



# New Media & Social Change

How Nonprofits are Using Web-based Technologies to Reach their Goals



A Product of  
The Hatcher Group

## About the Hatcher Group



Connecting Nonprofit Organizations  
to Policymakers and the Media

The Hatcher Group is a full-service communications and public policy firm dedicated to advancing social change by helping nonprofits communicate effectively with policymakers, media and the public. We work with major national foundations, research institutions, national and regional coalitions, government agencies and numerous other nonprofit organizations. Located just outside Washington, D.C., The Hatcher Group provides communications services that help national and international clients: build strong communities; improve the lives of low-income families, immigrants and at-risk youth; strengthen education and early learning; encourage environmental responsibility; and advance the cause of human rights, democracy and social justice.

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## About the Author

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## About the Report

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The report relies heavily on the staff members at the 30 nonprofit organizations who completed the survey and responded to questions. Their willingness to share their experiences using new media is much appreciated.

Fall 2009

# **New Media and Social Change**

## ***How Nonprofits are Using Web-based Technologies to Reach their Goals***

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# Introduction

With the **traditional media in flux**, nonprofit groups are increasingly turning to alternative means to reach the public. At the same time, self-publishing and social media platforms on the Internet are experiencing explosive growth rates and new prominence.

To understand the relationship between these trends, The Hatcher Group set out to examine how a group of nonprofits working on state-level advocacy issues are using new media technologies to promote their agendas. Our goal in producing this report is to show how some nonprofits are using those technologies to advance social change, and to provide resources and advice to aid organizations in such efforts.

We focused on 30 organizations that are members of the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative,<sup>1</sup> a group of independent, nonprofits with a shared commitment to responsible budget and tax policies. Their work is coordinated by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.<sup>2</sup>

In May 2009, we asked each of these groups to complete a **70-question survey online**,<sup>3</sup> gauging their interest and experiences with a broad variety of new media tools and technologies. We then followed up with many of the organizations through in-depth telephone interviews.

We found that all of the organizations surveyed currently use new media technologies in some capacity, although 44 percent devote less than two hours to the task each week. Nearly all intend to increase the emphasis they place on new media over the next year -- with half planning to increase their use significantly and another 40 percent planning a slight increase.

Nearly all also reach out to bloggers on a regular basis, and the few who currently do not plan to in the future. Similarly, 60 percent of the groups are now on Facebook, and an additional 30 percent plan to establish a presence. Many of the organizations we spoke with found success using blogging and social networking to increase their role in policy debates, get their message in front of key audiences and connect with supporters.

Some other technologies were less popular. Despite all of the attention focused on Twitter recently, less than a quarter of the organizations have a presence on the service, and more than half have no intention of establishing one. And while more than a third plan to start submitting content to social news websites, none had previously done so.

In short, we found that the use of new media technologies to advance social change is very much a work in progress. Organizations have a high interest in using new media tools but are still unsure about which work best for them, how much time they want to invest in this effort and how best to use the evolving technology.

But this much is certain: The importance new media plays in helping communicate the message of nonprofits will only increase in coming years and organizations that intend to thrive in that environment should make a concerted effort now to stay ahead of the curve.

*“I know the blogs are best at debunking myths that can slip through a lot of the traditional media outlets.”<sup>4</sup>*

— President Obama

*“The great thing about this age of blogs is the way people who really know something about a subject can quickly weigh in, without being filtered through Authority.”<sup>5</sup>*

— Paul Krugman,  
The New York Times

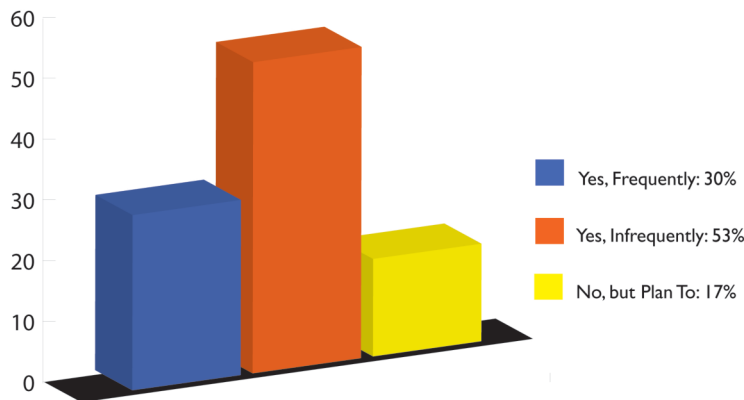
*“It used to be certain elites would have a monopoly on discussing those issues, whether it’s politics, culture, music, art, etc. What’s happening is technology is allowing people all over the country (and the world) to discuss the things they care about. Once they start talking about those things, a lot of times, they will act on those issues.”<sup>6</sup>*

