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MEKANISM SHOWS THEIR *SPICY SIDE* FOR SLIM JIM

Mekanism recently teamed up with Venables Bell & Partners and 15 letters to create a fully interactive, multimedia gaming, and social networking website for Conagra Foods' **Slim Jim** snacks, encouraging users to get in touch with their *Spicy Side*. The site combines the engaging functionality of a video game with the interaction of an online community, allowing user-based personalized avatars to play, rumble, chat, and become buddies within this imaginative world of spiciness. Unique mini-profiles, a Spicy Side gallery character directory, a video room featuring the campaign's commercial spots, a store full of fiery merchandise, and a flash-based showcase of the many varieties of Slim Jim snacks complete the integrated media experience.



Aggression, craziness, and a penchant for mischief and adventure are squeezed into Spicy Sides, the horned creatures that embody the madness in everyone—madness that is unleashed by consuming a Slim Jim product. While exploring Spicy Town, the 3D playground of neighborhoods, mountainous



paths, and city sidewalks, users can talk using the chat feature, make buddy lists to organize virtual friendships, block unwelcome antagonists, or challenge players to a *Rumble*. In this real-time, multi-player, anything-goes brawl, competitors punch, kick, throw fish, and bludgeon with barbeques, in an outrageous fight until one of the combatants' Slim Jim life meter runs out. Mekanism EP/President **Jason Harris** noted, "Venables approached us with a great basic concept. Partnering with 15 letters we developed, designed, and created a groundbreaking piece to engage and entertain users with the Slim Jim brand for hours at a time. This game is addictive fun—I dare you not to have fun on this site."

The Spicy Side campaign also includes live action spots, which are featured on the site and provided some of the concept inspiration for the website. The spots detail the dangers of feeding peppered beef jerky snacks to our small alter egos. After getting their tiny hands on a Slim Jim, these peculiar characters destroy everything and torment everyone in sight. CD/Director **Ian Kovalik** explains, "We wanted to build something online that tied the whole campaign together. We loved the idea of everyone having a Spicy Side and thought it would be pretty cool to let users create their own character—to see what they look like with horns on their face. Naturally, we decided to build a world where you could actually





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meet other people's Spicy Sides, interact with them through chat and buddy lists, and then beat the living tar out of them. It really is a fun and immersive experience."

The site's 'About' section, a witty Q&A session, further explains the Spicy phenomenon, maintaining that a victimized cat "was asking for it", that even Abraham Lincoln had a Spicy Side, and that the concept is certainly not "just an elaborate ruse to sell more Slim Jims." The site was designed to create a memorable user experience, to engage, entertain, and dramatically increase product awareness. The site was a huge technological feat, combining unique and fun game play with significant brand participation, as players get points and power from finding the spiciness of Slim Jim products. The campaign uses interactivity and significant stickiness to create lasting brand impressions in a truly unique setting.

Interactive Credits:

Agency: Venables Bell & Partners
Creative Director: David Kim
Art Director: Keith Scott
Copywriter: Paul Johnson
Producer: Lissette Fernandez

Interactive Media: Mekanism
Creative Director(s): Ian Kovalik, Andre Riccardi
Interactive Art Director: Scott Barry
Interactive Designer: Tony Papesh
Executive Producer: Jason Harris
Producer: Steve Muller
Associate Producer: Brendan Gahan

Developers/Flash: 15 Letters
Creative Director: Mark Rattin
Lead Design Engineer/Interaction Design: Jin Young Kim
Design Engineer(s): Ari Braginsky, Ross Gerbasi
Database and Middleware Developer: Rich Hanson
Developer: Jeff Froom
Design Production and Animation: Andrew Heidgerken
Animation: Dominic Vallone
Music Design: Matt Mercer
Project Manager: Caroline Casey

Spot Credits:

Agency: Venables Bell & Partners
Creative Director: Greg Bell
Art Director: Keith Scott
Copywriter: Paul Johnson
Producer: Emily Moore

Production Company: Biscuit
Director: Jim Hosking

ABOUT MEKANISM

San Francisco-based **Mekanism** is a collective of film, animation & interactive content creators telling brand-related stories across emerging media platforms. They entertain and inspire measurable brand loyalty by imparting a unique passion and zest for creative storytelling to commercials, branded entertainment, features & integrated campaigns.

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