RCSI Student Life Quality Enhancement

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Introduction

RCSI aims to create high-quality marketing content to give prospective students a real insight into student life. Feedback from students highlighted that, when considering an application to RCSI, they wanted to know more about the day-to-day workload, social experiences at RCSI, and life in Dublin. Many international students found it difficult to imagine what life at the University would be like; they also wanted the chance to interact with current students to address their queries or concerns before joining the University.

Initiative

RCSI's content strategy for the Student Life brand was reassessed to better support prospective students in their decision-making. The revised content is also beneficial for current students, especially those in junior years who have questions about their placements and senior years. The strategy was redeveloped to feature more of the student body, placing them at the forefront of all social media accounts under the Student Life brand. While the Marketing team produces and manages the content, significant student collaboration through the Student Ambassador programme ensures that much of the social media content is created by students, for prospective students. Examples of this initiative include:

1. Videos Filmed by Student Ambassadors and the Students' Union.

The marketing department worked with Student Ambassadors from the principle undergraduate programmes, as well as the Students' Union, to create videos. Students were given vlogging cameras to film a day in their life, showcasing their accommodation, walk to university, activities in Dublin city centre, daily classes, facilities like the gym, and social aspects such as clubs, societies, and college events. A particularly successful collaboration with the Students' Union resulted in behind-the-scenes vlogs during Orientation and Freshers Month.

2. Student Takeovers on Instagram and YouTube

Instagram Stories were utilised as a dynamic and interactive way to engage with prospective students. Student Ambassadors took over the Student Life Instagram account to post about their day, giving audiences a live insight into a day in the life of an RCSI student. This increased engagement as users returned to check stories throughout the day. Prospective students could submit questions to be answered by current students through the Instagram Q&A function. The Marketing Department also collaborated with students on an "Ask Me Anything" series on Instagram Stories, along with a "CAO Q&A" on YouTube, where CAO students submitted questions on Instagram to be answered by Student Ambassadors in a sit-down video.

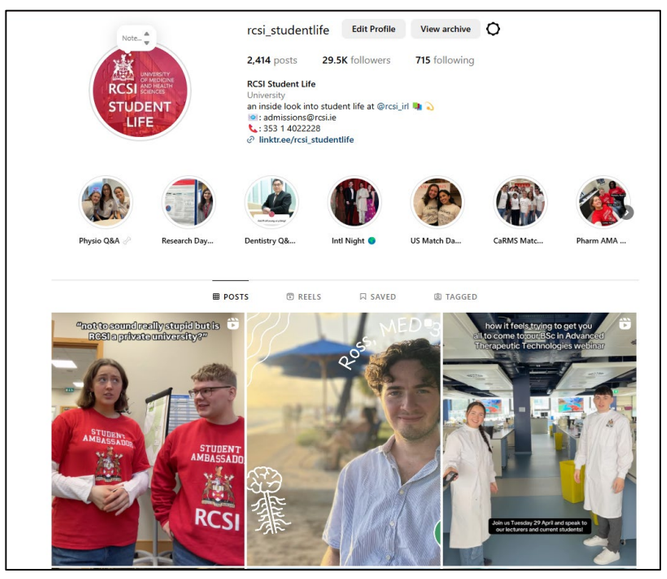
3. Student Stories and Money Diaries

A recurring theme from student feedback was the desire for more financial information before starting at RCSI, especially during a cost-of-living crisis. The Marketing Department updated the Student Stories page on RCSI's website and expanded the Money Diaries section. Money Diaries is a feature where current students share a journal of their spending for one week, helping prospective students better understand how much to budget for university.

4. Short Form Videos to Showcase Student Events

New short form videos of key events in the undergraduate student calendar were created. This included the White Coat Ceremony, Teddy Bear Hospital, College Ball and Results Day. These videos allow prospective students to see what social events at RCSI look like.

To successfully deliver this project, Marketing collaborated with the Student Recruitment team to ensure the content featured a diverse mix of student ambassadors, accurately representing the student body. The Web team also assisted with content consolidation, creating "Day in the Life of …" pages for the principal undergraduate programmes, providing a permanent home for the videos.



Outcome

This initiative transformed engagement with current and prospective students, showcasing the campus, events, and student life through genuine and relatable experiences shared by students. RCSI's social media following and engagement saw immense growth, with 67.6k+ followers, 11.7 million likes, and 96.7 million views on TikTok. Over the reporting period, Instagram followers increased by 482%. Traffic to the student life section of the website also rose, becoming more qualified. These pages received 11% more active users from November 2023 to October 2024 compared to the previous year, and the bounce rate decreased from 51.6% to 22.42%, indicating that users were genuinely interested in the content and stayed on the site longer.