— Markos Moulitsas,  
Dailykos.com

# BLOGGING & OUTREACH TO BLOGGERS



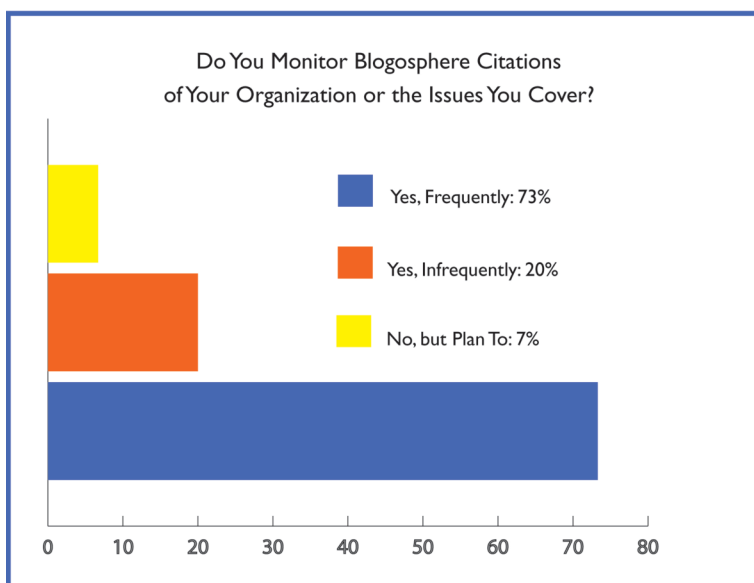
Does Your Organization Reach Out to Bloggers?



Blogging and blogger outreach combined were the most frequently used social media tools by the groups we surveyed. Some 83 percent currently reach out to bloggers and the remaining 17 percent plan to in the future. Similarly, more than 93 percent now monitor citations of their organization in the blogosphere and the remaining groups have plans to do so. Seventy-three percent of the groups indicated that they monitor the blogosphere frequently, while 20 percent do so infrequently.

Most groups surveyed spent just one to two hours per week reaching out to bloggers. Additionally, while 17 percent of the organizations spent more than three hours per week, more than 25 percent did not spend any time on such efforts in a typical week.

Do You Monitor Blogosphere Citations of Your Organization or the Issues You Cover?



## At A Glance

A blog is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse chronological order, and are normally shorter than op-eds or newspaper articles. "Blog" can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.<sup>7</sup>

### Blogging Stats:

- **Nearly 100 million** Americans read blogs at least once a month<sup>8</sup>
- The blog search engine Technorati tracks **900,000** blog posts every day<sup>9</sup>
- **A 2007 survey** of liberal blog readers found them to be highly engaged in the political process. Eighty-four percent voted in mid-term congressional elections and 74 percent voted in state/local elections<sup>10</sup>

# Tools and Targets

Organizations used various tools to identify and monitor blogs. More than half used **Google Blogsearch**, although significant numbers also used an **RSS Reader** or **Google Alerts**. Other tools mentioned include **Technorati**, **BlogPulse** and **IceRocket**.

Reaching out to bloggers had clear dividends. Eighty-eight percent of the organizations said they had been cited in blogs as a result of their outreach efforts, and 64 percent felt that they had successfully affected blog coverage of an issue. Additionally, 16 percent of the organizations were subsequently invited to submit guest-posts.

Most groups identified several target audiences in reaching out to bloggers. More than 91 percent identified the media as a target, 83 percent listed both advocates and legislators, and some 70 percent aimed to reach the general public. A few of the organizations also indicated that they were trying to reach other groups, such as “community leaders” and “informed members of the progressive community.”

