



GM Challenges Online Gamers: 'Who Is Benjamin Stove?'

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Aliens, time travelers and ancient fairies might not be General Motors business, but they take center stage in GM's innovative campaign to promote alternative renewable fuels.

"Who is Benjamin Stove?," a three-month-long Alternate Reality Game (ARG), has encouraged more than 280,000 participants to learn more about GM's commitment to promoting renewable fuel options in the U.S. and the wide availability of FlexFuel vehicles among GM's vehicle lineup.

Developed with the Campbell-Ewald advertising and marketing communications agency and innovative experimental media firm GMD Studios, the game launched on January 9 with a dedicated "Who Is Benjamin Stove?" Web site (www.whoisbenjaminstove.com) and a plea from Tampa resident Tucker Darby to the online community to help him unravel the mystery behind an unusual painting of crop circles he acquired as a child.

The story has developed over the course of 12 weeks through ongoing online and real-world communications with gamers, including additional Web sites, online

puzzles, e-mails, print stories and online ads. In addition, real-world clues planted in several markets, including Seattle, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York City, Phoenix, Miami, Salt Lake City, Atlanta and Columbus (Ohio) provided the opportunity to actively engage participants and extend the game beyond the confines of cyberspace.

"The 'Who Is Benjamin Stove' game was developed to build awareness of GM's renewable fuel initiatives and programs, including our 'Live Green, Go Yellow' campaign," said Bob Kraut, director, GM Brand Marketing and Advertising Operations. "GM already has on the road more than 1.5 million vehicles with FlexFuel technology capable of running on either gasoline or E85 ethanol fuel. We continue to be an industry leader in promoting E85 awareness and use."

"The 'Who is Benjamin Stove?' campaign is an innovative strategy to interact with a large and engaged online community while creating buzz about all that GM is doing for this timely issue of alternate fuel sources and our dependence on foreign oil," said Ed Dilworth, executive vice president, chief Contact officer at Campbell-Ewald. "Immersive entertainment is an increasingly important trend for marketers and the response to 'Who Is Benjamin Stove' has been phenomenal. It has far exceeded the buzz we hoped to create."

"Who Is Benjamin Stove?" has generated broad appeal among ARG aficionados and has been praised on message boards for addressing the key components for a successful ARG by appealing to a broad cross section of gamers; including players of all skill levels; developing sub-storylines among multiple genres; utilizing strong

spacing and regular updates; creating a quality user experience; and challenging participants through multiple types of play. The game will come to its conclusion in early April with additional online and real world opportunities to engage players.

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