

Psychedelic Outreach in the Information Age

MAPS Ventures Into the Worlds of Web 2.0 & Summer Festivals

By: Brian Wallace



Brian Wallace,
MAPS Outreach Coordinator
brian@maps.org

IF you are reading this, chances are you are a fan of the work that MAPS does. Maybe you've been a die-hard, dues-paying member since '86, or maybe a friend passed this Bulletin along because they thought the pages within would be of interest to you. Whether your Bulletin was delivered through the mail from our dedicated staff at MAPS headquarters or it was passed along to you at a conference by one of our volunteers, at some point there was a personal exchange.

I believe these personal exchanges are what MAPS is

built upon. The person who handed you this Bulletin is setting up the building blocks necessary to open the way for psychedelic psychotherapy to become available as a prescription medicine for those in need. MAPS is one of the leading organizations working to find a place for psychedelics in society through rigorous clinical research examining their therapeutic applications. With our goal to turn psychedelics into prescription medications to be used in safe and legal therapeutic contexts, it is likely that we will need more than just the science to overcome the misinformation and fear so prevalent in our culture around psychedelics. If we are to succeed, we will need each of you to stand with us to re-educate friends, co-workers, and family members on the potential therapeutic applications--and the potential risks--of these extraordinary tools.

With the advent of social networking sites, MAPS has begun several campaigns to increase our presence in the world of "web 2.0". The idea of web 2.0 is to allow individual Internet users to take ownership of what is posted to the web. The beauty of web 2.0 sites is that many of these sites are built to facilitate cross-posting, commenting, and sharing--vital elements of dialogue--not just between strangers but between friends, family, fellow students, and colleagues. While some Twitter users have been known to post updates regarding what they've eaten for breakfast, MAPS' accounts on Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, Tribe, Evolver, and Youtube are being continuously updated to reflect the psychedelic knowledge renaissance, and the sharing of information indicative of this growing paradigm. We post recent news articles, videos, podcasts, and more. Get started by becoming a "Fan" on Facebook and engaging others in conversation on the Fan Page. Join our "Cause" on Facebook and post it to your profile to show your friends that you care about psychedelic therapy. Follow MAPS on Twitter, and

re-tweet (re-post) the information to your own Twitter feed.

Regardless of your inclinations to online social networking, I encourage you to continue to have these conversations in real life just the same! The idea is that by quoting, citing, or inviting others to view MAPS postings online, you might use one of these topics as an icebreaker to start a conversation about psychedelic therapy. If someone notices you made a post on the latest MAPS fundraising drive, engage them and explain why MAPS' goals, research, and medicines-in-development are important to you. (One thing that I must mention as I encourage you to utilize social networking is this: many of these sites do in fact "own" the content you post, so don't post anything that you wouldn't want the world to see.)

Another venue MAPS has been exploring to foster the sharing of information is running outreach tables at music festivals and conferences. Tables help to support MAPS financially by bringing in donations for books, clothing, and memberships. They also serve to educate people--many of whom have firsthand experience with psychedelics-- with informational brochures, Bulletins, and a miniature psychedelic library. Like the information shared on our social networking sites, the information given at the table functions as an incredible contextual reference point for attendees of these events to think of as they go about their weekend. Nothing is better than when someone comes up to the booth that believes LSD stays in your spinal cord for 10 years (false), and walks away having learned about MAPS' study testing the efficacy of LSD-assisted psychotherapy to alleviate anxiety and depression associated with life-threatening illness (true). Replacing outlandish rumors with facts is something all of us can do to reduce negative stigmas around psychedelics. You don't even need to be tabling at an event for MAPS to do it!

I encourage you to "know your source" in the realm of information dealing. In doing so, you might even get the opportunity to become a credible source of information yourself. So next time someone tells you that Ecstasy "puts holes in your brain," what can you do? Try referring them to Peter Jennings' "Ecstasy Rising" (available in MAPS' online store), which refutes the fraudulent Ricourte research this rumor is based upon.

Even if you don't go and sign up for a Twitter account when you put this Bulletin down, or I never run into you from the other side of a MAPS table, I hope to have left you with some inspiration to have these conversations in your day-to-day life. You can help pave the way for MDMA, LSD, and other psychedelics to be made into prescription medicines to be used safely, legally, and therapeutically--by sharing this Bulletin with a friend or family member today. Thanks for reading this... Now get out there and pass the information along! •