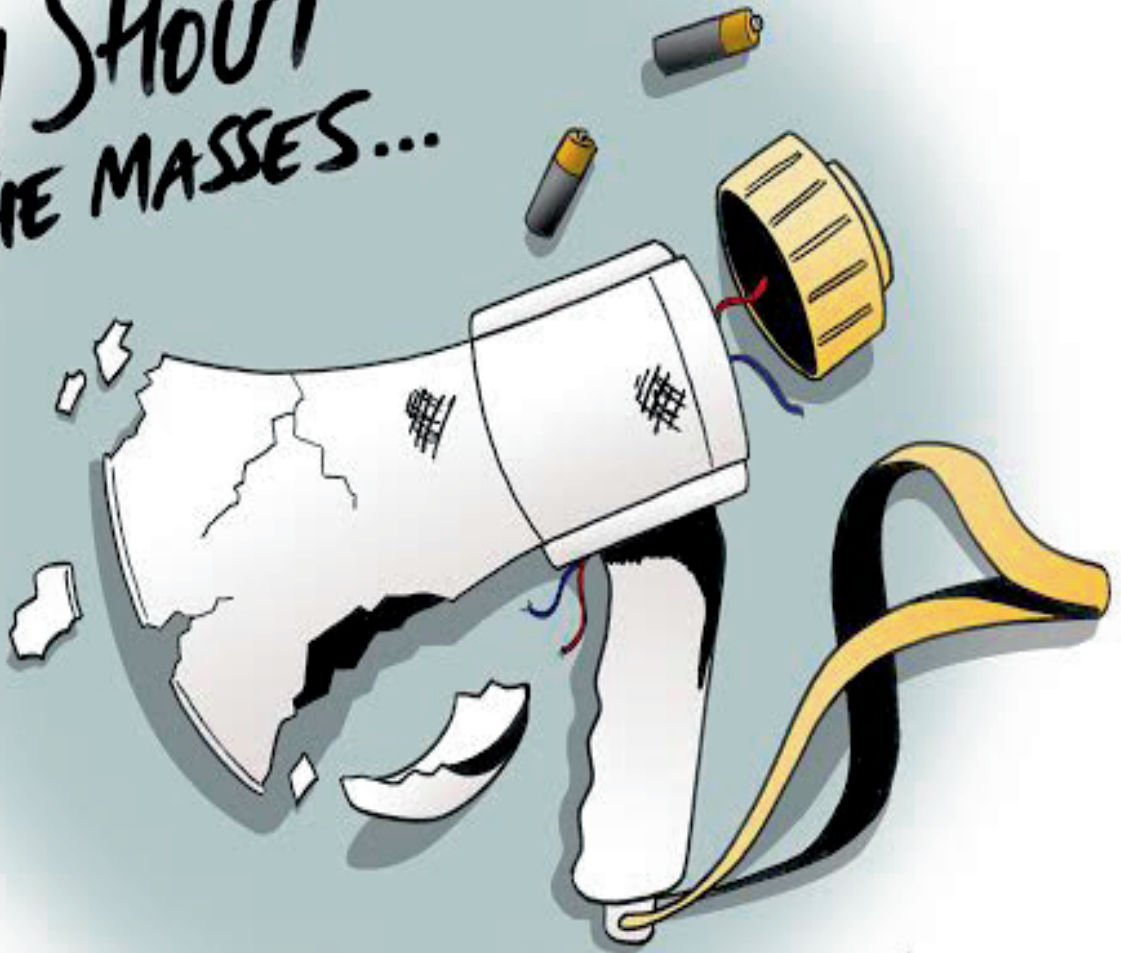


# Before They Book.

WHY SHOUT  
TO THE MASSES...



WHEN YOU CAN  
TALK TO THE FEW  
THAT MATTER?



## Why shout to the masses when you can talk to the few that matter?

No other industry is obsessed with fame as much as ours. Who else makes up news headlines to sell their services? This obsession has not only defined how we sell our work, but also who we are and, ultimately, what we make.

Nigel Bogle even once described BBH as 'The Fame Factory'.

But when it comes to digital media, you can either optimise the mass awareness-driven model with more reach, more channels, and more word of mouth, or you can challenge it.