The repository of Q&As filmed with students helps prospective students quickly find answers to their questions online, reducing the need for direct inquiries to RCSI and positively impacting the workload and distribution of staff and student resources.

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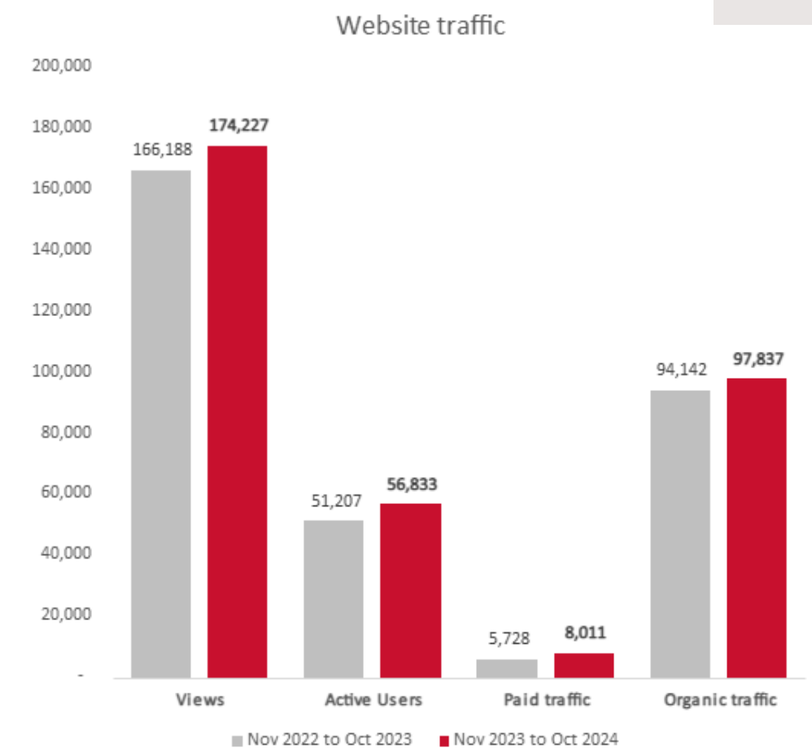

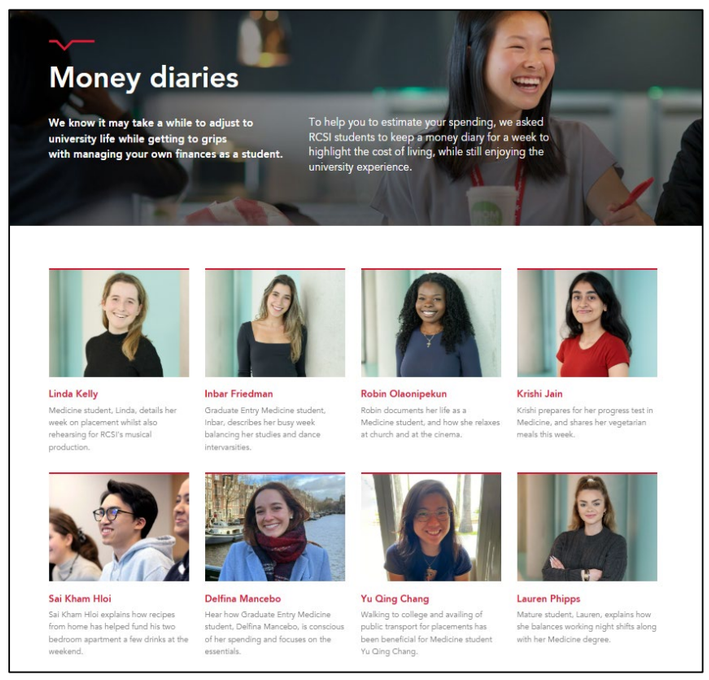

Social media comments have highlighted the positive influence of this project, with remarks like "**This is why I want to be a doctor at RCSI**."

External recognition of this initiative included five National Social Media Awards: **Best Social Media Strategy: Third Level, Best Instagram Brand, Best TikTok Strategy: Brand, Best Social Media Advertising Team**, **and the National Social Media Awards Grand Prix**, which recognizes the best use of social media across all industries and categories