

## **DCCA Report Communications Brief**

At the core of Akaku's communications strategy lies the Akaku mission statement ("To empower the community's voice through access to media"), which guides our tactical approach. Over the course of FY08, we shifted our communications messaging—from a one-way message that focused on the products, services and channels available to the community to a two-way, collaborative message that focuses on how Maui's communities can employ Akaku and independent media to exercise their democratic right to freely access community opportunities, local activities, information, media and government.

Akaku amplified its outreach efforts with its viewers and community producers with the introduction of a Communications team, whose main purpose is to communicate the core mission and philosophy of Akaku to the organization's various audiences, including community producers, viewers, Maui County residents, members of government, donors, and media, to name a few.

In the last fiscal year, Akaku introduced and/or enhanced regular external communications via the following venues:

**Akaku.org** – Akaku boasts a vibrant website that includes regular updates on activities and services provided by Akaku and its departments. The site includes a platform to schedule a video on demand for viewing on cable channel 54, streaming video of two Akaku channels (currently in beta-testing mode), course calendar for video production classes, Board meeting notices, and a variety of information regularly updated to keep the community informed.

We are working on ways to harness the interactive nature of the internet to enhance two-way communications via this medium.

**Press Releases & Public Service Announcements** – Akaku collaborated with its departments to ensure that new initiatives, projects and opportunities were communicated with the press for possible publication or public announcement. Print media were monitored on a regular basis, and clippings were stored in our outreach files.

**Reel Akaku Newsletters & Reel Akaku e-Updates** – In the second half of FY08, Akaku re-introduced a quarterly print newsletter and semi-monthly e-update to communicate directly with community producers and other parties interested in Akaku announcements. We will continue to publish these newsletters with an eye towards evolving these outreach media in a manner that responds more closely to what its recipients want to hear—particularly as regards the e-updates.

We also worked to build our email outreach lists to keep in line with our increased outreach activities while maintaining a conservative carbon footprint. At the onset of our email outreach efforts, our database of engaged community members boasted nearly 1,000 individuals, but just less than 400 email addresses. With informed outreach, we grew our core Akaku email list from 394 active emails to 492 active emails.

Towards the end of FY08, we commenced building additional email lists made up of other community segments that hold a stake in Akaku affairs. Thus far, that list contains the email addresses of more than 100 individuals in such community segments as members of the press, members of county government, members of Maui nonprofits, vendors and Akaku supporters who don't necessarily fall into any of the above-mentioned segments.

**Community Event Outreach** – Akaku communications team worked closely with Akaku departments to help raise awareness of Akaku's education and productions services to new audiences through community events. Our staff manned the Akaku booth at such community events in 2008 as Whale Day, the East Maui Taro Festival and the American Heart Association Heart Walk. We distributed handouts, flyers and collected names of parties interested in learning more about the organization, taking a class and/or getting involved with Akaku in other ways.

The communications two-member team collaborates closely with Akaku's President/CEO, Administrative Services Director and other department Directors to develop communications outreach strategies and incorporate a variety of media in Akaku's public awareness raising activities.