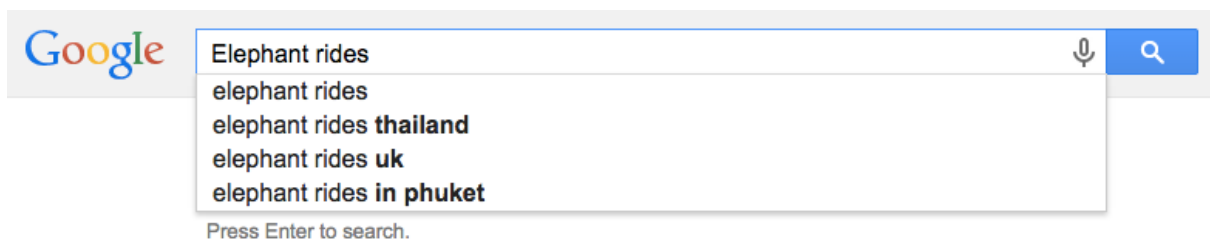
We chose the latter and developed a strategy that would:

- Target specific behaviours, not reach out to an audience of millions
- Intercept intentions, not interrupt attention
- Strive for pertinent, not loud, content
- Wait for the effects of long-term solutions, not seek out the immediate effects of short-lived bursts

This paper aims to explore the differences between shallow fame and genuine influence. Ultimately, what should strategy aim for? To be heard by millions of random people, or listened to by the few that matter?

In our case, we aimed for the few over the millions and used digital media to stop tourists from spending on animal entertainment.

'Before they book' focuses on a specific audience at a specific time to influence the exact behaviour we wanted to challenge, through discreet channels.





## **A precise and focused role for creativity**

World Animal Protection exists to end animal suffering. So when they briefed us on their first campaign, they were looking for a campaign that would have a genuine impact on animal welfare. This brief was not about passively highlighting an issue but to actively engage people in protecting animals.

Together, we honed in on the issue of animal entertainment. Animal entertainment is a major source of animal suffering: riding elephants, walking with lions, swimming with dolphins, etc. In all these activities, there are hundreds of thousands of wild animals trapped, confined, mutilated and forced to live and behave unnaturally in the name of entertainment.

Our focus was on the most popular type of animal entertainment: elephant riding.

Paradoxically, people who take part are animal lovers: they want to be in contact with wild animals when abroad. But they are unaware of the torture that takes place behind the scenes: young elephants are taken from their mothers, beaten with clubs and bull hooks to break their behaviours...

This is an awareness issue and we had a clear message to fix it: animal entertainment is animal abuse. But a very limited media budget to say it. So like many other charities, we could have unleashed the passion of the networks for good causes and aimed to become the next social media sensation. But how do these charity stunts really work?

When we were working on this brief, the Ice Bucket Challenge was on every social media profile. The challenges generated over a billion views on YouTube<sup>1</sup>, the creation of 2.4 million unique videos on Facebook<sup>2</sup> and the donation of over \$100 million<sup>3</sup>. These numbers demonstrate how powerful social media can be when it comes to spreading the good and generating donation at scale. But what exactly did it drive fame for?

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<sup>1</sup> TheGuardian.com: <http://goo.gl/m8zTZe>

<sup>2</sup> Time.com: <http://goo.gl/SNmWUk>

<sup>3</sup> FastCoexist.com: <http://goo.gl/1cTvyU>



53% of the participants didn't know the cause behind the Ice Bucket Challenge<sup>4</sup>. The motivation for a third of them<sup>5</sup> was to gain attention on social media. How many of the millions of people watching these challenges know what ALS is? The Ice Bucket Challenges were omnipresent but they didn't say much about the cause.

These stunts create more fame for the movements and participants that fuel them than for the cause they support. They drive shallow fame and donations at scale, because charities must play by the rules of social media and give more room to the users' personal branding than to the cause they fight for.

However our brief was to create genuine influence and behaviour change. And to do so, we couldn't afford to lose the fundamental message that would impact on behaviours: "Animal entertainment is animal abuse".

The role of creativity wasn't to create the next social media sensation with a nod to a cause, but to stop animal lovers from spending on animal entertainment. To play that role, our first task was to understand the user journey and find the moment when our message would have the most impact on behaviours.

We wanted to intercept the people who are likely to go on an elephant tour before they book it, and demonstrate to them that "Animal entertainment is animal abuse". It is this behavioural thinking that became central to the idea of 'Before They Book'.

