



VISIT PORTSMOUTH 2023 CAMPAIGN REPORT

Executive overview

Visit Portsmouth joined with partners across the destination for a summer/autumn 2023 campaign running in two bursts. These campaigns comprised poster sites in London and a supporting digital element. The summer burst ran from June to August, with the autumn in September and October. Both targeted London and the surrounding areas, with summer reaching people as they planned their holiday getaways, then in autumn building on the good interest, as well as pushing the shoulder season and October half term. Supporting partners were Victorious Festival, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Spinnaker Tower, Gunwharf Quays, The D-Day Story and South Western Railway.

For the 2023 campaign Visit Portsmouth booked advertising space with JC Decaux after the company offered a selection of different options to what we'd utilised previously, including the large impactful advertising boards at Waterloo Station. Partners agreed to trial these new options which offered good value for money.

The digital campaign that ran alongside (and beyond), used Meta ads across Facebook and Instagram, as well as mobile ads included by JC Decaux as an added extra - further details below.

Campaign results at-a-glance

The London campaign with JC Decaux drove nearly 8.94 million impressions. There were over 615,000 over-deliveries.

The digital campaign delivered over 4.1 million impressions, reaching 1.18 million people and generating almost 38,000 link clicks. They also achieved significantly lower cost per click figures than industry benchmarks, meaning we had to spend less money than competitors to drive clicks on the ads and through to our website.

On the Visit Portsmouth website there were year-on-year increases in users, sessions, page views and pages per session during both the summer and autumn campaigns - comparing against previous periods when we've also run ads in London and online.



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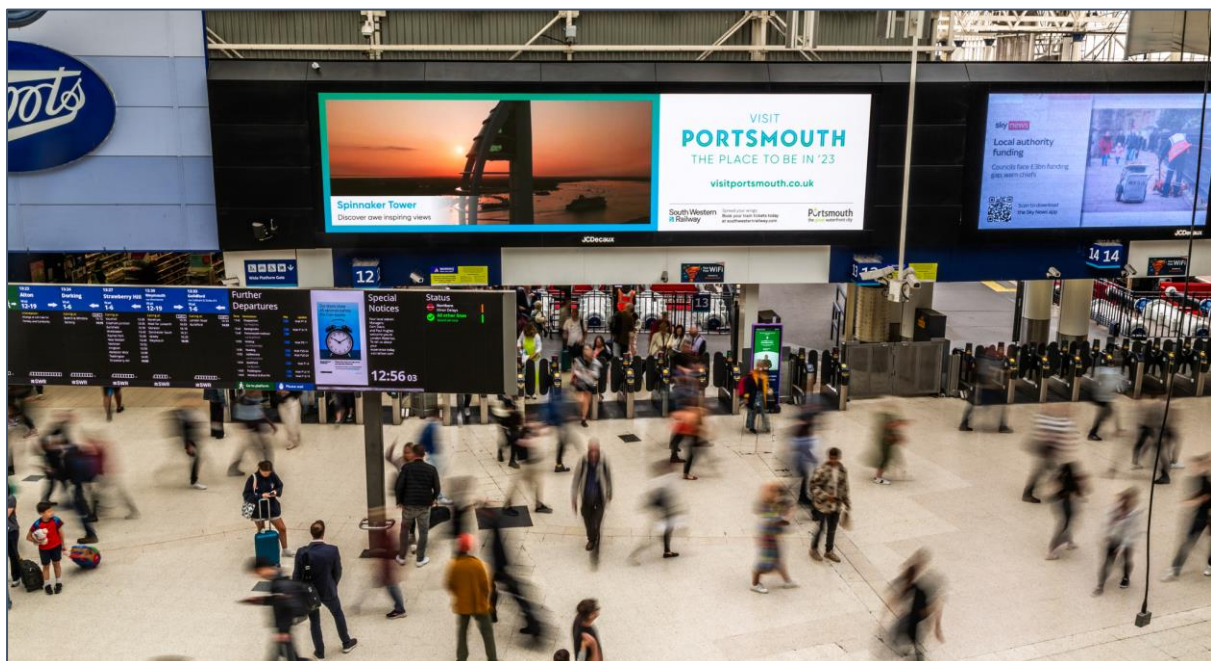


