

### **Overview**

Diocesan Communications throughout 2014 has been on a record pace. Visits to the Diocesan website continue to grow. In 2012 (the first year for the new Communications Director), there were 70,320 total visitors, 192 per day. Of these, there were 21,670 unique visitors (A unique visitor is a new visitor - not the same person checking the site repeatedly) with a unique ratio of 31%. In 2014, the total number of visitors to date is 85,135, an average of 271 per day. Of these, there were 27,765 unique visitors, a ratio of 33%. The traffic has increased greatly, due in no small part to the amount of news items submitted by parishes throughout the Diocese.

### **www.doepa.org**

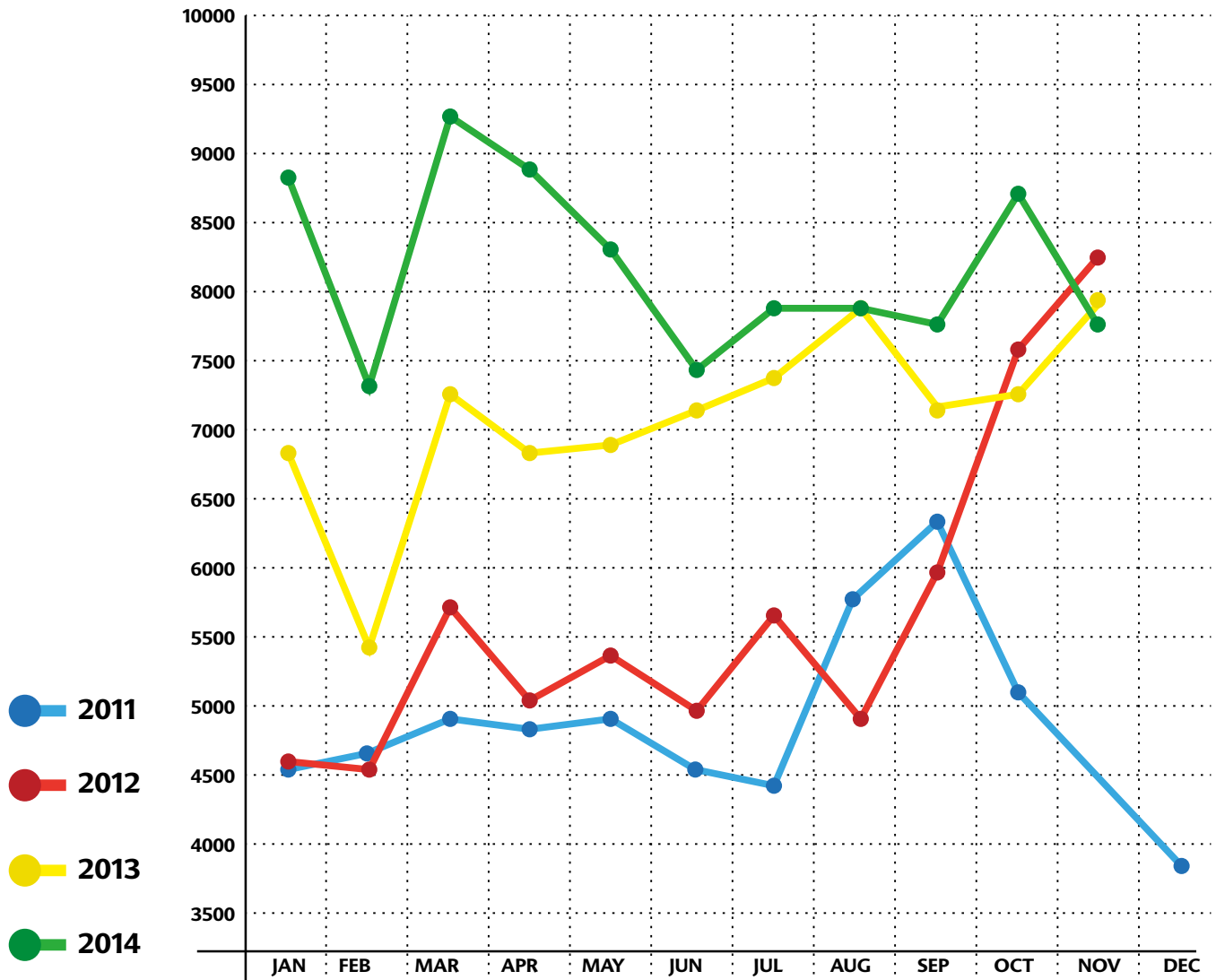
Submissions have increased greatly. We are seeing many parishes that have not sent items beginning to participate, which is wonderful. In 2014, we have had stories sent by: Berwick, Bethlehem, Coaldale, Edwardsville, Frackville, Gradyville, Harrisburg, Jermyn, Lopez, McAdoo, Mechanicsburg, Minersville, Mount Carmel, Nanticoke, Old Forge, Olyphant - All Saints and St. Nicholas, Philadelphia - St. Stephen Cathedral, Pottstown, Stroudsburg, Wilkes-Barre - Holy Trinity and Holy Resurrection, Williamsport, and Wrightstown, not to mention all of the Diocesan news items. We are now well over 50% participation, but there is room for improvement here. REGULAR contribution from all is the goal.

