

**Social Media's Re-Institution of Two-Way Communication:
A Content Analysis of the Use and Pervasiveness of Today's Technology by
the Third Sector**

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Abstract

This article is a content analysis of the use of the top three social media platforms, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube by 100 of the 627 top nonprofit organizations in the United States listed by Charitywatch.org. The purpose of this research is to generate much-needed knowledge in this field by providing empirical data to the nonprofit sector on the use of social media in the nonprofit sector. Previously, such analysis did not exist for organizations operating within the United States, and, thus, many organizational leaders may be hesitant to allocate resources and funding to such efforts. The 100 websites were coded with an inter-coder reliability rate of 93%. Results demonstrate that there is a statistically significant, positive correlation between the number of social media websites linked to and the number of individual site subscribers. Websites were also coded for social media link 'viewability,' and this was measured against social media site popularity to test if link placement could influence social media following. Results indicate that the more clicks a user must perform to reach a social media page, the lower the site following would likely be. Results also revealed that the type of organization did not have a significant effect on whether audience members would be more involved with social media efforts or not. These trends can be used as evidence that the time spent in managing social media sites, even at the nonprofit level, can have a positive impact on an organization's ability to reach its target population.

“...In 2005 Facebook didn’t exist for most people, ‘Twitter’ was still a sound, the ‘cloud’ was something in the sky, ‘3G’ was a parking space, ‘applications’ were what you sent to colleges, and ‘Skype’ was a typo.” – Michael Friedman, That Used to be Us

Introduction

According to charitywatch.org, there are 627 top national organizations within the United States of America that operate with nonprofit status, and each one of them is constantly looking for innovative ways to connect with its target audience to gain popularity and, as a result, more funding. When this need is combined with today’s newest Web-based technologies there seem to be infinite possibilities. Within the past several years, social media have become a cultural phenomenon that has changed how all organizations manage business online. Despite this reality, there is a lack of research-based guidelines on how to effectively manage social media efforts (Briones, Kuch, Fisher-Liu, & Jin, 2011).

Managers of nonprofits can purchase dozens of books ranging from titles including “The Networked Nonprofit,” (Kanter & Fine, 2010), “#Socialmedia Nonprofit Tweet,” (Fouts, 2010), and “The New Rules of Marketing and PR: How to Use Social Media, Online Video, Mobile Applications, Blogs, New Releases, and Viral Marketing to Reach Buyers Directly,” (Scott, 2010) and scour them in search of the key to using social media. However, none of these titles have any numerical data that demonstrates what an effective use of social media consists of. There is an absence of a theoretical framework that professionals can use to effectively manage social media (Fisher-Liu, Jin, Briones & Kuch, 2012). This lack of information has left nonprofit social media managers to discover what works on their own. A 2009 article titled “Engaging Stakeholders through Social Networking: How Nonprofit Organizations are Using Social Networking,” found that nonprofit organizations are failing to fully utilize the interactive function of Facebook which could potentially cultivate relationships (Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009). These two facts, when taken together, draw attention to the purpose of this study.

There is little research showing social media managers that one cover image attracts more attention than another, or that a certain number of updates per week will result in more engagement. In fact, a 2010 study discovered that nonprofit organizations lag others in social media adoption, waiting to see how others use this new technology (Waters, Tindall, & Morton, 2010).

As there are very few studies focusing on the field of nonprofit organizations’ use of social media to achieve marketing objectives, it is important to create new knowledge to guide these organizations toward success. The purpose of this study is to analyze how nonprofit organizations have adopted social media and to identify any strategies which are being employed as the world embraces the new world of Web 2.0, user generated content and unrestricted user interactions. This study also attempts to link nonprofit online and social media efforts to factors such as popularity and user-engagement.

Literature Review

State of Nonprofits

According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), there are more than 1 million nonprofit organizations in the United States. The main sources of the \$1.4 trillion in

revenue for these nonprofits included contributions, gifts and grants (22%); program service revenues, fees, and government contracts (67%); and other sources like dues and special events income (11%) (NCCS, 2010). Starting around 2008, nonprofit organizations in the United States began experiencing major crises in terms of revenues and fund-raising. The effect of the economic downturn has hurt nonprofits significantly as both the government as well as individual giving has seen sharp declines (Hoefler, 2012). The results have been that most nonprofits are using their reserves for daily operations and only around 20% of nonprofits in the U.S. were expecting to break even in 2010 (Nonprofit Finance Fund, 2010). As a result, the need for more and newer forms of recruiting members, volunteers and fund-raising has a main focus.

