Episode 106: Ali Duerfeldt

# KL: Katie Linder

# AD: Ali Duerfeldt

# KL: You’re listening to “Research in Action”: episode one hundred and six.

# [intro music]

# Segment 1:

# KL: Welcome to “Research in Action,” a weekly podcast where you can hear about topics and issues related to research in higher education from experts across a range of disciplines. I’m your host, Dr. Katie Linder, director of research at Oregon State University Ecampus. Along with every episode, we post show notes with links to resources mentioned in the episode, full transcript, and an instructor guide for incorporating the episode into your courses. Visit our website at ecampus.oregonstate.edu/podcast to find all of these resources.

On this episode, I am joined by Ali Duerfeldt, a Marketing Manager with Oregon State University Extended Campus and a member of the Marketing and Enrollment Services Team. She works with internal and external clients managing strategic marketing efforts. As the Marketing Manager for the OSU Ecampus Research Unit, Ali has most recently worked implementing strategies to promote research projects like the online learning efficacy research database and our instructional designer study, as well as manage the implementation of a rebranding strategy for the Research in Action Podcast. Ali holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Gonzaga University and a Masters of Education in College Student Services Administration from Oregon State University.

Ali, thank you so much for join me in the studio!

**AD:** Thanks, Katie. I’m so happy to be here!

**KL:** So, since it is our anniversary month for the podcast, I thought that it would be fun to bring you in and talk a little bit about how we work with you around dissemination plans for our research, and also marketing for the things that we do in the research unit. So first let’s start out by you sharing a little bit about your role here at ecampus.

**AD:** Sure, absolutely. So I am a Marketing Manager with Oregon State University Extended Campus and as part of my role I work with a lot of internal clients, which would also be Oregon State Ecampus Research Unit – your unit, Katie – as a marketing manager. So specifically I manage our marketing plans, dissemination plans, tactics, support for creative services, visual Identity, social media, different things like that.

**KL:** Okay, so long term listeners may remember on a previous anniversary episode, I think last year, we brought Heather onto the show, and Heather does press writing for us and works for Ali. So we have a whole team here that works with Marketing Ecampus, so the research unit is very fortunate that we have someone to help us strategize about dissemination plans, and I know not everyone has that, so I wanted to bring Ali’s expertise onto the show. So first I thought we could talk a little bit about, what is a dissemination plan? Like as we’re thinking about different studies that we’re conducting and other things that we’re trying to release to broader audiences, can you help us to kind of think about like, what is that? What is that planning part?

**AD:** Sure. Absolutely. I think sometimes there is conception about dissemination plan or – or maybe just a different way of looking at it. When I think about the work that I engage within your unit and research in general, I really want to start at that broad base – like what is the scope of this research? And I want to build from understanding like, what the research is telling me and telling your target audiences and then build from there. So I really try to think of these fennel Idea of what is the premise or the scope of this study, what are the goals that I have for reaching or disseminating information – who are my target audiences, what’s my general strategy to do so, and then of course key performance indicators. How are we going to measure that success? And I feel like that really the top level – um things that you want to have in place before we dive into, what I think is commonly known as the dissemination plan, which would be really the tactics for getting out your goals and really targeting your audiences. Um so I think that when we work specifically with research, it’s about understanding this top level information and then getting into the best tactics to reach your audience and share the information.

**KL:** So I think that this idea of audience is really important, because for some of the studies that we have done here, and I can link to them in the show notes for folks who want to take a look, we’ve actually had really different audiences. So in some cases we’ve wanted to really market the study to people who work in disability studies, or who work in disability services based on the outcomes we had, but in other studies we were really working on instructional designers. So like a totally different audience, and it really did impact how we decided to share out the research through webinars or through publications or even through social media who we decided to target.