London poster campaign

For the London poster campaign with JC Decaux we took 1x Digital Rail Special and 24x Rail D6 posters. These were displayed from 26 June to 9 July, with the D6 posters live all day and the Rail Digital Special running 4pm to 7pm Tuesday to Friday and 10am to 4pm Saturday (for the Commuter and Leisure Commuter audiences respectively).

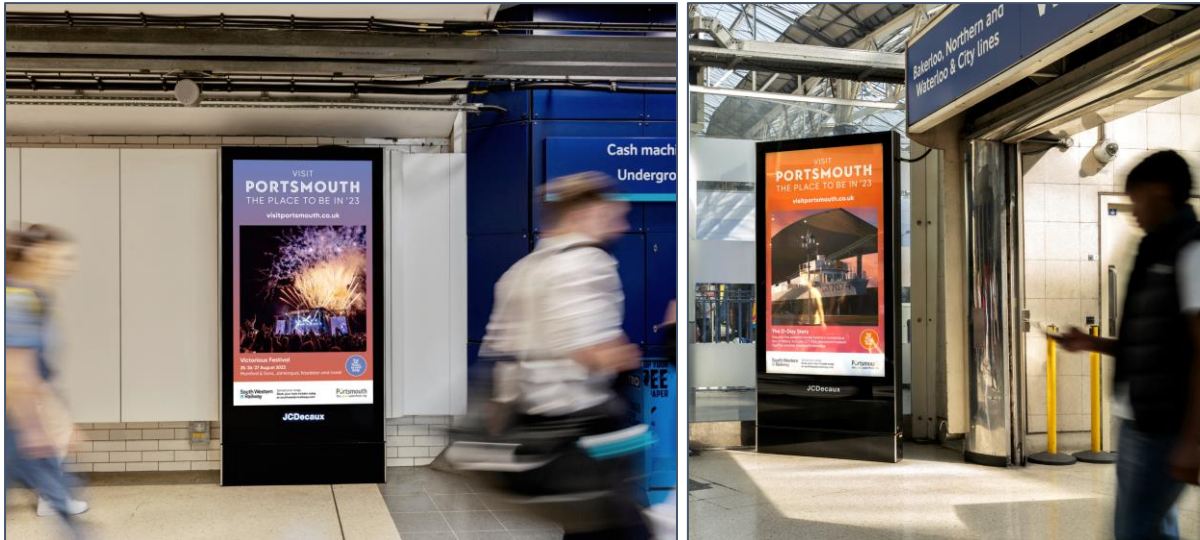
The Digital Rail Special utilised five different creatives - one each for Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Victorious Festival, Gunwharf Quays, Spinnaker Tower and The D-Day Story. All had a striking image or video, alongside the Visit Portsmouth name and our campaign tagline: The Place to be in '23. South Western Railway was included in a banner along the bottom of every ad, which included the brand logo and URL for booking.

The Victorious Festival and Spinnaker Tower adverts used video, whilst the remaining three had still imagery.



An example of the Digital Rail Special in place, showing a Spinnaker Tower advert.

The D6 posters all used still imagery (albeit with animated elements to help catch the eye), and featured the Visit Portsmouth name and tagline at the top, with South Western Railway details at the bottom.



Rail D6 ads in place, showing ads for Victorious (left) and The D-Day Story (right).

Poster campaign - results

In total these posters generated 4,429,375 impressions - a 5.8% increase on the projection of 4,186,555.

As part of their offer JC Decaux also included mobile ads, which are detailed further in the Digital Campaign section below. When the posters and mobile ads were combined, the JC Decaux campaign as a whole generated 4,765,445 impressions. This is an over-delivery on what was promised of 5.5%, or 248,639 impressions in real terms.

