



Social Media:  
Good for business,  
good for the world

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As one of the owners of BBR Creative, I'm constantly on the lookout for industry trends that will positively impact our business. In the 20 years since I've graduated college as an Advertising Design major, I've witnessed such dramatic changes in the way we conceptualize, design and produce advertising, that sometimes I can't even imagine what changes the future will bring. But the one thing that remains constant is the inevitable change that will most certainly occur.

So with the current trend of advertisers bending toward Social Media more and more, we're ever-focused on that realm of communications to benefit our clients in growing their businesses -- and, ultimately, their sales and profits. But recently, I was watching a television show and was amazed by this group of geniuses at MIT who won the [DARPA Balloon Challenge](#) and how their strategy could translate into incredibly good works for our society at large.

[DARPA](#) (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) is the prominent research organization of the U.S. Department of Defense. This is the group that truly brought us "the Internet" years ago. DARPA placed 10 red balloons at various locations around the United States. The challenge was to locate all 10 balloons in the shortest amount of time. Since no single individual could plot the location of all 10, participants had to figure out how to work with others to solve the puzzle. The winning team from MIT developed a website and a strategy using social media that allowed them to find all 10 balloons scattered across the United States in less than eight hours.

## DARPA Balloon Locations



MIT's Riley Crane made this inspiring statement concerning the competition:

"From a broader scientific perspective, we were in it to understand how to mobilize the vast resources of the human network, to face challenges and explore opportunities in living in such a connected society. And as a footnote to that, I think some of the applications that might come out of this would be: Can we use this technology we've developed to find missing children or something along those lines where there's an incentive for people to really participate and help out? Often, the police will offer a reward for finding a missing child. Can we restructure that in a way that we tap the vast resources of this network? Again, maybe you don't live in the state where a child was abducted, but maybe you know someone who does. Or during an emergency, maybe we need to find 10 people in a region who can operate heavy machinery, maybe a building collapsed. And how can we use these new tools to solve those challenges to help society? That's kind of the broader message that comes out of this from our side."

For some reason this competition/story/event has really intrigued me. It made me realize that social media is not only good for business; it can actually change the world when we harness its power to simply do "good."

A great description of this challenge and the interview with Riley Crane can be found via [CNET](#).

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