



CASE STUDY:

Increase Traffic by 148% With a Mix of Newsjacking, Personal Patient Stories and Original Blog Content

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Three years ago, the digital team at UCLA Health System (UCLA) wanted to experiment with newsjacking, creating original content to piggyback on current healthcare topics. They also wanted to repurpose existing content and establish a secure online forum for patients to share stories without compromising their privacy. Thus, the [UCLA Connect](#) website was born.

For the past 3 years, Aha Media Group (Aha Media) has been supplementing the patient stories with original blog content pulled from the news. Aha Media's writers also use content from UCLA's publications and press releases to create short, consumer-friendly blog posts.

The results are astounding, demonstrating that UCLA's audience is growing, engaged and excited about the content: UCLA Connect has also won awards from [eHealthcare Leadership Awards](#) and Ragan's PR Daily.

OVERALL BLOG GROWTH

The blog has increased significantly in every key metric:*

Page views: **69%**

Submitted stories: **93%**

Direct traffic: **148%**

Search engine referrals: **189%**

SOCIAL MEDIA TRAFFIC GROWTH

Growth from social media sources increased as well:

Visits: **99%**

Unique visitors: **101%**

Returning visitors: **401%**

**Stats reflect growth for the full years of 2016 and 2017 and from Jan – Oct of 2018.*

THE CHALLENGE

Three years ago, UCLA lacked the internal resources to create quality, relevant content that would drive traffic. Press releases and other publications sat on the web, not optimized for search. And though patients shared stories through Facebook Groups and blogs, UCLA couldn't use the testimonials. Those forums were not sufficiently secure, and there was no way to vet the stories for accuracy.

ABOUT THE CLIENT

Who they are: Hospital and Health System **Industry:** Healthcare

Number of employees: 10,000+ **In business since:** 1955

Headquarters: Los Angeles



AHA MEDIA'S APPROACH

Aha Media rounds out the news content, while patients use a secure online form to submit their stories to the UCLA team, who vets them for accuracy. The content process includes:

- **Newsjacking:** During a monthly meeting, UCLA and Aha Media discuss timely health issues. Aha Media uses those topics to create 4 original blog posts each month.
- **Physician participation:** Our writers interview UCLA providers, giving them a way to contribute to the web content creation while respecting their busy schedules.
- **Repurposing content:** The team also turns existing UCLA content into blog posts. This method allows UCLA to extend the life of their published work and turn it into accessible content for the blog and social media.

THE RESULTS

Outcomes of the project include increases in:

Patient engagement: Patients continue to engage with the Connect site, even after treatment is finished. They [share their stories](#), upload pictures and respond to comments. Plus, potential patients learn firsthand about the UCLA patient experience.

- In the first year of the Connect site, UCLA **more than doubled** the number of stories they received, increasing from 92 to 195.
- Over the past 3 years, the site has **more than tripled** the number of returning visitors, increasing from 820 to 4,109.

Search engine optimization (SEO): Because Aha Media is an expert in SEO, search engines serve blog posts to UCLA's intended audience. The site received 6,559 referrals from search engines in its first year. By year three, the number increased to 18,970. The content **increased page views by 69% and direct traffic by 148%.**

Compelling content for social media: The patient stories and timely blogs make engaging posts that UCLA leverages on social media. The number of visits they received from social media **more than tripled, increasing 189% over 2 years.** Even more critical, **social media return traffic increased by 401%**, proving that UCLA's audience is engaged and participatory.

Physician engagement: UCLA physicians participate in the project in multiple ways. Some encourage patients to share their stories, while our writers interview others as a basis for blog posts. And patients frequently share their [stories](#) of how UCLA doctors helped them or their loved ones.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Using a professional content firm empowers UCLA to publish new content optimized for search.
- Creating a safe online community lets patients share their stories and organically spread the message of the excellent care they received.
- Relevant blogs give consumers a reason to stay on the site and share the content.
- Niche content tends to perform better than general health and wellness. The most popular blog posts throughout the project include:
 - [5 "Good-For-You Foods" That Aren't](#)
 - [Is Pokémon Go a Healthy Game?](#)
 - [6 "Lazy" Ways to Burn Calories](#)



It's great working with a strategic and tactical partner who helps us evolve and experiment with different ways to grow and connect with our audience. The project management and ideation is a huge plus for our team!

- ASHLEY ANDERSON,
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER, UCLA HEALTH

ABOUT AHA MEDIA

Aha Media has a broad range of content expertise. See more of Aha Media's [case studies](#) and the [work](#) we are proud to share.

GET IN TOUCH

Looking for a custom content solution that suits your business objectives and audience's needs? Reach out for a consultation at hello@ahamedia.com.