

Targeted online campaign increases HIV testing

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BACKGROUND

Despite diversified HIV testing options, the Ukraine-Russian war has hindered testing uptake among key populations (KPs) due to war-related challenges like migration and displacement, infrastructure and commodity damage, injury and mortality, and fear and stigma. To address this, innovative and agile health communication strategies are crucial, particularly in underserved regions.

Funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and led by Pact, FHI 360, AIDS Foundation East-West (AFEW), and local nongovernmental organizations, the Community Action for HIV Control Project launched targeted online advertising campaigns for HIV self-testing (HIVST) from March to July 2023. Tailored to KPs, these campaigns used various digital platforms including Telegram (messenger) Facebook + Instagram, Google, YouTube, and bloggers, where visual and text messages were posted promoting HIVST and facilitating test kit orders (see Table 1).

TABLE 1. Summary of pilot metrics

displays	17058773
clicks	90432
click to the HIVST order form	30164
number of orders	826
number of tests	1578
total advertising costs	±11800
cost of one test order	\$14.00
cost of ordering one test	\$7.48



IMAGE 1. The image was tested as part of a campaign for the MCM and contained the call to action (CTA)* "HIV test today – your advantage tomorrow. Get tested for free, confidential, fast." Final CTR: 5%



RESULTS

The highest number of displays were recorded on YouTube (41%) and Google Display Network (32%). While Facebook + Instagram accounted for much fewer displays (19%), the combined platform had the most substantial reach (54%). Google Display Network generated the highest number of clicks at the lowest cost per click (\$0.04), making it the most economical. Facebook + Instagram followed, demonstrating effective engagement despite a lower click-through rate (CTR).[†] Google Search, though with fewer displays, had a high click-through rate (4.84%), indicating that users who encountered the ads were highly interested.

Analysis of conversion rates[‡] highlighted Facebook + Instagram's substantial engagement (0.85%) and Google Display Network's (1.11%) cost efficiency in

driving traffic. Telegram's data was incomplete, making its full assessment challenging, while YouTube's effectiveness couldn't be fully gauged without click data. Overall, Google Display Network and Facebook + Instagram proved to be the most effective in terms of cost per click, suggesting a strategic focus on these platforms for future campaigns (see Table 2).

Female sex workers (particularly in Lviv region) placed the most orders (252) for HIVST kits, at a low cost per order of \$3.31. This indicates a high volume of orders coupled with efficient cost management. In contrast, groups like men who have sex with men (MSM) (Lviv region) and All KP (Zaporizhzhia region) show fewer orders (63 and 55 respectively) but significantly higher costs per order (\$15.00 and \$20.00), suggesting a potentially less cost-effective approach (see Table 3).

CONCLUSIONS

Russia's brutal attack on Ukraine has posed incredible challenges on HIV case finding, yet the targeted online campaign effectively raised HIV testing awareness and promoted HIVST, showcasing the resilience and efficacy of digital platforms. Future strategies should expand targeted digital approaches to ensure continuous support and accessibility, especially in unstable conditions. HIVST offers a solution for testing in volatile contexts and remote areas with limited health care access. Online engagement and promotion of HIVST can sustain this testing strategy.

* Call to action (CTA) is an instruction to the audience to provoke an immediate response, usually using an imperative verb.

† Click-through rate (CTR) is a measurement of the number of users who click on a link or an advertisement in relation to the number of users who view the page, email, or website where the link or advertisement is shown. CTR is a way of measuring the success and effectiveness of an online advertising campaign for a particular website or email campaign.

‡ The conversion rate is a key metric in online marketing that measures the ratio of a website's visitors to conversions. It represents the percentage of visitors who take a desired action, such as making a purchase, signing up for a newsletter, or downloading an app.

TABLE 2. Summary of platform performance and advertising costs

platform or resource	displays	%	reach	%	clicks	%	amount (USD)	CTR	cost per click (USD)
Telegram (messenger)	1316448	7.7%	n/a		n/a		\$2,243.00		
Facebook+Instagram (click to the HIVST order form)	3274074	19.2%	641053	53.98%	27789	31%	\$2,775.00	0.85%	\$0.10
Google Search	52394	0.3%	n/a		2536	3%	\$1,688.00	4.84%	\$0.67
Google Display Network	5430601	31.8%	n/a		60019	66%	\$2,178.00	1.11%	\$0.04
Youtube	6979756	40.9%	540973	45.55%	n/a		\$1,289.00		\$0.00
Bloggers	5500	0.0%	5500	0.46%	88		\$275.00		\$3.13
Total	17058773		1187526		90432		±11800		± \$ 0,12

IMAGE 2.

The image was tested as part of a campaign for female sex workers and contained the CTA "What has been, has been. What matters is what will be. Order an HIV test." Final CTR: 4,4%



TABLE 3. Orders and cost per order by demographic group and location

KP type and location	orders	cost per order
FSW (Lviv)	252	\$3.31
MSM (Lviv)	63	\$15.00
Men (Lviv)	22	\$17.30
Risk Network (Chernigiv)	45	\$10.00
Men (Chernigiv)	44	\$14.90
MSM (Chernigiv)	66	\$9.70
All (Zaporizhzhia)	44	\$18.80
All (Zaporizhzhia)	84	\$13.60
All (Zaporizhzhia)	55	\$20.00
Total	675	

AFFILIATIONS

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