

[DOI: 10.20472/IAC.2018.037.003](https://doi.org/10.20472/IAC.2018.037.003)

PENELOPE DAIGNAULT

Laval University, Canada

VALERIANE CHAMPAGNE ST-ARNAUD

Laval University, Canada

MAXIME BOIVIN

Laval University, Canada

COMMUNICATING POSITIVE ACTIONS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE IN FRENCH CANADA: EXPERIMENTING AND EVALUATING AN INNOVATIVE WEB MEDIA

Abstract:

This study is part of a larger research project related to the recent creation of the first French Canadian Web media dedicated to promoting action to fight climate change (CC). This media, called “unpointcinq” (onepointfive), primarily targets adults of the French province of Quebec who are generally interested in the subject of CC, but find it either too complex or far from their personal concerns. It disseminates various contents about the province’s diverse initiatives – individual, community-based, governmental, etc. – regarding the fight against CC. The originality of this media relates to its positive tone. Information about CC often presents fear-inducing messages that stress its negative consequences, using an apocalyptic rhetoric (Benjamin et al., 2016; Spence & Pidgeon, 2010). However, research in environmental psychology and environmental communication show that negative framing can be ineffective for engaging and mobilizing publics around CC issues (Jang, 2013; Cox & Depoe, 2013), encouraging researchers and practitioners to test other communication strategies, including different types of positive frames. This mixed-methods research is divided in two parts. First, before the Web media was launched, we conducted a segmentation study using a quantitative questionnaire sent to 1200 Quebecers, assessing attitudes and behaviours regarding CC, but also perceived relevance and interest towards different themes and frames potentially covered by “unpointcinq”. This study allowed us to identify priority segments to target, as well as the most efficient frames to use in the media. In the second qualitative phase, we conducted five semi-directed focus groups within the first four months of the media being launched. A total of 40 participants from the segments most receptive to the media evaluated its first contents. These interviews were conducted in the spirit of a living lab and in an iterative manner, where participants and researchers both made recommendations to the editorial and production team to better frame the information. In this present conference, we propose to present the most salient results of the two phases of this ongoing research project.

Keywords:

Environmental communication; climate change; positive framing; web media; mixed methods

JEL Classification: Q54, L82