

The Social Media Guide For NONPROFITS

by



Feminist Approach to Technology

Email: projects@fat-net.org

Website: www.fat-net.org

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The Social Media Guide

For NONPROFITS



Author **Lisa Hodges**

Introduction

Conversation has changed. Have you noticed?

On the internet, there are hundreds of conversations going on all the time about world-changing issues. People are talking about your cause, and they want to help by volunteering, donating and sharing resources. The catch is that you have to connect with them. As nonprofits, it's crucial that you take part in these conversations and even better, learn how to use them to further your own mission.

This guide shows nonprofits how to use social media. By social media, I don't just mean Facebook. I mean the act of developing an online presence and building relationships using online tools. It means communicating the essence of what your organization does in an online medium.

We'll talk about a variety of skills, including how to lay the foundation for effective social media outreach, how to write compelling online content, and how to use important tools, such as Twitter, your organization's website and blogging.

I assume that you are comfortable with using a computer and the internet, and have some experience with online tools- maybe a personal Facebook account or blog. I have included how-to instructions, but it will take some homework on your part to master the tools and customize them for your organization.

A lot of material is covered here, so you may want to read it in chunks. Take each topic (especially the Tools and Social Communities section) one at a time to give yourself time to get comfortable with them. Like many nonprofit employees, you probably don't have the ample staff or resources for your social media outreach, so I tried to make every skill as easy to get started as possible.

Each section has links to additional sources of information, which are rich resources filled with tips and answers to questions you may be left with. If you still have questions, or want to go a bit deeper into the material, there's a general resource section at the end of the guide with links to the leading blogs, individuals and organizations in nonprofit social media.

There is also a worksheet that you can fill out as you go through the guide. When you finish the worksheet, you should have a personalized outline and plan for social media outreach for your organization. This will help you share your work and newfound knowledge with the rest of the staff.

Why all the fuss about social media?

It's simple: the more people you can reach, the bigger a difference you can make. Reaching out to people can (and should) be done offline as well, but using the internet allows you to reach many more people, potentially all over the world. Also, though it does take considerable staff time, often the costs for internet outreach are lower than holding elaborate events or sending out direct mailings.

The good news is people want to help! People want to make a difference and you can give them an opportunity to do so. You just have to get your message out to the right people. Once you have a solid groundwork in place, you will be ready to take on the internet!

At the end of this guide, I'll share two success stories (The YP Foundation and Pratham Books) who have used the internet to build engaged communities that connect and enhance their cause. They'll show you just how much social media outreach can benefit nonprofits.

Before we begin, or why aren't we talking about Facebook already?

Some of you might have already experimented with social media and seen its potential. Before you get excited and jump onto Facebook thinking you'll magically gain 10,000 passionate followers, however, setting a solid groundwork is key. These foundational steps will help you to develop a sustainable online effort that grows over time and truly communicates how special your organization and mission are.

So first, we'll talk about setting goals for your social outreach, identifying target groups, developing key messaging, and several other crucial steps that are the foundation for effective social media interaction. Once these are in place, we'll get into specific social media tools, such as blogging and Facebook.

Foundations of Social Media

GOALS

Before you start your online outreach, it's important for you and your organization to understand why you are there and what you hope to achieve. There are many options for what tools you can be using, what tone you can adopt in your online conversations and what communities to join. To get these right, you have to outline your goals.

Also, since you have probably less time and dedicated staff working on social media than you'd like, you want to use your time as efficiently as you can! Narrowing in on why you are online in the first place will help you do this.

The more specific your goals are, the more likely you'll be to achieve them.

If your organization's mission is to end government corruption, a vague goal would be to "spread the word about corruption." An even better goal might be to "get more people to sign a petition that will go to the local official government speaking out against corruption."

Why is this better? First, it is detailed. "Getting more people to support your cause" is vague. What does it mean to "support your cause"? How will you measure it? More importantly, does it matter if someone supports something if they don't act on that support? You want to bring about actionable change. If you've ever written a grant proposal, you know that donors want to see specific, actionable goals that lead to measurable results. The same is true here.

Here are some types of GOALS

Brand/Cause Awareness

Spreading the word about your organization and the greater cause you are working towards.

Fundraising

Online fundraising and promoting donations offline

Creating a community around your organization

Credibility and Transparency

Showing supporters exactly what your nonprofit has accomplished and what your income is spent on.

Establishing your organization as an authority in your field.

Foundations of Social Media

Another important point is that your goals and a supporter's goals might be slightly different. You are usually trying to achieve an organizational goal, while your supporters are motivated by your larger mission. For example, let's say you are an environmental organization and you want to plant 1000 trees in one year because that's what you promised your donors. A random supporter doesn't necessarily care that you need to plant 1000 trees. They do, however, care that if they help, you'll be creating so many carbon offsets and beautifying your city. That's the goal you should be communicating- the outcome, rather than the organizational specifics.



WORKSHEET

Fill in the "Goals" section for your nonprofit. Ideally, these will tie into your broader organizational goals, so get as much input as you can from your colleges and the leaders of your organization.

For more on setting goals

http://beth.typepad.com/beths_blog/2009/01/creating-your-organizations-social-media-strategy-map.html
(Read Point 1)

<http://www.wildapricot.com/blogs/newsblog/archive/2009/06/23/what-are-your-non-profit-s-goals-for-social-media.aspx>

TARGET GROUPS



Who exactly are you reaching out to?

