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Creative Brief for the University of Arkansas Student Technology Center

Emma Sutherland
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Citation

Creative Brief for
University of Arkansas
Student Technology Center

By

Emma L. Sutherland

Advisor: Dr. Anne Velliquette

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Sam M. Walton College of Business
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, Arkansas

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Background

The Student Technology center is a place for students to create, unwind, and study. Students can take advantage of equipment checkouts, gaming, study rooms, recording studios and so much more. The issue, no one knows about it. I have worked with the students and the team in the STC to create deliverables for the Student Technology Center to target and appeal to students. They are looking for insights into how to make the center more appealing and involve students within the STC. They want to know the best way to market to first-year students, sophomores, juniors, and seniors by creating a welcoming environment. The goal is to create a sense of community within the university and effectively communicate with the students. Ultimately, we plan to implement our deliverables into the center to accommodate the wants and needs of students and make the experience at the Student Technology Center the best it can be.

Target Audience

We feel that targeting incoming first year and current first-year students going into the university will lead to a greater amount of success because most of them are out-of-state students with little connections to other students. 50% of incoming first-year students are from out of state and have no prior knowledge of the school and might feel lonely in the first year of their college experience. We are targeting students that were involved in high school, so they are looking to get involved on campus, not just in video games or technology, but in sports, Greek Life, etc. They should be education-driven, or have a desire to learn, so they will be motivated to find things to add to their resume for future internships and jobs. Since they are Gen-Z, they are always on social media and constantly on the lookout for new connections and are curious to see what the STC posts on all their social media accounts to find out when the next hangout is happening.

Insights and Analysis

Competitive Analysis
I have analyzed three different school's student technology centers in order to gain insights into what works, and what does not at other universities.

At the University of Oklahoma, they offer a lot of the same services as the STC at the University of Arkansas. The website is very wordy and there is a lot going on. One thing I did like about their website was the filter option to find exactly what you are looking for. As far as social media, the Instagram was good, posting study tips, giveaways, and mental health posts. However, there has not been a post since 2019, so it is not updated.

At the University of Alabama, there are also a lot of the same services offered, however their website was interesting. It was found through the University library website and had pictures of all the equipment. I liked this feature, because some students may not be educated on the equipment they are needing, so the pictures make it easier to find. There was also an easy click to check out button that makes it very easy to use. The main downside I found was there was no Instagram.

At Texas A&M, there was no Instagram for their STC, and their website was very wordy and confusing. I found myself scrolling a lot, which I did not particularly enjoy. I believe the less customers have to scroll, the better. While researching Texas A&M, I found one main feature

that I would like to implement into the Nexus. They had a specific area called "The Studio", which offered recording studios, a green screen room, light boards, and their media lab. In the University of Arkansas STC right now, all those features are scattered throughout the center, so I think it would be a good plan to accumulate them all in one area with separate rooms for each.

Current Student Opinions
After talking to students on their current views of the Student Technology Center, and where they want to see it going, I have concluded that students want a fun and engaging area where they can relax and learn. When asked if students knew what the STC was, the most common response was that they have walked past the center, but never knew what it was, or what was offered there. I asked them a series of questions regarding the future of The Nexus and came to some great conclusions. The best way to reach students is through Instagram, flyers around campus, tabling outside of the center, and chalking the sidewalks. Regarding the Instagram, students do not want to be flooded with posts. They want to see funny memes, upcoming events, new game launches, and potential giveaways. One student in particular gave an idea that the center should be mentioned in some of the freshman introductory classes as a way to inform them of the equipment and services offered. Students would be willing to attend workshops and if it was beneficial to their majors. The majority of students I talked to are looking for a chill, welcoming community to rest their brain and expand it at the same time.

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• Already have a full facility • Technology • Newest games and consoles • 3D Printers • Various pieces of equipment available for checkout	• Lacking social media • Lacking awareness of the facility • If students are not into gaming, they might not be motivated to come in. • From a visual perspective, it looks unorganized and sloppy (not appealing)
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Remodel and makeover making it more appealing and inviting for students. • Create a student-led Instagram • Events – game nights, movie nights, local DJs, sports watch parties to encourage school spirit.	• Expensive to renovate • Students are not guaranteed to engage • Technology becomes outdated fast – frequent replacements (expensive)

Objectives and Outcome
What do we want the target audience to think or feel about the brand? What do we want them to believe? What measurable effects is the advertising designed to accomplish? What do we want the target audience to do? Clearly state objectives.