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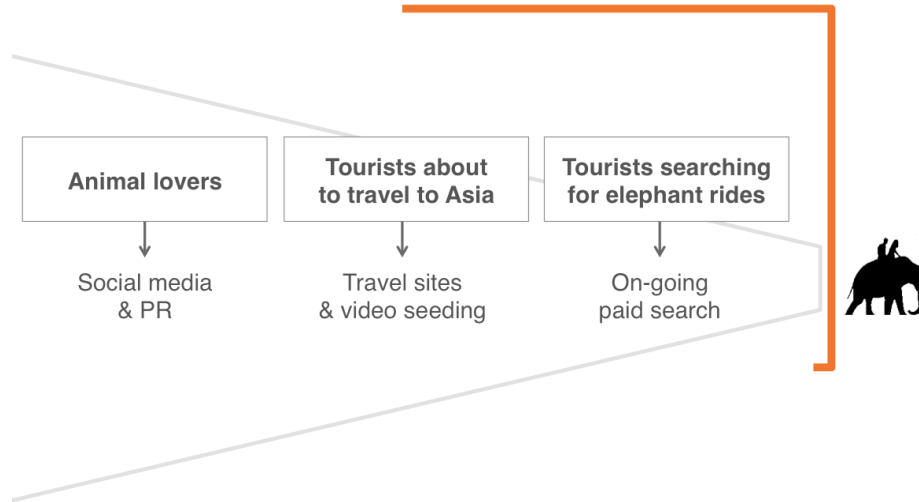
<sup>4</sup> Independent.co.uk: <http://goo.gl/CtMw2u>

<sup>5</sup> Independent.co.uk: <http://goo.gl/CtMw2u>





## INTERCEPTING ANIMAL LOVERS BEFORE THEY BOOK



### Making search central

The Internet is the top source of inspiration for 76% of leisure travellers<sup>6</sup>. And 60% of these online journeys start with a search query<sup>7</sup>. Search engines are our opportunity to be where their research starts, be there when tourists are planning their activities, and prevent them from booking animal entertainment.

Every year, there are over one million search queries for elephant riding on Google<sup>8</sup>. On social media, charities have to work hard to earn people's attention. Whereas search intercepts those who are actively interested in animal entertainment.

We looked at the keywords that would help us intercept the right users. There were two main categories of search terms:

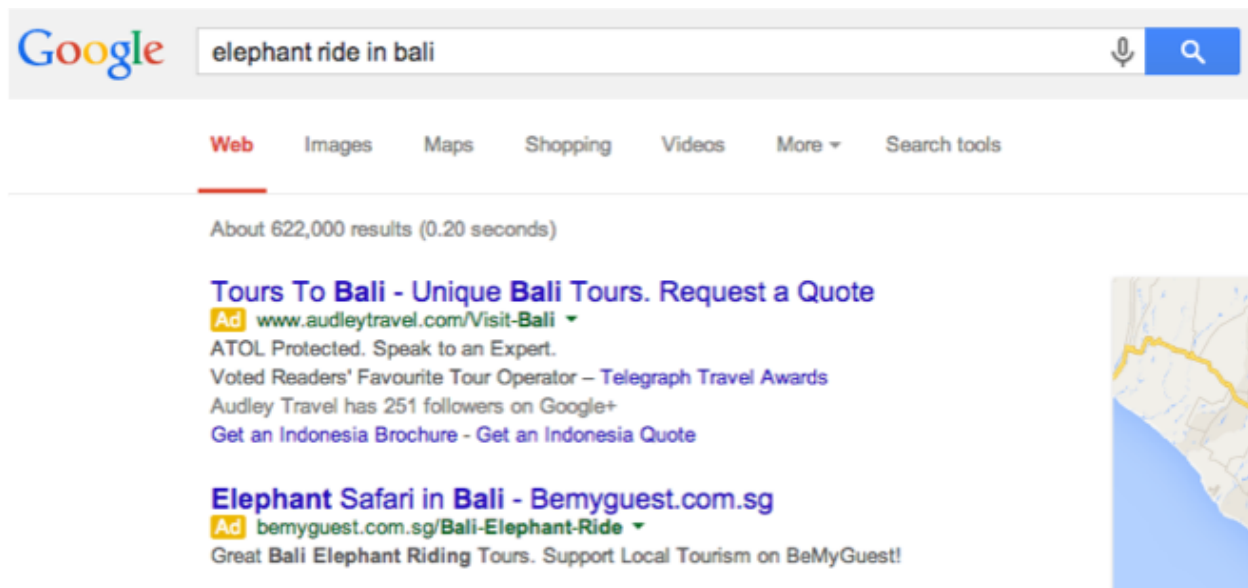
1. The generic ones: 'where can I ride an elephant', 'elephant trek', 'holidays with elephants', 'elephant experience', etc.
2. The region-specific ones: 'elephant riding' followed by Thailand, Bali, Phuket, Sri Lanka, etc.