In this section, we'll talk about how to determine who your target audience is, and how to break that audience into groups, or how to segment. Your outreach will be MUCH more effective if you take the time to figure this out. If you don't know who you are reaching out to, how will you know:

1. Where to look for them?
- &
2. What will motivate them?

By the way, this goes for offline outreach as well. Just ask anyone in marketing or communications.

For example, let's say you want to reach out to both potential donors and young volunteers. Going onto Facebook and asking for donations could be completely useless, since your donors are more likely to be older and not on certain social community sites. You might even scare away volunteers who are on Facebook and might not have money to donate to the cause, but still want to get involved. In other words, each target group will require a different approach.

In the previous examples, the target audience was segmented into two groups: potential donors and young volunteers. This is a good start, but the groups are not quite specific enough. How old are the donors? Where do they live? A good target audience segmentation answers these questions clearly.

Here is an example of different target groups I developed with one community media nonprofit:

- Indian rural media creators
- Indian NGO's in the community media space
- Media students in India and abroad

Next, we'll get even more specific and develop an individual profile for each target group. This will help you to picture this individual as you write content and create your organization's personality online. Don't worry if you aren't sure about all of the details; you can take an educated guess about the specifics of the profile. Just try to make it as close as possible to a real person in your target group.

Here is a sample user profile for the above target group "Media student in India"

Name: Sameer

Age: 21

Education Level: College

Profession: Media student

Motivation for Interacting with your Organization:

Wants to bring media beyond the mainstream, but doesn't know how or where to begin.

Online Behavior + Where do they Connect:

Sameer is online both at school and at home. He has a personal laptop.

Time Online/Week:

A couple of hours a day

Favorite Platforms:

Yahoo to check his email daily, Google, Facebook account he visits once a week

Previous Interaction with your Organization:

He has volunteered once before.

Now you can start to understand your target groups and what motivates them better. Go where they are online. Learn what types of content they read. News? Comedy? Blogs? Find out what sites they are linking to. Keep these answers in mind, since they will help you when you're writing content, picking which tools and community sites to focus on, etc.

WORKSHEET

Fill in the "Target Groups" section for your nonprofit. If you can work with whoever does marketing and communications for your org, they probably already have a good idea of who these groups are.

For more on creating Target Groups

<http://www.remarkable-communication.com/relationship-marketing-series-6-connect-with-one-person/>



CALLS TO ACTION

At this point, you should have your social media goals mapped and you should know exactly who you are targeting. The next step is to figure out what you want visitors to do when you have their attention. You don't want someone to visit your website (or blog, Facebook page, etc.) and then leave without interacting. You want them to take an action. This could be one of many things: introducing your website to a friend, uploading their own video, or commenting on a blog post, to name a few.

These are the key to creating an active, engaged community online. It's important that you develop clearly articulated Calls to Action for each place you are on the internet (your blog, Facebook, Twitter, etc.), so that everyone you interact with can get involved. You want to keep your target groups in mind here as well, because each segment will respond to different Calls.

Later, we'll talk about mapping Calls to Action in a calendar to keep track of what is happening and when.

Sometimes these will directly relate to your organizational and overall social media goals. Other times, though, don't be afraid to try out small actions to increase your followers or to attract more short-term attention, such as a poll or photo contest.

Here are two **Call to Action** examples

Example 1

Save the Children India

Save the Children India is running a campaign to end preventable childhood diseases called “Every One”. They created a separate website for the campaign that has information and a movement called “Thumbs up.” Site visitors can give a virtual thumbs up showing that you support their cause. The website says:

“Thumbs up is a drive to show that you care, Every One of you. They say a small gesture helps to show that you care, give a Thumbs Up to the cause to show the people of India your support, most importantly to these Children. This would surely motivate them and us and show that we are all in this together. Every One of us.”
<http://every-one.in/thumbsup.php>

This Call to Action works well because it is simple (just add your “Thumbs up” to the page!) and helps the site visitor to feel engaged in the cause. Also, the language they’ve used is very inclusive- just count how many times they used the word “you” in the paragraph.

Example 2

Give India Challenge Fund (from their Facebook page)

“Dear Donor,
Do you want to increase the impact of your donation? Did you wish you could get your donation to do even more?
Educate ONE MORE child OR
Provide vocational training to ONE MORE woman OR
Provide cataract surgery to ONE MORE person
GiveIndia now provides you the opportunity to increase the impact of your donation.

Donate money for the “The GiveIndia Challenge Fund”. The contributions from this fund will be used to provide matching grants to NGOs incentivising them to raise even more money for themselves.”

http://apps.facebook.com/causes/21530?m=8c3a5226&recruiter_id=6616770

This is a fundraising Call to Action. Notice how they give concrete examples of how a donation will help to encourage more people to give. Also, their language is very clear and simple, making the Call to Action even more effective.

Pay attention to any others that you come across on- and offline. Write them down and analyze them. What makes them effective, and how would you improve them?

WORKSHEET

Which of the two example Call to Actions given seems more effective to you? Why? Brainstorm your own on the worksheet.

TIMELINE

You might have noticed that there are several parts to a social media outreach. The outreach itself (daily conversations within your social communities) is one part, while creating the content (video, writing, etc.) is another type of task that needs to be scheduled.