Internet marketing has been an un-explored area for many nonprofits. In fact, nonprofit organizations were never discussed as a topic in any of the sessions of the Internet Marketing Conference for almost a decade since its inception in 2000 until 2010 (Internet marketing Conference, 2010). Over the past two decades, technology in general and Web technology in particular has evolved at a break-neck pace. As the Web allows uses to evolve in many facets, of which content creation has been a very important one, marketers must rapidly adapt and evolve or be left behind.

Rise of Web 2.0

Web 2.0, a popular term for internet applications and defined as “that version of the internet that allows users to actively engage in creating and distributing Web content,” (Janusz, 2009; p.124). The expansion of user generated content started with users creating content for blogs. However, the launch of Freindster.com in 2002 and Myspace.com in 2003 allowed users to not only generate content but also share it with their closest social networks. It allowed users to interact with them (www.uncp.edu, 2013). According to Ross et al. (2009), social networking websites not only allow users to connect with their immediate networks but to also find individuals with similar interests for emotional and social purposes. This has led to the rapid expansion and unprecedented popularity of the social media websites Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Organizations Get Social

For-profit marketers were quick to jump on the social media bandwagon, developing a presence on multiple social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Bydas Digital Communication Agency even boasts that, “your presence in social networks is important since it offers opportunities to engage the audience and establish affinities and partnerships with other businesses. Activating a corporate profile on a social network promotes your business online and provides your marketing department with new tools to precisely assess customers’ needs.” (Agency, 2012) But, historically, there is little research to support this claim. Without strong numbers, corporate CEOs have been slow to recognize the need for a social media presence. Studies do show, however, that companies which utilize social media engage directly with consumers and thus have a greater opportunity to reach customers and increase the likelihood that those customers will make a purchase (Naveed, 2012; Swain, 2009; DEI Worldwide, 2008).

Likewise, Dan Shaver established that customers are being influenced by social media and to attract customers positively toward a product, a company needs to build a strong social media presence (Shaver, 2007). Building a strong social media presence requires consistency. It

requires engaging with the target demographic to build relationships that help brands to build their trust and their business. If a company has established good public relations practices, then customers will become loyal to the brand. It requires having actual goals and a strategy for the social media campaign (Shaver, 2007).

In the summer of 2009, SocialMediaExaminer.com began studying the trends of social media marketing. Four years later, it concluded that this medium is “here to stay”. The site’s most recent study in 2012 revealed that 83% of marketers out of the 3,800 surveyed indicated that social media is important to their business (Stelzner, 2012). The 2012 SocialMediaExaminer.com report also discovered that marketers believe that the number-one benefit of social media marketing is generating more business exposure. While nonprofit organizations are not selling goods or services as for-profit companies do, the overwhelming idea that exposure is the number-one benefit for both. Overall, 94% of those surveyed reported that their company was using social media to reach their target audience.

In May of 2012, CEO.com measured social media usage by Fortune 500 Company CEOs, and discovered that a mere 7.6% are on Facebook and 3.8% are on Twitter. Overall, the article found that “After searching Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google Plus, and Pinterest we concluded that 70% of CEOs from Fortune 500 companies have no presence at all on social networks” (www.CEO.com, 2012).

It should be noted that utilization of social media websites by CEOs is not a good indicator of how their companies are using various social media websites. While these actions may lead audiences to believe that a social media presence is not highly desirable, another study conducted by Brandfog revealed that 94% of employees believed “social” CEOs would enhance the company’s brand, and 81% believed that a ‘social’ CEO is a better leader. According to Jones et al. (2008), organizations that use social media tools help organizations appear more reputable and more innovative than their competitors (Jones, Spence & Vallaster, 2008). A separate study conducted by IBM suggests 16% of all CEOs in the U.S. are using social media to communicate with customers, and expects it to rise to 57% within five years (Adams, 2012). Although the abovementioned researched focused on CEOs of for-profit companies, the findings can be used by CEOs of nonprofit organizations where the leaders’ interaction and engagement with members is perceived as more important because most non-profit organizations (and their leaders) include a higher ‘human’ element as compared to for-profit organizations.

