

# Nonprofits 2011 Social Media Guide



## How is Social Media Shaping Nonprofits?

Social Media allows nonprofits to establish a relationship with customers unlike any other media. It opens the door for nonprofits to establish a one-on-one dialogue with supporters and donors, build deeper relationships, spread the word about organizational issues, and fundraise effectively.

A recent study released by Network for Good concluded that the level of connection to an organization, or the depth of the relationship that a donor has with a nonprofit, is directly tied to the donor's likelihood of giving more and more. As a result, the Network for Good suggests that even small nonprofit organizations with limited resources should make meaningful connections with their donors online.

Nonprofits can interact with supporters more personally on Facebook Fan Pages or through Twitter. They can provide news about their nonprofits' platform, talk about upcoming legislation or social happenings, encourage social sharing, and gain feedback directly from their fans. While the economy has hurt charitable giving across the board, many organizations are finding social media and grassroots efforts are helping take campaigns to the next level for awareness, response, membership, and donations.

Nonprofits are also using social media, specifically multimedia sites like YouTube, to set themselves apart in an innovative way. Through these unique social media ventures, nonprofits are gaining valuable media attention and positioning themselves as leaders within their sector.

From positioning and communicating to campaigning and raising awareness, social media is another great marketing

tool when used correctly. This guide details how some nonprofits are using social media to their advantage and how you can, too.

## Key Benefits of Social Media & Nonprofits

As the industry continues to progress more and more, Nonprofits have seen the impact social media can have on their organization. The following is a list of possible benefits that can result by the use of an effective social media strategy:

- ★ Provides a cost-effective way to boost site traffic
- ★ Has a viral effect – passionate supporters will spread the word through their social media accounts
- ★ Engages supporters and donors in a new way
- ★ Protects the brand's reputation through consistent monitoring and replies
- ★ Creates loyal supporters and donors
- ★ Generates brand buzz and media attention
- ★ Boosts brand awareness

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## Nonprofits Using Social Media

Social media is impacting the way potential members and donors approach the nonprofit industry. Mashable reports 93 percent of the top U.S. charities have a Facebook page, 87 percent have a Twitter profile, and 65 percent have a blog.

By evaluating Nonprofits' participation in social media, we can clearly establish a positive relationship between level of involvement and success. From effectively using Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and blogging, the following are examples of how Nonprofits have been engaging in various social media platforms.

### Case Study: Darius Goes West

Darius Goes West is dedicated to raising money to support research of the fatal genetic disease, Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD). Logan Smalley founded the organization in honor of his best friend Darius Weems who lives with DMD. Darius's older brother died of the same disease, but not before asking Logan to watch over his little brother.



The organization's first big endeavor was a feature length documentary called "Darius Goes West." The documentary followed Darius and his 11 best friends on a cross-country journey

to convince MTV to customize Darius's wheelchair on the network's show, Pimp My Ride. The documentary was a hit – raising over \$2 million for DMD research to date. Darius and Logan now visit students across the country to raise awareness and money for DMD. Along the way, the organization uses social networks to stay connected.

"We're early adopters because our target audience is high school and college students," Smalley says. "You have to go where your audience is and that's where our audience has been hanging out. Social networks are our home turf."

The organization's social media efforts really paid off when they were entered into America's Giving Challenge- a 30-day national competition that encourages people to leverage their personal networks and social



media to help win cash awards on behalf of their favorite cause. Awards are given based on the number of unique daily donations made over the 30 days of the challenge. Darius Goes West used photos and videos from local outreach to promote the cause online to the communities they had visited. They also used YouTube and created memorable, humorous videos with clickable calls to action that featured Darius's alter ego John Madden updating the organization's audience on their progress during the challenge. Darius Goes West had 1,633 donations totaling \$24,459 with an additional \$10,000 awarded after placing in the top 10 in the challenge.

### Case Study: Amnesty UK

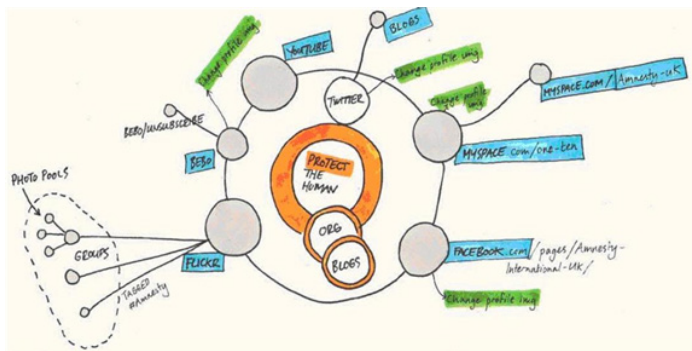
Amnesty UK is the United Kingdom's section of Amnesty International, the international human rights membership organization. In December 2008, Amnesty UK used social media sporadically and without a clear strategy to communicate with their 6,500 followers. They had recently launched ProtectTheHuman.com in September 2008 as a social media campaigning and community platform for the organization's digital activists. As Amnesty UK began delving deeper into popular social networks and engaging in conversations with the community on their

## Remember

Word-of-mouth spreads fast, and in the virtual world, it spreads even faster to a much wider audience. Positive interactions are important to build relationships and brand loyalty. There are several difference markets that nonprofits can reach using social media – current supporters, possible supporters, donors, media. One messaging strategy likely won't fit all, so don't be afraid to diversify.

custom website, they realized they had a large number of supporters spread across numerous social media platforms.

