Bizü

"Making Distant Introductions"

Contents

Overview

- Inspired by our Parisian cosmopolitan environment and our academic research on ideas of digital utopias and the virtual cosmopolitanism, Bizü has sought to create an international digital community that reduces extreme behavior.
- Bizü is about "*making distant introductions*". It is a digital space where cultures are shared and learned – where people of all walks of life can interact and learn from one another. It is the cultural epicenter where people and life can occur.
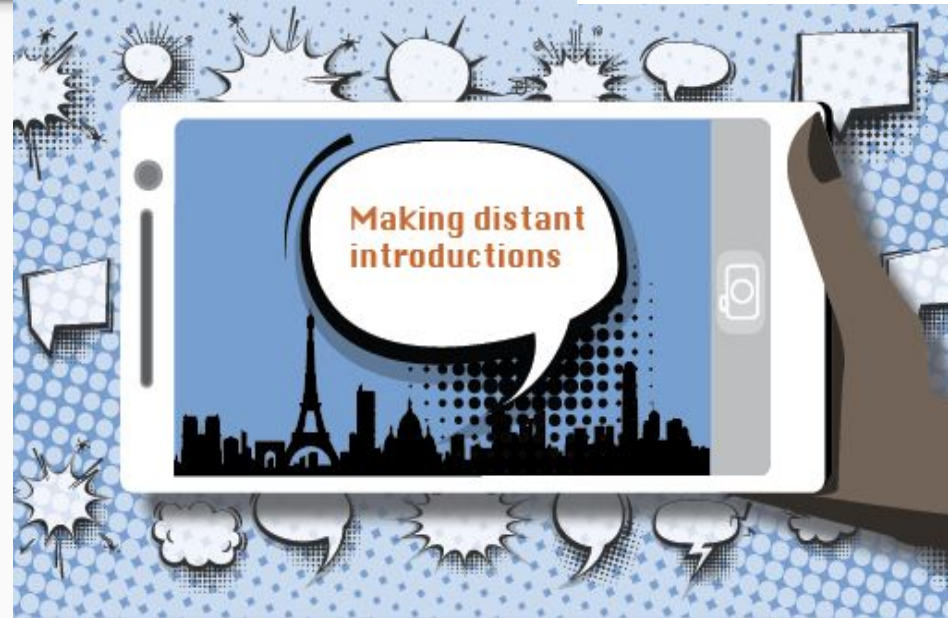
Target Audience

· Our campaign approach is inspired by this Mark Twain quote: "**Travel is fatal** to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime." This quote reflects the research we've been discussing and how exposure to alternative ideas and cultures through travel broaden our understanding and tolerance of alternative life views. The sooner these ideas are introduced, the sooner hateful rhetoric can be countered or abolished within a person's psyche. With that, at no point in a person's life do the benefits of travel cease to have influence.

Therefore, Bizü's target audience is the multicultural population of Paris ranging from adolescence to young adulthood. Since this age range encompasses the most active users of mobile devices, as well as those in the midst of identity and value formation, we hope to encourage dialogue to reduce social tension and foster inclusive communities. Bizü is for those interested in a modern "pen-pal," whether the interest is driven by prejudices, curiosity or even loneliness. Bizü is a place to interact; even those without the economic means to travel can now be transported and experience the benefits of global interaction and cultural enlightenment.

Logo Analysis and Campaign Slogan:

- Logo leverages three colors, iconic elements and textual elements:
  - Psychology of color: blue symbolizes sincerity; orange symbolizes optimism
  - Text rises above cloud icon to connote disembodiment and mobility
  - Reflection of text symbolizes how interactions with others recreate our images and notions of self
  - Speech bubble icon encloses these elements to signify ethos of brand world
- Campaign slogan leverages themes of time/space compression and recognition

Methodologies

- Examined literature from authors like David Harvey, Andrew Eig, Catherine Bernard, Hye Jean Chung, Jacques Lacan, and Miriam Sobre-Denton
- Participated in Facebook Paris' panel on online extremism
- Weekly discussions with scholars from a wide range of media expertise
- Attended Paris' Impact2 event, investigating social entrepreneurship in Paris
- Facebook discussion platform
- Online photo campaign
- Online video series
- Offline demonstration
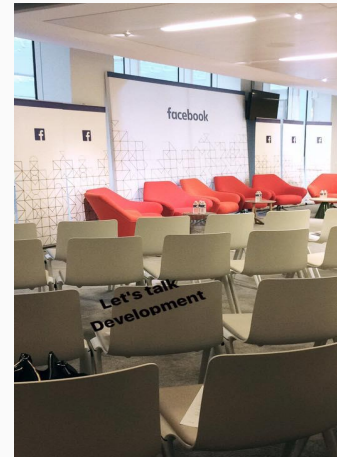
Through our **research**, we sought to better understand How digital media impacts the way we relate to others?