This information, when aggregated, suggests that employees have been charged with managing the social media face of a corporation in order to remain in the public eye without much CEO oversight. The question is how different, if at all, are nonprofits performing. While many corporations and nonprofit organizations share their goals for using social media, there has been no dedicated study within the United States to evaluate nonprofit use of social media sites.

Research Perspective

The only identified analysis similar to this research offers information on nonprofit usage of social media by Australian organizations. In a population of over 22 million people, Australia has an estimated 600,000 nonprofit organizations. Of these, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimates that 59,000 are “economically significant” with a contribution of \$43 billion to GDP and filling 8% of employment (Wirth Consulting, 2012). Wirth Consulting evaluated 595 nonprofit organizations from a range of industries to analyze which social media platforms were the most utilized, and what the top-ranked organizations are that make use of social media, as

well as establish if social media use is really prolific in the Australian nonprofit sector. Data were collected from publicly accessible websites and government reports between November 2011 and April 2012. The data were collected manually across the 595 Australian nonprofit organizations whereby a “point in time” representation of the areas covered in the report was taken in.

The Wirth study revealed that 97% of Australian nonprofit organizations have an online website presence. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube topped the list of most frequently used social media technology.

Benefits to Stronger Online Social Presence

According to Hoefler (2012), the three most successful ways in which for-profit organizations have been able to market themselves in this new Web 2.0/social media environment is using three main strategies which include;

Affiliate Marketing – this is the process in which an organization drives traffic from its website to another website by promoting the latter website on its own. The two main ways in which a non-profit organization can participate in affiliate marketing is, (1) by linking to a company which is in a similar area of business like a hospital and, (2) by listing its products and services on retail websites like Amazon.com, etc. (Hoefler, 2012).

Online Donations and Memberships – A total of \$7 billion was donated online in 2008 (Network for Good, 2010). As technology advances, giving online is getting easier. The latest trend is mobile giving whereby a person can donate up to \$10 by simply texting via their cell phone. Online and mobile donations are a promising area as long as people’s concerns regarding security and additional fees and payment data storage are addressed (Hoefler, 2012). The social media page of a nonprofit can play an important role in encouraging people to donate online, as well as direct visitors to the right places to donate or sign up for memberships.

Information Products – the third main strategy that nonprofits can use is creating valuable information products. Information products are materials that are created with the purpose of informing and inspiring people. They can be in any media form including print and digital (Hoefler, 2012). A company’s website as well as their social media page can showcase these information products in many media forms like books, brochures, banners, videos, music, etc. Consequently, with the rapid advancement in technology, it is even possible to have interactive information products.

Summary

The importance of social media and its use by nonprofits is even more pronounced when one realizes that social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, etc. can effectively and efficiently be used to implement one or all the abovementioned three strategies. This can also significantly help in raising awareness, increasing donations as well as memberships for nonprofit organizations.

Current field reports suggest that maintaining an active social media presence can promote business and is considered desirable among corporate employees. This study is a reaction to Waters’s claim that nonprofits are failing to fully utilize the capabilities of social media. However, because no foundational, quantitative data is accessible on the specific topic of nonprofits within the United States and their social media usage, this study aims to set a baseline by collecting such information.

Research Questions

Overall, the three most popular social media sites are Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube in that order. In his 2009 article *Engaging Stakeholders Through Social Networking: How Nonprofit Organizations are Using Social Networking*, Waters suggests that nonprofits are lagging behind others in their social media adoption. To establish a baseline on social media usage, the following research questions was formulated:

Research Question 1: Do nonprofit organizations within the United States utilize the same social media sites that are popular with society at large?

Research Question 2: Does the category of nonprofit work have any effect on what social mediums are utilized by an organization?

In their research, Ahearne and Bhattacharya have shown that most of the users access the Internet for social networking (Ahearne & Bhattacharya, 2005). Again, following Water's questioning of how nonprofits are making use of social media, it can be expected that the majority of organizations would at least maintain a Web presence with a website. This led to the following research questions:

Research Question 3: Do nonprofit organization websites offer links to their social media sites, and if they do, how accessible are those links?

Research Question 4: Is there a correlation between the number of social media websites a nonprofit organization has presence on and the total number of subscribers to those social media sites?