**AD:** Yeah or even how youtalk about this study. So ifyou are looking at sharing information that is really targeted toward researchers, you’re going to have a lot different language than you are when you’re working with practitioners in the field – more like ID studies – or, excuse me, (instructional designers) - Instructional designers. Thank you! Um so I think it’s really important when you start with that scope and that summary of research of, who am I talking to and why would they matter? And how do I communicate to them in a way that is going to – that they are going to understand and make sense of that. I think at a marketing level it’s really interesting to be on your team and working with research, because I am not a researcher at all, and so coming in and taking these really complex research reports and distilling them down to something that is digestible and then trying to rebuild it into something that would be digestible for that target audience is a really unique exercise, and I think it’s really powerful for all of us to be involved. I see how important it is when you come to me with this detailed study and it feels like a whole different language, so you’re able to really distill from me, “This is what I want to say and why it matters” and then I’m able to take that and distill it even more to say, “What is that we’re really talking about. How can I distill this or get it down to three or five talking points for my specific audience, and then how does that get released into the world. So I think that going through those different exercises helps us to understand what we’re actually talking about and why it matters.

**KL:** Well I can imagine that there are people listening to this who are thinking, “you may not be a researcher, but we’re all not marketers.” Right? We’re not trained in this. And so definitely we’ve learned a lot working with our marketing department here about all the different ways that we can get this research out into the world. But I love this idea of differentiating between strategies and tactics, and that the dissemination plan is really made up of those tactics. So let’s talk about some of the components of a dissemination plan. You know, in terms of strategy you talk about things like audience and goals, but in terms of tactics, what are some of the things that we’re considering?

**AD:** Absolutely. So I think are go to is always going to be web. So how are we going to have custom landing pages, how are we going to have a web presence with a trackable URL, unique URL, UTM codes, so for a world that is not marketing – how can we use a web presence to then grab analytics and understand where our visitors are coming from, what referral source we’re getting from them. So really understanding we’ve got to have a web presence and a place to direct individuals towards. Then I think it’s really a copy, so are we going to do a press release? And if we don’t do a press release, or if we do, we’ve found it to be really powerful, uh – the organic reach of our department, of our community, even just Oregon State in general, or fellow colleagues within your unit or even mine. So how do we distill the press release or the research into talking points that could be just common language for us to use and reach out? So that’s always a part of the dissemination plan that I try to provide you and others in leadership level in our department with three to five talking points that if someone said, “hey, what is the Ecampus research unit doing?” or “I saw they just released a new study, can you tell me about it?” Even if I’m not a immersed in it, I have these go to sort of points to talk about and it provides me, and others, with a language and ability to speak succinctly about the language that’s happening.

**KL:** Okay, so I want to pause there and talk about this idea of talking points, and also using the people around you in your network to help you explain your research to other people. This is one of those areas that I don’t think I realize the power of until I came here, because Ecampus is a really large organization and a lot of us travel quite a bit for professional development, we go to different conferences and things, and it’s a situation where – even if someone doesn’t ask us directly about our research, there might be a situation where you want to tell someone about it, so we’ve really made a very kind of um, intentional decision to make sure everyone in the organization understands what the research unit is doing so some level so that they can mention it, and we actually get a lot of people who reach out to us because someone else in the organization reached out to them. So I think that that’s something for people listening to consider – who’s in you network – and even if it’s just a department, you know, like your local department – when you have a new article out, let everyone know so that they can at least see the title of it, and maybe they’ll talk to someone who would be interested in it. I mean, that to me is a small thing that you can do, but it is super powerful.

**AD**: I think we often overlook, I mean, there are so many changes in marketing, it changes every day from where we put our money towards, payed digital, or what we’re doing on the web, but we often overlook just this organic reach, and we have analytics to prove, when individuals in our department post to their own social media channels or share out, like you said, at conferences, it actually does make a really big impact - and also a lot of it goes in with a buy in, right? People support you, support your colleagues – and then also reciprocity. You’re willing to do that for others when the time comes for them.

**KL:** Okay so, other than the web what are some of the things that we’re looking at?

**AD:** Right. So we’ve talked about web, we’ve talked about copy, social media – I think that continues to be a really powerful tooland a – but understanding where it’s appropriate. So some people are using different platforms than others, whetherwe’re doing evergreen content or not, but what we do understand is when we disseminate information about your research specifically, we always have a social media component, we’re always creating a digital look and feel to be able to convey this study – an individual representation on social media and then also being able to provide some copy to associate that with a clear call to action, right? So we’re always trying to get individuals to learn more, or read more, or see how – so that continues to be a really important part of the dissemination plan. And then beyond that, also working with our digital agency to understand if we want to take it a step further, do we want to have some paid initiatives behind it. So working internally and externally to leverage partnerships to understand if we want to get our reach a little bit further through sponsored content.