By examining existing literature, we determined that the boundaries separating digital and physical spaces are drastically diminishing due to digital media. This creates the means for digital mobility, which has greatly impacts how identity forms in the physical space. Our hope is to create a campaign that simulates how those with vulnerable physical communities can leverage digital communities as support systems, reducing risks of extreme behavior.

Campaign Strategy:

Bizü is a social platform that taps into our campaign values and theoretical research by:

Introducing a digital application that advocates for the recognition of differences in beliefs and values

Providing a digital community for those who are at-risk in or disenfranchised by their physical communities

Encouraging meaningful dialogue and cross-cultural exchange

Simulating notions of global mobility and cosmopolitanism

Redefining notions of utopia and heterotopia through understanding others

bizü

LANGUAGE EXCHANGE

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING

ONLINE DISCUSSION

ABOUT bizü

TOPICS

POLITICS

RELIGION

RELATIONSHIPS

ARTS

SPORTS

LIFESTYLE

TODAY'S PROMPT

PREVIOUS DISUCCSIONS

SUBMIT A PROMPT

CAN YOU BE ANTI-GLOBALIZATION AND NOT RACIST?

RESPOND

SEE RESPONSES

In my opinion...

SUBMIT

DISCUSSION

When I visited Nepal...
22

I think it's a spectrum...
33

Globalization is ...
10

I'm not an Islamaphobe but...
125

Academic Rationale

- Our research focused on four theoretical themes:
    - Positive recognition
        - The idea that individuals want to contribute to the value of cultural capital that circulates and structures their world with positive recognition and representation
    - Time-space compression
        - The collapse of spatial barriers where it is now possible to experience the world's geography and various cultures through food, culinary habits, music, television, digital spaces and more
    - Heterotopia
        - The recognition and valorization of complex differences between others, which allows individuals to exist harmoniously with both individual and collective identities.
    - Virtual Cosmopolitanism
        - The idea that the success of virtual cosmopolitanism came from a balance between "patriotism and world belongingness"

Academic Rationale (cont'd)

Based on research we've explored on notions of utopia and how that manifests in the digital space, we've found that these notions of community and purpose shape identity within a chaotic digital environment. By providing an inclusive space, extremist groups are more effectively able to exploit vulnerable individuals, including individuals disenfranchised from their physical communities as well as those in adolescence. From discussions with academics working within this digital space, we've determined that individuals are most susceptible to radicalism during periods of identity formation.

Once extremist ideologies have penetrated an individual's identity, it is difficult to deconstruct these ideas and reconstruct a non-radicalized identity. Thus, within the context of Paris, we are attempting to employ a campaign that aims to create dialogue between the multicultural communities of Paris. While paying particular attention to those at risk for disenfranchisement, our directive is to effectively create notions of community that were previously absent and reduce the social barriers between various Parisian communities.

Online Campaign: Facebook Page

Open Platform Dialogue

- Created a Facebook page that fosters open dialogue based on profound questions about culture, values, and identity

- Over several weeks, we will continually post thought-provoking questions in an attempt to discern parallels amongst vastly different people