Calendar

A calendar is essential to keep track of all the moving parts of social outreach. You can schedule all daily work, such as updates to the Twitter and Facebook accounts, as well as schedule major events, such as a website update or program launch. If something major IS happening (such as a website update- new content, new look, etc.), you can remind yourself via your calendar to coordinate it with your other outreach (Twitter, YouTube, etc.) to make sure you get maximum exposure for the event.

Ideally, you should use an online calendar that you can share with other staff members. This allows all involved people to view what's going on and see what they are responsible for. If you have one person researching for a blog post, another taking pictures, and a third uploading the post, a calendar will help them see deadlines for their individual pieces.

There are many online services for this. If you already have a gmail account, you automatically have a google calendar that you can share with anyone else in gmail.

Another benefit to having a calendar is to ensure that you're always refreshing your different sites (your website, YouTube channel, Facebook page, etc.) with new content. You can schedule a new video to be posted, a new blog post to be written, and so on every week.

A Note on Timing

I'm not going to lie: getting results from social media takes time. You can't spend just an hour each week updating your social profiles and putting up a blog post and expect to achieve your goals.

It takes daily commitment over months and even years to develop a sustainable online presence. Many experienced social media strategists caution that it takes at least 3-6 months before you'll see the benefits of your outreach, so don't give up too soon!

WORKSHEET

Look at the sample calendar I've provided and create one for your organization.

ANALYZING RESULTS

You can create the best possible social outreach plan, but how will you know if you've been successful? You need to create some way to measure your outreach.

Here are some useful tools:

Website Metrics: Google Analytics:

This is one of the most powerful analytics tools out there for your website. It's free! Google Analytics provides clear data on all the important statistics for your website, including how many people are visiting your site, how they get there (which sites directed them to your website, if they came from a search engine, etc.), which pages they visit and how long they are spending on the site, among other things.

This information can give you a good picture of how successful your outreach is over time. For example, you can check the analytics a few days after you post a guest blog article. If the traffic doesn't grow, then you know the article was not effective.



Also, since you can see who is visiting your site and how they found out about it, you can see which of your outreach methods is most successful. For example, if you find that the majority of visitors are coming from your Facebook page and from a partner organization's blog, you know that your Facebook outreach is going well and that the energy you put into blogger outreach was well spent.

Like other measurements, you should focus on growth rather than absolute numbers. You may start out with just a few visitors to your site, but as long as that is consistently growing as your outreach progresses, you are doing well.

To include Google Analytics on your website, you need someone with a little technical knowledge to insert a small piece of code to the back-end of your website. There are many other website analytics tools as well. Ask the developers or tech staff who built your website if any other options are available for the platform your website was developed on.

Other Engagement Metrics

Most of the tools and social communities that we'll talk about later has its own internal set of metrics. For example in Twitter, it is easy to measure how your follower count is growing, how many people are responding to you, etc. You can track each of these stats on a spreadsheet to see how they change over time. It helps to put each metric in the same chart or graph so you can see overall trends, such as increasing interaction across your entire internet presence.

Once you've started getting the hang of each tool, you can start setting realistic monthly goals. But again, here you should focus mostly on growth rather than hitting an arbitrary number.

Another thing to keep in mind is that increasing number of followers/fans is great, but it is not enough. A follower who does not retweet your content, send people to your website, or completed any Call to Action is not a very valuable follower. Make sure your metrics reflect both quality and quantity of interactions. Did the person click the link you provided? Did they visit your website? Did they sign up for the online petition? If so, that was a meaningful interaction and should be tracked separately. I've included a sample metrics chart that records both raw numbers and qualitative measurements, such as number of direct replies in Twitter.

WORKSHEET

Look at the sample metrics worksheet I've provided. Modify it to include metrics that make sense for your organization. Note: Feel free to measure weekly metrics if you anticipate quick change in your numbers.

CAMPAIGNS



What are online campaigns? They are mini-versions of all your overall social media outreach, with the key components of Goals, Calls to Action, and a Target Audience.

Here is the difference:

- They take place of a specific period of time.
- They have specific, smaller goals.
- There is some urgency to the campaign.

The last point is crucial. If you are doing a fundraiser, people are much more likely to donate if they know that you absolutely must raise Rs. 50,000 in the next week to launch your new program.

Campaigns are great for several reasons. Because they are short-term and have immediately achievable goals, they can energize your current follower base and also help you gain new followers. People are likely to participate and tell their friends if the campaign is fun and interactive. Also, they allow you as an organization to focus on something achievable in the short term.

To plan for a campaign, you lay out all the foundational steps as you would for any normal outreach. Define your goals, target groups and Calls to Action. These will probably differ from your overall versions. For example, while your overall outreach goal might be to reach children to practice reading online, your specific campaign goal might be to get children to nominate their favorite books for a contest.

Next, lay out a calendar for all of your campaign events. It will be much more effective if all of these elements are laid out beforehand, so you can react to events as they happen. For example, if you are launching a campaign to get 500 signatures for a petition, prepare for what happens next if you get either too many or too few responses.

You need to keep the momentum going, so plan regular events- website updates, email updates, constant Facebook reminders, and updates to any other outlets you might have. Be sure to leave enough time for any content creation (new blog posts, research, photos, etc.) you might have to do along the way.