In order to successfully reach these supporters, Amnesty UK realized they needed a better idea of these existing networks, so they conducted a network audit that allowed them to map the size of each network and their existing supporter base. After using the audit to set benchmarks, Amnesty UK began posting to their networks multiple times each day with relevant content, continuously monitoring and responding to supporters, and getting to know their community on a personal level. To monitor progress, Amnesty UK began measuring their efforts



against their benchmarks on a weekly basis by using free brand monitoring and analysis tools online.

Soon Amnesty UK was ready to proactively use social media to launch support for a campaign that addressed a major brand's human rights issues in Nigeria. Amnesty UK hoped social media would help shame the opposing brand in front of its shareholders, raise awareness about human rights issues in Nigeria, raise funds for the cost of media used to promote support for the campaign, empower Amnesty UK supporters, provide a fun and engaging way for people to show their support via social media, and revitalize the perception of the Amnesty UK brand.

Amnesty UK began by encouraging hundreds of activists to send the opposing brand a mention on Twitter requesting a web chat about their human rights record in the Niger Delta. Thirteen days later, the major brand responded on Twitter by saying they would host a webchat about the issue on their website. When the webchat arrived, 445 people registered, 145 people actively participated, and the majority of the 60 questions answered focused on human rights. Amnesty UK ran a parallel chat during the major brand's webchat to discuss responses with a panel of experts.

Amnesty UK also leveraged social media in other creative ways during the campaign. Amnesty UK also created an online editable map that used a derogatory play on the opposing brand's name that showed where the brand

## Nonprofits Checklist

1. **Use a relevant name.**  
Make your account names easily searchable and relevant to your brand.
2. **Strategically create content.**  
Don't just push out information. Think about what content would be most valuable to your audience.
3. **Remember, it's a conversation.**  
Talk to your audience like you would talk to real people. Avoid contrived speech or industry jargon. Use content that is open-ended and inviting.
4. **Consistently update your content.**  
Manage the sites effectively by being current and up-to-date with content so customers return to the site for new updates and information.
5. **Integrate your efforts.**  
Tie the social media into your other marketing efforts by focusing on the same underlying message about your brand and adding your social sites to your print materials.

could be found across Europe. They used their blog to create awareness and rewarded donations with ad space on the blog.

As a result of Amnesty UK's efforts, the major opposing brand committed to reduce gas flaring in the Niger Delta, and 2,285 people donated an average gift of £17.65. Over 32 percent of those donations were made by first-time donors. Over 70 online media resources, including mainstream media, trade media, and bloggers, picked up stories concerning Amnesty UK and the opposing brand. Over 250 prospects were converted to Amnesty UK members, 91 lapsed members reactivated, and 565 new contacts/donors were found.

### Case Study: TechSoup

TechSoup is a nonprofit organization that specializes in helping other nonprofits use technology to help reach organizational goals. They sell technology and software programs at a discounted price and provide blog posts, webinars, forums, articles, and websites to guide nonprofits in using technology effectively. TechSoup gained most of its support through blogs, websites, chat forums, and a



**techsoup**



printed content-centric magazines and product-centric catalog.

As TechSoup strived to break further into a tight-knit nonprofit sector with very little time or money to spare, they recognized the importance of providing easy-to-use, easy-to-share content on a limited budget and while complying with a new green initiative adopted by the organization.

TechSoup partnered with digital publisher Nxtbook Media to create a digital edition of TechSoup's typical print publications that highlighted content, products, and community. Immediately after releasing the digital edition, TechSoup launched a Twitter campaign that asked their existing audience to help spread the word about the digital edition. Within eight hours, over 300 tweets and retweets about the catalog were shared across Twitter. As time passed, more and more readers used the "Share" function on the digital edition to post the publication to Twitter and other social media sites. By combining their digital edition, relevant and shareable content, and social media, Techsoup saw 26,922 page views within the first week of the catalog's release and 76 new subscriptions to the organization newsletter.

### Case Study: The California State Parks Foundation

In 2009, The California State Parks Foundation learned of proposed budget cuts that would significantly impact state parks and result in 220 park closures. As part of a campaign to gain grassroots support, the Foundation turned to their 517 Facebook fans on May 26<sup>th</sup> to stress the importance of reaching 5,000 Facebook fans by May 29<sup>th</sup> in order to show support before the vote on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Foundation also spotlighted a "Find us on Facebook" callout on their direct mail, telemarketing and email efforts

that reached over 22,000 people. Called "The Friend Get a Friend" campaign, the organization sent a new Facebook message to its reached goal of 5,000 supporters on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 24 hours before the vote, saying, "This year's cuts are 10 times as bad, so we need 10 times as many fans on Facebook."

