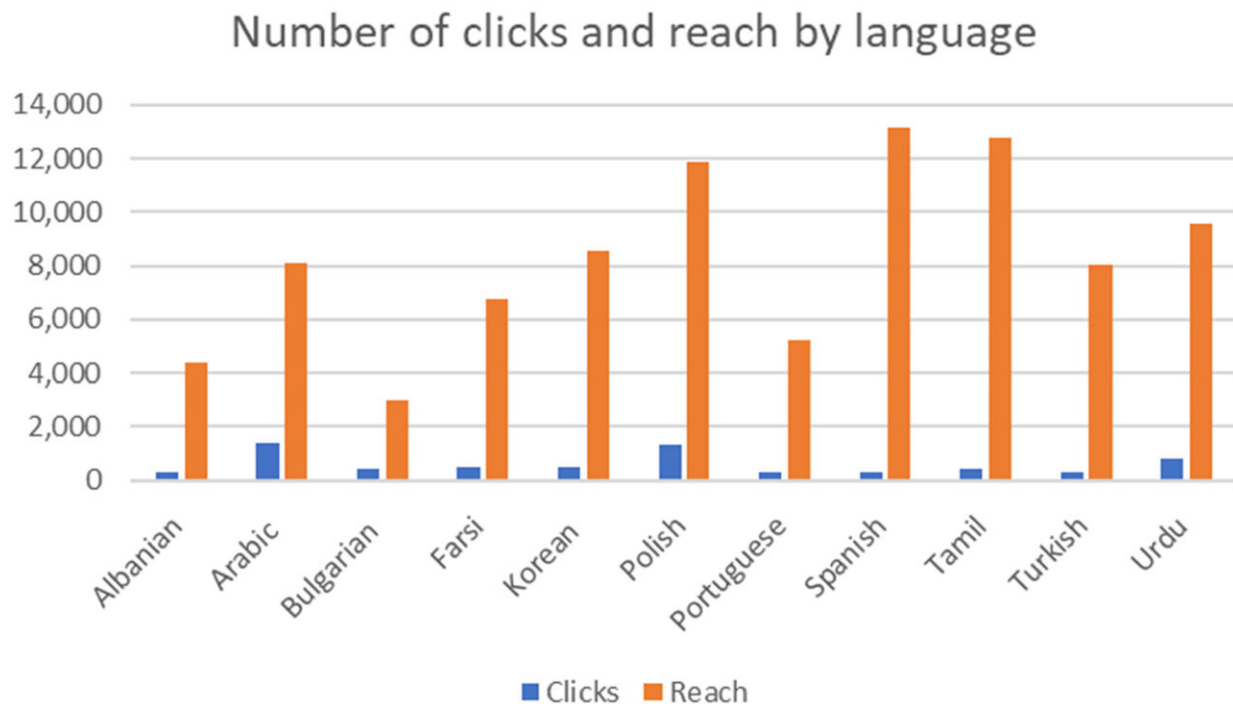


# Evaluating the effectiveness of locally led digital public health campaigns

January 22 2024



COVID-19 vaccine campaign metrics. Credit: *DIGITAL HEALTH* (2024). DOI: 10.1177/20552076231220151

Kingston University academics and staff from the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames' Department of Health Behaviors and Public Health Services have published an evaluation of the effectiveness of a series of locally led digital public health campaigns.

The work concluded that local authority-led online marketing campaigns for [health promotion](#), assessed across a variety of platforms, [health](#) promotion initiatives, and population targets, are useful for increasing participation in [public health](#) programs.

The study, commissioned by Kingston Council and evaluated by health psychology experts Professor Tushna Vandrevalla and Dr. Kristin Hanson, analyzed four locally led public health campaigns that employed a variety of digital marketing methods including [social media](#) advertising, search engine optimization and programmatic marketing.

The campaigns, designed as interventions to increase involvement in public health programs, included a drive to increase the uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine, a weight management program, at-home sexual health testing, and a free condom distribution program.

The research, which has been [published](#) in the journal *Digital Health*, looked at online health promotion initiatives undertaken by the Council between July 2020 and April 2022. The academic experts examined a variety of levels of engagement with the campaigns, including impressions (low engagement), click throughs to content (medium engagement) and sign-ups for each [campaign](#) (high engagement).

Dr. Hanson said the researchers' findings showed the potential impact online marketing holds for public health. "Locally led digital marketing for public health has the potential to extend the reach of health services by harnessing the communication means that are used regularly to provide information to members of the public that is specifically tailored for that community. These types of campaigns can be really cost effective, can overcome barriers to participation, and are a great way to get vital public health information to people quickly," she said.

Targeted online marketing had also allowed organizations to be more

inclusive, Professor Vandrevalla added. "Social media and using search engine optimization for marketing allow [local authorities](#) to target health promotion in specific groups and communities that most need vital information," she said.

"Before the emergence of these tools, it was very hard to reach groups such as [younger people](#), those from ethnically diverse backgrounds or target behaviors that are associated with stigma, such as sexual or mental health. These findings show how crucial digital campaigns can be in era where we're constantly seeing advances in technology."

Director of Public Health at the Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames Council Iona Lidington said the collaboration with Kingston University has highlighted the impact of paid marketing on public health service uptake.

"This publication underscores our commitment to evidence-based practices and partnership working, and provides a solid foundation for ever improving our public health interventions and strategies—improving health and well-being outcomes in our local community and delivering value for money for our residents."

**More information:** Kristin Hanson et al, Online public health promotion at the local level: An evaluation of four local authority-led marketing campaigns, *Digital Health* (2024). [DOI: 10.1177/20552076231220151](#)

Provided by Kingston University, London

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