**KL:** Alright, so, if you’re listening to this and you’re starting to feel a little bit overwhelmed, never fear, we are going to go dig deeper and get into the real nitty gritty of timelines of these dissemination plans, some examples, and also how to go about coordinating them. So we’re going to take a brief break, and when we come back we’ll hear a little bit more from Ali. Back in a moment.

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# Segment 2:

**KL:** So Ali, I’m curious if you could talk a little bit about when do you start thinking about this dissemination plan? You know like, at what point are we starting to work together to talk about what we might want to be releasing and how and when.

**AD:** Exactly. I think it’s going to be different for everyone, but for our relationship, what we do is understand when the study is kicking off. So really understand – Katie, you come to me or you team comes to me and says, “We’re starting this new research study and here’s our timeline and we expect to be completed with this study here, have all of the information gathered, synthesized, and our final product x number of months later.” For me that really is the starting point for understanding, okay what is – how can I start to put the bare bones of a marketing plan together and what are the needs I have across my team? So I need to lude people in – “hey we’ve got this coming down the pipe line. It might be six months from now.” We have projects Katie that are into 2019 that I’m aware of. So I think there is – when appropriate, and when opportunity strikes to really start the process right away. I will also say that sometimes it just comes up and it happens, and we run by the seat of pants and say, okay we’re going to do this. We’re going to pull our resources together and get this ball in motion. So I don’t – I wish I had a better idea or statement about when to do this, but I think the important thing is you’re never too late to market whatever research you have, and that goes back to research you have done maybe years ago. I think there is never a time for which you can’t put your best foot forward to market what you’re interested in and a product that you believe in.

**KL:** Well and I would imagine that a lot of the people listening understand the concept of a pipeline, you know, we have multiple things going on at the same time and there’s different things that we’re kind of juggling, and one of the things we’ve been working on recently just as an example is we have a book coming out later on this year, an edited collection, and then a second edited collection coming out in 2019. And book marketing is something that I have some familiarity with, but our marketing team didn’t necessarily have familiarity with, so you wanted a lot of lead time to be thinking about – what do we want to do here? What’s the strategy? How can we leverage all of the different stakeholders within the organization to really make this successful? And we wanted a lot of thinking time (Yes.), and processing time (Yes.). So I think it really does depend on the project – if it’s a research report that can look very different than a book marketing plan, which can look very different than releasing an article, you know, that’s a little bit smaller, depending on the impact. You know like, all of these are things to take into account.

**AD:** And I think too, something that we’ve tried and listeners might be interested in is standardization – so really understanding different levels of a marketing plan. So when you have a white paper series versus a book promotion, my involvement with you and the energy that myself and my team members spend is going to look really different – and not in a bad way, because it’s not a value driven thing, but it’s just an understanding of resources too. And so for listeners to understand, it’s not like there’s a whole team of us behind all of Katie’s work, all of the Ecampus Research Unit’s work – in an ideal world we would love to do that – but understanding priorities, and what we can commit to, and ways that we can also repurpose things that we have.

**KL:** Right, and I think that idea of like, not everything gets full court press – so how do you decide the stuff that you want to prioritize? Okay so, I’m really curious, when you’re thinking about disseminating research across multiple platforms, we’re working with issues of timing, trying not to overlap maybe with other projects, you’re thinking about audience – how are you starting this process? Like what is this – for people who are listening to this and thinking, “this is crazy. This is overwhelming” what does this look like for you to start this process?