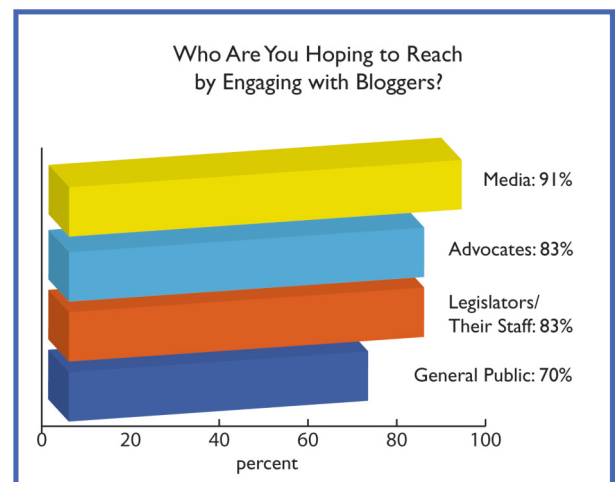
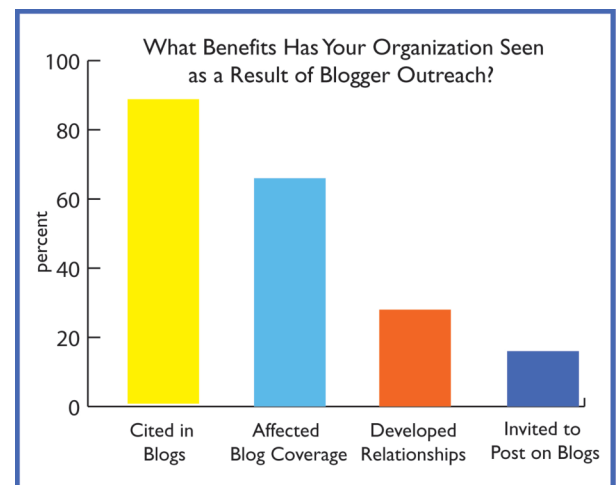
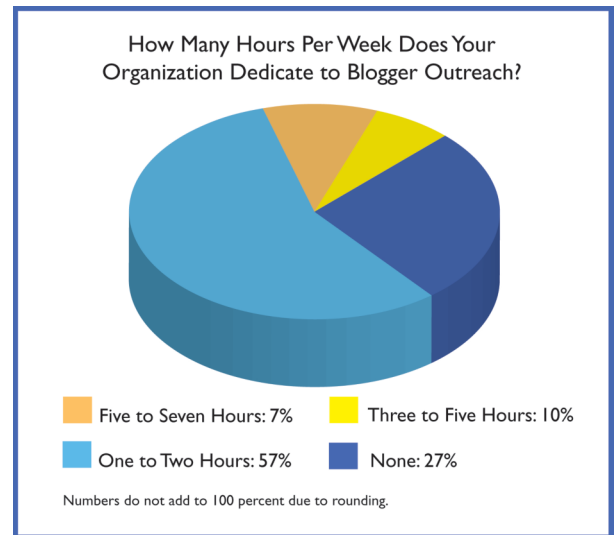
Groups had similar targets for their blogging efforts. Each of the organizations writing their own blog posts, either on their website or elsewhere, hoped to reach members of the media by doing so. Large majorities also intended to reach advocates, legislators and their staffs.

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## Reaching Journalists by Reaching Bloggers<sup>11</sup>

A survey of 4,000 U.S. journalists conducted by Brodeur found that:

- 20.9 percent of reporters said they spend more than an hour per day reading blogs
- 57.1 percent of reporters said they read blogs at least two to three times per week
- 71 percent of journalists have a list of blogs that they check on a regular basis
- More than 90 percent of journalists check blogs at least two to three times per month



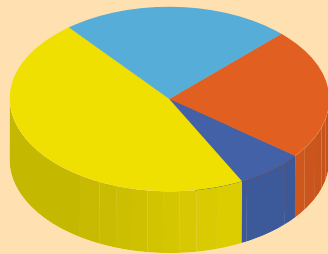
# Blogging: Next Steps

Reaching out to bloggers was found to be an important strategy, but many organizations take it a step further and either write their own blog posts or have their own blog. Thirty percent of the groups have their own blog and an additional 47 percent plan to create one. A third of the groups also sometimes guest-posted items on other blogs.

**Wordpress**<sup>12</sup> is by far the most popular software platform for blogging among the organizations we surveyed. A few of the groups used Google's **Blogger**<sup>13</sup> software. In terms of which staff members were responsible for blogging, results

were split closely between policy staff and communications staff. A few organizations encouraged all of their staff members to blog, with varying degrees of success.

Does Your Organization Have a Blog?



## Blogging Terms

### **Blogsphere**

The entire community of blogs

### **Blogroll**

A list of external links located on the homepage of a blog, often in the sidebar

### **Cross-Post**

An article or blog post that is posted on another blog, generally linking back to the original publication

### **Embedding**

Typically in reference to audio, video or flash widgets, embedding is the act of displaying rich media directly on a website, rather than linking to it

### **Guest-Post**

A blog post authored by someone other than a regular contributor to the blog

### **Permalink**

The full URL where an individual blog post can be found permanently

## Blogger Outreach Success: A Mini Case Study

One organization was particularly pleased with the results of its blogger outreach efforts. It started by identifying a list of bloggers in its state who might be sympathetic to its issues. Then, staff members reached out to the bloggers through email, introducing themselves and their organization. By systematically identifying and reaching out to a select group of bloggers they were able to develop solid relationships and contacts. These relationships ended up serving them well down the road. Aside from generating traffic to its website, increasing exposure for its reports and being quoted directly, the group felt that it was affecting coverage in a more meaningful way by communicating with bloggers. For example, representatives of the group noted that bloggers would often contact them directly to get their opinion on specific policy issues. They also emphasized that the blogs they were interacting with catered to a targeted audience of journalists, advocates and opinion leaders — exactly the audience they were most interested in reaching.



