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## **Meth Project Goes Digital**

By Sheila Parker

November 10, 2011

There's a new look for Georgia's Meth Project. The organization launched a new campaign across all mediums to reduce methamphetamine use this week. Central to the campaign is the revamped MethProject.org website — what the organization calls an encyclopedic online source of information about Meth for teens. It's being supported by new television, radio, print, online, mobile, and social media campaigns. A web-centric social network built around the theme “Ask MethProject.org,” the campaign challenges teens to consider what they know about Meth, and equips them with facts, tools, and resources to understand the risks of the drug and to influence their peers.

Jim Langford, Executive Director of the Georgia Meth project says MethProject.org provides the immersive, multimedia experience teens have come to expect in the digital world. Organized around getting answers, speaking out, and taking action, MethProject.org addresses teens' most frequently asked questions about the physical, mental, and social effects of Meth use. Each question is answered with a range of content—more than 350 in all—from interactive facts, videos, animations, image galleries, polls, and quizzes, to personal stories from users, their friends and family, and first-hand accounts from experts.

Designers say they hope to spark exploration and engagement through MethProject.org as it brings to life the breadth of research on the subject in a way that is highly interactive and accessible to young people. For instance, teens can take a normal beating heart to Meth-induced heart attack in the simulation “Heart in Overdrive,” learn how Meth rapidly changes a user's appearance by pairing before and after photos in “Mug Shot Match-up,” dose a healthy brain with Meth to watch its effects, or experiment with the drug's ingredients to see which ones explode or emit toxic gas. Personal stories from users are told through videos, rich animations, and drawings as teens describe their experiences with Meth in poignant detail.

The Meth Project's large-scale prevention campaigns have been developed in consultation with top experts in research, prevention, treatment, advertising, and digital media including experts from National Institute on Drug Abuse, the Department of Justice, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, RAND Corporation, UCLA, University of Illinois, and the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. Meth Project.org is the culmination of six years of campaign development and quantitative and qualitative research conducted with more than

50,000 teens and young adults, including 60 national and statewide surveys, and 112 focus groups.

MethProject.org is also intended to serve as a platform for teens to connect and share. In the “Speak Up” section of the site, teens can post their own messages about Meth through artwork, videos, stories, and photos, as well as comment on other teen submissions. “Take Action” provides ways for teens to get involved to prevent Meth use or find help, and showcases teen-led community action programs across the country.

The Meth Project is also expanding its presence on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. A new national Meth Project Facebook page will build upon its network of more than 27,000 fans across the Meth Project’s individual state pages. It will expand on the viral success of the Meth Project’s previous campaigns—which have been shared and viewed by more than 15 million people on YouTube—with the launch of a dedicated Meth Project YouTube channel.