Research Question 5: Does the viewability of a social media link have an effect on the number of social media subscribers for a given organization?

Method

Selection of Nonprofit Organizations

With over a million nonprofit organizations in the U.S. (Hofer, 2012), it is important to find a representative sampling frame and sample for the purposes of generating new knowledge. The American Institute of Philanthropy's Charitywatch.org's list of 627 nonprofit organizations was used as the basis for this study. Using the online randomizing software, randomizer.org, 100 of the 627 nonprofit organizations were randomly chosen for analysis. This would provide a statistically representative sample for initial analysis at 16% of the sampling frame (Mohammed-Baksh & Callison, In-press & 2007). CharityWatch, formerly known as The American Institute of Philanthropy, is a nonprofit charity watchdog organization. The mission of the organization "is to maximize the effectiveness of every dollar contributed to charity by providing donors with the information they need to make more informed giving decisions" (www.charitywatch.org 2012). Although we acknowledge that there are much more established sources like *Charity Navigator* available to provide a sampling frame, we used *Charity Watch* because firstly, it provides a more in-depth assessment of its rankings and second, the results of both sources were similar in many respects. According to the Los Angeles Times (Kristof, 2010), "*Charity Watch* rates fewer charities than *Charity Navigator* but provides a far more detailed look at the finances of those that it does rate."

However, in an attempt to provide a more in-depth and broad perspective to our analysis we also used *Charity Navigator* as a resource. In order to categorize the selected organizations,

nine categories used by the popular site CharityNavigator.org were used: Animals, Arts Culture and Humanities, Education, Environment, Health, Human Services, International, Public Benefit, and Religion. Out of the 100 organizations selected, 97 were available on CharityNavigator. The remaining three were coded based on comparative organizations listed on CharityNavigator.

Coding & Operationalizing

All 100 organizations were coded by two coders in order to allow an inter-coder reliability measurement to be made. Each organization was added by company name, chapter, and Web address, as well as category, and links to various social media websites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. A section for 'other' was completed for each additional social media website(s) an organization utilized within their corporate website.

Also, although blogs are considered a part of social media, we did not include any blogs for this study. This was done primarily because we wanted a level of consistency in terms or content, design, and capabilities of the social media websites being compared. For example we wanted to analyze how one particular nonprofit organization was using Facebook as opposed to another nonprofit organization. It would have been significantly more complicated to compare and contrast how different organizations were using blogs that vary significantly in terms of design, interface, capabilities, resources, etc., and are designed to provide users with a more customized experience.

Each social media link was evaluated for accessibility based on viewability from the organization homepage; accessibility through number of clicks needed, type of link utilized, and site popularity at the time of evaluation. If more than one link was available for a single social media site, the first one seen was the link evaluated. For example, The American Institute for Cancer Research had both a 'Like Us on Facebook' link as well as a 'Find us on Facebook' link farther down the same page. In this case, the first link, the 'Like Us' link, was the one evaluated for the study because it was seen first, and the purpose of this study was to measure accessibility and the effects this may have on social media popularity.

Each of the two coders coded 50 randomly selected Websites. In addition, both coders separately investigated 10 randomly selected common Websites of the 100 used for this analysis. Using Holsti's Percentage Agreement inter-rater reliability method across these coded Websites, inter-coder percentage agreement was 93%.

Results

Correlation between Total Site Subscriptions and Number of Websites Used

The correlation between the total number of site subscribers and the number of social media websites utilized by a given organization proved to be statistically significant ($r = .32$, $p = .001$). This significant, positive correlation is depicted in **Figure 1**.

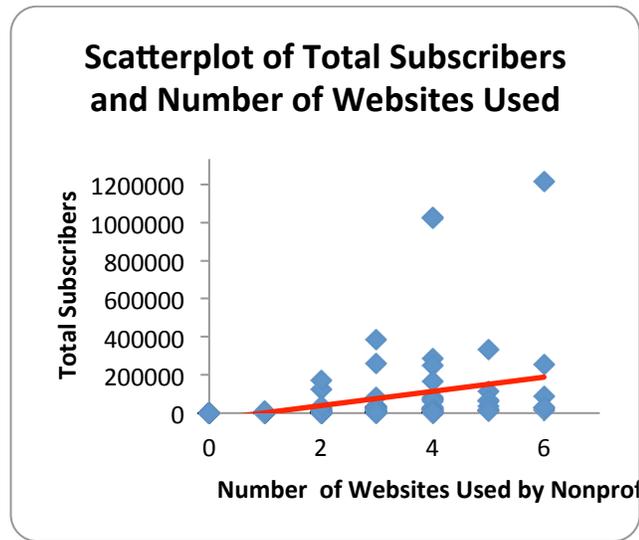


Figure 1: Scatterplot reveals a statistically significant correlation of .32, $p < .05$.