Midway through the campaign JC Decaux ran a series of Visual Impact Measurements, to see what in the ads drew and held people's attention, where they looked and how long they dwelled on an advert.

It showed that the imagery was strong and had good interest, with skylines and people/faces doing particularly well. There was also a good showing for the Visit Portsmouth name and messaging, with people's eyes journeying through the ad from the image to the name and downwards to the additional information.

That said, video was found to draw and hold attention more than still imagery, so this influenced part two of the campaign for autumn (which is covered in detail later in this report).

South Western Railway

Whilst South Western Railway (SWR) didn't have an advert in its own right, the operator was included on every single poster across both the Digital Rail Specials and Rail D6s. The footer-style banner included the brand name, logo and URL, and London locations were selected where South Western Railway operates services to Portsmouth (to not only promote SWR but encourage more people to take the train on one of its major routes).

SWR was also included within the landing page on the Visit Portsmouth website, being mentioned in the content's introduction, with links to both the South Western Railway website and also its SWR Rewards platform. This was not only because SWR is a key partner but also to further promote sustainable travel into Portsmouth.

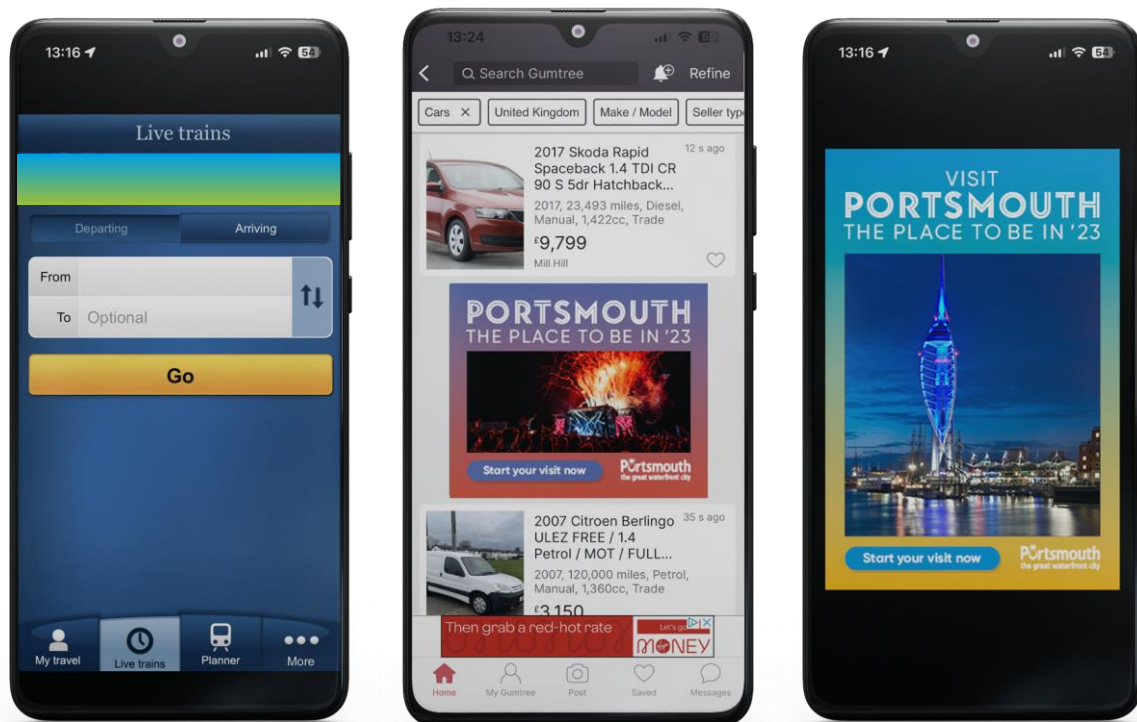
During the course of the digital campaign there were strike days where services were impacted. As such we didn't include a dedicated South Western Railway ad within the digital element of the campaign, to ensure we didn't have negative sentiment among the comments and replies. Instead, SWR featured more heavily in the autumn digital campaign.