The objectives of my deliverables will be to:
1. Create a sense of community:
   a. Create a central space for students to come hang out with other students and meet new friends. We want the space to feel inclusive to everyone.
2. Encourage mental breaks and positive mental health:
   a. According to the American Psychological Association, three quarters of college students struggle with mental health. There is a growing issue all around the world. We want to address that problem and do our best to be there for our students to the best of our ability.
3. Build awareness of the STC:
   a. Right now, the majority of students do not know what the STC is. I plan to help build that awareness through social media, and word of mouth with other students. When new students start to come in, they will tell their friends, and then they will come in, creating a chain. This is our ultimate goal.

Position and Personality

The Nexus Positioning Statement:
  Through experiential technology, The Nexus is helping students achieve their educational and recreational ambitions by providing an inspiring environment for students to unwind with peers, experiment with new tech, or meet their academic goals in order to expand their overall potential.

The Nexus is not just a place to rent out equipment and use computers. It will be a central location for students to hang out and take study breaks. Students can try out new hobbies without the fear of wasting money on expensive technology. The targeted user is going through a transitional period in life and wants to make new friends that are at the same point as them. The Nexus will have a friendly, humorous tone, but very informative. It will be a minimalist, technological vibe to the center with LED lights and fun furniture.

Message, Medium, and Media Vehicles

Moving forward, I believe that The Nexus should look into a student led Instagram as a way to reach students with memes, upcoming events, and giveaways. Instagram Reels is an easy-going and enjoyable touchpoint that should be taken advantage of. They should be entertaining and engaging, showing customers that the facility is lighthearted and fun. We should set up a table outside of the center as a way to increase foot traffic and inform more students about the center and encourage participation.

Deliverables
What are three solid ideas that you can execute that will reach the target market, be on point with objectives in brief, and meet the client's requests. Will present Deliverables to client.

1. *Social Media Recommendations – Instagram*
   a. Need to get an Instagram account
      i. Have a single tone, voice, and message
      ii. Posts about events, equipment, workshops, services offered, student highlights, new technology alerts, etc.
      iii. Instagram reels

Many students on campus have no idea what the student technology center is, or what is offered in the facility. Almost every student is on Instagram and uses it every day, this would be the best form of communication from the facility to the students to increase awareness.

2. *Studio rename, rebrand, remodel*
   a. A new name that is unique and represents what the center is trying to build.
      i. The Nexus ™
         1. Definition: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nexus
   b. Complete remodel of the studio to create a welcoming environment so students are more likely to visit the center.
      i. Modern furniture
      ii. New floors (if possible)
      iii. Paint job
      iv. Add collaborative learning spaces for groups.
      v. Below are a couple of pictures I have picked out for inspiration:
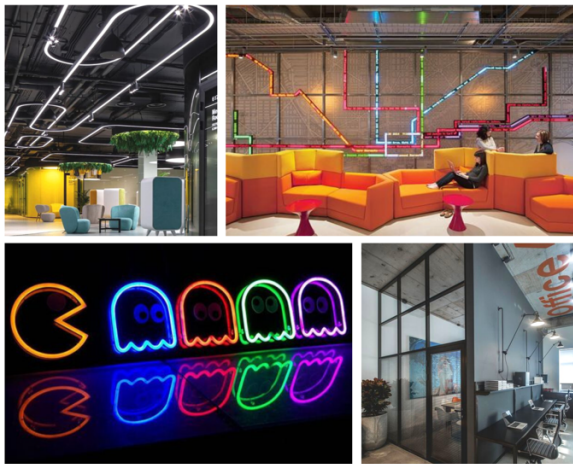
Students are more likely to visit "newer" spaces. We saw this with the new Student Success Center on campus. A modern look will increase students' desire to visit the facility.

3. *More events hosted at the center*
   a. Informational Workshops
      i. 3D printer info

        ii.   Volunteer or student led.

       iii.   How to use technology

       iv.   Introductions to podcasts or recording music, etc.

  b. Movie watch parties

  c. Sports watch parties to increase school spirit.

  d. DJ nights for student DJs to play their music live for other students.

       i.   Video game tournaments

         1. Example: Super Smash Bros

The best way to get students' attention is to host free events. Students are more willing to come to an event or workshop, then they will be exposed to the facility and will be more likely to come back and bring friends!

Creative Brief:
Student Technology Center

By: Emma Sutherland

Advisor: Dr Anne Velliquette

Walton Honors Thesis

University of Arkansas

Target Audience

We feel that targeting incoming first year and current first-year students going into the university will lead to a greater amount of success. They should be education-driven, or have a desire to learn

Insights

What students want:
- Fun and engaging area where they can relax and learn.
- Looking for a chill, welcoming community to rest their brain and expand it at the same time.