Category and Site Subscribers

Further tests were conducted to measure whether or not the number of subscribers to a site was impacted by the category of nonprofit. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to find the difference in number of subscribers based on the nine categories of nonprofit organizations listed by Charitynavigator.com: (1) Animals, (2) Arts, Culture, & Humanities, (3) Education, (4) Environment, (5) Health, (6) Human Services, (7) International, (8) Public Benefit, and (9) Religion. Analysis revealed no significant differences in the number of total subscribers based on category ($F [10, 89] = .27, p = .99$).

Table 1 provides a visual representation of group means across the nine nonprofit categories, as well as number of nonprofit organizations evaluated by this study within that category. Category 5, Health, was the most popularly evaluated category, with 24 organizations involved in this study. Second in popularity were International and Public Benefit organizations, each with 21 representative organizations. The next most popular category was Human Services, with 18 organizations in the random sample of 100 organizations analyzed.

The largest group mean belonged to the Human Services category, with ~112,426 website subscribers. Following this was the category of Environment, with ~104,399 subscribers.

Category (group)	<i>n</i>	Group Mean
6. Human Services	18	112,426
4. Environment	5	104,400
5. Health	24	80,614
8. Public Benefit	21	73,720
7. International	21	37,498
2. Animals	7	9,552
9. Religion	1	6,682
3. Education	3	189
1. Arts, Culture, & Humanities	0	0

Table 1: Chart displays the mean amount of subscribers and number of nonprofits studied within the nine categories.

Social Media Sites by Popularity

Of the 100 randomly selected nonprofit organizations analyzed, 87 linked to the social media website Facebook. Next in popularity was Twitter, which had links on 76 of the 100 sites analyzed. The third most popular site linked to was YouTube, with 59 links within the Websites analyzed.

Figure 2 depicts other social media sites for which links were recorded during the Website analysis.

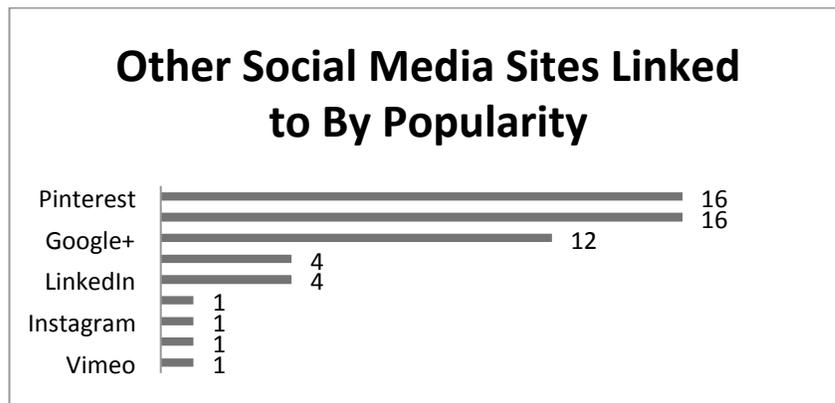


Figure 2: Other social media sites

Facebook

Overall, 86 of the Websites evaluated had links to a Facebook page. Of those that did provide a link, 39 had links viewable when the home page was first opened in a web browser. As Table 2 illustrates, the number of clicks required to access a webpage’s associated Facebook page increased as the mean number of “Likes” on that Facebook page decreased.

In order to measure a relationship between a Website’s social media viewability and that social media page’s popularity, a single factor ANOVA was run for each organization’s Facebook link viewability with the organization’s Facebook “likes.” Analysis indicated that there was no significant difference between viewability groups.