Digital campaign

Mobile app ads

As noted above, JC Decaux ran a series of mobile app ads to support the digital poster sites. These promote brand awareness and ad recall, capitalising on our campaign being top-of-mind for those who had recently seen the digital posters.

The ads took the form of: banners, MPUs (Mid-Page Units) and Interstitials (full page ads). The second two used similar creative to the D6 poster sites, whilst the banners went with a more generic Visit Portsmouth text-only message to work within the very narrow dimensions.



Mock ups of the ads for, left-to-right: Banner, MPU, Interstitial.

These ran for the same period as the digital banners (26 June to 9 July).

JC Decaux delivers its mobile ads across a host of apps and channels, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, National Rail, Met Office, Parkrun, TuneIn, Snapchat and more.

The ads were initially delivered to those in London Waterloo and the immediate surrounds, but part-way through the campaign it was extended out to also cover Richmond, Twickenham, Guildford, and Clapham.

Mobile app ad results

These ads generated 336,070 impressions, a 1.8% increase on the projected 330,251. The average view time was 12.4 seconds, an improvement on the 10 seconds JC Decaux more regularly sees.

The click through rate did especially well, with our 0.09% result eclipsing JC Decaux's average of 0.03 to 0.04%.

The best CTR was seen on Fridays (0.11%) followed by Tuesdays and Saturdays (both 0.1%). Worst was Thursdays (0.07%) followed by Mondays and Wednesdays (both 0.08%), although the range from worst to best isn't huge.

Perhaps unsurprisingly the larger ads delivered the best click through rate, with the narrow banners delivering the least.

Meta ad campaign

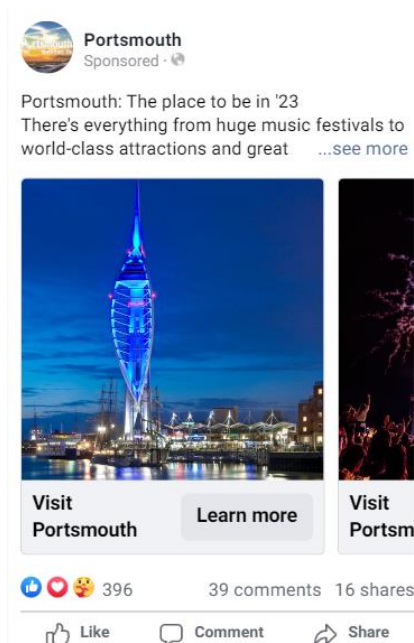
The Meta ad campaign used identical imagery to the London poster campaign for familiarity and ad recall.

