

## How can new media influence young people's drinking behaviour?

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With funding for anti-drink driving campaigns on Television cut this Christmas one University of Birmingham academic is looking at whether new and social media can be used to effectively fill this gap by encouraging young people to drink responsibly.

Professor Isabelle Szmigin from the Birmingham Business School is an expert in consumer marketing and has previously researched the role advertising plays in shaping young people's attitudes to excessive drinking.

She comments: 'We know that funding for the high profile national TV campaigns has been cut, but the drink driving message has lost none of its importance, so we need to look at alternatives that can convey this important message.'

'New media and social media have great potential to reach young people but we need to find out what is effective in creating awareness of the risks of excessive alcohol consumption.'

One Birmingham student has already used new media to drive the message home by developing her own anti drink driving podcast.

As part of her Communications coursework Charlotte Ball, a 2nd year Business Management with Communications undergraduate, has mixed poetry and parody to produce a strong anti drink-drive campaign for Christmas.

The finished podcast is being made available online in a bid to highlight the drink driving risk amongst young people over the Christmas party season.

Charlotte produced and recorded the podcast using music mixed and produced by Birmingham based teenager "Little C Prod".

She comments: 'I was really pleased to produce something that is being made available online. I hope that the message gets through to young people to think again about driving after a second unit of alcohol at a time of year when it can be easy to forget.'

Professor Szmigin adds: 'Charlotte's podcast is a tremendous example of taking a creative approach to a drink driving campaign. It is good to see young people talking to each other about such important issues. Too often drink driving campaigns 'talk down' to young people.'

'The expectation is that young people over-consume alcohol, but here we have an example of the way in which students at Birmingham are working towards greater alcohol awareness by putting social marketing theory into practice, and to good use.'

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### Notes for Editors

Podcast creator Charlotte Ball and Prof Isabelle Szmigin are available for interview by arrangement.

The podcast has been professionally recorded and is downloadable for broadcast use at:

<http://www.business.bham.ac.uk/news/2010/drink-drive.shtml> (<http://www.business.bham.ac.uk/news/2010/drink-drive.shtml>)

Background music used in the podcast has been cleared for use on the University site and for news coverage purposes.

Charlotte Ball is a 2<sup>nd</sup> year undergraduate studying Business Management with Communications at Birmingham Business School and the sole author of the podcast. Charlotte's hometown is Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands.

Next semester BSc Business with Communications students are producing video casts on the continued theme of alcohol awareness.

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