

# PARBUNKELLS

## Problem

How do you drive online traffic to a word that doesn't exist on the internet?

## Solution

Use OOH to generate buzz and drive online and social media activity.

## Background

Julia Weist wanted to observe how people pay attention and what happens when something doesn't exist on the internet through her Reach Project. Weist set out to find a space on the Internet that was empty and a single word that would lead people there.

## Objective

Julia Weist's need at the time of the campaign was to find an online search that returned no results. That search was then posted on an OOH display. When those words were searched online, only one search result would appear, a site that Julia created. When that site was visited, it triggered a lamp in her house to light up.

A major challenge was the risk of people posting the word elsewhere, thus creating another search result for the search she has chosen, parbunkells. Another page could mean that users who search parbunkells might not arrive at her unique site, which would decrease hits to her site and lessen the accuracy of her results.

## Strategy

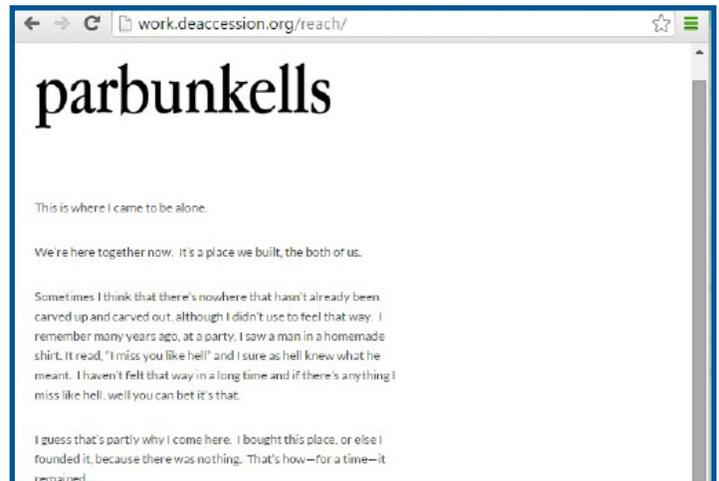
The location was chosen due to proximity to her own home, so she could observe her neighborhood responding, as well as construct her lamp responding to site hits. A search for the word on the billboard, "parbunkells" resulted in only one webpage, a site created by the artist. Viewers were invited to visit the site, but asked to never use the word as text anywhere else online, lest they undo the page's unique singularity.

The site includes a PHP process that writes a status to the web server each time a visit occurs. The server is queried by an Internet-enabled circuit board which in turn runs a command to an Internet-enabled outlet. When the reach webpage was visited, a lamp turned on in the artist's home.

## Plan Details

Market: New York

Flight Dates: 6/12/15 - 7/20/15



The location at 107-37 Queens Blvd. in Forest Hills, New York was chosen due to its proximity to the artist's residence and remained up for more than four weeks.

## Results

Though Julia urged people on her site not to post parbunkells anywhere else on the internet, the results were quite the opposite. While the board was up, 22,000 new search results for parbunkells appeared online, and 1,300 people visited Julia's page per day. There were 7,500 overall visits to her site. Most of the visits, she noticed, were on mobile devices. "I can see from the analytics that a lot of people are searching for the word not in front of desktop computers, but when they're walking around."

A @parbunkells Twitter handle and hashtag were created and a Reddit thread was started quickly. Among the followers were Oprah and Jimmy Kimmel. The internet began to circulate the word and its meaning. To Julia, it was a metaphor for people coming together, which became the subject of most of the social media activity. An Instagram account was created that posted classic pairings of things "coming together." A company began selling parbunkell shirts, sweatshirts, coffee mugs, and throw pillows and other products online.

Media coverage included *The New Yorker*, *Gizmodo*, *DNAinfo*, *Rhizome*, *VICE* and *Popular Mechanics*.

This campaign showed that even the smallest OOH campaign can spark an interest, and engagement that leads to digital activity and content.