An ongoing issue has been the way stories are submitted. The optimal method is to send photos via email. There have been occasions where items were texted, and they got caught in the spam folder. This folder is checked periodically, but it is not a safe way to ensure your news items arrive. Another issue is the lack of any details with photos. At the VERY MINIMUM submissions are to include: Who (Parish and/or participants), what (the occasion or event - be specific) Where (what parish/city - is this offsite?) When (What is the date of the event) Why (if applicable) Too many times photos are sent with "Holy Spirit Church Sunday School" as the subject, a bunch of photos, and nothing else. This delays the process, and complicates matters unnecessarily. Photos will just about ALWAYS be posted, but if the story is not included, we cannot guess what is happening and posting will be delayed. This takes up a lot of time.

A second issue is the quality of the images sent. The Communications department realizes that not every parish has a resident photographer or expensive equipment to take photos. However, it is respectfully requested that the largest, highest quality photos be sent. There is a noticeable difference between photos shot with a traditional camera and those shot with a cell phone. Please take the time and make the effort to get a reasonably good photo. If there is a group involved, please get a group shot. PLEASE DO NOT EDIT, CROP or get "ARTSY" with photos (no instagram effects, coloration, odd cropping.) We have striven to develop a "brand" for the website, meaning it has a certain look and feel. Think of it as your community newspaper, and submit accordingly. Again, the OCA requirements are being followed here.

The website is updated weekly, if not daily. We are rich with news items about what is going on around the diocese, but very poor with regard to resources for parishioners and non-Orthodox. This needs to be addressed sooner rather than later. Articles, essays, how-to guides, and so forth should absolutely become a regular part of the growing website. It has style, but needs more substance.

**Website Statistics Comparison 2011 - 2014**



**Unique Visitors per day**

January 2012	1,507
January 2013	2,076
January 2014	2,491

**Unique Visitors per day Ratio**

January 2012	33%
January 2013	31%
January 2014	28%

We are close to doubling the amount of unique visitors per day (*Only January data for each year shown but all months are similar*) but our Ratio hasn't changed significantly. What this means is our amount of unique visitors has grown - almost doubled - while we continue to attract new visitors at close to the same pace as 2012.

### **Alive in Christ**

The newest issue of “Alive in Christ,” the Diocesan Magazine, is in production. We are trying to keep on the strict schedule shown on the inside cover of the magazine, with some luck. The previous issue included the graduates which is always a headache keeping track of. Numerous emails were sent in search of photos and information, which did not always produce results. Two weeks after the magazine was distributed a message was received asking when to submit a graduation photo. Please spread the word to your Parish when Spring hits - it is the same method every time - send graduation photo and name, parish, parents, where they graduated from, and future plans. This should be part of the graduate’s responsibilities as their big day approaches.