**AD:** Well I love if some of your listeners thought I was this magical, amazing, super smart, intelligent, experienced where I’m behind some big mahogany desk doing this, but the reality is I’m sitting in my cubicle with a blank word document and I start with the x research study as a title and I usually bold it and put it in the center, and that is truly where I start. It’s really simple. And I know some people are saying, “Yeah, yeah. It’s simple to you.” But in the sense of, I start with a blank canvas and just start typing – so what is the scope? And I put it in my own words – what am I trying to promote? What is it, what’s my product here? And okay, what are my goals? And I just jot them down really messy, who are – who’s my audience? Who am I really trying to target? And a lot of it is the leadership people like Katie, or like Mary Ellen, or like researcher at UPCEA or at QM. So I really don’t know, maybe I don’t have a concept yet, but I have an idea of where these people might live or be. Uh and for key performance indicators, how am I going to assess that I was successful? Well I’ll probably have a website, so I’ll write down that I’m going to pull URL information and maybe earned media, and maybe someone will pick this up so I’ll make sure to track that as well. So it’s really an organic, kind of barebones beginning, and it’s a constant process of refining, adding, deleting, I’m always drafting and moving things around and “Oh don’t forget about this”, and I’ll drop it to the bottom or something like that. But it’s not – it’s very much a living document and it’s something that is not done in a silo, so anytime I start with this, there’s always coming back to your team and saying, “Hey, does this look right? Does this feel right? Who am I missing?” because you’re way more connected in your world of research than I am so maybe I’m missing some areas, and then bringing it back to my team and looping them in – of hey, we’ve got this really great idea, what do you think you can do from a creative side, visual representation, how do you think you could talk about this from a copy side? What are some creative ways we can make this live and come to life on the web – so it’s a really collaborative process, but it’s certainly very bare bones from the begging. I’m always refining it.

**KL:** I’m wondering to what degree you’re looking at past plans? Because once we do this one time, we have these tactics, we do social media, we have webinars, we do reports, and we have certain visuals that we create to put out into the world. I mean, is there kind of, are there kind of – I mean I hesitate to say checklist, but kind of a checklist that you develop where you’re like – oh we did this last time, would it be a fit for this new thing?

**AD:** Absolutely, and I think a lot of that is, what can we repurpose? What do we know has worked? And towing that line, walking that line of, oh we’ve done this I can crank this out – we can crank this out, this is just like our other study to, shoot. How can we be on the cutting edge? How are we innovating here? How are we being the pioneering spirit of this division at Oregon State Ecampus that we know to be? And so always kind of playing those two sides of – let’s do what works and we know has been proven to work, and what else – what’s next? How can we be the ones to bring it to the forefront?

**KL:** Okay so, I would love to hear what tips you might have when you’re coordinating these different dissemination strategies, because I should be very clear – Ali does not work full time for the research unit, she serves a lot of different pieces of ecampus, and we are kind of one piece of her very large portfolio. So – you’re not just juggling us and the things that we’re releasing, and that includes not just our studies but things like the podcast and other things that we’re putting out into the world. How are you kind of juggling this? And I would imagine – for the people who are listening, think about how would you be juggling your dissemination plan with other scholarship, your teaching, other things that you might be doing in your professional life. So Ali, how are you kind of juggling this? What tips do you have for keeping this going?

**AL:** Yeah. I mean, I think from an infrastructure component people are interested – we really rely on a project management system based camp, and everyone’s going to have their own project management systems and all of that, and I think that there is a fit for all of them and use what is right. For me and the world of work that we do here, base camp is my fail safe, and so everything is drafted out in timelines, due dates, draft dates. I think it’s really important to stay ahead of the game, because there is going to be a lot of review that happens. It’s not just me reviewing curated post assess, or postcards, or digital image, but it’s you’re unit, it’s your brand, so you’re the final say really on that. So um just building in that lead time. But I would say project management system is really important. Starting as early as you can and, you know – Katie knows I’m the queen of kind of fake deadlines. I like to put a deadline – “yes this is our deadline!” and then build in another week or two just to give us that – maybe it’s the thrill of the game or something. But just building in that time I think is really important, and having some sort of structure. If it’s just done on sticky notes or on the fly, I’m just not sure you can have this really strategic sort of 360 view of what you’re trying to do. I think that the research that people are doing is so impactful, and I think the marketing and dissemination should be just given enough attention, because without that I would hate to see this really important research kind of get thrown to the wayside without that.

