Weston College: S.P.A.C.E campaign raising e-Safety awareness

Summary

Weston College have developed a new e-safety campaign, which has improved the students’ understanding of safeguarding issues. The e-safety campaign is helping students to ‘think before you click’ and learn how to change their Facebook privacy settings and adopt good practice when using social networking sites. The college has also held successful e-safety themed awareness days, including a competition to encourage students to create their own resources and e-media.

About Weston College

With over 3500 FE and HE students, Weston College has transformed itself in the last nine years and has maintained its position as one of the top performing colleges in the West of England for the last four years. It has achieved significant success with examination achievement rates at 99.8% for A Level and 100% for vocational courses. The latest Ofsted report is exceptional with recognition of high quality teaching and learning and praise for a rich and varied curriculum describing the support given to students as “outstanding”.

Weston College offers more than 100 vocational courses, 27 A Levels and an ever increasing range of very popular Apprenticeships. In 2007 the College opened the ‘state-of-the-art’ University Campus which houses Arts, Media, Design, Music and a Sixth Form Centre. It also houses Degree Level education delivered in partnership with Bath Spa University. Weston College’s Knightstone Campus also includes the latest technologies and state-of-the-art facilities with an industry standard fitness suite and gym, world-class training kitchens, a top restaurant, Higher Education Centre, Electrical Installation Training Centre. Both sites benefit from the innovative LibraryPlus facilities and service. A third campus - the South West Skills Campus houses the Construction and Engineering Centre of Excellence and the bespoke Business Enterprise Centre.
The challenge

Sheena Palmer, Learning Technology and Resources Manager at Weston College wanted to enhance and improve the awareness of e-safety resources throughout the college at its 3 main campuses. In order to do this she formed a close-knit team of staff dedicated to researching and developing the kind of materials needed to support a new awareness campaign.

One of the main challenges was to create a campaign brand and materials that students could easily relate to and find useful, and so the expertise of the College marketing team was called upon.

Developing the materials and the slogan was something that was a considerable test and an important factor to ensure that e-safety could be clearly embedded in the consciousness of both existing and new students.

“We knew we needed a strong brand that would have impact among the students; we believe the S.P.A.C.E. logo and materials have done just that. By the end of the launch day, it seemed as if all students and staff were ‘S.P.A.C.E. aware” Jon Pickard, Lead Designer.

In order to help facilitate the project and raise the awareness of safeguarding issues, Sheena devised and planned an e-safety campaign launch day, held on the 7th Feb to coincide with international Safer Internet Day. (organised by Insafe each year in to promote safer and more responsible use of online technology and mobile phones).

It was not just a safeguarding message that the college wanted to get across, but also the kind of support systems available to students should they experience any other form of online abuse. Many students are aware of cyberbullying and the effect it can have, as Karen Derby explains:

“Bullying in the playground was pushing and shoving, whereas now it’s cyberbullying and it’s much worse as it’s constant and it’s really personal, it’s like you can’t escape from it, whereas when it was at school you could escape and go home – but now it’s everywhere, on your phone, the laptop. This campaign will help students to know where to get help at College.”
The activity

Sheena was discussing with colleagues during a meeting the key policies and concepts that the college already had in place and how these could be translated into something that the students could engage with.

This was when she came up with the acronym S.P.A.C.E, which stands for:

S = Select online friends carefully
P = Protect personal information
A = Act wisely – protect your online reputation
C = Control privacy settings
E = Expose cyberbullying or abuse

It was thought that this would work well not only as a slogan, but would be something that the students could connect with. So the team worked closely with the marketing department to produce an attractive and recognisable logo.

Prior to the launch they organised a teaser campaign, which was called ‘are you ready to launch?’ They had very visual posters put up around the college to help make students aware of the e-safety campaign day, on the 7th Feb.

For the actual launch day itself, there were stands at each of the 3 campuses and these were jointly manned by staff and HE computing students, who were on-hand to provide advice, particularly on Facebook privacy settings. They also had cyberbullying videos and quizzes to test the students’ knowledge.