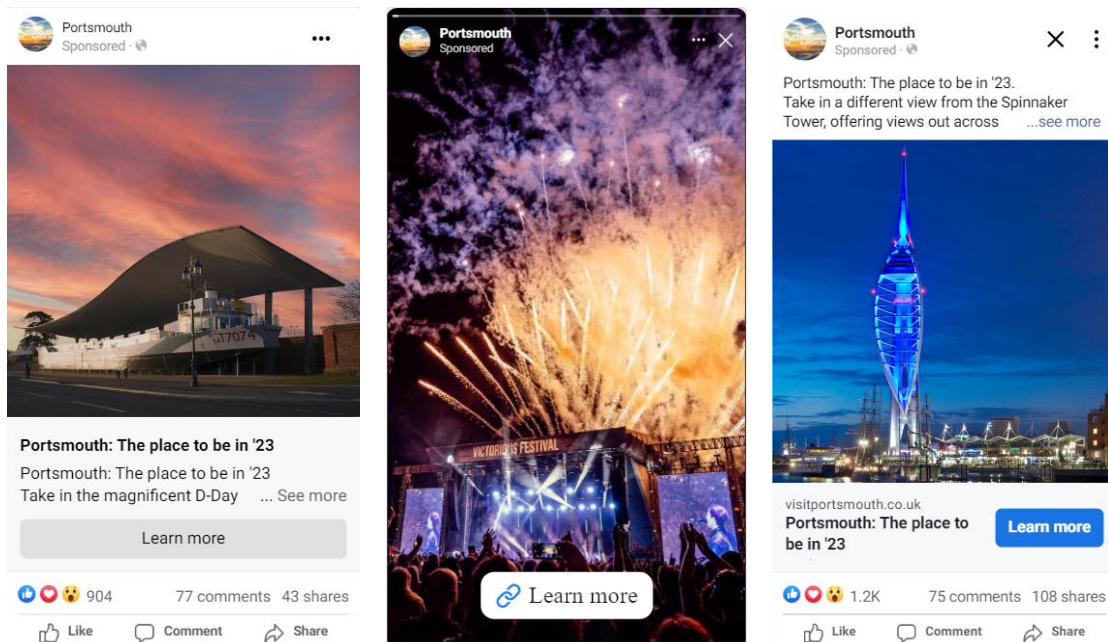
Last year we deployed a video-heavy campaign, using new film content to generate interest and awareness, albeit at the expense of clicks through to the website. This time, with no new video content and aiming to vary the ad creative, we elected for imagery. As such, clicks through to the Visit Portsmouth website were set as a campaign objective.

Clicks were directed towards a new landing page on the Visit Portsmouth site, featuring content about the main partners, as well as general information about the city. It also contained imagery from the campaign to reinforce familiarity.

Six separate ad sets were created, with the budget split evenly across partners. There was a main destination advert that pulled together all the campaign creative into one carousel and had a broad message to cover Portsmouth more generally - as well as individual ads for Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Victorious Festival, Spinnaker Tower, Gunwharf Quays and The D-Day Story.

The carousel ad was optimised to show the best performing tile first, or the one which Facebook's algorithm thinks would have the most impact on each specific user - which also gave us the added benefit of shuffling the deck and ensuring certain partners aren't favoured in the running order.





Screenshots of the Meta ads in a variety of placements: the Destination ad as it appeared in the Facebook Feed, the Gunwharf Quays ad on Messenger Stories, the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard ad in the Instagram Feed, the D-Day Story ad in the Facebook Video Feed, the Victorious image ad in Facebook stories, and the Spinnaker Tower ad in the Facebook Business Feed.

Note: all ads appeared across numerous placements, the above is for illustration.

All our ads targeted similar geographic areas (mostly those travelling in and around London, as well as places in easy reach of Portsmouth on South Western Railway's lines into the city). However, the demographic targeting was tweaked for each; the Victorious ads reaching those with an interest in live music, D-Day for history buffs, Gunwharf Quays for shopaholics, and so on.

The Victorious Festival budget ended up being split between two ads, with 70% going on static, image-based ads and click throughs like the others, whilst the remaining 30% went on a video ad delivered in the last few weeks running up to the festival, using the same creative as was used in the Digital Rail Special.

The digital campaign budget was initially split into two, with half the spend going on an initial two-week rush whilst the poster sites were live, and the remaining half to be spent over the remaining seven weeks, running throughout summer. However, August saw a real improvement in the Cost Per Click metric - which our Meta Ad Adviser attributed to lower auction competition over the summer months driving costs down. As such we used a portion of leftover budget in August (money that was earmarked for late opportunities or to further boost the autumn campaign) to take advantage of these favourable conditions. This made the spend over time look more like an inverted bell curve.

Meta campaign results

In total the digital campaign drove 2,624,182 impressions, with a reach of 1,279,999. With 27,709 link clicks we had a click through rate of 2.16% and a cost per click of 0.11.