Campaigns could easily be the most successful online outreach method you use. Some, like the now famous Pink Chaddi Campaign (<http://thepinkchaddicampaign.blogspot.com>), have gained an international following.

One final thing to keep in mind is not to lose any gains made during the campaign. Make sure to capture all the new supporters somehow, whether through a newsletter signup on your website, RSS subscriptions on your blog, or “liking” your Facebook page, for example. You can remind people to take these actions in your campaign outreach, so you can continue to communicate with them once the campaign is over.

WORKSHEET

Take a closer look at the Pink Chaddi Campaign. Their main areas of outreach were on their blog and Facebook page. What did they do well? Can you tell what their goals were? (Hint: you may have to do a bit of digging.) Why do you think it was so successful?

For more on Campaigns

Take a look at bellbajao.org, another very successful campaign. You can read all about the campaign’s goals, outreach, and check out their multimedia on the website.

Writing Online

INTRODUCTION

Now, we've laid the foundation for good social media outreach. We know why we're online, who we're talking to, what we want to achieve, we've set up a timeline for outreach, and we know how to measure our results. Before we talk about specific tools and social communities, I want to introduce a few more important concepts that will make a big difference to the response you get online. First we'll talk about effective online writing.

As I mentioned earlier, social media outreach has two components: one is reaching out to an audience online and the second is creating new and exciting content to draw your audience in. In this section, we'll talk about the second part.

Content can be text, audio, video, blog posts, essays... anything! You will need to constantly create new content to keep supporters engaged (and to attract new ones), whether this is regularly updating a Facebook page, writing a new blog post, or putting up new videos. You might even want to designate a particular staff member just for content creation, or gathering content if you are getting some of your content from other organizations.

This section focuses on written content. Writing online is similar in many ways to offline writing, but it has a few key differences that will make a big impact in your outreach.

The most important thing to keep in mind when writing online content is to keep it short. Really short. As a rule, you can look at whatever you're planning to post, and shorten it by about 50-75%. Paragraphs should only be around 3-4 sentences long, and any extra words should be trimmed if they don't directly contribute to the sentence's meaning.



When people spend time online, they rarely stay on any one page for long before they go bouncing on to the next site or hyperlink. You have to stay short and engaging to keep their attention.

Here are some other tips to keep in mind for effective online writing:

- Write to your target groups: If the main target group you outlined was “college students”, then make sure your tone reflects that. Use phrases and references that would be relevant and engaging for them. Instead of “Support our worthy cause by volunteering to plant trees this weekend,” use “Tired of studying? Why not try something different this weekend? The trees need you!”
- Use a conversational, personal tone. If you read aloud what you’ve written, it should sound natural, as if you are talking to a peer. Stay away from academic or formal language. “We’d love to see you at our next volunteer event.” reads better than “You are kindly requested to attend our upcoming volunteer event.”
- How do supporters’ actions contribute? People will be much more engaged in your content if you keep reminding them how they can make a difference. Using the word “you” with specific examples of how they can help will go a long way.

WORKSHEET

For more tips on effective Online Writing

<http://www.remarkable-communication.com/5-editors-secrets-to-help-you-write-like-a-pro/>

This blog is full of other great posts on effective online writing. Her writing itself is also a great example of how to write well online.

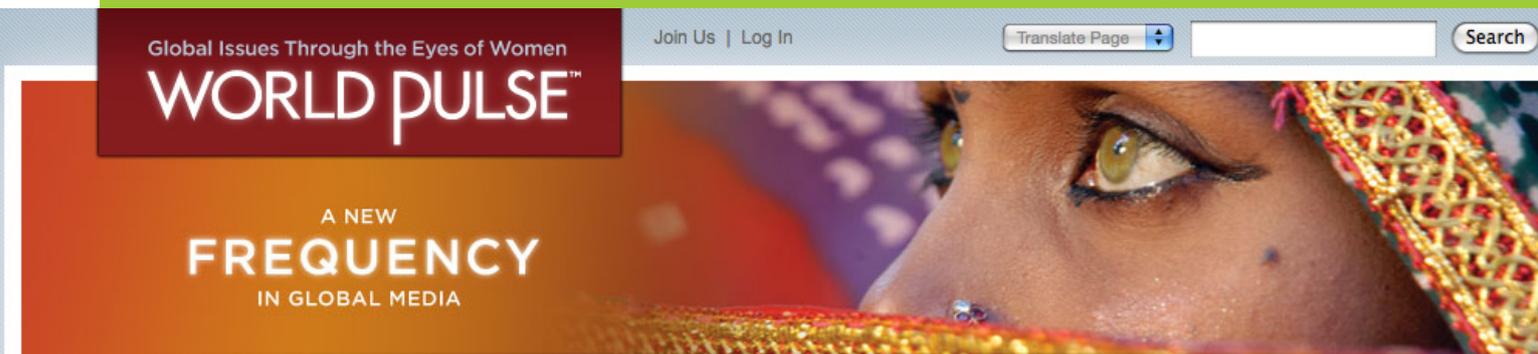
KEY MESSAGING

Building on the great online writing tips the we just covered, now we'll talk about developing key messages to center your outreach around, which will ensure the most important points of your cause are being communicated. These key messages should be short, clear, and easily understood. Who are you? What do you do? Why should a visitor to your website or blog care? These are all questions that need to be answered in your key messaging.