In total we had 400 different keywords, that we translated into six different languages, and that gave us access to 95,000 monthly searches<sup>9</sup>. Keywords that tour operators had also identified and were already investing in paid search.

<sup>6</sup> The 2014 Traveler's Road to Decision: <http://goo.gl/jmG8yU>

<sup>7</sup> The 2014 Traveler's Road to Decision: <http://goo.gl/jmG8yU>

<sup>8</sup> Google Adwords 2014



*Google Adwords: tour operators competing for the top position of tourists' search results*

How could we trick Google's algorithm to gain a place at the top of tourists' search results? By behaving like a tour operator.

The quickest way to get to the top of the page is to buy Google AdWords. These are the ads that advertisers can buy through a bidding process.

There are two factors that influence which ads win: budget and relevance. So, of course, the advertiser must offer a reasonable price versus the competition. But more importantly, their ads must answer what people are searching for.

This is not just about matching the ad copy to people's queries. It is also about getting people clicking on it. Because the most engaging ads get the most out of Google AdWords, cheaper.

The best way we could outbid the competition was by offering tourists the very best elephant rides.

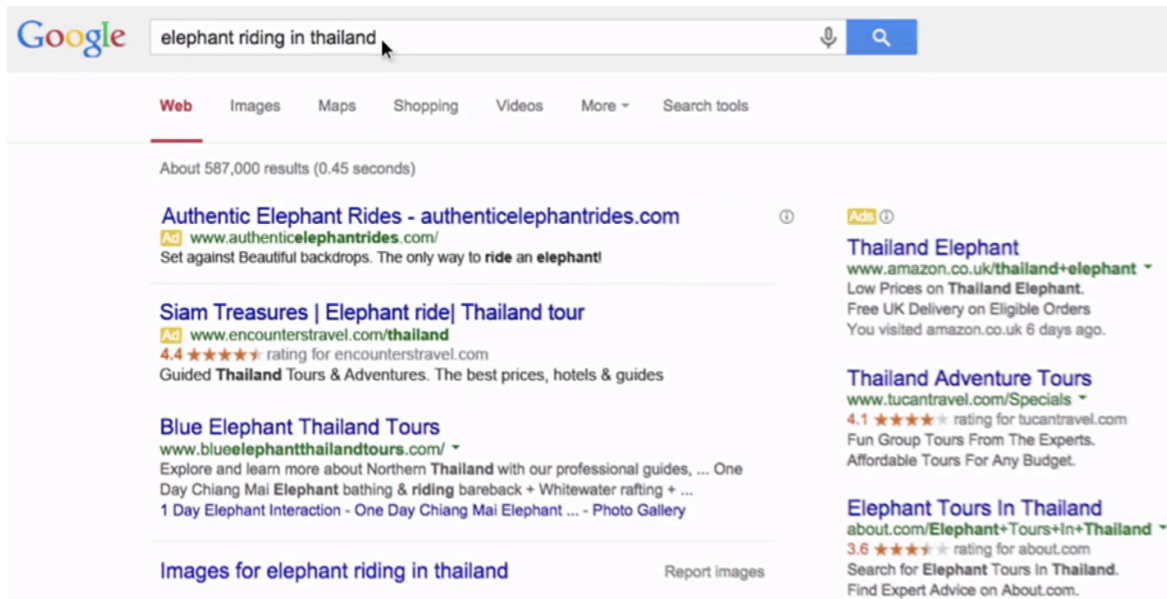
A search brief isn't usually what creative teams look forward to. But there was an exciting challenge in taking traffic from other tour operators that have spotted the same opportunity. How could we create an experience that mimics tour operators to get tourists away from animal entertainment?

