



surviv(AL)House

COMMUNICATION Narrative

www.uab.edu/solardecathlon

COMMUNICATIONS Narrative

s u r v i v (A L) H O U S E

The **s u r v i v (A L)** House team is intent upon communicating effectively not only about our home, but also about our school and our region. We understand that at the competition in Denver, many visitors who come to our house may never have been to the south or to Alabama, and so we tell the story of our area's climate, architectural history, and traditions, and present a compelling



case for why our house is perfectly suited to those elements. At home in Birmingham, many in our community will never have been inside a completely solar-powered home, and so we showcase the appeal and livability of solar powered homes and a sustainable lifestyle.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Once Team Alabama was chosen by the Department of Energy to participate in Solar Decathlon 2017, the original coordinators gathered a group of students, faculty and administrators from the Sustainability, Engineering, Business and Communications divisions of the University to organize a communications plan.

The team has worked closely with that core group and UAB's Public Relations and Communications offices in order to take advantage of their broad reach in the internal and external media landscape, and their expertise in managing information campaigns. UAB Decathlon students also worked with key individuals in development and alumni affairs to coordinate communications and fundraising with internal and external UAB audiences.



S U R V I V (A L) H O U S E : C O M M U N I C A T I O N

BRAND



The name **s u r v i v (A L)** House was created by Team Alabama Decathlon interns in the Digital Media Studio at UAB. Out of all of the concepts presented by students in the studio, the team determined that **s u r v i v (A L)** captured the essence of our message of resilience and sustainability in the face of adversity. Our color scheme and icons were created to depict the four major characteristics of the **s u r v i v (A L)** House.



Grey represents the grey characteristics of tornadoes, but it also represents the metal used to sustain the structure of the house. Blue represents the water-saving and conservation aspects of the home. Yellow represents the solar - powered energy aspects of the home, and green represents the sustainable and modern aspects. The team has created a branding guide in order to have consistency in on communication copy provide for the **s u r v i v (A L)** house.



COLORS:

GREY: C=42 M=34 Y=34 K=1

YELLOW: C=4 M=0 Y=71 K=0

GREEN: C=57 M=13 Y=100 K=0

BLUE: C=68 M=15 Y=16 K=0

FONTS:

Avenir- LIGHT, BOOK , & BLACK

Bodoni 72 Oldstyle - BOLD

Calibri – LIGHT, BOLD

THE STORY BEHIND THE BRAND

Since 1966, Alabama has been struck by more tornadoes than any other state. The 2011 Super Outbreak was the largest, costliest, and one of the deadliest tornado outbreaks ever recorded, affecting the Southern, Midwestern, and Northeastern United States and leaving widespread destruction in its wake. Over three days, 349 tornadoes were spawned. Alabama was one of two



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states most severely affected. Of the 219 tornadoes that formed on April 27 -- the most active day -- 59 touched down in Alabama, resulting in more than two hundred fatalities. Countless homes, neighborhoods and cities were either partially or completely destroyed across the state, and in the days that followed, thousands of people were left without power, water, or any means of transportation or communication.

Anyone in our regional audience can tell a story or two about what happened to them in the days of the outbreak, and of the struggles of the lengthy aftermath. This pivotal event lives large in our region's history, and each year the threat looms of a repeat of the devastation of 2011.

MESSAGE

As the design of **s u r v i v (A L)** House evolved, it became clear that the team's message would concern three fundamental aspects of the house

- **HEAT AND HUMIDITY –**

traditional design and current technology can minimize the effects of both

- **RESILIENCE IN EXTREME WEATHER –**

team-developed safe room technology keeps residents safe from harm

- **QUICK PERMANENCE –**

in the event that a home or a community of homes is lost in a tornado, our prototype can be rebuilt quickly and inexpensively by any contractor

resilient. affordable. green.



GETTING THE WORD OUT

The **s u r v i v (A L)** communications team represents an interdisciplinary collaboration of students from a broad spectrum of study areas including art, English, biology, public health, anthropology, engineering, and marketing. These students met weekly at the UAB Makerspace along with the design and construction team, so that all team members would remain aware of the work taking place to support each aspect of the competition. The team was also frequently joined by community mentors, administrative mentors, faculty, and partners in media and public relations.

PLATFORMS FOR COMMUNICATION

The team prioritized interpersonal communication and “showing up” at the outset, with the intention of not only making the community aware of our project, but also to recruit more team members. The team held fundraisers at restaurants and pubs, spoke to k-12 students and professional groups, and hosted tables at concerts and festivals. These activities were very effective in creating buzz about the project and also helped to make meaningful connections between the team and the community.

For internal team communications, including mentors and volunteers, the team used Yammer. The dynamic capabilities of Yammer allowed for creative idea sharing between team members, file storing and sharing of project documents and deliverables, and creation of topic-specific groups. Additionally, user activity reports developed from Yammer analytics allowed development of a multi-platform approach to maximize core team and extended team communication. Organic post reach was monitored on Facebook which informed advertising needs.



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EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The team developed its web page early on as a platform for general information and fundraising. The site connects visitors to these active social media outlets

Website: <https://www.uab.edu/solardecathlon/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UABSolarDecathlon/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/uabsd17/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOeGjMMrcKY>

HASHTAGS

#AlabamaSolar

#UABSolarDecathlon

#UABSolar

#DenverOrBust

The team posts frequent messages, pictures, and video content about progress on the build site, and overall team activities. The **s u r v i v (A L)** team has been featured by WIAT TV local news, WBRC Fox News Birmingham, WBHM Radio, Bham Now magazine, UAB Magazine, AL.Com and the Birmingham News, Weld Magazine, and by other regional outlets.



ON-SITE COMMUNICATION

Signage for the exterior of the home is intended to reflect the **s u r v i v (A L)** brand while also conveying the sense of drama tied to the themes of our house. Interior signage will highlight important technical and sustainable elements of the house. Our tour of the house will not include apps so that our team will be able to fully engage with our visitors through the scripted tour and also through active question and answer periods, when time allows. Visitors will be able to view a monitor that displays the home's energy use and active systems.

