



Social Media and the Army

Implications for Outreach and Recruiting

Jennie W. Wenger, Heather Krull, Elizabeth Bodine-Baron, Eric V. Larson, Joshua Mendelsohn,

Tepring Piquado, and Christine Anne Vaughan

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The U.S. Army's outreach and recruiting efforts now encompass social media platforms. As part of these efforts, the Army Marketing and Research Group uses its website (GoArmy.com) and social media (Facebook and Twitter). The authors analyzed these efforts to understand if and how potential recruits and others are engaging with content and offer recommendations related to the Army's technology-based outreach efforts.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What platforms are used, and how much are they used?
- What online material engages people, and who is engaged? To what effect?



KEY FINDINGS

GoArmy.com visitors are interested in career information, and the site is used more intensively in populated areas and in immigrant and ethnic communities

- Visitors to GoArmy.com are likely to view pages containing career-related information and, to a lesser extent, information about procedures and requirements to join the military.
- The number of visitors is positively correlated with contracts, but the relationship is very small.
- People living in densely populated areas and those living in places with higher proportions of minority groups and immigrants appear to use GoArmy.com more intensively than others. In some cases, there are more contracts than would be expected in these areas.

@GoArmy's Twitter is a good source for building awareness of Army culture, but the platform is less effective in producing contracts

- Content originating from @GoArmy focuses on careers, the Army in general, and uses social media–

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specific language. Other service accounts (e.g., Marines, Peace Corps) focus on values and recruiting.

- Content of mentions and retweets by @GoArmy followers tends to be about sports or history.

GoArmy's Facebook page has an audience made up of the general public, soldiers, veterans, military families, and potential recruits

- The Army's Facebook account has substantial potential for creating a positive image of an Army career for precisely the people who are in a position to influence potential recruits.
- Social media platforms offer a wealth of information and the potential to determine how the audience responds to specific posts and information.
- Information collected as part of this project suggests that the response to images of women serving as soldiers generally is quite positive.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Gain a better understanding of the audience for different communication channels.
- Build the follower base.
- Develop additional metrics to measure communication effectiveness.
- Continue to explore social media data as a measure of audience reactions to Army-relevant information.