Also, once you write these, you'll already have some quick points ready when writing your email newsletter or blog post.

Example of Key Messaging

WorldPulse (www.worldpulse.com) is an online magazine and social community centered around women in development. Their site is visually attractive and very active, so it's a good one to explore for an example of a successful social media community.



They present their key messaging under the “About” tab:

“Introducing a New Frequency in Global Media

World Pulse is a media enterprise covering global issues through the eyes of women.

We are dedicated to listening to and broadcasting the unheard voices and innovative solutions of women worldwide.

We produce World Pulse Magazine as well as PulseWire, an interactive community newswire where women can speak for themselves to the world and connect to solve global problems.

From web to print, we've created a forum where women's voices can rise from the ground up and connect across oceans, continents, and cultural barriers to create a new world.

Become a part of the Pulse. Join Us.”

This key messaging is effective because it is both informative and engaging. From this paragraph, you know

1. What World Pulse does (media enterprise covering women's global issues).
2. What their tone is (active and empowering).
3. Who might be interested in the site (women in development & their supporters).

Did you notice the Call to Action at the end?!? (“Become a part of the Pulse. Join Us.”)



WORKSHEET

Look through the World Pulse “About” tab for more key messages. See how you can adapt your organization’s messages to be just as engaging and informative as these. Be sure to add your key messaging to your worksheet.

A Note on Fundraising

Another reason to engage in social media is to raise funds online. This could be an entire guide on its own, so I'm just giving a short introduction here.

Right now, the amount of money raised online by nonprofits within India is relatively low. This trend will mostly likely change as spending money online becomes more common, so this is something worth learning about so you can be ahead of the curve.

Note: Before you can expect to raise any money, you first need to establish a solid relationship with your supporters. Before people donate, they tend to want to take smaller actions to support your organization, such as volunteer or sign a petition. Once they're involved, then you can take the next step and ask them to donate. You don't want to lose potential donors by asking them to donate before they feel trust and a connection with your organization.

Also, you need to have a great communication vehicle set up so you can clearly communicate to donors where their money will be going, and to follow up once they've made a donation. Taking someone's money is a serious matter, and once someone donates, they will expect more information from you. Transparency, accountability and reported results are crucial aspects of successful fundraising.

If you have all of the above worked out, there are some technical requirements to accepting money online. First, you need a bank account as well as a merchant account, which allows you to accept money processed online. You will also need something called an "online payment processor". This is a service provided online that connects the individual donor and their credit card to your bank account. It also provides the interface (the "shopping cart") that the donor will go through to make the donation.

There are many different types of payment processors. Probably the best known service is, Paypal, which has some limitations for Indian clients. It only allows you to list prices in \$USD, for example. The best way to start looking for a payment processor is to talk to your bank to see what services they offer. Be sure to look out for all fees (per transaction fees, credit card fees and monthly fees might all apply) and the security that they offer.

Also, go through a sample donation yourself before opening it to the public. Make sure the service you use makes it easy for donors to donate- you don't want to lose people through a complicated and confusing online shopping cart!

There are few alternative ways to raise funds online, including:

- **ChipIn.** You need a Paypal account for it to work, but if you do, this is a cheap and easy option to raise money online. ChipIn shows up as a box (or “widget”) with your organization’s information and a thermometer that updates as money is donated. You can place the widget on your website, blog, and many other places where you have an online presence. See <http://www.chipin.com/>.

- **GiveIndia** lets you and your supporters set up individual fundraising pages. They charge a small fee per transaction, and charge a fee to be listed on their site. See <http://www.giveindia.org> for more information.

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For more information on fundraisin

<http://www.fundraising123.org/>

<http://www.frogloop.com/care2blog/2010/2/6/five-online-fundraising-tips-to-raise-more-money.html>

<http://www.wildapricot.com/blogs/newsblog/archive/2009/02/06/online-payment-processing-for-the-small-nonprofit.aspx>

Listening:

Finding relevant sites and blogs

Listening online just means finding and following existing online conversations. There are many benefits in seeing what similar organizations are doing online. You can learn from their experience. What are they doing well? What isn't working? What conversations are already going on about your cause?

Finding these conversations can save you from a lot of unnecessary work. If you can make a comment or post a link in an existing forum or community, it will be a much easier way to get attention than by creating a new community from scratch.

These other organizations can be useful partners to you by sharing links and content, which will help to expand both your audience and theirs. Also, I hate to say it, but since you are both trying to attract a similar audience, they are potential competitors that you need to keep an eye on.

Lastly, and most importantly, social media is all about having conversations! People want to engage in two-way interactions online. The only way to do this is by listening (or paying attention to existing conversations) in addition to talking. These tools will help you to listen.



How do you find these other sites?

There are many ways to sift through the millions of articles, tweets, blog posts, and websites to get to information you might be looking for. Some sites, like Twitter, have inbuilt search features, but I've listed some general tools to search across multiple blogs and social media sites below.

Google Alerts:

<http://www.google.com/alerts>

Google alerts will search the web for keywords that you provide (for example, "community journalism") and send the results to your email inbox.

You need a gmail address to use these. Sign into your account and go to the above address.

