

ENTERPRISING AGENCY USES LIVE VIDEO WEBCAST TO PROMOTE NEW *STAR TREK*® *ONLINE* GAME

Success Story

CHALLENGE

After the intellectual property for the much-anticipated *Star Trek Online* game was acquired by a client of Reverb Communications, the agency was tasked with generating awareness and excitement among the franchise's fans, the gaming community and media.

SOLUTION

Reverb decided to host and webcast a live event announcing development details for the game during the annual *Star Trek* convention in Las Vegas. Thomson Reuters developed a custom webcasting solution featuring a high-resolution video stream and onsite production services. The video webcast was delivered within a webcast player designed specifically for the announcement, featuring visual elements and branding from *Star Trek Online* to offer a richer user experience and reinforce the personality of the event.

RESULTS

Reverb's goals of increasing awareness and audience engagement were reached easily as more than 15,000 viewers attended the live webcast, far exceeding the original target of 5,000. On-demand views brought the total to more than 30,000 while registration in the *Star Trek Online* community nearly tripled. Webcasting the announcement also resulted in a cost-savings for Reverb's client by reducing travel costs. Global distribution earned increased press coverage, including a cover story in a major gaming publication.

Twain Harte, California is a small vacation community in the shadow of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and home to Reverb Communications—a full-service video game agency in a locale where employees are more likely to encounter a bear than rush hour traffic. But despite the peaceful surroundings, the energy level inside Reverb is commonly turned up to eleven. Working with billion-dollar franchises like Guitar Hero™ and Rock Band™, the agency has grown to be a leader in delivering integrated marketing solutions for clients in the video game industry. “We’ve always been risk takers,” says Mel Kirk, director of marketing at Reverb. “We work to move the industry forward and you can see that in our client roster and the titles we work with.”

One of those titles, *Star Trek Online*, is in production at Cryptic Studios which recently acquired the intellectual property from another developer. The anticipation for the game, a massively multiplayer online game (MMOG) which accommodates thousands of gamers simultaneously in a virtual online world, has reached a fever pitch in part due to delays dating back to 2004. To announce Cryptic’s new involvement in the game, Reverb planned an event to raise the excitement level in the *Star Trek* community, amongst gamers and in the media. “This announcement was a major opportunity to build awareness around the game. *Star Trek* has a hardcore fan base of 4 million in the U.S. alone,” says Kirk. “It was important for us to make the event as engaging as possible and meet the high demands of our audience. They’ve been waiting a long time for this and we wanted to surpass their expectations.”

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Mel Kirk
Director of Marketing
Reverb Communications

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A CUSTOM SOLUTION AND PEACE OF MIND

Kirk shared his vision with Thomson Reuters which custom-designed a solution for a live video webcast and onsite production services. Because a high-percentage of Reverb’s audience was gamers with broadband connections, Thomson Reuters suggested delivering the video content at an increased bit rate (800k vs.



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300k), resulting in a larger, higher resolution stream. The video would run inside a customized webcast player, incorporating visual elements from *Star Trek Online*. “I was familiar with webcasting, but not fluent in all of the backend technology required to deliver the user experience we wanted,” said Kirk. “Thomson Reuters brought in their team of experts to explain every step in the process and make me feel comfortable. One of the risks we don’t take is in choosing a webcast partner.”

During the *Star Trek* Convention at the Las Vegas Hilton, Reverb and Cryptic delivered the announcement which outlined new developments in the game. As a bonus, the event featured an introduction by actor Leonard Nimoy who played “Dr. Spock” in the original *Star Trek* series. Joining the standing room only crowd were more than 15,000 viewers who accessed the live webcast from around the world. “We said that if we could reach 5,000 people we would be ecstatic,” said Kirk. “Including the on-demand audience, the webcast has been viewed more than 30,000 times. The results far exceeded our expectations—our cost per view is less than a dollar. It’s a much cheaper alternative than buying TV advertising and we can demonstrate the results to our client.” The event had an immediate impact. Following the webcast, registration in the *Star Trek Online* community surged from 15,000 to more than 40,000.

TRAVEL SAVINGS AND INCREASED PRESS COVERAGE

In the past, an industry announcement like the one Reverb webcast required both domestic and international press events which were a hassle to coordinate. Even more challenging was the need to arrange and pay for media to travel to these events. A typical audience of twenty journalists would cost Reverb’s client at least \$25,000. “Webcasting the





By webcasting its product announcement, Reverb Communications reached more than 30,000 viewers, including fans and media from around the world..

announcement allowed us to reduce travel costs and reach a much larger audience," said Kirk. "As a result, we received a ton of press coverage and it was a major cost-savings for our client. The webcast really captured the impressiveness of *Star Trek Online*. It gave us a lot of leverage in working with the media." Highlights included massive blog activity, TV coverage and a cover story in *Game Informer*—a leading gaming publication with a circulation of 3.5 million.

Kirk notes that those in the gaming community are often among the early adopters of technology that later becomes ubiquitous. "Video is the new screenshot. The Web has made dynamic assets easy to create and share and tools like webcasting give us new ideas and stretch the boundaries of how we can communicate with our customers."

ABOUT REVERB COMMUNICATIONS

Reverb Communications is a focused marketing agency that specializes in launching videogame titles and peripherals. The agency combines public relations, marketing, and sales programs to develop individualized communication campaigns that directly contribute to the bottom line of each client. For more information about Reverb Communications please visit: <http://www.reverbinc.com>.

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