**KL:** So I definitely want to point out, because I know not everybody is going to have the resources to create like these print assets, the website landing page, you know, all of these different kinds of things. And one of the things that we’ve been working really hard on within the research unit, with kind of consulting advice from marketing, but we’ve really kind of taken it on ourselves, is making sure that whenever we go out and present our research we have really compelling data visualization. And I can link to the episode in the show notes that we did with Stephanie Evergreen talking about data viz – um but this is one of those things where even if you have a really nicely done slide deck where you have really compelling data viz, and maybe you turn some of those slides into social media posts, or you do a blog post, or you present at your national organization where people can really see this compelling slide, or you do a really compelling poster design if you’re presenting at a poster session – this can be scaled in a lot of different directions depending on what you have resources for. And we’re very fortunate to have these resources of our marketing team, but also we’re thinking really carefully about things like partnering with national organizations for webinars to release our studies and really trying to build up those collaborations and networks so that we’re reaching the right audiences, and if the marketing unit went away tomorrow – if we didn’t have all of that, I feel like we still have a strong foundation of, you know, we’ve learned so much already of working with the marketing unit, but also there’s just little things you can do that don’t require press releases I guess (Absolutely!). I want to make sure that’s clear, because not everybody has that.

**AD:** Absolutely. And I think that’s so important just to understand that anything you do is better than nothing. So even if you are organically sharing on your personal page, “Hey, I just released this study and I’m super passionate about it.” That’s marketing! Guess what – you’re a marketer. Everyone is a marketer. And so I would hope that regardless of your field, that everyone understands you have the tools and resources within you and around you to be a marketer, and to market your product, and your brand, and who you are.

**KL:** Okay, so we’re going to get into that a little bit more in segment three. I also want to mention we’re going to do a couple of bonus clips talking about specific examples of dissemination plans, so make sure to take a listen to those. And we’re going to be posting at least one dissemination plan that Ali has drafted into the show notes, so if you actually want to see this magical Word document that she is talking about, we’ll make sure to post it to the show notes. So we’re going to take another brief break, and when we come back we’re going to talk a little bit more about branding research. Back in a moment.

# Segment 3:

**KL:** Ali, a huge part of your world is branding (Yes – brand, brand, brand), and Oregon State actually just updated their brand pretty recently, and so we went through this overhaul of everything in Ecampus and all of the different branding elements – including the podcast. So people have probably seen that we’ve updated recently the visual components of the podcast and the website as well. What are some of the elements of a brand, Ali? I mean, this is like your whole world I feel like.

**AD:** Yeah. Absolutely. Well I think what’s maybe unique, or just interesting to point out is the work that I do with your unit is always under the umbrella of Oregon State’s brand, so I consider myself a brand ambassador. Someone who takes this really aspirational vision of who Oregon State is and what we aim to be, and everything that the university has said that, “this is who we are and how we present ourselves to the world” and take that and creatively roll it into what the Ecampus research unit is. So we’re not coming up with something on a standalone silo here, you’re not – the Ecampus research unit, the podcast, or any element like that – it’s not stand alone. It’s not something that we built. It’s really a component of this larger organization of the Oregon State brand. And so it’s a really careful and fun opportunity to figure out how we are aligned, and then how we are different – and I don’t mean that different from Oregon State. I mean different because of what our product is, and how we have something to share with the world in that. But um I think a brand in general, I mean, so many people have different views of what a brand is and I will probably not say this in a way that others might agree with, but I think a brand is who you are and how you express your true authentic self, and how others experience you. And so when I think about the ways in which we brand the Ecampus research unit, for me it’s about how we show up in the world of research and the research that we do, and how others interact with us and experience us. So whether that’s the way that they read reports or the way that you talk on the podcast, I think a brand is very much putting ourselves out there and saying “this is who we are”, and listening to those who experience us and saying, “but this is how I perceive you to be” and really marrying those two together to identify, yeah – this is my true authentic self.