During the production of the Summer issue, a wonderful story and photos submitted by St. Michael’s in Wilmington was overlooked by the department for no good reason - it was just missed. It is a fantastic story and exactly what we are looking for and it will absolutely be in the next issue. Sincere apologies to St. Michael’s for this error - please do not be discouraged by this oversight. If you are receiving too many copies, please inform the Diocesan office so we may keep our costs down.

### **Issues Going Forward**

The department has received inquiries on occasion asking if/when something would be posted to the website, and in every case the answer has been “Nothing was submitted.” The point is - people are looking at the website and wondering why photos aren’t submitted. This has happened at least 3 times during the past year. Please take photos of your events and submit them (in the manner listed above). People are looking! Consider the internet your “first point of Evangelization.”

The FOCUS information on the home page is out of date and shows a broken link. Numerous inquiries to FOCUS have yielded no response. This is being worked on.

The question has been raised in the past about modifying the look of the website. Your basic choices are The Theotokos or Jesus, on different looking backgrounds. That is a bit simplistic, but it describes what our options are. When the Diocese is ready, we can certainly look to redesign/customize our site to reflect our diocese better. This will involve a cost of several hundred dollars.

Some BIG events have taken place with not even a blip to the communications department. This has to change. When I hear about things after Divine Liturgy “through the grapevine” something is broken. Some examples are: Various visits by His Grace, notable retirements, new clergy, and parish anniversaries, to name a few. Keep the Diocese informed!

I try to stay on top of “Big News Items” via the OCA Facebook page and so forth - but I do miss a lot of things. If something is missed or there is something you think should be shared, let me know.

“Download these from my website and post them.” We are done with this. The OCA will not do this, neither will the Diocese. If your parish wants to be represented, please follow the guidelines (approved by then ABP TIKHON) listed on the website - or just see the notes above. As you will see below, time is a precious commodity with the department, and it can’t be wasted tracking down your story, photos and info. If you wish to participate, please follow the guidelines.

### **Budget**

The Office of Communications has been over budget in the past and was slightly over-budget this year. This is most likely going to continue as we experience growth and interest with the items being produced.

Here are the reasons: Content submissions are WAY UP. The hours billed are ONLY for maintaining the website - which consists of updating the news, making any changes requested by His Grace or Matushka Sandy, and posting announcements and upcoming events - as well as production of the magazine. There is a calendar which hasn't been updated in a VERY long time, which would also fall under this. Note that photos are optimized and cropped to maintain our branding. Because of the growth in content, the magazine has expanded to fit everything in, at the expense of any meaningful article. It is basically a 20 page picture book showing events around the diocese.

In 2011, there were 83 news items posted the ENTIRE YEAR.

In 2014, we had that many news items submitted BY APRIL.

This is the reason for the budget being tight. This is also the reason for the request to submit information correctly. I am not looking for a raise. I am not complaining about the work. I simply want it recorded that the department is and has gone over budget and the reasons why. While I believe the work is worthwhile and effective, the Diocese needs to consider if the money is better spent with something else. This is also why I mention the proper way to submit information, every minute counts.

### **Conclusion**

The Communications Department continues to spread the message of the Diocese. The results can be seen in record numbers of visitors to the website and much positive feedback regarding the magazine. We have come a long way in three years, but there is much to be done. It is good to see the amount of parishes participating, all need to be more regular with this. The website is updated frequently with the goings-on of the Diocese, but needs more timely and helpful information. The Diocesan magazine will evolve, with more articles and information to go along with the photos. The core belief of the Communications Department is to spread the word, create excitement and interest, and make people sit up, take notice, and want to get involved with the good works that are happening. Be a part of it!