- Thus far, the Bizü page reached approximately **14,083** people and generated **1,243** engagements
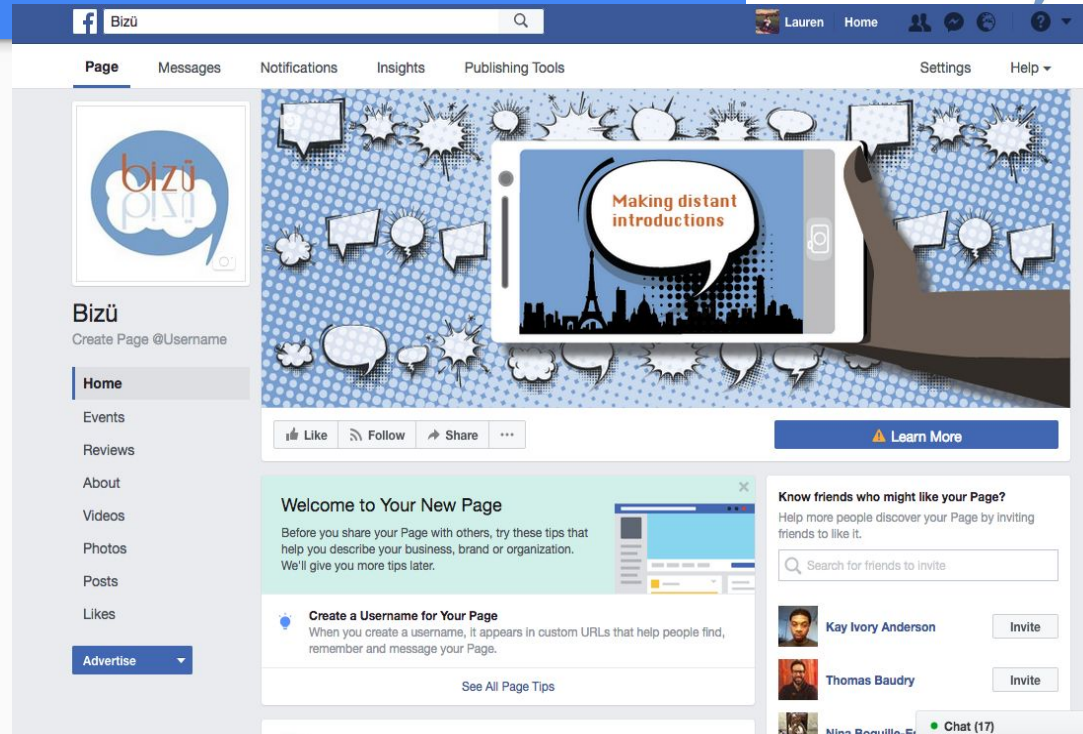
#Bizu Photo Campaign

We've started photographing individuals all over Paris who wanted to make an introduction with someone of a different cultural value or belief, which we shared with the #Bizu. It is an ongoing campaign where we have thus far photographed **10 individuals** and shared the photos via social media, and thus generated over **826** likes, and **increased** overall engagement. So far, our photo campaign has reached **33,085** people.

Photo Campaign Response

Souad Naime Kis
Like · Reply · Message · June 4 at 7:59pm

Subhanulla Siavash Je suis afghan
See Translation
Like · Reply · Message · June 4 at 8:15pm

Ahmed Shahin So...lovely that's
Like · Reply · Message · June 5 at 1:01am

Rajvir Gill M from france 🇫🇷
Like · Reply · Message · June 5 at 9:23am

Ravi Kumar Yes frnchs good friends
Like · Reply · Message · June 5 at 9:39am

Ravi Kumar

😎💕

Like · Reply · Message · June 5 at 9:39am

Ijaz Gondal My country is Pakistan. I live in Paris.
Like · Reply · Message · June 5 at 10:21am

Faisal Shirzai j'adore français je suis afghan
See Translation
Like · Reply · Message · June 5 at 11:36am

Ahmed Mohamed I live in wester sahara (sahraui)
Like · Reply · Message · June 5 at 1:01pm

Ahmed Mohamed 🇪🇭
Like · Reply · Message · June 5 at 1:01pm

Nåjeeb Ullah

Like · Reply · Message · June 5 at 1:45pm

Paul François J'ai un ami, Borat Sagdiev qui peut l'amener avec son pote Azamat dans une petite camionnette de glace sympa et un ours en cas de problème
See Translation
Like · Reply · Message · 👍 1 · May 15 at 11:33pm · Edited

Nizz Zainul I'd love to skydive but my mum would kill me.
Like · Reply · Message · 👍 1 · May 30 at 1:32am

Chris Paige
May 4 at 3:57pm 🌐

I'm from Washington, DC and I want to #Bizu a Texas Republican.