# Best Practices: Reaching Out to Bloggers

- **Be Transparent.** Identifying yourself and your organization when you reach out to bloggers will begin your relationship on good terms by making it clear that you are contacting them in good faith with a straightforward agenda.
- **Get to Know Them and Keep it Relevant.** Want to pitch an idea or story to a blogger but don't know much about what they write? First, do some research. Make a point to familiarize yourself with their content, so you do not end up pitching them on an issue that does not interest them.
- **Keep it Timely.** The news cycle online is even faster than in print and on television. If you want to be a part of it, you have to keep up. This means sending embargoed items in advance of release or, at the very least, getting your information out there in as timely a manner as possible.
- **Treat Them as Individuals.** Avoid sending blast emails to dozens of bloggers at once. Take the time to personalize your outreach efforts with the blogger's name, URL, and perhaps even a comment on something they have written recently.
- **Link to Them.** All bloggers want to get links to their site. Links are a form of currency – spend some and you tend to get something in return.

**IF YOU DO JUST ONE THING** ... put together a list of the blogs you would like to see cover your organization at some point. Send those blogs an email introducing yourself and your organization to start a dialogue.

## Best Practices: Blogging

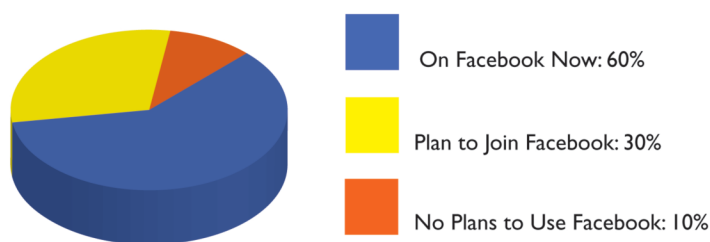
- 1) Write in a witty and conversational tone. If your post is boring, it will not hold anyone's attention.
- 2) Incorporate **links into your post**<sup>14</sup>, especially links to news stories and other blogs.
- 3) Use multimedia. Images and videos can enhance posts considerably.
- 4) Diversify. There are many **different types of blog posts**.<sup>15</sup>
- 5) Use timely information that is breaking news or relevant to the news cycle.
- 6) Choose a descriptive and attention-grabbing title for your post.
- 7) Keep blog posts short – certainly below 1,000 words. They are more likely to be read in full.
- 8) Keep the community in mind. Different blogs have different styles and cultures.
- 9) Encourage audience participation by asking open-ended questions that spark dialogue.
- 10) Respond to comments. If someone takes the time to comment on your post, you should return the favor by replying to their comment publicly.
- 11) Identify yourself. Blog posts written under an organizational name are not generally received as well as those posted under an individual's name. You should also include a bio and your website links.
- 12) There are no hard and fast rules. Experiment and keep tabs on what works and what does not.

**IF YOU DO JUST ONE THING** ... identify a blog to which you would like to contribute guest posts from time to time. If the blog allows user posts, create an account. If the blog does not allow user posts, email the blogger and try to set up a process for offering guest contributions.

Facebook offers many opportunities for nonprofit organizations to improve their work. Among the organizations we surveyed, Facebook was by far the most popular single technology. A full 90 percent of organizations surveyed are either currently on Facebook or plan to be in the future.

This popularity among groups we surveyed tracks with data showing that Facebook traffic has grown rapidly over the past 12 months. Despite that popularity, the organizations do not seem to be investing much time in Facebook. Of those that were actively using it, a majority only invested one to two hours per week and just 11 percent spent more than two hours per week.

Does Your Organization Use Facebook?



## Facebook Success: A Mini Case Study

One organization used the Facebook event invite function to dramatically increase turnout for a public event to discuss the state budget and related fiscal issues. The event was open to journalists, advocates and members of the public. The organization used its Facebook group, as well as several staff members' accounts, to invite as many people as possible from its target audience. Facebook event invites take advantage of the viral nature of social networks, by making event RSVPs public to the friends of those who respond. This feature allowed the organization to reach far more people than they could have through other means. Although its format was switched from a half day to a full day, the event had a record turnout.

## At A Glance

Facebook is the world's largest social networking platform, with a **stated purpose** of "making the world more open and transparent."<sup>16</sup> Users of the site can create a profile, add friends, send and receive messages, create events and allow people to RSVP for them, update their status, create and join groups, write notes (blog posts), upload and tag videos or photos, write on a friend's wall and become fans of organizations, politicians or companies.