Our achieved click through rate was 140% above average, with Wordstream benchmarking CTRs for the travel and hospitality industry at 0.9%. Wordstream also puts the industry's average cost per click at £0.50, making ours (£0.11) around a fifth of that.

Website results

During the period of the London campaign (26 June to 9 July) the Visit Portsmouth website saw the following increases year-on-year:

Users +27.1%

Sessions +25.2%

Page Views +17.5%

New Users +28.4%

The Pages Per Session metric did see a -1.5% drop, though this would be expected owing to the large bounce rate anticipated on content-dense landing pages (especially those with multiple external links to other organisations).

Over the full period of the digital campaign (26 June to 28 August) the year-on-year increases were:

Users +10.6%

Sessions +11.2%

Page Views +6.4%

New Users +11.3%

Pages Per Session +0.6%



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Autumn results at-a-glance

Poster sites generated 4,508,885 impressions (an 8.9% over delivery on the 4,141,993 promised - or in real terms an extra 366,892 impressions).

The social media campaign delivered:

Impressions - 1,492,392

Reach - 585,491

Click throughs: 12,146

Clicks (all): 20,125

Poster campaign approach

Our agreement with JC Decaux included a second set of ads to run during autumn, using almost the same placements as in summer:

1x Digital Rail Special (running 4pm to 7pm Tuesday to Friday and 10am to 4pm Saturday)

24x Rail D6s (running all day)

These were all around London Waterloo railway station from 25 September to 8 October inclusive.

No Mobile In-App Ads were included in the autumn run.

Campaign creative was kept purposefully similar to that of the summer, to promote ad recall from those who had seen the previous set. It was also to build on previous success, as JC Decaux (through its Visual Impact Measurement tool) reported good visibility for the Visit Portsmouth brand name and URL in heatmaps of where people focused their attention. That said, the heatmaps also illustrated that video content generated more impact and kept attention longer than still imagery. To that end we included more video ads than in the summer, including one composite destination-wide ad pulling in footage from all partners.

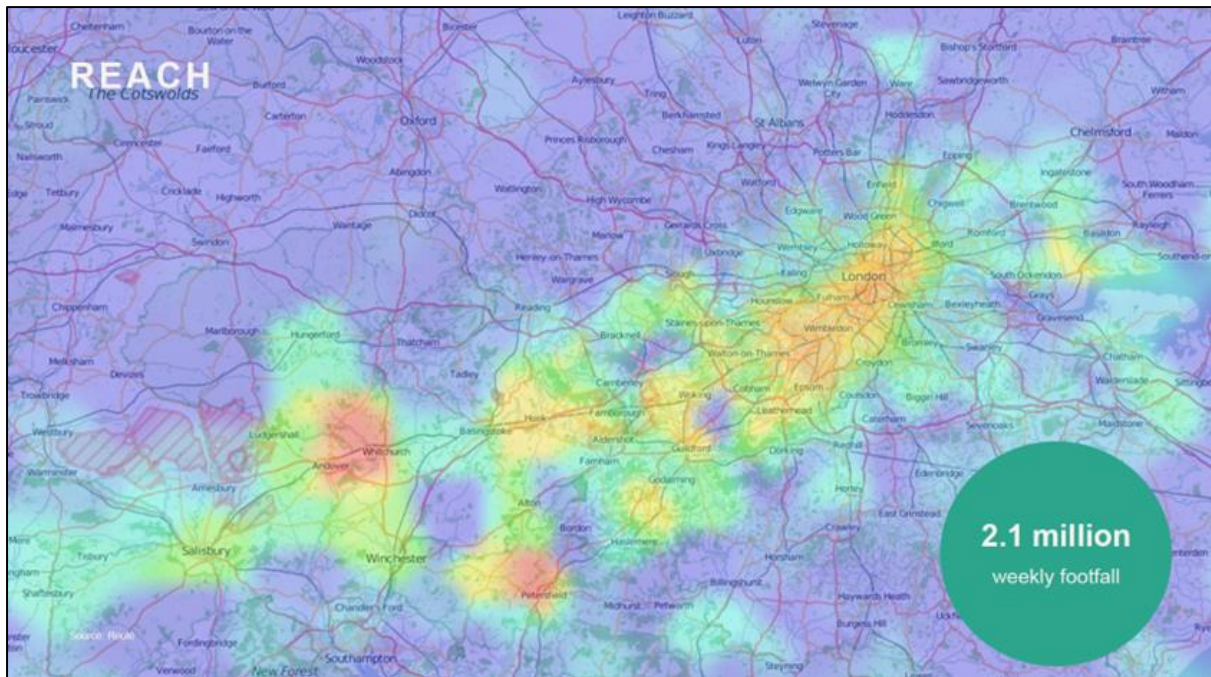
To provide a strong destination message we (with the approval of all partners) changed the order of how ads would display in the Digital Rail Special. This involved running destination ads every other, in between the individual ads for each of our five partners (giving a total run of ten ads, which would then repeat).