Quotes for illustration purposes only

International Meet & Greet

In order to simulate our Bizü group chat functionality that we hope to develop in the application, we also held a focus group that we framed as an International Meet and Greet. The incredibly successful event was held at a local café where we were able to include 23 participants. The participant pool was incredibly diverse and representative of the Paris cosmopolitan. Our participants were from **England, France, the United States, Iran, Mexico, Turkey, Lebanon, China, Austria, Ecuador,** and the **Philippines.**

Estimated word-of-mouth reach: 150 people

The event was framed as an international conversation hour which prompted everyone to showcase their own cultural identity. We were proud to host a night where over six languages were present but inspiring conversations of global solidarity brought a room full of strangers together. There was only one rule – you can only take a Polaroid with someone you learned something new about!

Questions and Discussions

Meet & Greet:

- What's your most embarrassing childhood memory?
- What is your favorite holiday dish? What holiday?
- What is your weirdest family tradition?
- If you were a cocktail, what would you be?
- What's your favorite children's book?
- What's the most beautiful place you've ever been? Why was is beautiful?
- If you had to choose 3 fictional characters to represent your identity, who would they be?

Focus Group:

Write 3 words you think of when you hear:

- The current geopolitical climate
- Impacts of immigration on society
- The ideal society

Bizu International Meet-up Event Video Recap

Measure of Effectiveness

· **Online Campaign:**

- **Overall reach: 55,012**
- **Post engagement: 3,200**
- **Page likes: 276**
- **Post likes: 1,001**

Offline Campaign:

"This focus group really made me feel as if I could better articulate my beliefs in a way that didn't warrant persecution or assumptions."—Kaitlyn Horesh, American, 23

"My family in the states could really benefit from something like this. Having immigrated to America from Iran, it would have been amazing to have an application that would more easily facilitate integration to the community"—Sheelon Aghili, Iranian-American, 24

"I really found this exercise beneficial in understanding others beliefs. I found some that I initially disagreed with to actually be valuable and I enjoyed hearing other people's wisdom."

Challenges: Combatting Facebook Hate Speech
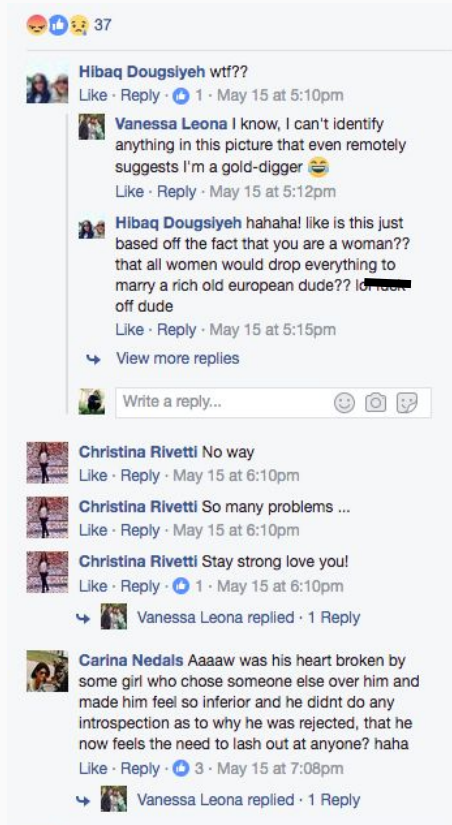
We experienced one example of hate speech. Users responded with counter speech naturally up until we were forced to remove the comments. In essence, this simulates user response that reflects the general values of Bizü by not tolerating examples of hate speech. This is one example of why an alternate platform like Bizü could prove effective.

Opportunities to Grow

- Increase engagement with more dialogical material including:
  - Videos of future focus groups and meet & greets
  - Encourage participants to host their own Bizü events to submit to the page
  - Encourage users to submit photos of themselves in their home countries indicating with whom they would #Bizü

- Actual application development:
  - Begin more aggressive crowdfunding campaigns to solicit investors who may sponsor the development of the application

Expenditures

Campaign Expenses

- Meet & Greet/Focus Group Venue Costs
- Meet & Greet Supplies (Notecards, Pens, Paper)
- Digital Ethnography Supplies (Film, polaroid etc)
- Video editing software