### Facebook Stats:<sup>17</sup>

- 200 million registered users; half sign in every day
- Less than one-third of Facebook users are college students
- People 35 and older represent the fastest growing age group
- More than 4 million users become fans of pages each day
- More than 20 million users update their status at least once each day

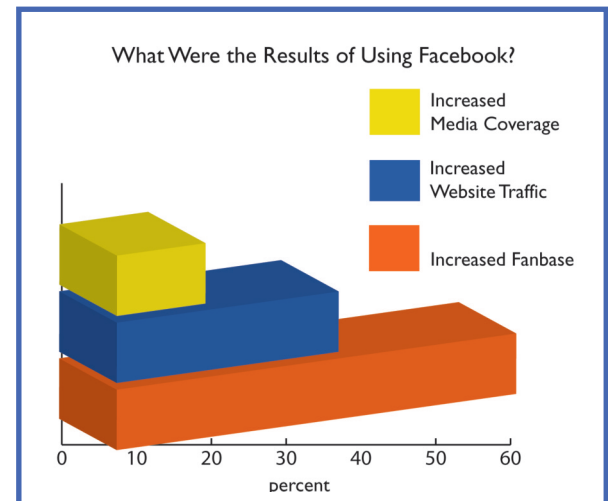
# How Nonprofit Organizations are Using Facebook

Our survey found that groups use Facebook primarily to promote their content, but are also interested in identifying supporters and engaging in discussions. Asked which audiences they were trying to reach on Facebook, large majorities indicated they were targeting advocates and the general public. Slightly more than half wanted to reach policymakers and their staffs, or the media.

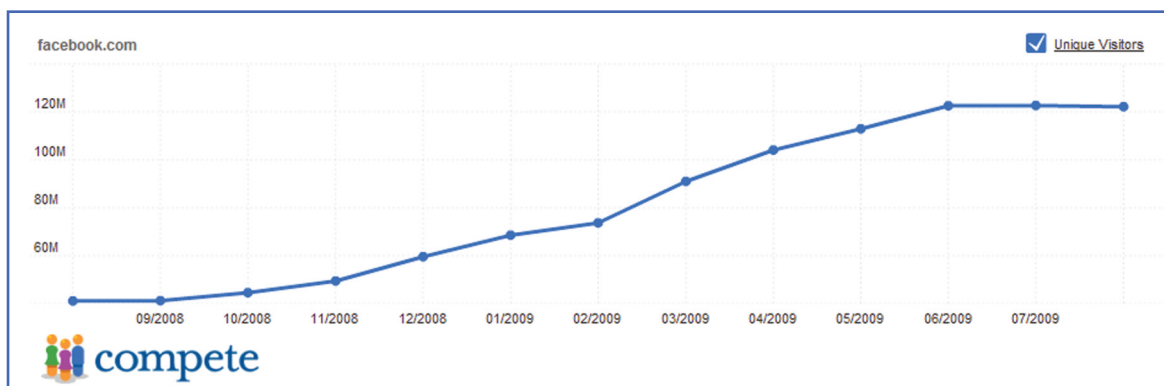
Some groups had success using Facebook to promote their events. One organization used its Facebook group to raise money and promote a fundraising event.

These experiences match closely with broader trends throughout the nonprofit and foundation sectors. Organizations like **DonorsChoose** and the **Case Foundation** have had tremendous success using Facebook to solicit donations, raising millions of dollars from tens of thousands of donors.<sup>18</sup> **The Gift of Life Donor Program**<sup>19</sup> was able to increase awareness of its organization considerably by combining a Facebook strategy with an offline event. While some **well-circulated media reports**<sup>20</sup> have been dismissive of Facebook as an effective fundraising tool, evidence indicates otherwise. As of July 2009, nonprofit organizations had **collectively raised more than \$10 million**<sup>21</sup> on Facebook, with \$5 million of the total donated in the previous six months.

In terms of outcomes, results were mixed. While Facebook seems to be useful for increasing awareness of an organization, only a third of the groups had success using it to drive additional traffic to their websites. Further, while one group reported that its Facebook presence had “strengthened relationships with reporters,” it does not seem to be an effective tool for generating media coverage. Only 13 percent of respondents reported success doing so.



## Facebook Traffic



Compete.com Site Comparison Tool, accessed September 2009<sup>22</sup>

# Facebook Pages vs. Facebook Groups

One key decision many organizations face when establishing a presence on Facebook is whether to create a page, a group, or both. Several of the organizations we surveyed were unclear about the differences between the two. This likely reflects Facebook's lack of clarity on the subject. Buried deep within the **question-and-answer section** about pages, Facebook offers this explanation of the distinction:

*Pages can only be created to represent a real public figure, artist, brand or organization, and may only be created by an official representative of that entity. Groups can be created by any user and about any topic, as a space for users to share their opinions and interest in that subject. Pages can be customized with rich media and interactive applications to engage Page visitors. Applications can't be added to groups.*

*Pages are designed to allow Page admins to maintain a personal/professional distinction on Facebook, while groups are a part of your personal Facebook experience. If you're a group admin, your name will appear on that group, while Pages will never display their admins' names. Additionally, when you take actions on your group, such as posting on your group's wall, these actions will appear to come from you as an individual. However, if you post or take other actions on a Page you own, it will appear to come from the Page.<sup>23</sup>*