The best way to reach students
- through Instagram, flyers around campus, tabling outside of the center, and chalking the sidewalks.
  - want to see funny memes, upcoming events, new game launches, and potential giveaways.
  - should be mentioned in some of the freshman introductory classes

SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
· Already have a full facility · Technology · Newest games and consoles · 3D Printers · Various pieces of equipment available for checkout	· Lacking social media · Lacking awareness of the facility · If students are not into gaming, they might not be motivated to come in. · From a visual perspective, it looks unorganized and sloppy (not appealing)
Opportunities	**Threats**
· Remodel and makeover making it more appealing and inviting for students. · Create a student-led Instagram · Events – game nights, movie nights, local DJs, sports watch parties to encourage school spirit.	· Expensive to renovate · Students are not guaranteed to engage · Technology becomes outdated fast – frequent replacements (expensive)

Objectives/Outcomes

- Create a sense of community.

- Encourage mental breaks and positive mental health.

- Build awareness of the STC

Positioning Statement

Through experiential technology, The Nexus is helping students achieve their educational and recreational ambitions by providing an inspiring environment for students to unwind with peers, experiment with new tech, or meet their academic goals in order to expand their overall potential.

Deliverables

1. Social Media Recommendations – Instagram

2. Studio rename, rebrand, remodel

3. More events hosted at the center

Social Media

- Posts about events, equipment, workshops, services offered, student highlights, new technology alerts, etc.
- Instagram reels
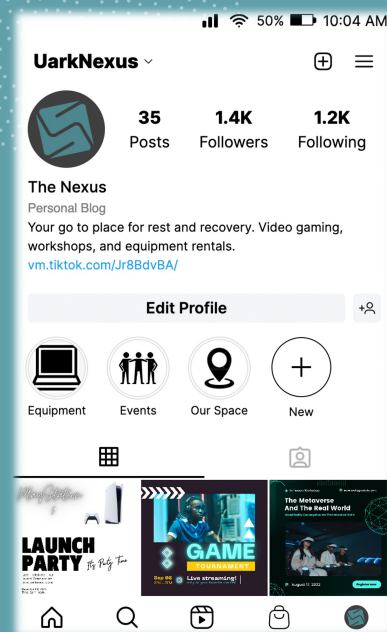
Facility "Face Lift"

- Modern furniture
- New floors
- Paint job
- Add collaborative learning spaces for groups

Events

- Informational workshops
- Video game tournaments
- Movie/Sports watch parties

APPENDIX
Prior to completing my creative brief, I completed six preliminary assignments. These assignments gave me the opportunity to research my client, other schools' technology centers, and the student population at the University of Arkansas to allow me to comprise a creative brief to the best of my ability.

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Thesis Preliminary Work
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Assignment 1 - Competitive Analysis

University of Arkansas Student Technology Center: https://its.uark.edu/printing-labs/stc/index.php
- Website:
    - Easy-to navigate.
    - Sections for equipment checkout, gaming information, and creative projects
    - Reservation link at the bottom of the page
- No Instagram because not authorized by the university communications department.
- Services Offered:
    - Printing, study rooms, recording studios, 3D printing, drawing tablets, video game consoles, media lab, green screen room, game & controller checkout.
    - Equipment:
        - Laptop and accessories, calculators, cameras, projectors, headphones, microphones, virtual reality headsets

University of Oklahoma: https://libraries.ou.edu/technology-lending
- Website:
    - Very wordy
    - A lot going on.
    - Filter option
- Has an Instagram, but has not posted since 2019?
    - Posted study tips, giveaways, mental health posts.
- Services Offered:
    - Printing, 3D printing, PC's.
    - Equipment:
        - Laptop and accessories, calculators, cameras, headphones, microphones, presentation technology, adapters

University of Alabama: https://www.lib.ua.edu/using-the-library/equipment/
- Website:
    - Found on the library website.
    - Has pictures of all the equipment.
    - Easy click to check out.
- No Instagram
- Services Offered:
    - 3D printer, presentation monitors, whisper booths for recording

- o Equipment:
  - Laptops, calculators, headphones, Structure sensor, phone chargers, computer accessories, cameras with accessories, green screen

Texas A&M University: https://library.tamu.edu/borrowing/loan_evans

- Website:
  - o Confusing and wordy
  - o A lot of scrolling
- No Instagram
- Services Offered:
  - o "The Studio"
    - Recording studios, green screen room, light board, media lab
  - o Equipment:
    - phone and laptop chargers
    - calculators
    - cameras
    - projectors
    - laptops
    - tablets
    - Blu-ray DVD players
    - GPS (Global Positioning System) devices

Conclusion/Insights

After conducting research on the top three competitors of the University of Arkansas, the Student Technology Center has many advantages over many of its competitors, we just need to capitalize on them. The STC offers a wide range of equipment and resources that many other schools do not. One key difference that I noticed is that the others.

