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IRB STATEMENT:

This project does not fall under the category of systematic investigations. It will not collect data from Cal Poly students or employees as subjects. It does not attempt to answer research questions. Therefore, this project does not need to be reviewed by the California Polytechnic State University Institutional Review Board.
ABOUT THE DESIGNER

My name is Saira Costo and I am a 4th year in Graphic Communication. I am concentrating in Design Reproduction Technology and am hoping to one day work in the sports industry as a social media manager or graphic design and branding. I am originally from Sacramento CA, but I am hoping am hoping to pursue my passion anywhere in CA or in Arizona.

On campus, I have been able to get involved with sports as I work as a Graphic Design Intern for the Cal Poly Athletics Marketing Team. I also work for the football team by creating content and managing their social media page.
ABSTRACT

For my senior project I will be revamping the Cal Poly Athletics Social Media Look and Feel with a new social media specific branding guide and mock ups of posts specified to the Cal Poly Football team. The goal of my project is to create a social media look for Instagram and Twitter that will drive more engagement and interest with followers and fans on campus. I will be using the Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT) to describe the importance of humanizing players and creating connections through social media. I will also be defining the three most important elements of branding to create a branding guideline that will keep the audience engaged in the events offered by the teams. The final product will include a summary of the importance of social media marketing, posting ideas, and a mockup of the social media graphics. The deliverables will be available as links to my BeHance page digitally.
Currently, at Cal Poly, the Athletics Marketing department has implemented engaging social media tactics with each sport, but they lack key components of the Social Information Processing theory and branding guidelines in social media posts. To help rebuild this social media structure and begin to create an engaging environment for fans to interact with their favorite players on campus, a solid algorithm for social media posts needs to be implemented. Social media has been a key way to communicate with fans and keep them loyal, it ultimately boosts game attendance, popularity, ticket sales, community support, and sponsor and program interest. To start this process, it is important to understand how the Social Information Processing theory plays a role in sports and how it is supported by consistent branding.

PROJECT GOAL
The Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT) is the way that people develop relationships and process social situations. This theory has become more prevalent in online situations as technology and social media use increase in society, it is called computer mediated communication (CMC). Humans are programmed to naturally create relationships, no matter the basis of how they make them, but CMC lacks face to face interaction. This void is filled by the sharing of text and photos through online media – social media.

CONNECTIONS | The SIPT identifies how connections are formed in a virtual format, this connection is enhanced with social media, also called Computer Mediated Communications (CMC). CMC bypasses the connections that were previously formed through face to face interaction, allowing humans to interpret interactions textually to determine the relationship. Social queues that were previously based on face to face reactions have been replaced with pictures, emojis, and the use of certain language in texts. That being said, the internet has allowed interactions that would otherwise not happen in real life from anywhere in the world, creating a social bond that is defined by the SIPT.
**HUMANIZING** | By giving the fans a more personal look into players’ lives through social media, it has brought fans to have a more humanized view of their favorite players. A lot of the time athletes are seen as heroic figures because of the way they are portrayed in the media. They are praised by incredible plays and advanced physical performances, but this also makes the athlete have to live to a standard that is not always attainable, that is why it is important to use social media to show a more personal side to these athletes. Fans are able to process these personal social interactions to relate more to these players, they form genuine and human connections, benefiting the players’ support system. Along with humanizing, fans are able to form connections with the players through social media that they would not develop through face to face engagement.

**SOCIAL MEDIA** | Social media is the forefront of marketing as it is one of the most successful tactics to spread brand awareness to an audience, it has also become the best place to be a fan of sports. By using the SIPT, it proves that these mediated connections between the players and their fans over social media is creating a virtual bond— one that develops as the player or team posts more about their values and day to day activities. Over the past 5 years, social media has served as the number one liaison between loyal fans and their favorite sports teams, making it the perfect place to see the SIPT in action. Creating a human connection has proven to sky rocket game attendance, sales, and engagement with teams, this personal connection can all be formed through social media.
BRANDING
Branding in sports is the key to creating an identity to your team and sharing core values with their fans and followers. By being able to display these values, it creates a place for fans to find commonalities and ways to trust their favorite teams and players. In turn, this communicates good messages that will make a team stand out against their competitors and gain fans and sponsors loyalty when making decisions. To create a brand, there are branding guidelines that are important to follow, they create a consistency that reinforces and establishes the brand’s image - ultimately making it identifiable against competitors. In sports, branding is essential because it will gain fans’ support against other teams based on how consistent and recognizable they are as a brand.