**KL:** I always felt that brands were really about differentiating yourself too and being clear about your authentic self so that people can tell you apart from other things. Especially when we’re in a crowded market place. So I would love to think about two different elements of branding. One is kind of the work that we do here around products and research, and really thinking about things like the podcast, but also I think that it could be helpful for our listeners to hear about this idea of a personal or professional brand, because a lot of people may be affiliated with an institution, but maybe they’re not in a unit or not in a lab. Like they are really an independent researcher, an autonomous researcher. So let’s kind of pull those things apart a little bit. When we think about research or maybe the products that might come out of research, do think these things can/should be branded? I mean, obviously we’re doing it, so I kind of know your answer to this. But you know, some people might be listening to this going, “I’ve never thought of this before.”

**AD:** Absolutely. I think it’s about having a really cohesive vision about who you are, what you’re doing, and how you put it out there. So I want to be really careful that a brand is not a logo. I think a lot of people know this. We’re not talking about putting a logo on your research and saying, “Look I branded it. People will understand or know when they see this logo or this visual identity – that’s who I am.” A visual representation is part of a brand, but your brand is more than that. So I think that in the world of research – it is so important to brand what you’re doing. So whether that means taking a moment to understand, and we did this recently with a podcast - we went through a rebranding effort – who you are. What are the words that resonate with who you aim to be, or how people are interacting with you? What does that mean? Are you playful, are you serious, are you inviting, is it exclusive, are you fun and upbeat or is this sort of serious and streamlined? And so I think those words start to build, “okay this is who I am. This is my personality” and that starts to feed into how I talk about myself at conference presentations, how I represent myself on social media, how I create a cover report for my research. So starting at that high level I think is really important, and you’ll see that trickle down, and then you’ll see your users or your audience or your product buyers really understand that more – of “Yes. This is how I am experiencing this person, this product, their research throughout a lifecycle of what they have to offer and how I interact with them.”

**KL:** So we have had a couple of people on the show that have talked about this. I definitely want to point out episode 66, we’ll link to it in the show notes, which John Nychka is talking about professional philosophy. And he did end up creating kind of a visual element that helped explain his research, and his mission, and what he was trying to do, and we definitely talk about that on that episode. Um I want to talk with you a, Ali a little bit about how you think attention to brand can strengthen research dissemination. You know, like – what is it – what’s the why behind this? What’s the motivation for researchers? Because it takes time to really think about this, and to plan it in advance, and to really build the interior dissemination process.

**AD:** Yeah. You know – I’m not a researcher, so I think from the marketing or even just someone who consumes research, right? I’m interested in things outside of the world of online learning, and so I’m reading about my own personal interest and I think about the research that I’m reading about in the field that I’m personally interested in, and having a brand behind it I think creates beyond the authentic understanding of what I’m getting in my email or my social media feed every day. It’s creating a relationship with an individual or an entity that kind of feels like an individual that I can count on, that I’m start to familiarize myself with, that I know – these are the experiences that I’m having, I like them, and I want to know more and I’m willing to invest more time, maybe more money for buying, you know, subscriptions to something, or maybe just more energy to share out something that I’m really interested in because this maybe researcher or higher level unit or entity has had that kind of impact. So I don’t know. I think that’s how I kind of view it.

**KL:** I think that’s really interesting, because I think that some people – and certainly, we’ve talked earlier about visual images and social media posts, and very clear tactics that you would use, but I also that think that part of when we travel around, when we talk to people, when we up tout research into the world, one of the elements of our brand in the research unit that we’re trying to communicate is that we have consistent quality, and when you see something come out from the research unit, you know it’s going to be good. And not just because we have a branded cover and all those kinds of things, but because of the way the data analysis was done is really good quality. The data visualization is really good quality. When we give a webinar, you’re going to be able to understand what we’re saying and we’re going to give good slide design. And like your – it’s going to be a sure thing if you’re kind of investing to bring us to speak or you know, something along those lines at a conference, and it’s about reputation.

