Developing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Communicating Peace

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War Prevention Initiative

• Project of the Jubitz Family Foundation
• Located in Portland, OR, USA
• Mission: To advance the Global Peace System by supporting, developing and collaborating with peacebuilding efforts in all sectors of society
• We do so by informing and educating about alternative to war and violence
Peace Science Digest

- Project of the War Prevention Initiative

- Mission: *to make peace science research more accessible, understandable, and useful*

- Targets “peacebuilders, advocates, educators, media, elected officials, and other beneficiaries”

- Produces 8 issues per year, each featuring 5 articles
How do we know that we are informing and educating about alternatives to war and violence?
Focus: Peace Science Digest

• Most public-facing and consistent output
• Allows us to pull different sources of evidence, including:
  • Survey results
  • Website analytics
  • Social media analytics
  • Newsletter analytics
  • Direct feedback from staff, Board of Directors, partners, and other key stakeholders
  • Personal interviews with readers
March 2019

• Start of Volume 4, Issue 1
• Peace Science Digest had produced 24 issues, summarizing 120 peer-reviewed articles
• Outputs: printed magazine, website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and weekly newsletter
• Limited staff capacity
• No systematic collection of direct feedback or other analytics
• Vague understanding of the audience
Our Approach

• Identifying the Need
• Collecting an Evidence Base
• Gaining Consensus
Identifying the Need: Results from the Reader Survey (May 2019)

• 54 respondents
• Largest respondent category was white (81%) men (58%) over 60 (41%)
• Smallest respondent category was female (39%) people of color under 30 (6%)
• 45% have a Master’s degree, 38% have a PhD
• 28% work in a non-profit or non-governmental organization, 21% worked in a university setting, 19% are retired
Identifying the Need: Reported Use

• “I am a lecturer in peace and conflict studies and it frames relevant issues to bring to my professional life, as well as my activist self.”

• “Sorry can't remember at the moment but the digest really helps me stay informed on scholarly work that is relevant to my profession.”

• “I’m a Peace Studies professor and I read the digest regularly to keep abreast of issues in my field.”

• “Cite the research in an issue-based meeting at work to inform the conversation.”
Identifying the Need: Theory of Change

• Survey results indicated
  • Need for more information
  • Need to understand our current audience and target audience
  • Revisit the Peace Science Digest’s mission, vision, and goals

• Theory of Change
  • Need to identify long-term goals
  • Examine how our activities support our goals
  • Make explicit our operating assumptions
  • Better understand the broader context
Collecting an Evidence Base: Summer 2019

• Next steps following survey results and discussion:
  • Conduct Personal interviews
  • Develop audience personas
  • Network analysis
  • Market analysis
  • Extant literature on science communications, cognition, and the policy-making process
Collecting an Evidence Base: Personal Interviews

• 22 survey respondents volunteered for personal interviews
  • Removed volunteers who had a personal relationship to the Digest
  • Randomly chose half --> 7 contacted
  • 2 respondents gave over the phone interviews

• Focus
  • How did you find out about the Peace Science Digest?
  • Why do you chose to read academic research?
Collecting an Evidence Base: Audience Personas

- Marketing technique to create a board idea of the ideal stakeholder, including a high-level understanding of what they do and what’s important to them.
- 5 personas: Ron, Dale, Liz, Jay, Jennifer
Collecting an Evidence Base: Who is in our network?

- Survey results
- Facebook analytics
- Twitter analytics
- Newsletter analytics
- Google analytics
Collecting an Evidence Base: What market are we competing in?

• Other research digests

• Other projects with goal to bridge research and practice
Collecting an Evidence Base: Research to Policy

- Four approaches
  - Knowledge shapes policy
  - Politics shape knowledge
  - Co-production
  - Autonomous spheres

Citation
Collecting an Evidence Base: How do people process information?

• Heuristics, “a mental shortcut that allows people to solve problems and make judgements quickly and efficiently.”
• Example of Cognitive Biases = Confirmation Bias

Citation:
Gaining a Consensus: Staff Retreat

• September 2019

• Goals/expectations for the meeting
  • Develop a draft Theory of Change
  • Devote time to clarify our audience and how to engage them
  • Think big picture (refine mission, vision, and goals)
Gaining a Consensus: Theory of Change

Gaining a Consensus: Problem Statement

There is a gap between what academic research says about peace and violence, and working knowledge that policy makers and practitioners use. Furthermore, there is a delay in application of academic research in policy and practice.
Gaining a Consensus: Long-term Change

• Our audience will change or improve their behaviors by integrating lessons from the Peace Science Digest.

• The peacebuilding field will become stronger changing the narrative and increasing the legitimacy of peace science.

• We contribute to a narrative change about war and peace by challenging a predominant militarist narrative on foreign policy.

• The demographic make-up of the peace field becomes more diverse.
Gaining Consensus: Reiterate the Problem Statement

There is a gap between what academic research says peace and violence and working knowledge that policy makers and practitioners use. Furthermore, there is a delay in application of academic research in policy and practice. As result, traditional and predominant militarist narratives that inform policy and practice are seen as more legitimate and common-sense. This militarist narrative is informed by masculinities and racism, which stifles diversity in the field of peace and security.
Gaining a Consensus: Key Assumptions

• Practitioners and policy-makers rely on academic research to inform their work.

• Practitioners and policy-makers are receptive to research that may challenge their existing beliefs.

• The research published in the Peace Science Digest is generalizable.

• There are problems in the world that can be solved by research. We understand how to apply research to solve problems.

• There is a predominate militarist narrative in which knowledge and/or awareness about peace science research can counteract.

• There is a diversity problem in the field of peace and security.
Gaining Consensus: Mapping it out

Problem Statement

Key Audience: Elected officials

Entry Points:
Officials’ staff, lobbying organizations, local newspaper and media

Steps to bring about change:
• Share specific, actionable, academic research that challenges militarist narrative
• Target media outlets to publish or share research findings

Measurable Effect?
• Citations and references to the Peace Science Digest
• Increased engagement on social media
• Meetings with elected officials

Wider Benefit?
• Fewer advocates for militarized foreign policy
• Less militarized foreign policy
• More federal funding for peacebuilding initiatives
Next Steps for **Theory of Change**

- Refine Problem Statement, Long-Term Goals, and Key Assumptions
- Develop and execute a monitoring plan
- Develop infrastructure to systematically collect data on key assumptions and audience
- Identify an external consultant to validate our approach
Next Steps for Peace Science Digest

- Relaunch Peace Science Digest in 2020
  - Ending Volume, Issue format
  - Maintain Special Issues
- Advisory Council
  - Development
  - Strategic Communications
- Design and Web Development
Thank you!

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