CONSISTENCY I Consistency is a vital part to creating a popular brand, it makes the brand even more recognizable for supporters. To help create consistency, branding guidelines must be set in place and followed, this allows colors, logos, and fonts to be used throughout digital marketing materials creating recognition of a brand across platforms to further establish its look. On a social media platform, branding must be followed across all platforms, this makes it so that all targeted audiences are engaged with the content that is being produced. Unifying visual elements such as colors and graphics help make the teams stand out against each other because it creates a contrast towards others. Making sure that all elements are being consistently shared across platforms further establishes the brand.
**RELEVANCY**  A good brand always keeps their fans engaged, this can be done by making sure that it is always relevant and up to date on trends. Brands must be able to be adaptable while also sticking to the guidelines set in place for that brand. Fans will stay loyal to brands that can be receptive to change and what is trending online. Trends are important because they keep brands like sports teams relevant with the large audience that they are trying to keep involved. When a brand is able to keep up relevance it is building credibility and maintaining its fan base.

**AUDIENCE**  Brands must understand their target audience, that way they can effectively communicate with their fans. The first step to managing this audience is to define it and with sports this group can start to get very large, which is why it is important to constantly do market research on your targeted fans. By being able to understand your audience, the brand can tailor the information and ads to their fans. Sports teams need to be able to communicate and relate to all their fans, as a lot of pro teams have huge followings, they need to make sure to continue to spark the interest of all of their fans.
CREATIVE OBJECTIVES

To showcase Cal Poly Athletics achievements and history through graphics with BOLD, UNIQUE, and INSPIRING design elements.

Focus on TRENDS and INNOVATION to keep consistent in our designs that are presented to our community.

We are OPTIMISTIC and ENTHUSIASTIC about our school and community, so our visuals must also represent this style of mind.

We make decisions with INTEGRITY and CHARACTER that will be represented in our visuals and promotional materials.

A MUSTANG IS NEVER CONQUERED.

TARGET AUDIENCE

We value and respect our supporters and competitors.

We want to be able to give our fans the best experience they can get, whether they are at the game or not. To do this, we will create content that will foster a deeper connection between player and fan. This will create loyal relationships and fans for our talented athletes.

DESIGN ELEMENTS

23
Jersey Material

Brush Strokes

SLO Topography

Grain effect

Mustang

Grain effect

TYPEFACES

Mustang
GIBSON

BALBOA

PROHIBITION

ABRIL

FATFACE

COHOYSLANG

Ropest

These are the primary, secondary, and tertiary typefaces that will be used in the graphics. The other families are to be used in stylistic approaches to graphics-to be used dynamically.

Primary: GIBSON
Secondary: BALBOA
Tertiary: Ropest

All typefaces can be used in the weight that best supports the design.

LOGOS

Primary logos include school colors plus black and white only. Every graphic is required to have the primary logo.

The Mustang logo is a secondary logo, but it should be used as much as possible and when applicable.

Secondary colors must be incorporated in every graphic. There should not be any other colors used as the centerpiece of the graphics unless approved.

Stylistic approaches must always be approved prior to posting.

COLORS

Player of the Week

ZION HALL

19

47 Yard Field Goal

Cal Poly vs. Portland

THE CLIMB

GAME 12
REFLECTION

This project was a great experience and I loved going through the creative process to create it. I was able to grow my skillset and see how far I could expand my design capabilities. I can’t wait to see if any of my design ideas are going to be of use to the Cal Poly Marketing team as I plan on presenting some of the design components with them. I am so proud of myself for completing this project. I am excited to add this piece to my portfolio and exhibit the skills I have learned over the course of my years in the Graphic Communication program and with football. Link to report: Report

Thank You!

Saira C.