The D6 ads remained largely unchanged from summer in both content and delivery.

Poster campaign - results

The autumn ads generated 4,508,885 impressions (an 8.9% over delivery on the 4,141,993 promised - or in real terms an extra 366,892 impressions).

The weekly footfall through the location of our poster sites is approximately 2.1 million, with many coming from London and the towns/cities to its immediate south west (along the corridor serviced by South Western Railway).



Social media campaign

As in summer, the autumn campaign comprised a digital element, with Meta ads again chosen - albeit with a slight shift towards video content to better mirror the poster creative.

There was a destination-wide ad, plus one for each of the partners (including South Western Rail, with extra budget to offset the summer when it had no social ads owing to ongoing industrial action).

For the destination-wide ad, two creatives were provided - one video and one carousel of five images which each clicked through to the Visit Portsmouth website. Facebook could then deliver whichever of the two ads it estimated each individual user would react best to. Videos were also used on the Spinnaker Tower and Victorious Festival ads, whilst Gunwharf Quays, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and The D-Day Story stuck with still imagery.

Ads using video content typically perform better for awareness and engagement metrics, but less so for clicks through to a website/destination/Instant Experience. To try and mitigate this somewhat we selected Landing Page Views as a key target and allowed Facebook's AI to deliver optimised creative to those people most likely to be receptive to it (albeit with our key demographic targeting still in place, as per the summer campaign).

Ads ran for exactly one month, from 27 September to 27 October.

Social media campaign - results

The ad campaign reached a total of 585,491 people, generating 1,492,392 impressions. There were a total of 149,783 video plays.

The ads generated 12,146 clicks through to the website, for a click-through rate of 0.81% and a cost per link click of £0.33. This represents a slight decrease on the Wordstream benchmark CTR (0.9%), although our cost per link click was still a third lower than the industry average (£0.50).

It's worth noting the difference between website click-throughs and more general clicks on the ads themselves. Total ad clicks (comprising video interactions, content expansions or clicks through image carousels) took the number of clicks up to 20,125, for a rate of 1.35% and a cost per click of just £0.20.

Website results

During the period of the London campaign (25 September to 8 October) the Visit Portsmouth website saw the following year-on-year increases:

Users +22.3%
Sessions +20.2%
Page Views +14.9%
New Users +21.3%

Over the full period of the digital campaign (27 September to 27 October) the year-on-year increases were:

Users +33.2%
Sessions +41.4%
Page Views +27%
New Users +42.8%

Campaign results- total

Poster campaign

Impressions promised: 8,328,548
Impressions delivered: 8,938,260
Mobile In-App Ad impressions: 336,070
Overdelivery: 609,712
Overdelivery as a percentage: 7.3%

Digital campaign

Impressions: 4,116,574
Reach: 1,183,667
Ad clicks: 76,825
CPC: £0.13
Link clicks: 37,955

If you have any queries or feedback about this report, please contact Tourism@portsmouthcc.gov.uk.