“Another aspect of Facebook that I was unaware of is that when you reach 18 the settings change automatically and you need to actively reset them to your own levels” - Sheena Palmer, Learning Technologies and Resources Manager

Each student could take away with them an e-safety pack, which had products that were all branded with the S.P.A.C.E slogan. The pack included:

- a pen
- a T-shirt
- spacebar stickers (for sticking to a computer space-bar key)
- USB card
- stress ball as well as a range of information leaflets

During the launch day, Sheena jointly launched a competition for the students, which was themed around e-safety in order to get the students to create their own e-safety resources.
The competition was focussed around the following activities:

- A one minute information film on eSafety or cyberbullying, suitable for upload to YouTube and / or mobile phone, and Weston College website.
- A one minute drama / docu-drama, suitable for upload to YouTube and / or mobile phone, and Weston College website. Include original music if you wish.
- Create sample materials for a promotional campaign, e.g. Poster, mouse mat using the SPACE logo and branding.
- Write and be ready to perform (on Friday 30th March) a short play (maximum 5 minutes) on eSafety or cyberbullying.

The winning student would win an iPad 2 as a prize for the best work produced.

**The outcomes**

One piece of work that stood out more than the other competition entries was a short animated video from animation student Chris Stone, his piece featured sound effects and safeguarding messages. The video is expertly produced and has a clear message which students can relate to. As a result the college is going to make the video available for other students to watch as part of the S.P.A.C.E resources available through the college VLE.

![Competition winner Chris Stone being presented with his iPad 2 by Sheena Palmer](image)

“"I don’t think that there is any student or member of staff that does not know what S.P.A.C.E is, so I think we have achieved what we set out to in terms of awareness” Sheena Palmer, Learning Technologies and Resources Manager

As an on-going part of the project there are 3 different posters that are constantly displayed in all the IT and learning resource rooms. All student computers have the S.P.A.C.E sticker on the space bar and the message is reinforced through the digital displays and as the screen saver on all student computers. They also developed a tutorial session, which all level 1, 2 and 3 students have completed; this has helped to further raise awareness.

As a result of the launch day and campaign, Chris has changed his own privacy settings on Facebook based on the knowledge gained on the day.

“The other night I was checking my Facebook privacy policy and just making sure it was set to friends only and not open to everyone. So we tested this out and
tried to find my page on Google and I don’t think we could.” - Chris Stone, Animation Student.

“I hope the students feel like they are supported, because the college does take e-safety seriously” - Sheena Palmer, Learning Technologies and Resources Manager

The impact

As social media becomes more and more popular, it is something that is ever present in a fast, technologically advancing society. This means that students are at the forefront of this evolution, using the latest mobile and communication devices to connect to the world around them. That is why it is important that students have the required knowledge and support, especially considering how easy it is to post anything up to the internet.

This is why Weston College are working very hard to make sure that their students are aware of safeguarding issues, but not only that they are engaging directly with the students face-to-face and through interesting activities, such as their competition.

Weston College’s e-safety campaign is certainly a model that has enhanced awareness, with a powerful and engaging brand. This is proving to be much more effective than static documents uploaded to a website.

Since the competition and launch of the campaign the e-safety course has had 2500 website hits and the S.P.A.C.E resources have had over 1115 hits.

The project is sustainable, with the college planning to move to Moodle 2 over the summer period. There are also plans to pre-enrol all students with the e-safety courses as part of the next re-launch in February 2013. Their aim is to provide each student with both the knowledge and support that they need to help equip and protect them.

The lessons learned

“Now that the project has finished I think that next year we will look to involve more students as this year was focussed more towards creative arts students, so I would like to increase the range and types of activities available to students” - Sheena Palmer, Learning Technologies and Resources Manager
Useful links

Weston College website

Weston College Facebook S.P.A.C.E

Jisc RSC e-safety advice

Safer Internet Day

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