Learn about the pros and cons of each choice when making the page vs. group decision:

## PAGES

### Pros

- Publicly available on the Internet to non-Facebook members
- Allow you to add applications to increase functionality
- Statistics available on page activity
- Indicates a more “official” presence, separate from administrator identity

### Cons

- ‘Updates’ sent to page fans are less visible than messages sent to group members
- Visitors still need to be a member of Facebook if they want to join in discussions

## GROUPS

### Pros

- You can send messages to group members, rather than less visible ‘updates’
- They are marginally easier to set up and manage than pages

### Cons

- Groups are only visible to Facebook members and cannot have extra applications
- Users are limited to membership in 200 groups
- Creator of group is publicly affiliated as an administrator (no anonymity for staff)

# Facebook Terms

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## Profile

A profile is the hub of an individual's presence on Facebook. It includes the person's wall, notes, photos, videos and other information.

## Wall

Each profile and fan page has a wall on which others can write or post multimedia items. This is the equivalent of a guest book on a website, in that other individuals visiting the profile can leave publicly visible messages.

## Friends

Adding or accepting someone as a friend is the most basic way to connect on Facebook. All friendships are mutual, so if someone requests to be your friend you must accept the request before you are officially "friends."

## Status

Status updates are Facebook's response to Twitter. You can enter a short text statement and a photo, video, event, cause or hyperlink as your status. Under default privacy settings, your status updates are visible to all of your friends.

## Notes

The notes application is Facebook's version of a simplified blogging platform. Anyone on the site can create notes, which can include text, hyperlinks, photos and tags. By default, notes are visible to all of an individual's friends.

## Tag

Tagging allows you to associate a video, photo or note with another individual's profile. For example, if pictures are uploaded from an event, those in the photo can be "tagged" to let them know they are in the photo.

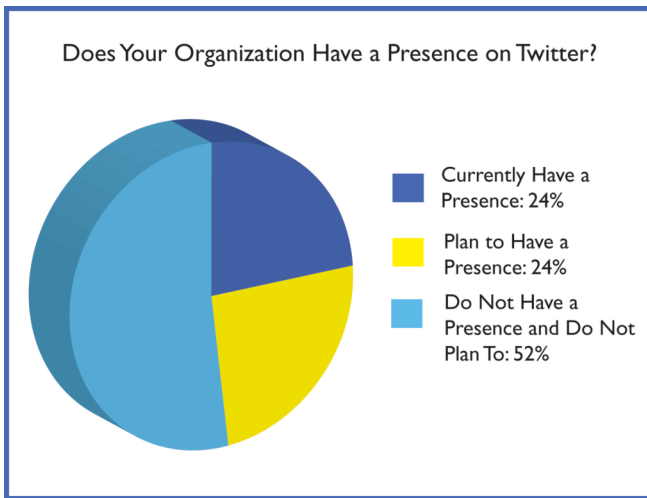
## Best Practices: Facebook

- 1) Actively engage your audience by sending out messages and updates, starting discussions and updating content. Engagement not only keeps your organization on peoples' minds, but it also increases the likelihood that your page or group will become visible to the social networks of your current fans or members.
- 2) Use your organization's logo as your picture. This will clearly identify your page or group as the official Facebook presence for your organization.
- 3) Include <http://> at the beginning of all links you post or send out to ensure they are clickable hyperlinks.
- 4) Leverage the fans or members you have to gain new ones. Simply asking group members or page fans to invite their friends to participate can significantly increase the reach of your presence.

**IF YOU DO JUST ONE THING** ... use a staff member's personal account to monitor what people are saying about your organization.

Although Twitter has generated significant **media attention lately**,<sup>28</sup> more than half of the organizations we surveyed do not use it and have no plans to do so. Currently only 24 percent use the social networking and micro-blogging platform, while another 24 percent plan to do so in the future.

Just one of the 30 groups surveyed devotes more than two hours per week to Twitter. A large majority of organizations now using the service indicated that their Twitter presence is managed by their communications director, although executive directors and other policy staff were sometimes involved as well.



