 Promotion – Email solicitation to Seniors

With approval from the administration, an email will be sent to all Seniors, inviting them to visit the sample portfolio and urging them to consider creating such a site as well as offering help in creating it.

5.1.5 Promotion – Evening e-portfolio workshop for seniors

An evening workshop will be offered to Seniors who wish to create a portfolio. This will be repeated at monthly intervals.

5.2 Target Market –Students with a talent

5.2.1 Product – Electronic art or writing portfolio

5.2.2 Promotion – one on one solicitation to selected students

Approach students identified as having product in their area, first through email, then through personal contact. Include links and demo of photography themes.

5.2.3 Promotion – Daily Bulletin

Include address and squib in the Daily Bulletin push page e.g.:

The latest and greatest in digital photography – see it at kua.press.kua.org

5.3 Target Market – All Students

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5.3.1 Product – Personal or special interest website

5.3.2 Promotion – Print media

Place small printed – kua.press.kua.org signs strategic locations – ask housekeeping about signs in bathrooms

5.3.3 Promotion –Daily Bulletin

express yourself > kua.press.kua.org

5.3.3 Promotion – whiteboard

see me at IMHO >kua.press.kua.org

Create your site at kua.press.kua.org