Number of Clicks to reach Facebook	<i>n</i>	Group Mean for Facebook Likes
1	39	82,799
2	43	57,375
3	3	9,502
4	1	7,059

Table 2: Group means for Facebook

Twitter

Almost 76% of Websites reviewed in this study linked to an organizational Twitter account, and 34 links were viewable from the Website home page when first opened in a Web browser. As the number of clicks required to access a Webpage’s associated Twitter page increased, the mean number of ‘Followers’ on that Twitter page decreased.

In order to measure a relationship between a Website’s social media viewability and that social media page’s popularity, a single factor ANOVA was run for each organization’s Twitter link viewability with the organization’s Twitter following. Analysis revealed that *p* was significant at .06 level ($F(2, 96) = 2.89, p = .06$).

Number of Clicks to Reach Twitter	<i>N</i>	Group Mean for Twitter Followers
1	35	19,169
2	40	9,918
3	1	2,963

Table 3: Group means for Twitter

YouTube

The third social media website this study focused on was YouTube.com. Analysis revealed that 59 of the nonprofit Websites evaluated linked to a YouTube account for the organization; 21 of those that provided a YouTube link did so on the Website’s home page, and was viewable when first opened in a Web Browser. As the number of clicks required to access a Webpage’s associated YouTube page increased, the mean number of ‘Subscribers’ on that YouTube page decreased.

A single factor ANOVA was also run for each organization’s YouTube link viewability with the organization’s number of YouTube subscribers. Analysis revealed that *p* was significant at .062 ($F(2, 97) = 2.87, p = .06$).

Number of Clicks to Reach YouTube	<i>n</i>	Group Mean for YouTube Subscribers
1	21	1,209
2	32	1,065
3	1	774
4	4	100
5	1	14

Table 4: Group means for YouTube

Discussion

The Wirth (2012) study in Australia revealed that 97% of Australian nonprofit organizations have a Web presence. Our study is comparable to this, with 99% of the organizations analyzed expressing a Web presence, and 87% expressing a social media presence on at least one social media website. The only organization not to have a website of its own was the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation. While the ACLU itself has a Website, there is only one article available that described the difference between the ACLU and the ACLU

Foundation. For the purposes of this survey, it was decided to not equate the ACLU Website as one to code, and instead reported that the ACLU Foundation did not have an Internet presence.

This analysis of overall social media popularity found that Facebook ranked number one in number of links; Twitter ranked number two; YouTube ranked number three. After these three social media websites, there was a steep drop-off in popularity, with the next two social media websites used garnering only 16 total links each (Pinterest and Flickr) out of the 100 sites evaluated. This quantitative analysis of empirical data proves that Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are the three leading social media websites used by nonprofit organizations in the United States in the year 2012.

The positive correlation between the number of Web subscribers and number of social media websites utilized by a given organization is further indication that the differences in number of websites utilized is more related to the number of target audience members an organization is reaching, than it is to any other factor measured in this study. According to the Bydas Digital Communication Agency, “Your presence in social networks is important, since it offers opportunities to engage the audience” (www.bydas.com, 2012). The findings of this study prove that the more an organization utilizes social media, the larger the audience it will find (www.bydas.com, 2012).

Past studies revealed that companies that utilize social media engage directly with consumers and thus they have a greater opportunity to reach more customers and also increase their likelihood those customers will make a purchase (Naveed, 2012). Our research indicates that this can work in the nonprofit sector as well. By engaging directly on an ongoing basis with the target audience, nonprofit organizations have the ability to constantly remind others of their cause, campaign, or purpose. The Vice President of the Connecticut Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society once stated that, “Social media allow the organization to constantly be in front of its audience without spending a lot of money to do so. It also allows the audience to get to know the organization and identify with the people who work there” (Butler, 2012). While these organizations are not selling more of a product, they may be engaging more audience members, soliciting more donations, and receiving greater turnouts at events because of increased exposure.

The correlations for the number of clicks to reach Facebook and the number of likes on Facebook, the number of clicks it took to get to Twitter and the number of Twitter followers, and the number of clicks it took to reach YouTube and number of subscribers to a YouTube page were not statistically significant. Although there was an observable trend when group means and number of clicks were observed, a correlation could not be reported.

The statistical analysis seems to be skewed due to the uneven distribution between the categories. This is due to some categories having an underrepresentation within cells. For example, the “Facebook link with three clicks” cell had only one organizational Website, and the “Facebook with four clicks” cell had only four organizations. However, as Randomizer.com picked the sample of 100 out of the 627 organizations within the population, all categories that were selected were used for analysis.