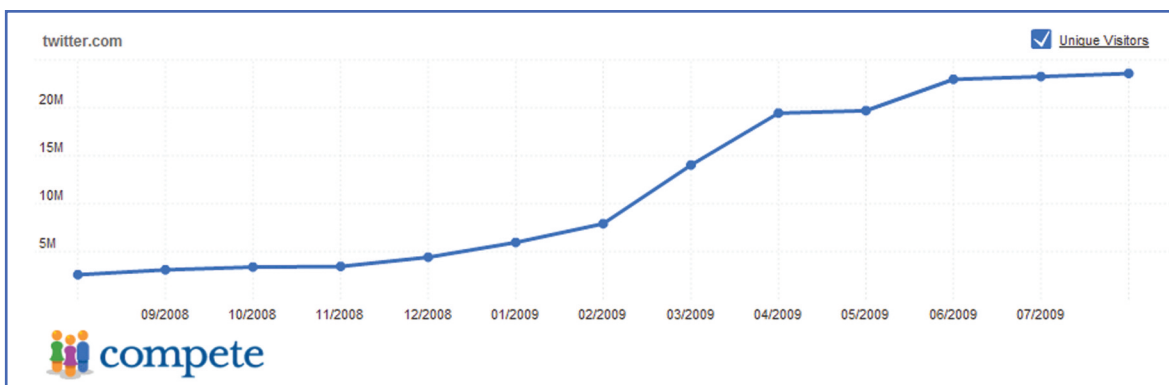
## At A Glance

Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read each others' updates, known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters, displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to other users — known as followers — who have subscribed to them.<sup>24</sup>

### Twitter Stats:

- The number of unique visitors increased from 1.2 million in May 2008 to 18.2 million in May 2009<sup>25</sup>
- 72.5 percent of all users joined during the first five months of 2009<sup>26</sup>
- 93.6 percent of Twitter users have fewer than 100 followers, while 98 percent of users have fewer than 400 followers. Meanwhile, 1.35 percent of users have more 500 followers, and 0.68 percent have more than 1,000 followers<sup>27</sup>

## Twitter Traffic



Compete.com Site Comparison Tool, accessed September 2009<sup>29</sup>

# How Nonprofit Organizations are Using Twitter

The small number of groups we surveyed who currently use Twitter all said they hoped it would increase awareness of their organization. A majority also use the service to build connections with other organizations, promote reports and otherwise distribute news. The most common benefit cited from Twitter was an increased influence on public debate. Other benefits included increases in media coverage, email-list size and website traffic. All respondents now using Twitter identified legislators and their staff members as outreach targets. Many respondents also targeted advocates and reporters, and some hoped to reach the general public.

## Twitter Success: A Mini Case Study

One organization had particular success using Twitter to facilitate its state policy work. As the legislative session in the group's state was winding down, things began moving at such a rapid pace that daily newspaper updates were not sufficient to inform and promote its advocacy efforts. The organization found that following Twitter updates posted by reporters and advocates from the state-house was the fastest and easiest way to track legislative developments. The group's representatives were also able to update their Twitter profile to provide rapid-response statements. These short and timely statements sent out on Twitter caught the attention of local reporters, who then contacted the organization to solicit quotes for stories.

### Twitter Terms

#### Tweet

An update of 140 characters or less that goes out to all of your followers

#### Followers

Other Twitter users who follow you

#### Re-Tweet

A common way to give credit when forwarding someone else's Tweet

#### Tweet-Up

A meet-up or offline event organized on Twitter

#### Hashtag

An easy way to organize content on Twitter by **adding a #** in front of popular keywords<sup>30</sup>

## Best Practices: Twitter

- 1) Take the time to create a unique, well-designed and professional-looking background for your profile. The background also gives you a way to share information such as your website URL, email address or mission statement.
- 2) Take advantage of free third-party applications to make the most efficient use of your time. Among the organizations we surveyed, **TwitterFeed**<sup>31</sup> — a service for automatically updating a Twitter profile with content from an RSS feed — was the most popular third-party application.
- 3) Stay active and engage your followers. Be sure to send out updates on a regular basis. Include a good mix of Re-tweets, Tweets linking to your own content and other commentary. Keep your updates lively and interesting so you will attract worthwhile followers.
- 4) Seek out and follow legislators, media outlets and advocates. Tools like **WeFollow**<sup>32</sup> and **Twellow**<sup>33</sup> can help you identify profiles worth following.

**IF YOU DO JUST ONE THING** ... use Twitter's search function to follow what people are saying about your organization and the issues on which you work.



Although none of the organizations we surveyed currently submit content to social news sites on a regular basis, more than one-third of them plan to do so in the future. Ten percent of the organizations surveyed integrate buttons for social news sites on their own website. These buttons allow people who visit their website to submit or vote on content directly, without leaving the site.

Many organizations we surveyed expressed confusion and a lack of knowledge about the purpose of social news websites and what they could do for their organization. The primary concern was that most popular social news websites have a national audience, while statewide organizations are interested in reaching an audience within their state. We anticipate social news websites targeting statewide audiences — such as **Oregon Reddit**<sup>34</sup> — will launch over the next few years.

Statewide organizations that follow these launches will be in a position to establish themselves as the sites take shape. Non-profit groups working nationally **have reported**<sup>35</sup> Digg and Stumbleupon as being top sources of website traffic. It is not uncommon for popular content on large social news websites to attract tens of thousands of visitors over several hours.

