UMIACS Faculty Presentation and Discussion on Publicity and Outreach

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Session was led by Allison. ***Goal:*** Going to break into groups and brainstorm. How do we think different (including using fonts)

- Defining outreach: Engaging locally and broadly
- We've been struggling with how to address the question of "why"
- The difficulty is building the next century's reputation
- How to attract resources - it's not just about writing good grant proposals
- Getting great PhD students - communicating with them using their media (they don't go through front door websites)
- Attracting campus partnerships

Outreach

- In the absence of good information, bad information fills in the gaps
- Low-hanging fruit - Twitter feed on UMIACS webpage
- Example: Connections between UMD units - showing happy communities
- Example: Georgia Tech - talking about UMD webpage - showing respect in community
- Example: UMIACS retreat - integrating people into community
- Proposal: Tweet about UMIACS representation at conferences
- Proposal: Get involved in co-sponsoring events
- Expensive fruit
- Webinars (a la Stanford) - 126k signed up for Norvig's AI course
- All-Labs Symposium - Shared keynote speaker, each lab has a bunch of talks (HCIL already does this, other labs might want to join in)
- Video spots (a la MIT) - dynamic content
- Going to break into groups to learn
  - What do we want to tell
  - Who is doing it well
  - Whom do we want to reach

Breakout Sessions Reports

--TELL --

Group 6:

- UMIACS should focus on how multidisciplinary the organization is
- We should have content that's interactive
- To showcase 2-5 minute videos
- Interviews are a nice format that don't require as much effort of the part of the interviewee
- Interactive demos help for educational goals and for impact and understanding
- Who
- The focus of the UMIACS webpage should be the public at large
- Twitter as a platform
- Big return for a small investment
- Should be coordinated by a single, designated person using something like TweetDeck

Group 5:

- The focus on the UMIACS webpage should be soundbites rather showcasing people or groups (which have their own pages)
- All content should have a sunset clause so that we don't have stale presentation
- Content should be throttled (not too much at once)
- Focus on long-term, lasting impact (e.g. not too many people knew about the specifics of featured cholera research)
- FindBugs
- Emergency response

Group 3:

- Dichotomy between popular press (UMD is poor at that) vs. people with money
- Leadership should be targeting people with money
- UMD website is doing better job of showcasing UMIACS accomplishments

Group 2:

- Has to be high profile, elevate stuff that's already in the lab
- Should be focused on the general public
- Events should be timely and relevant

Group 1:

- Stories should be historically focused (Steve Jobs came here and got a great idea) so that they have longevity and impact
- For recruitment, we also need to convey how much fun it is to be here
- Talk about outcomes for students / postdocs
- Talk about how awesome the support staff is
- Talk about what we're good at
- We have a lot of stuff; we want to expose it all in a good way (but not e-mail)

-- WHY --

Group 3:

- To get good placements, we need to reach out to academic peers better
- In terms of media, we should have meetings with reporters, etc.
- UMIACS can also provide a conduit for getting access to experts
- For industry, the website is crucial
- UMIACS should also provide a way for connecting with
- Students
- Alumni
- A newsletter is a good means of reaching out to more traditional media consumers
- But it needs lots of good pictures and engaging writing
- The journal Science has write-ups of late breaking research; it requires a lot of effort but is high visibility
- Talks
    - Ted Talks: Not for everyone, but really engaging
    - Showcase great lecturers like David Mount

Group 4:

- Who is our audience: (1) Bloggers and media (2) University staff
- Build a brand with a big *I* for interdisciplinary or "you, me, and computer science"

Group 1:

- Selling our location well (e.g. Stanford sells the valley)
- Putting our stuff up for download (e.g. Google Labs)
- Look at examples at the lab level (e.g. CLIP vs. JHU's CLSP)
- Look at UMIACS-level equivalent (e.g. ISR in UMD, ISI at USC)

Group 6:

- How can we automate this process better
- Using the pubs@umiacs framework
- Create a sample/template for release on page
- Create a webform to populate a page
- Better stories to showcase large group awards
- Probably need a designated communication person (e.g. part time staff)
- This new person could reach out to staff members, faculty, etc.
- It would also provide uniformity
- What platforms do we want to focus
- LinkedIn: Better links to industry (CxO)
- Facebook: not very useful, just brand awareness
- For all of this, we need the content first

Group 2:

- Whatever we do, it must be done professionally
- Existing staff members just won't cut it
- We also can't just reproduce content from the lab level
- If a slightly disinterested user doesn't find it at the top level, they'll leave
- Still, the onus at the lowest level is on the individual labs
- University needs this information to bring focus at the state level

Group 3:

- MediaLab, Stanford are good examples, but they have more resources
- HCIL is a good example inside UMD

Recap

- What to tell
  - Focus hot profiles
  - Expose out big impact
  - Display interesting, unique ideas
  - Show that people associated with UMIACS go on to get great jobs
  - Prove that we're interdisciplinary and fun
- Models
  - Stanford
  - Medialab
  - JHU CLSP
  - TED talks

- Branding: How can spin the UMIACS name into something that people will "get"
- How are we reaching out to whom
  - Use soundbites that are accessible to people outside the field
  - Get other people to do the hard stuff for us
  - Maryland public television interviewing faculty
  - Get the University communication folks to do help build a message