Had there been a more even distribution, the numbers might have been statistically significant. Across each social medium, group mean dropped with each additional click required to access a page. The observable difference in group means between number of clicks did display a negative trend, so the conclusion is that the fewer clicks it takes a Web user to access a social media page, the more likely that person is to follow, friend, or add the organization online,

leading to one more person receiving the company's message every day.

Conclusion

Analysis does seem to indicate the widespread use and popularity of various social media websites by nonprofit organizations in the United States. This article suggests that nonprofit organizations should prominently display all their social media initiatives on their Website. In addition, nonprofit organizations must attempt to have presence on as many social media platforms/websites as possible. This not only seems to help increase the number of subscribers to the organizations but can also be used as a tool to increase user engagement, which in-turn can hopefully have a positive impact on donations and membership. Of course it must be noted that merely having a social media presence is not a guarantee for success but rather a starting point to aid in the organization's marketing efforts. Each social media website has unique properties and customized appeals. Nonprofit organizations must dedicate resources to creating innovative and focused social media strategies to increase engagement as well as help the overall marketing efforts and objectives of the organization.

In summation, according to this article, the three most important strategies related to nonprofits and social media are; (1) Prominent mention of all social media affiliation on the organization's homepage; (2) Being present and active on as many social media platforms as possible, and; (3) Having unique and focused marketing and user-engagement strategies for each social media website

Limitations & Future Research

This article represents a "point in time" representation of social media. All data were collected between the dates of October 1st and 10th, 2012, but as social media are fluid entities, the numbers reported here have already changed.

There are more than one million nonprofit organizations in the United States. This study evaluated only 100 randomly selected nonprofit organizations out of a sampling frame of 627 top nationally recognized charities. It must be noted that although 15% of the sampling frame is an acceptable representative percentage (Mohammed-Baksh & Callison, In-press, 2007), it is not a complete compilation. Future research must include a much higher number of organizations to analyze. The authors fully acknowledge that the inclusion of only 100 organizations for analysis is a major limitation of this study. Also, this study used a list from charityWatch.org. It must be noted that although *Charity Watch* is a reputed and credible organization, there are many other established organizations that generate similar lists.

This study only reports and describes observations in a concise and quantitative manner. No real analysis or reasoning has been established as to what are best practices within social media, or what signifies a proper amount of social media sites to utilize as an organization. This is due to a need for pure baseline research on the topic of social media usage by nonprofit organizations within the United States before any in-depth research is done on specific organizations. After basic trends are quantifiable, further research can begin.

Another limitation of this study is that it assumes that social media is positive or 'good' for the organization. It must be noted that social media does have its limitations and not all social media has proved to be beneficial to all organizations. There is new research that questions the true benefits of social media. However, for the purposes of this study we focused more on the benefits and positives of social media more than its potential downside.

The next step in this study of nonprofit organizations operating within the United States should be to analyze a larger percentage of the more than one million nonprofit organizations in the United States. Further research can also be conducted to evaluate organizations based on financial figures acquired through published annual reports and connect them to social media usage. Research should focus on the presence or lack of funding for a social media expert or social media management software. Also, overall revenue should be evaluated for online donations when possible. This information could then be tested for a correlation with a social media presence to establish whether or not social media are effective in generating funds for a nonprofit organization. All social media sites should be evaluated for average posting rates, share counts, and overall reach.

Future research can also focus on comparing nonprofit organizations within the United States with corporate organizations within the United States to find the best practices and growth.

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Appendix A: List of nonprofit organizations analyzed with social media links.