## Best Practices: Social News

- 1) Use accurate and meaningful titles and descriptions. While misleading or overly dramatic headlines may succeed in generating short-term boosts of traffic, this traffic will not be useful to your organization. Compelling headlines that people are likely to agree with tend to get the most votes and, therefore, traffic.
- 2) Keep search engines in mind. When social news submissions become popular, the links are often syndicated across the web. Choose relevant and popular keywords for the titles of your submissions.
- 3) Be an active participant in the community. Find interesting content from other websites to submit, vote for and leave comments on. By developing a reputation as a valuable member of the community, the likelihood increases that people will vote for, comment on and click through your submissions.

## At A Glance

The idea behind social news websites is relatively simple. Anyone can submit a web link with a headline and description of their choosing. Then anyone with an account on the social news site can vote to move a headline up or down, and leave comments. The headlines (or submissions) that receive the most positive votes are featured more prominently on the site and can receive significant web traffic. These sites use a concept called “the wisdom of crowds” to aggregate information in a collaborative manner. Their purpose is to aggregate the knowledge and opinions of users to allow the best user-submitted content to “float to the top” and receive the most exposure.

The lack of editors provides advocacy organizations an opportunity to access citizens directly. Popular Social News websites include **Digg.com**, **Reddit.com**, **Stumbleupon.com**, **Current.com**, **Buzz.Yahoo.com** and **Buzzflash.net**.

**IF YOU DO JUST ONE THING ...** when you have breaking news or other content that may be of interest to communities on social news sites, take a few minutes to submit it.



# Conclusion

While it is clear that some forms of new media have taken hold in nonprofit communications, there remains significant room for growth. Organizations we surveyed were slow to adopt Twitter and social news websites, and very few were using such technologies as video sharing and RSS feeds. Overall, the amount of time groups are dedicating to new media is relatively small despite the importance these groups said they placed on these technologies.

At least three factors explain why:

1. Many nonprofit organizations, especially relatively small ones working primarily at the state level, are understaffed and short on resources. While they may be interested in pursuing new media technologies beyond blogging and social networking, many simply do not have the capacity. Anecdotal evidence indicates that national organizations with higher capacity devote considerably more resources to new media and are more active on both microblogging sites like Twitter and social news websites like Digg – with positive results.
2. Lack of familiarity with the various tools and the benefits they can offer seems to be a roadblock as well. There is considerable confusion on issues such as where to start, how to engage and what to expect. When reaching out to bloggers, many are unsure whether they should treat them as allies or as journalists. When developing a presence on Facebook many do not know whether they should create a page, a group or both. When it comes to tools like Twitter and Digg, many groups just do not know where to start.
3. Not all of these tools are equally suited to every task. While organizations had some success raising money, connecting directly with supporters and promoting events with Facebook, they did not have much luck influencing media coverage with the social networking platform. Likewise, blogging and blogger outreach may be smart strategies for raising awareness of an organization and influencing public policy debates, but they were not particularly helpful in fund-raising efforts among the organizations we surveyed.

These factors indicate that organizations should be deliberate when deciding which new media strategies to pursue and should consider the following principles:

- Set clear goals and benchmarks at the outset to help ground this work in practical results.
- Take time upfront to research what similar groups have done. That will inform your organization of the possibilities and provide a better sense of what works and what does not.
- Follow established best practices and use the right tool for the right task to minimize wasted time and resources.

Staff time is one of the most valuable assets an organization has. Learning from the successes and mistakes of others – and thinking strategically about how they apply to your organization’s specific needs – will help ensure that you invest your time well and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your communications efforts.

Our findings should also be of interest to funders seeking to advance social change. There is clearly a broad need among nonprofits for assistance in using new media to their advantage and improving how they capitalize on these technologies to achieve their important goals.

# RESOURCES

## Blogging

ProBlogger

<http://www.problogger.net>

Blogging, on Wikipedia

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blogging>

## Facebook

Nonprofits on Facebook Page

<http://www.facebook.com/nonprofits>

How to Create and Manage Facebook Pages

<http://www.facebook.com/help.php?page=904>

Creating and Running a Facebook Group

<http://www.facebook.com/help.php?page=826>

## Twitter

Twitter Help Portal

<http://help.twitter.com/portal>

Twitter Search

<http://search.twitter.com>

Twitter 101

<http://business.twitter.com/twitter101>

## Social News

How Digg Works

<http://digg.com/how>

The Wisdom of Crowds, on Wikipedia

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Wisdom\\_of\\_Crowds](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Wisdom_of_Crowds)

## General

Online Politics 101: The Tools and Tactics of Online Political Advocacy

<http://www.epolitics.com/onlinepolitics101.pdf>

Glossary of New Media Terminology

<http://www.thehatcherblog.com/blog/2008/05/glossary-of-new-media-terminology>

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