**AD:** Absolutely. It is your reputation on the line and I would venture to say not only as a unit or about who you are professionally, but we all know that our professionally lives and our personal lives tend to bleed into each other, and it’s a reputation that comes in on your personal side as well. And building that reputation and that credibility is so important, especially in a landscape that is saturated with others like you or others looking to do similar work.

**KL:** Okay. So as we’re wrapping up, Ali I want to hear for people who are listening to this and they’re thinking, “How do I do this? Where do I start? I want to create a brand for my research” or “I’m getting kind of excited. This seems kind of cool.” Do you have any resources, or thoughts, or just ideas of where do you start if you want to learn a little bit more about this and jump in?

**AD:** Yeah, I mean, there’s tons of resources on the web and Katie, I’ll be happy to share some links and information, but I would say a bran dis about your authentic self. It is a match of being who you are and what others say you are, and so I would start there. As cheesy as it might sound, sit down on a whiteboard or a sticky note and – who do you want to be? Who are you? What is it? What are those words, what are those key concepts? And then poll a view people, like “Hey, when you think about me, or my product, or my research, or whatever it is – what are the words that come to mind? Is it relatable, is it intimidating?” And so once you have that kind of concept, what are the next strategies to move that forward? Okay, is it the way I talk about myself? Is it the way that I talk about my product or research? And then as you start to think about marketing – its taking those elements of who you are and weaving them into how you do it. So it’s really taking this big picture authentic self, and translating that into the everyday tactics and making sure that whatever you do to market your research, whatever you do to market yourself, your product, your research – always is aligned with who you are and how you do what you do.

**KL:** Well Ali, we will definitely link to resources in the show notes for people who want to learn more. And I want to think you so much for letting me learn from you as a marketer and apply what I’m learning to the work we’re doing in the research unit, and thank you so much for coming into the studio with me!

**AD:** Thanks, Katie!

**KL:** Thanks also to our listeners for joining us for this week’s episode of Research in Action. I’m Katie Linder, and we’ll be back next week with another episode.

# Show notes with links to resources mentioned in the episode, a full transcript, and an instructor’s guide for incorporating the episode into your courses, can be found at the show’s website at [ecampus.oregonstate.edu/podcast](http://www.ecampus.oregonstate.edu/podcast).

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# Bonus Clip 1:

**KL:** Ali, I wanted to make sure we offered a specific example of one of these – one or two actually of these dissemination plans, and something that we’ve recently released was a database that we curated of studies that are related to efficacy of online learning. So basically how do we know that online learning works? And we have compiled a database now of over 200 citations – we’ll link to it in the show notes for people who are interested. But this is an example of something that we’ve released that wasn’t exactly original research, it was more like a product of the research unit. So I thought that I could be kind of interesting to talk a little bit about what were some of the tactics we used to market this and share it out with different audiences.

**AD:** Yeah. Absolutely. This was a really fun project to work on and to market, because it was more of a tangible product, whereas research sometimes is not so much. So as we got into this sort of understanding a higher level – what is the scope or the summary of this project or research, what were our goals? And I think the top level goal for this was really to provide a tool to support the understanding of the effectiveness of online learning to leadership faculty and instructors at institutions across the nation. It was also really important in this marketing plan, to help position Oregon State Ecampus as leaders in the field on online education. We’re always looking to do that, and as many people as other universities are looking to do is use research to position themselves as leaders in this field. So as we worked through goals on audience, and strategy, and key performance indicators, we got really down to the tactics. One of our biggest tactics because this product, was a living, breathing thing on the website – on the internet – was our web presence. So we had high involvement with a custom landing page that had multiple pages within it, and a database tool itself. Within that it was just as important to have unique tracking codes to really understand when we pull analytics who is coming to this page, where are they coming from, where did they hear it that they got directed her, where across the country are they coming from? Different things like that. So it was really important to build in some of those tracking mechanisms. From a copy standpoint, we knew we would do a press release. This was something that we felt was news worthy within the world of online education and research. And we also made sure to have talking points for our internal team. Not only our marketing team, but our directors, our leadership, and our colleagues. We wanted others to be able to go out to conferences or even on their professional or personal selves and speak about the innovative research or the innovative product that we had created here at Ecampus. Uh we also did some paid digital. So in that sense what we did is work with a digital marketing agency that we have on record with the university and we created some unique post promoting this product – the online learning efficacy research database, and were able to target those post via LinkedIn to individuals that we felt really fit our audience segmentation. And so that really helped us get this product, for a lack of better words, in front of the audience that we wanted to. On the social media front we created branded images that helped us show and tell what this was all about – if you were just scrolling through your phone getting a snapshot. And like Katie had mentioned earlier in our discussion, you know, we can’t do it all, so Katie and her team really do a lot to. So one thing we did was create a curated photo album of different photos that Katie and her team could pull from to promote this. We understand the power of having a post on social media that has a bunch attached to it. So being able to provide imagery that felt like it fit with the personality of the organization and the product that we were promoting as well. And then the organic reach – the outreach to organizations that we felt aligned well or would be interested in this, and just personal connections that people have from their – just personal connections that people have from their professional worlds.

