

Article

Persuading the Home Front: The Communication Surrounding the World War I Campaign to “Knit” Patriotism

Marcy Leasum Orwig¹

Abstract

Government public relations are often viewed as propaganda. However, one’s own perspective has much to do with how the communications are perceived. One example of American propaganda is linked to World War I. While there has been research devoted to the patriotic posters and films of this era, other forms of media during this same time period have been largely overlooked. This article, therefore, presents research on the communications surrounding the “Knit Your Bit” campaign, which the American Red Cross conducted with help from the U.S. government-sponsored Committee on Public Information. The campaign persuaded knitters on the home front to knit for the troops using content in the major women’s magazine of the day: *Ladies’ Home Journal*. This article considers how the overlooked campaign contributed to efforts to generate patriotism during World War I and how social, political, and economic factors affected the communications.

Keywords

public relations, rhetoric of war, citizenship, communication history, genre

¹Business Communication, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, WI, USA

Corresponding Author:

Marcy Leasum Orwig, Business Communication, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 417 Schneider Hall, Eau Claire, WI 54702, USA.
Email: orwigml@uwec.edu

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Marcy Orwig

Assistant Professor
Business Communication



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