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Assignment 2 – SWOT ANALYSIS

1.
Strengths:
- Already have a full facility
- Technology
- New games and consoles (e.g., Hogwarts Legacy)
- 3D printer
- Various pieces of equipment for checkout

Weaknesses:
- Lacking Instagram
- Lacking awareness of the facility
- If people are not into gaming, they might not be motivated to come in.
- From a look's perspective, it looks unorganized and sloppy (not very appealing)

Opportunities:
- Remodel and makeover to make it more inviting and appealing.
- Create a student led Instagram.
- Events
  o Game nights
  o Movie nights
  o DJ nights for local DJs to play their music.
  o Sports watch parties to create team and university spirit.

Threats:
- Expensive to renovate.
- Students are not guaranteed to engage.
- Technology becomes outdated fast – replacements frequently and expensive.

2. Customers Views
- **Questions asked to students:**
  o Do you know what the STC is?
    ▪ no
  o Have you ever been?
    ▪ no
  o What kind of stuff would you like to see in the future?
    ▪ chill place to hang out with friends
  o How would you use the space?
    ▪ Hang out in between classes
  o Would you be willing to attend workshops and events?
    ▪ Maybe if they were beneficial to my major
  o What is the best way to get information out to students?

- Flyers, tabling, catchier outside to attract students walking by
- In freshman classes for available equipment
  - Would you be willing to follow an STC Instagram account to learn more about events and opportunities?
    - yes
  - What would you like to see on Instagram?
    - Upcoming events, funny memes, new game launches
  - What is important to account you follow?
    - Not being flooded with posts
  - Do you know what kind of services the student technology center offers?
    - If yes, please list all you can think of

3. Client Objectives
- Create a sense of community.
- Encourage mental breaks and positive mental health.
- Build awareness of the STC

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Assignment 3 – SEGMENTATION, TARGETING, AND POSITIONING

1. Market Segmentation:
Main Target Market
- Gen Z Consumer
- Current/Future UofA students
- First-year student living on campus.
- Male and Female

Demographic
- Age
    - 17–23-year-olds attending the University of Arkansas
- Income
    - first-year student usually cannot afford a console.

Geographic
- On campus
    - Students living on campus usually do not have room in their dorms to have gaming consoles.
- Came from out of state with
    - Does not have many friends and wants the opportunity to network with other students.

Psychographic
- Lifestyle
    - Up to date on the trends
    - Hobbies/interests – gaming, movies, music, podcasts

Behavioral
- Heady to moderate usage of technology
- Light usage of technology with a growth mindset to learn more.
- Benefits sought.
    - Make friends.
    - Learn more about technology.
    - Engage in new hobbies.
- Motivations
    - Education, friendships, and relaxations

2. Brand Positioning
- Through experiential technology, The Nexus is helping students achieve their educational and recreational ambitions by providing an inspiring environment for students to unwind

with peers, experiment with new tech, or meet their academic goals in order to expand their overall potential.

Voice and Tone:
- Humor
- Friendly
- Minimal but informative

Images:
- Whites and reds for school spirit
- Bright images to brighten up the center since there are no windows.
- Images of popular games, album covers, movie posters, etc.

Usage/User Imagery:
- The targeted user is going through a transitional period in life and wants to make new friends at that same point in their life.

Metaphor, simile, and personification ideas:
- The Nexus ™
  - Definition: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nexus

What differentiates STC from Competitors:
- It is not just a place to rent out equipment and use computers. It will be a central location for students to hang out and take study breaks. Students can try out new hobbies without the fear of wasting money on expensive technology.

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Assignment 4 – MESSAGE AND MEDIA

1. Current Message and Appeals:
- Website
  - o Easy-to-navigate.
  - o Clean appearance
  - o Easy click to find more information.
- Social Media
  - o Currently no social media
- In-person Marketing Tactics
  - o Posters outside the facility doors
  - o Sometimes chalk on the sidewalk on campus.
- Most of marketing is focused on the gaming aspect of the facility.