Company Name	Facebook Link	Twitter Link	YouTube Link
AARP Foundation	Yes	Yes	Yes
ACLU Foundation	No	No	No
Action Against Hunger	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adopt a Platoon Soldier Support Effort	No	No	No
Africare	Yes	No	No
Alliance for Retired Americans	Yes	Yes	Yes
ALSAC/St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital	Yes	Yes	Yes
American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults/	No	No	No
American Brotherhood for the Blind			
American Heart Association	Yes	Yes	Yes
American Institute for Cancer Research	Yes	Yes	No
American Lung Association	Yes	Yes	Yes
American Parkinson's Disease Association	Yes	No	No
American Printing House for the Blind	Yes	Yes	Yes
American Studies Center	No	No	No
Armed Services YMCA of the USA	Yes	Yes	Yes
Associated Humane Societies	No	No	No
Association of American Indian Affairs	Yes	Yes	Yes
Autism Speaks	Yes	Yes	Yes
Blinded Veterans Association	Yes	Yes	No
Brain and Behavior Research Foundation/NARSAD	Yes	Yes	No
Brother's Brother Foundation	Yes	No	No
Cal Farley's Boys Ranch and Affiliates	Yes	No	No
Catholic Relief Services	Yes	Yes	Yes
Center for Biological Diversity	Yes	Yes	No
Center for Reproductive Rights	Yes	Yes	Yes
Center for Science in the Public Interest	Yes	Yes	Yes
Child Find of America	Yes	No	No
Children's Inn at NIH	Yes	Yes	Yes
Church World Service	Yes	Yes	Yes
Common Cause	Yes	Yes	Yes
Compassion International	Yes	Yes	Yes
CureSearch/National Childhood Cancer Foundation	Yes	Yes	No
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute/Jimmy Fund	Yes	Yes	Yes
Delta Society	Yes	Yes	No
Diabetes Research Institute Foundation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Diabetes Research and Wellness Foundation	Yes	No	No
Direct Relief International	Yes	Yes	Yes

Disabled Police and Sheriffs Foundation	No	No	No
Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee	Yes	Yes	Yes
Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Entertainment Industry Foundation	Yes	Yes	No
Food and Water Watch	Yes	Yes	Yes
Food for the Hungry	Yes	Yes	Yes
Food for the Poor	Yes	Yes	Yes
Foundation for American Veterans	No	No	No
Friends of Animals	Yes	Yes	Yes
Friends of UNFPA	Yes	Yes	Yes
Front Range Equine Rescue	Yes	No	Yes
Glaucoma Foundation	Yes	Yes	No
Goodwill Industries International	Yes	Yes	Yes
Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind	Yes	No	No
Handicap International	Yes	Yes	No
Hearing Health Foundation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hillel Foundation	Yes	Yes	No
Human Rights Campaign Foundation	Yes	Yes	No
Japan Society	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lighthouse International	Yes	Yes	Yes
Macular Degeneration Association	Yes	Yes	Yes
MAP International	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mental Health America	Yes	Yes	No
Military Order of the Purple Heart Service Foundation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Muscular Dystrophy Association	Yes	Yes	Yes
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund	Yes	Yes	No
NARAL Pro Choice America	Yes	Yes	Yes
National 4-H Council	Yes	Yes	Yes
National Caregiving Foundation	No	No	No
Childhood Disease Research Foundation	No	No	No
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Healthcare	Yes	Yes	Yes
National Hemophilia Foundation	Yes	Yes	No
National Military Family Association	Yes	Yes	No
National Multiple Sclerosis Society	Yes	Yes	Yes
National Parks Conservation Association	Yes	Yes	No
National Urban League	Yes	Yes	Yes
American Indian Education Foundation	No	No	No
Natural Resources Defense Council	Yes	Yes	Yes
Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society	Yes	No	No
Negative Population Growth	Yes	Yes	No

Operation Homestead	Yes	Yes	Yes
Paralyzed Veterans of America	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pathfinder International	Yes	Yes	Yes
PCI-Media Impact	Yes	Yes	Yes
Performing Animals Welfare Society	Yes	Yes	Yes
Physicians for Social Responsibility	Yes	No	Yes
Planned Parenthood Federation of America	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prevent Cancer Foundation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rainforest Alliance	Yes	Yes	Yes
ReSurge International	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ronald McDonald House Charities	Yes	Yes	Yes
Seva Foundation	Yes	Yes	No
Siouy National Relief Fund	No	No	No
Soldiers' Angels	Yes	Yes	No
SPCA International	Yes	Yes	Yes
Starr Commonwealth School	Yes	No	Yes
Sunshine Foundation	Yes	Yes	Yes
U.S. English	Yes	Yes	Yes
United Service Organizations	Yes	Yes	Yes
Veterans of the Vietnam War and The Veterans Coalition	No	No	No
Waterkeeper Alliance	Yes	Yes	No
Wishing Well Foundation USA	No	No	No
WWP (Wounded Warrior Project)	Yes	Yes	Yes