**KL:** So we also took the database a little bit on the road. We’ve been presenting it at conferences, and this is something where we had the marketing unit helping us with – help us with the poster design, and we also created some postcard that people could walk away with if they wanted to look at the database at another time, and especially so we could pass it out on campus at different meetings and things, but also so we would have it at conferences. So those were other – two other big pieces that we created as well.

Alright. Thank you for sharing this example, Ali!

**AD:** Thanks!

# Bonus Clip 2:

**KL:** Ali, I also wanted to make sure we talked about a dissemination plan of a study that we’ve been working on – and this is actually a study that we’re working on right now. We have not released this study yet, so this is like fresh – fresh off the press (Top secret) in terms of – Yeah. We’re definitely just finalizing this study and getting it ready to go out into the world, but this definitely has been a shared effort as we’re working on different ways to disseminate this through the research unit and also with the help of marketing. So what are some of the things that you’re helping with here, Ali? And this is our study, depending on when you’re listening to this – it’s probably already out, but this is about student device preferences and it’s a local study that we did here at Oregon State.

**AD:** Yeah. I think this is a really good example of how we prioritize the level of support, or involvement that marketing has on this. And this is not because it’s less valued, but just because it’s something that maybe isn’t the highest priority for our relationship. It’s something that we’re really pulling on strategies and tactics that we did in the past, and repurposing them for the promotion of this study. So you’ve heard me talk about the importance of having talking points for internal use, so we’re doing that. We are taking a template that we have on the website and truly using that and updating the copy to create a new web space for sharing out this information. Something really exciting is that data vis that we are going to include for this, I’m really excited to see how this comes to life and helps people digest this information in a really quick and meaningful way, and of course some social media as well. I think something that is different in this is we’re really in more of a consulting role for some of the work that you’re doing on your end for some of your own relationships and involvement for spreading some of this information, so you know – Katie, you have a lot on your plate for what you’re doing on this marketing dissemination plan if you want to speak to that.

**KL:** Right. So, what’s been interesting about this is the stronger relationships we’ve build with national organizations and other partners – the easier it is for us to think of ways to collaborate with them to disseminate studies. So in the research unit, on our end, we’re going to be doing some blog posts that have a little bit kind of guest blogging basically, to give a little bit more reach to the study. We also coordinate a social media strategy around everything that we release now. And then also we’re doing some – hopefully some webinar partnerships with different national organizations who might be interested in sharing the study with their audience. So like Ali said, there are certain things that we have done before, and because we built those relationships, it makes sense to us to kind of go back to those partners and say, “Hey, we have this new study, do you think this would be of interest to your audience? What are some ways that we can work together to disseminate this?” And then of course on our end, we always do the typically sort of conference presentations as well, and there are several national organizations that we present at related to online teaching and learning, and also just the administration of education programs. And so we usually have a little bit of a circuit that we propose to, and maybe three or four conferences that will take a study to over the kind of lifecycle to disseminating that study before we maybe – retire it – is sort of not the right word to use, but before it gets archived on our website and we’re not actively promoting it anymore.

Alright. Thanks, Ali for sharing what we’re doing!

**AD:** Thanks!