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<sup>9</sup> Google Adwords 2014

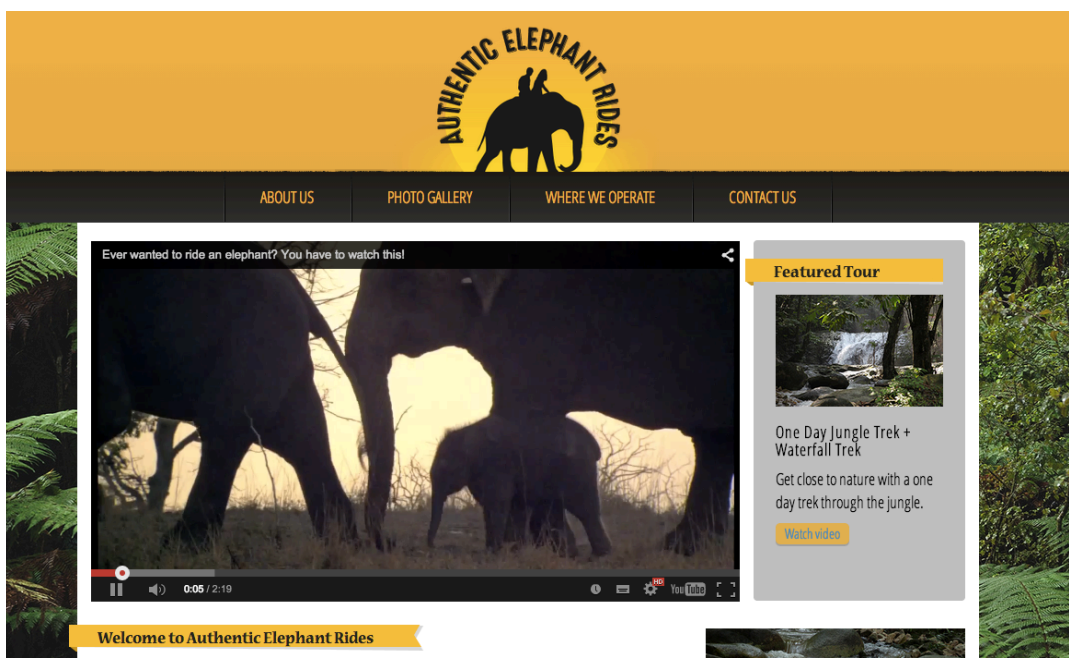


We created Authentic Elephant Rides, a fake tour operator that offers the very best elephant experiences. This was our way to compete against other tour operators and gain the top position in search results.



*Google Adwords: Authentic Elephant Rides in top position*

These search ads took users onto [AuthenticElephantRides.com](http://AuthenticElephantRides.com) where they could find out more about the experiences.



*Authentic Elephant Rides: website ([link](http://AuthenticElephantRides.com))*



This is a website that looks like any other tour operator website. There are a few promotional offers, described in a commercial manner, surrounded by pictures of tourists doing tourist activities, and displayed on a jungle design theme. Nothing unusual. This is what Google wants to read and what tourists expect to see.

Everything on this website invites users to watch a short video to see how incredible the experiences are. The film starts with a cheerful guide welcoming tourists to Authentic Elephant Rides where their holiday will be transformed into a memory they will never forget.



*Authentic Elephant Rides: Tour operator ([link](#))*

In the middle of the jungle, the guide takes viewers on a tour of the site where they train elephants to give tourists that extra special experience. But it is with the same passion and enthusiasm that she reveals the cruelty that takes place behind the scenes: “Elephants would not naturally let people ride on them. So in order to tame them and to give tourists that extra special experience, they’re tortured at a very early age to completely break their spirit. The process is called Phajaan or the crush...”