The results? Facebook fans grew from 517 to 45,000. Due to the fast growth, the organization's efforts were picked up by several media outlets. The cross-channel campaign raised several hundred thousand dollars in non-member one time gifts, and the organization tripled the size of its email list.

## Social Media Tools for Nonprofits

### Global Giving

Global Giving is an online organization that is dedicated to connecting "good idea people," or nonprofit organizations and projects, to "generous giver people," or online donors. Global Giving pre-screens nonprofit organizations so donors can know their money is in good hands. Donors can browse the website by topic or location, pick the one that matches their interests, and make a tax-deductible donation with the knowledge that at least 85% of the donation is on-the-ground within 60 days. Global Giving charges a 15 percent fee for the online service which can be taken out of each individual donation or covered by the nonprofit.

To get listed on Global Giving, nonprofits can participate in an Open Challenge, which gives organizations across the world the opportunity to raise funds for their cause with the potential of becoming long term members of the GlobalGiving community. For more information, visit <http://www.globalgiving.org>.

### Twestival

Twestival, or "Twitter-Festival," is a single day, global movement that merges the virtual



and real world by using social media to organize offline events in local communities to support a local cause. Over 200 cities have participated in Twestival since its beginning in 2009, and nearly \$1.2 million has been raised for causes like clean water and education. Twestival events are coordinated by local volunteers, and 100 percent of the funds raised through ticket sales and donations go towards charitable profits. To learn more about how to set up a Twestival in your city or to get your organization involved, visit <http://www.twestival.com>.

## CauseWorld

CauseWorld is a mobile application that partners with sponsors to help users support their favorite nonprofits. To use, an organization's supporters simply open the app on their iPhone or Android and use the phone's geolocation features to "check-in." When a user checks in, they are awarded "karmas" from sponsors. Karmas can be redeemed for specific actions to improve the world, such as donating to classrooms, planting a tree, or helping an injured animal. To learn more about CauseWorld, visit <http://www.causeworld.com>.

## Razoo

Razoo is an online donation platform for nonprofits and fundraisers. All nonprofits registered as a 501©3 and listed in the IRS Business Master File are listed on Razoo's site for donations. To use Razoo, an organization only needs to search for their brand and claim their page. From there, an organization can update their profile, share their stories, share their cause through social media, create fundraising projects, use the "DonateAnywhere" widget on their website or blog, and encourage supporters to create their own fundraisers for your nonprofit. Razoo doesn't require any setup fees or monthly subscriptions, and processing fees have been negotiated with financial institutions for lower rates. Donors are sent receipts from Razoo for their donations, but nonprofits can also use Razoo to view donations and send "Thank you" responses. For more information on Razoo, visit <http://www.razoo.com>.



## RT2Give

RT2Give is a social giving service sponsored by Twitpay. Nonprofits can register with the service, and send out Tweets requesting donations from other Twitter users. Twitter users that are registered with the service can simply re-tweet the nonprofit's message to donate. For more information on RT2Give, visit <http://rt2give.com>.

## The Point

The Point combines nonprofit fundraising with Groupon-style donations. Organizations or individuals can set up a campaign based on pledges that are only donated if the campaign "tips" over a certain amount by a specified date. For example, if an organization needed to raise \$500 for a special initiative by December 1st, they would create a campaign with a \$500 tipping point and a November 30<sup>th</sup> deadline. Supporters would pledge amounts such as \$5

or \$50 (or whatever they choose), but they would not be charged until at least \$500 in donations were pledged. If the deadline arrives and the tipping point has not been reached, no donations are made. The Point helps donors feel confident that their contributions matter while creating a sense of urgency surrounding the campaign. Both campaign creators and donors can participate anonymously or openly, and a widget allows supporters to donate straight from your website. For more information on The Point, visit <http://www.thepoint.com>.

## Mistakes Nonprofits are Making with Social Media

Given the viral nature of social media, it is inevitable that some individuals or entities may find that the incorrect use of it has actually damaged their reputations.

Using these tools incorrectly, such as ignoring rules about transparency, honesty, and trust, can do more damage to a site's reputation and media attention than taking the extra time to understand your audience's expectations and remaining patient as social media contributes to your long-term growth plan. As nonprofits reach into the social media tool bag, they must be aware of the impact of their actions and understand exactly how these tools work.

To help nonprofits understand the potential pitfalls of social media, we have identified common guidelines that review sites can use to thwart negative feedback from their community:

- ★ Be upfront about any advertisers or sponsored content.
- ★ Don't use manipulation or bribery to gain reviews or advertising.
- ★ Be transparent about your mission, motives, and methods.
- ★ Provide consistent, valuable content and interact with your audience.