Decide which keywords you want to search for. For example, if your organization is working on community journalism, some to start with might be “community journalism India”, “rural journalism” or “community media India”. Keep it as a “comprehensive” search for now (under the “Type” category). As you get more alerts, you can modify the keywords to give you more relevant data. You also might want to start by receiving alerts everyday, and switch to once a week when you’ve refined your results (you control this under the “How often” drop-down menu).

RSS Reader:

There are many blogs that are constantly updating with relevant information for your cause. An RSS reader will bring all that content right to you in one place, saving you from having to repeatedly check each blog individually. (RSS stands for “Really Simple Syndication”.)

First, you have to set up a reader. There are many available, but I use Google Reader because it has a good layout and I can access it right from my gmail account.

When you visit a blog, look for a button that says “RSS” (sometimes you can subscribe to both posts and comments separately). It may look like this: 

When you subscribe to a blog, it will direct you to a page asking which Reader you use. Select “Google Reader”.

Every time a blogger puts up a new post (or comment, if you’ve subscribed to them), a copy will be placed in your reader. You can subscribe to as many blogs as you like and still check them in one place. To access your Reader, sign into your gmail account and look at the uppermost right corner. In the “more” dropdown menu (next to “Calendar”, “Documents”, “Web”- there will be different items and order for each individual account), you should see a “Reader” option. Select it and you will be taken to your Reader.

Blogs are really a great source of information, and RSS Readers make it much easier to keep up.

Social media search: socialmention.com

This site specifically searches social media sites for relevant content, which might help you discover information other search engines overlook. You can do a comprehensive search, or search by format (video, blog, microblog, etc.)

Another good site to sift through is Indiblogger.com, which lists top Indian bloggers. You can narrow down your searches by category, location, subject, etc. to find people posting on relevant topics.

Tools and Social Communities



It's finally time to learn about the tools and social communities you will use for social media outreach. There are hundreds of online communities, some of which will attract your target audience, some of which won't. It's important to pick only a few tools and focus intensely on them. Remember, you may not see results for three or even six months with any given tool, so don't give up too quickly.

Start with a few key tools that you may already be using plus one or two new ones. Decide which is best for your organization based on who you are trying to reach, what kind of conversations you want to have and what your staff realities are. If you have a young staff member already familiar with Facebook, they might be well-suited to establish your organization there. Keep your target groups in mind here- who's online and where do they visit?

Also, remember that each tool or community should connect to your overall effort. Your website should direct visitors to these communities, which in turn should direct people to the website for more information. Your key messaging and Calls to Action should be obviously stated in each community.

Enough talk. Let's take a look at the tools.

WEBSITE

You might not think of your website as a social media tool, but it can actually be the most important one. At Joint Leap Technologies, we think nonprofit websites are so important that we've grown an entire business around them!

Your website acts like a home base. If you were to share one link to your nonprofit's online presence, you would probably share your website address. You might host a blog, have an active discussion on Facebook and be all over Twitter, but you still need a place to give more in depth information about your organization and mission. All your other online outlets can drive traffic to your website by linking to it.

Other ways a website can benefit your nonprofit:

- **Exposure:** your website can be viewed internationally by many, many people.
- **Credibility + Transparency:** If you put key information, such as financials and your annual report online, you greatly increase your credibility with supporters and potential donors.
- **Relevance:** Keep the site updated with current events and program updates to let supporters know that you are active and up-to-date with current happenings.

There are many techniques involved in great website design and content writing. Here are some tips to help you improve your organization's site:

- **Location on the page is important.** The most important points and site elements should be at the top of the homepage. If you have great interactive features, such as a newsletter signup, a poll, or a donate button, make sure to put them high on the page in an easy-to-see location. Your mission, or a summary of what your organization does, should also be placed prominently on the homepage. Often, people won't scroll down to read, so make sure the important stuff is above the screen cutoff.
- **Your website has a target audience as well.** If you are serving different audiences, for example victims of domestic violence as well as counselors, make it obvious which people should go to which part of the site. Having well-marked, separate pages or sections for each audience segment is a good practice. Also, the site design and content should be geared towards your target audiences.

- How easy is it for you to update your website's content? Can you do it in-house, or do you need to email your web developer- a process that can really slow you down? Think about it: If you are running a campaign, you will need to quickly update photos and homepage content as the campaign progresses. Many developers will offer you the option of a "Content Management System", which allows your staff to control the content without having to call your developers. This can save you a lot of trouble and money down the road.
- Some other website tips:
 - If security is a big issue for your nonprofit (if you are dealing with controversial issues or people's privacy, for example), ask your website host about security they offer. Poor hosting security makes it easier for people to hack into your website and corrupt your data.
 - If you are trying to reach many semi-urban or rural audiences, keep multimedia and flash to a minimum to keep loading times down.
 - Ask developers if the website will support all languages you plan to write in. If you are targeting a low-literacy population, you can offer lots of your content in video or audio formats as well.
- All the online content writing rules apply here as well. For example, instead of writing your mission statement word for word, provide an engaging summary.

Here are two examples of **well-written mission summaries**

Example 1

"What is GiveIndia?"

GiveIndia is a NGO that raises funds for the poorest of the poor in India by helping you donate money to 200+ trustworthy charities.

All NGOs on GiveIndia have been screened for transparency and credibility."

<http://www.giveindia.org>

Example 2

Youth Factor (YoFa)

“Yofa.. Youth Factor Think Indian Youth.

