Background

When R.AGE was founded in 2005 as The Star newspaper’s youth section, our reporters were often asked a question -- do Malaysian youth even read the newspaper? Thanks to an evolving media landscape, it took us a few years to get a definitive answer -- NO. And we knew definitively because by 2009, our multiple award-winning social media strategies were firmly in place. We were regularly engaging Malaysian youth through news content, and it wasn’t through our newspaper work. We were among the first news outlets to recognise that social media could be used for more than just sharing what you had for lunch. We used it to share our news content, our feature content, conduct live interviews, have live discussions on current affairs and social issues and much, much more.
Over the past two years, R.AGE has sought to up the ante again, this time by taking our digital media engagement offline. R.AGE has run several “special projects” -- events, campaigns and activities -- to complement its existing print and digital media work. We at R.AGE believe digital and on-ground engagement have to go hand-in-hand when it comes to young Malaysians. They are tired of “clicktivism” and only being part of an online discussion. They are restless for more. And we hope to give them just that.
Despite our new focus on engaging audiences through events, campaigns and activities, we still made several improvements to our existing print and digital editorial strategies.

1. The use of Twitter discussion threads. We create threads by replying to our own tweets. This gives us a vast increase in visibility on our followers’ timelines, and allows us to give them more context, up-to-date news and extensive coverage.
Twitter discussion threads also allow us to engage followers more effectively, as the first post in the thread always appears along with the two latest posts. That gives context to the discussion, and allows the audience to quickly scroll through what was previously discussed.

R.AGE regularly uses this function to discuss hard news issues in a youth-relevant manner. The best tweets and responses we get are then published in print the following week, further encouraging digital engagement.

R.AGE’s Twitter account now has over 30,000 followers, with over 30,000 tweet views a week.
2. Infographics

R.AGE’s secondary objective over the past few years has been to educate young people on the importance of being clued into current affairs and news. To achieve that objective, we started an infographic series called “BijakPandai”, which kinda translates to “CleverSmart” (it only works in Malay…).

We break down complex news stories so readers can have an overall understanding of the issue in five minutes.
3. Radio/podcast
In late 2012, R.AGE developed a partnership with Malaysian radio station Red FM to produce “R.AGE On Red”, a weekly live talk show on the station’s prime Friday drive-time slot.

Today, the show has evolved into our own R.AGE Podcast (thanks to the popularity of audio streaming), where a R.AGE journalist and Red FM deejay discuss youth issues, trends, music and some of our print stories. Just as it was with R.AGE On Red, the podcast is shared on Twitter, Facebook and SoundCloud.
4. Hard news features
For the past two years, R.AGE’s editorial direction has evolved to cover more hard news issues. We take these issues, such as the rising cost of living, political cybertroopers (a hot topic during Malaysia’s 2013 general election), the effect of college “confession pages”, etc. and present them in a youth-relevant manner.
5. Interactive news
R.AGE regularly takes our issue stories and opened them up to our social media followers to add their voices/opinions to the issue. The best example would be our recent #AllMalaysianWomen hashtag campaign, which was inspired by the #YesAllWomen movement. We asked young Malaysian women to share their experiences with sexism and misogyny in Malaysia using the hashtag (which represents how ALL Malaysian women have experienced sexism, in one form or another).

The campaign led to two radio appearances, with both stations lending their support for the hashtag.
A special two-page spread featuring all the best #AllMalaysianWomen tweets, published in R.AGE.

Spotlight: #AllMalaysianWomen

R.AGE was invited to speak about the campaign at local radio station Capital FM.

Look up some of the #AllMalaysianWomen tweets here.
Strategies: Special Projects

R.AGE has organised, collaborated or supported a variety of youth-related projects over the past two years. This strategy, we believe, complements our work on print and digital media. Here are a few examples of our special projects over the past two years:

**BRATs**, our annual, year-long teen journalist training programme

**TEDxYouth@KL.** R.AGE were the media partners.

R.AGE’s cross platform anti-bullying campaign.
Strategies: Special Projects

Rising Star, a nationwide social media-based talent search organised by R.AGE.

R.AGE Talks Media, a career talk featuring popular personalities in the Malaysian media industry.

Poskod Journalism Campus, partly sponsored and moderated by R.AGE.

Annual national cheerleading competition, attended by over 10,000 school children every year.
R.AGE’s anti-bullying campaign saw over 20 Malaysian celebrities volunteering as anti-bullying ambassadors. The campaign was highlighted on TV and two radio stations. A second phase will be launched later this year to use our celebrity support to lobby for a National Anti-Bullying Day in schools across the country.

Campaign poster featuring celebrity ambassadors

The campaign website and its “Map of bullying”, which allows bullying victims to show where bullying is happening
Spotlight: R.AGE Against Bullying

The campaign music video and official anthem, Keep On Keeping On, recorded by a local artiste.

One of many infographics on bullying produced by R.AGE to educate students, victims and family members.

A story published in The Star, telling victims how to post a pin on the RAB website “Map of bullying”, and promoting the RAB Instagram competition.
To be honest, R.AGE’s new focus on special projects and events has taken some of the team’s focus away from editorial matters.
But the fact is, The Star’s latest brand health survey shows the newspaper’s youth section is the leader in its category in terms of brand equity.
Our social media numbers have also continued to grow despite our new focus, and we believe in the long run, our events, projects and campaigns (which all have positive, community-serving objectives) will create a stronger, more loyal relationship with our audience. If we continue to only engage them in the digital sphere, it’s not too hard to imagine being purged from their “Following” list when their timelines become too crowded.
R.AGE now regularly receives over 30,000 post views on Twitter, our Facebook pages (R.AGE, BRATs and CHEER) have a combined audience of over 30,000. Oddly enough, our Twitter account also has over 30,000 followers at the moment.
With a new website, an online TV channel and an online radio platform to be launched by August this year, we believe it is clear that R.AGE’s commitment to providing engaging, interactive, positive and ground-breaking news content is as strong as ever.