2. Message & Appeal Recommendations:
- Instagram - funny memes, upcoming events, new game launches, and potential giveaways.
- Center should be mentioned in some of the freshman introductory classes

3. Best Touch Points**:**
- Website – I do not think we should focus on changing the STC website. It is quite easy to navigate and is very informative for students.
- Social Media – It is VITAL that The Student Technology gets on Instagram. Instagram is the social media platform most widely used by Gen Z.
  - o Promote events and have more basic information.
  - o Instagram Reels – easy-going, enjoyable touch point. Reels should be entertaining and engaging, showing customers that the facility is lighthearted and fun.
- Flyers around campus
- Sidewalk chalking

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Assignment 5 – SOCIAL MEDIA VOICE AND PERSONA

- How to Find Your Social Media Marketing Voice Article:
  https://buffer.com/library/social-media-marketing-voice-and-tone/#what-is-the-difference-between-voice-and-tone

1. Social Media Voice:
   - Character/Persona - Friendly, warm, uplifting,
   - Tone – personal, humble,
   - Language – simple, fun, laid back,
   - Purpose – Educate, entertain, engage, enable,

2. 5 Questions:
   - If the STC was a person, it would be the friend who fills your bucket and does not drain it. College is full of difficulties and uncertainties, the STC is there as a break to refuel and recharge your batteries whenever you need.
   - STC relationship to consumers is one who encourages constant growth and change in your life. People experience growth when they are pushed out of their comfort zone and try new things. The STC is here to cushion you and guide users toward their end goal.
   - STC is NOT exclusive to only technology wizards. The STC should be a welcoming, collaborative space for students with all diverse levels of technological knowledge to either start or continue their technological journey.
   - Companies with similar personalities – Orangetheory Fitness and other boutique fitness studios are a fitting example of companies with similar personalities to the STC. No matter if you are a fitness junkie, or are just starting out, the studio always makes a significant effort to comfort you and encourage you to be the best version of yourself.
   - I want customers to think about the STC as a safe place to unwind and recharge. College can be draining (we all know this), and there are a lot of students who do not know how to relax and reset in a healthy way.

3. Positioning Statement:
   - Through experiential technology, The Nexus is helping students achieve their educational and recreational ambitions by providing an inspiring environment for students to unwind with peers, experiment with new tech, or meet their academic goals in order to expand their overall potential.

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Assignment 6 – PREPARING FOR THE STRATEGIC PITCH
Deliverable #1
- <u>The Topic (objective trying to help STC achieve)</u> - increased awareness of the STC, inform students of events and opportunities.
- <u>My Idea (Deliverable)</u> - Social media recommendations
  - Need to get an Instagram account
    - Have a single tone, voice, and message.
    - Posts about events, equipment, workshops, services offered, student highlights, new technology alerts, etc.
    - Instagram reels
- <u>Proof Points (Why it is a good idea)</u> - Many students on campus have no idea what the student technology center is, or what is offered in the facility. Almost every student is on Instagram and uses it every day, this would be the best form of communication from the facility to the students to increase awareness.

Deliverable #2
- <u>The Topic (objective trying to help STC achieve)</u> - create a warm, welcoming environment for students to unwind and relax.
- <u>My Idea (Deliverable)</u> - Studio rename, rebrand, and remodel.
  - A new name that is unique and represents what the center is trying to build.
    - The Nexus ™
      - Definition: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nexus
  - Complete remodel of the studio to create a welcoming environment so students are more likely to visit the center.
    - Modern furniture
    - New floors (if possible)
    - Paint job
    - Add collaborative learning spaces for groups.
    - MOOD BOARD
      - Brand
      - images
- <u>Proof Points (Why it is a good idea)</u> - students are more likely to visit "newer" spaces. We saw this with the new Student Success Center on campus. A modern look will increase students' desire to visit the facility.

Deliverable #3
- <u>The Topic (objective trying to help STC achieve)</u> - grow footprint, get more students involved on campus within the center.
- <u>My Idea (Deliverable)</u> - Events hosted at the center.
  - Informational Workshops
    - 3D printer info
    - Volunteer or student led.
    - How to use technology

- ▪ Introductions to podcasts or recording music, etc.
  - o Movie watch parties
  - o Sports watch parties to increase school spirit.
  - o DJ nights for student DJs to play their music live for other students.
  - o Video game tournaments
    - ▪ Example: Super Smash Bros
- Proof Points (Why it is a good idea) - The best way to get students' attention is to host free events. Students are more willing to come to an event or workshop, then they will be exposed to the facility and will be more likely to come back and bring friends!