Throw in Social Change.
Make that 2.0.
That’s us.

We work on exciting, new initiatives to engage youth in social change.

<http://yofa.org/>”

- Both of these examples succinctly state what each nonprofit is all about in a few sentences, without writing a boring mission statement word-for-word. Also, they convey the tone of the organization. Give India uses serious language that promotes donations, probably for a more serious and older audience. Yofa is quick, catchy and fun. Their tone is more appropriate for a younger, hipper audience.

WORKSHEET

Use the website checklist to evaluate your organization’s website

Email Outreach

Email is a great way to reach out. There are two aspects of carrying out effective email outreach: growing your list and writing the emails. Since everyone already receives too many emails, we'll talk about ways to convince people to open your emails and to take the Calls to Action you include. Also, I'll cover a tool called a Mass Email Service that makes sending out mass emails easy to execute and measure.

Growing your list:

To have effective email outreach, you need to have a strong list of people to send to. Resist the urge to buy lists- they are expensive and contain names that are outside of your target audience. If you have 10,000 names of people that don't care about tigers, why do you want them on your wildlife email list?

The best addresses are those that you collect organically. Asking for email signups on your website, events and through organizational partners are great places to start. In each email that you send, you can encourage the recipient to forward it to a friend. This will build a strong list of people connected and engaged with your organization.

Remember that email addresses often change, so keep asking. If you asked for signups in an event one year, ask again next year.

Writing emails:

The online writing content rules apply here as well. You might want to restrict your email to a few short paragraphs along with several hyperlinks (to your website, Facebook page, etc.) and a picture or video if the emailing technology supports it.

Make sure that every email contains a Call to Action. Even if it is small- visiting your website, taking a poll- this action will keep your audience engaged.

Mass Email Service:

Sending out mass emails from your current email provider can be a risky proposition and difficult to manage. Emails might not make it through spam filters, and if you send out too many, you might get marked as a spammer. Also, you have no way of tracking how many emails are getting through or how many are actually opened. Mass email services give you much of this data, as well as features such as a simple unsubscribe option and dividing your email addresses into different sending categories (such as board, donors, volunteers, etc.).

One great service specifically designed for nonprofit's is Network For Good's EmailNow.

<http://www1.networkforgood.org/for-nonprofits/fundraising/emailnow>

It allows you to send HTML emails (with hyperlinks, pictures, logo, etc.) that are easy to setup. Also, their back-end gives detailed information on your sending history, who has opened the email, who has clicked through, etc. You can import an email spreadsheet and segment your list into different sending categories.

There is a monthly fee and an initial setup cost.

Also, note that the company is based in California, so for customer service you'll have to call on their time.

Blogs

If you aren't already familiar with the term, a blog is just a series of posts on a particular topic that lives online. You can interact with blogs in the following ways: writing your own blog, writing guest posts for other blogs, commenting on other blogs, or developing a relationship with other blog writers to have them promote your site.

Blogs can have a great positive impact on your organization.

Some reasons to blog:

- Keep supporters updated: Post on what's new with your organization and what you've accomplished recently.
- Attract new supporters
- Documentation: Your blog can act as a written history of the important things your organization does and how you're learning as an organization.
- Keep visitors coming back with new and exciting content
- Establish yourself as a leader in the field
- Have a conversation through comments

Creating your Own Blog:

There are many, many “how-to” articles out there on how to blog, as well as millions of people with different strategies for creating engaging content and growing an audience. The most important thing is to produce thoughtful blog posts on a consistent basis. Remember that people’s attention spans are very short online, so make your sentences and paragraphs shorter than you might in a more traditional writing format. Also, pictures and video go a long way on a blog.

Your blog posts can cover all the wonderful content you already have available to you from the people involved in your organization and the programs you carry out. There are hundreds of things to blog about, but here is a small list of potential post topics:

- Success story of someone your organization has helped
- Profile of a staff member
- Ask a volunteer to post (this might promote others to volunteer too!)
- Background information on your cause
- Guest post from another organization in your field
- Tips (If you’re a tree-planting organization, you can post tips on gardening. If you cover domestic violence issues, give phone numbers where people can call for help.)
- Program updates



The idea is to get people more connected and engaged to your organization, so be sure to pose questions and actively promote commenting to encourage interaction. The more human you sound in your blog (it should be written by individuals, and not by your organization), the more readers will relate to you.

Once you have a blog, you need to attract readers! Make sure to link to new blog posts from your website, Facebook page, Twitter account, and everywhere else you are online. Another great way to find readers is through other blogs. Next, we'll talk about how to create relationships with other bloggers, which will hopefully lead to them helping you to increase your readership.

Setting up a blog is simple. There are many free platforms available where you can quickly set up a blog for your organization. Two popular options are Wordpress (<http://wordpress.com/>) and Blogger (<http://www.blogger.com/>). Visit the sites and follow the easy instructions to setup your blog. IF you are setting up a blog, be sure to link to it prominently from your website, Facebook page, and everywhere else you are online!

A perk to using these platforms is that they include their own analytics, so you can track important metrics, such as the number of subscribers and page views without having to do any extra work.

Note: If you use the free blogging option, your URL will look something like “www.organizationname.wordpress.com”. To get rid of the “.wordpress” part, you need to pay for a hosted blog.