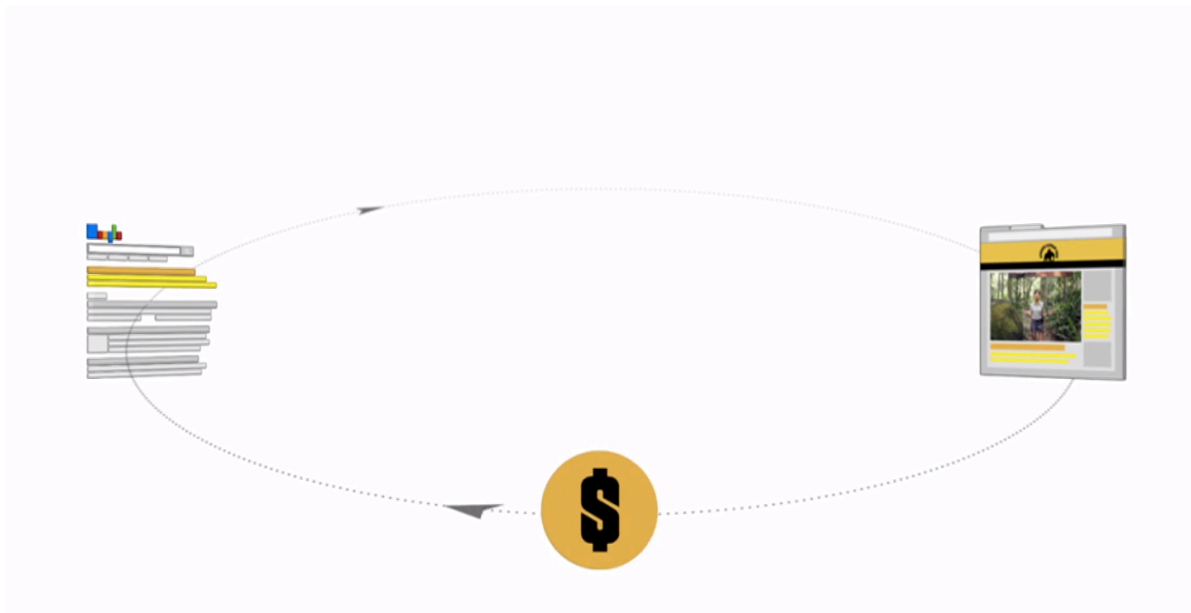


Never exposed to animal cruelty, tourists watch what they expected to see but hear a reality they were unaware of. Only words have been used to describe this animal abuse. But at the end of the film, they see a captive elephant equipped for entertainment. Where tourists once saw animal entertainment, they now see animal abuse.



*Authentic Elephant Rides: Animal entertainment is animal abuse ([link](#))*

Everything Google can read on this website makes Authentic Elephant Rides relevant to the problem of animal entertainment. It's about elephant riding, memorable holidays, etc. But anything that is related to the abuse or the organisation must be invisible to Google's eyes. For that reason, we told the truth in video (Google search doesn't read the content of a film) and invited tourists to be part of the solution on a second website.



*Before They Book: a search campaign that funds itself to let tourists know the truth*

The endframe invites users onto BeforeTheyBook.com where they can let others know the truth. A micro-donation can help World Animal Protection make the video they've just watched become the first search results others can see.

Results:

- Every day, 170 tourists are intercepted just before they book
- Tourists' donations funded 24 days of the search campaign

'Before They Book' is rooted in search to focus on the audience that matters the most, at the moment that matters the most: tourists researching a holiday actively searching for animal entertainment.

But this educational film could also be used to spread our influence beyond search and intercept two other audiences before they book: animal lovers and tourists about to travel to Asia.



## Spreading the influence beyond search

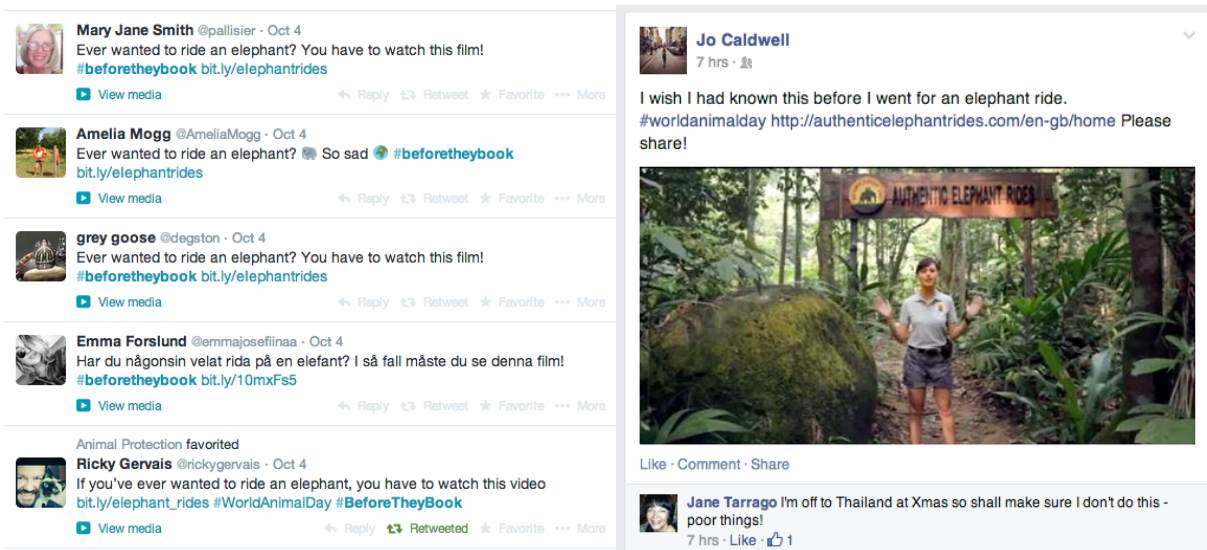
Even if they're not actively searching for it, many animal lovers are likely to be exposed to animal entertainment during their holiday researches. So to intercept them, we seeded our film to users who had recently visited travel sites for Asia.

Results:

- 270,000 tourists have watched the film before their trip to Asia and their engagement has lasted as long as it took to learn the truth. The average view lasted 1 min 30 out of the 2 minute video, where the truth is revealed during the first 90 seconds

We know that animal lovers are the most likely to ride elephants in the future. Using World Animal Protection's influencers and owned channels, we invited animal lovers to discover the unexpected truth and to spread it further.

To capture attention, we encouraged people to share the video with a sensational title à la Upworthy: "Ever wanted to ride an elephant? You must watch this video".



*Before They Book: Animal lovers spreading the truth on social media*





## Results:

- 235,000 animal lovers have watched the film and learned the truth about animal entertainment. The average view lasted 1 min 35 out of the 2 minute video
- The video has been shared over 35,000 times on social media
- The conversations around #BeforeTheyBook have reached a potential of 27 million users

World Animal Day took place on the 4th of October 2014. The combination of this and our arresting campaign content meant that many news sites also shared the truth.

The image shows two side-by-side screenshots of news websites. On the left is The Guardian's website, featuring an article titled "Think twice about wild animal tourism, visitors told" by Will Coldwell, dated Saturday 4 October 2014. The article includes a video player showing an elephant. On the right is the Mail Online website, featuring a travel news section with a headline "Would you ride an elephant on holiday? Shocking video highlights abuse and torture suffered by elephants enslaved in wild animal tourism industry". The article lists bullet points about fake advertisements and animal abuse, and includes social media share counts (1.1k shares, 66 comments).

*Before They Book: news sites spreading the truth onto their travel pages*



The scale of the debate amongst animal lovers forced the travel industry to react.

Two major influencers of the tourism industry<sup>10</sup> have contacted World Animal Protection to discuss how they could take action and offer animal friendly tourism instead of animal entertainment.

Results:

- Every year, the 5.3 million tourists about to travel to Asia who will visit these travel sites will come across animal friendly tourism instead of animal entertainment

## INTERCEPTING ANIMAL LOVERS BEFORE THEY BOOK



<sup>10</sup> As the conversations are still going, we're not able to communicate their names.



## How could strategy have the biggest influence?

Throughout the process, strategy always focused on how to most impact behaviours.

In our case, an influential strategy meant a shift away from industry conventions:

- Talk to the few that matter, not shout to the masses
- Educate with a message, not entertain with a social media sensation
- Make genuine impact, not add noise

But our strategy hasn't just answered a brief and delivered during a short-lived campaign fuelled with paid media. It has given assets and channels which will be relevant as long as the problem exists, and a platform that works across other type of animal entertainment.

In 2015, 'Before They Book' is still educating animal lovers about elephant rides and has extended to intercept others that are about to book tiger-themed parks.

*1,922 Words.*

## Appendix

Case Study Film: <http://carousel.bartleboglehegarty.com/p/Fc4pkMzZ>