Relationship Building:

To get the most out of blogging, it is a good idea to first create relationships with other bloggers. They can bring readers to your site through their blog and social media channels, and start some great conversations on topics relevant to you.

Relationships can only be built over a period of time. The best strategy is to start building these relationships several months before you need to cash them in for any promotion of your work.

You can start by finding relevant blogs that already are established and have a following. By relevant, I mean blogs that cover similar material as your website AND blogs that are widely read by your target audience. For example, if you are trying to reach Indian students, a good blog to target might be www.bharatstudent.com (which attracts a large student audience), even though it may have little to do with your cause.

(Hint: To find relevant blogs, use the tips we went over in the “Before you start your outreach” section. Google Alerts, your RSS Reader and social media search can all help you find blogs for you to target for relationship-building.

There are many ways to form these relationships. Your first step could be to write an introductory email (many bloggers list their address publicly on their blog), explaining who you are and why the blogger might be interested in your project. Include a specific ask: What do you want from them? A link? A blog post about community journalism? Be sure to include what the blogger will get: A link from your website? Access to great new content?

Here are some other tactics you can use to build relationships and increase your exposure through blogs:

Guest Posts:

A great way to get exposure through other blogs is by writing guest posts. Some bloggers will be immediately open to having you post, while some will require you to build a bit of a relationship first.

If you are offering to write a guest post, make sure it is something the other blog's audience would enjoy reading. You have to clearly explain to the blogger why he/she would benefit from the post.

As for writing the guest post, spend some time reading the blog you'll be writing for. Pay attention to the tone and length of the posts. Is it talkative? More academic? Try to match those elements in your post. Be sure to include a sentence inviting readers to engage with you. Encourage them to comment and to visit your blog and website.

Commenting:

Commenting on other blogs is a great way to show the blogger and other readers that they might be interested in what you have to say. Often you can include a link to your website when commenting, so readers can click directly to your website when they read your comment.

For this to be most effective, you should comment on a blog over a continuous period of time. Only after you've been a good commenter for awhile does it make sense to make a direct plug, such as "there is a lot more on this information on our website www.ournonprofit.org".

Featuring Others' Work:

One of the best and simplest ways to give back to bloggers is to feature their content on your site. You can feature one of their videos, link to their blog from site information, link to a blog post on the homepage, ask for a guest post from them, etc. Many bloggers track links to their blog, so they will know when the link has put up and possibly reciprocate by mentioning you to their audience.

OTHER RESOURCES FOR STARTING A BLOG:

<http://havefundogood.blogspot.com/2007/01/5-tips-to-start-nonprofit-blog.html>

<http://www.nonprofitmarketingguide.com/blog/category/blogging/>

<http://nonprofitblogexchange.blogspot.com/>

Facebook

We have finally reached social community sites, which are probably when many think of when you hear the term “social media”. Some of you might already have your own social profile, or at least have a few friends that use Facebook obsessively...

Using Facebook for your organization has a different format than a personal profile. We'll talk about creating something called a “Facebook Page” for your organization. Also, I'll give a few ideas for how to grow and engage your audience on your page.

To create a page, first sign into your personal Facebook account (you need one to create a page). Visit <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php> and under the lefthand “Official Page” column, you will “Create a Page for a:” and select “Brand, product or organization”. One of the drop-down menu choices is “Non-profit”. Enter your organization's name as the Page name, check the official terms box and create your page!



The screenshot shows a Facebook page for 'Feminist Approach to Technology'. The page header includes the name and navigation tabs for Wall, Info, Photos, YouTube, Boxes, and a plus sign. Below the header is a text box for 'What's on your mind?' with an 'Attach' button and a 'Share' button. The main content area features a post from 'Feminist Approach to Technology' with a photo of a woman working on a device. The post text reads: 'Girls have developed a walking cane that utilizes infrared technology to alert blind people of obstacles and drop-offs! Isn't it great! Who says girls like only barbie dolls and lipsticks? Have you given your daughter/sister/girl student a chance?'. Below this is a link to a CBC News article titled 'Technology & Science - Palestinian girls invent laser cane' with the URL 'www.cbc.ca'. The article text says: 'Three Palestinian girls have won a trip to a prestigious science fair in California after inventing a walking cane using infrared technology to alert blind people of obstacles.' The post is dated '6 hours ago' and has options for 'Comment', 'Like', 'Share', and 'Promote'.

Once you have your page, you can upload a picture (use your logo or a photo you have) by clicking on the profile picture on the upper righthand part of the page. Write a short blurb about your organization in the box under “suggest to friends” and put up your first links.

Once you have your page, you can upload a picture (use your logo or a photo you have) by clicking on the profile picture on the upper righthand part of the page. Write a short blurb about your organization in the box under “suggest to friends” and put up your first links.

Your organization’s page will look similar to a personal profile, but there are some key differences. The default page will be setup with some basic applications, such as video, photos, discussion, links and your wall. If you click on “Edit Page” (just under the profile picture) and scroll down, you’ll see a “choose more applications” button. There are hundreds to choose from, so below is a list of some of the widely used ones:

- Facebook FBML: Let’s you customize your page by using HTML. You will need someone with technical knowledge to utilize this application.
- Links: Allows you to post links to your wall. A great way to send people to other pieces of your online presence, such as your website.
- YouTube: You can feed your YouTube channel directly to your Facebook page to gain more viewers.
- Photos: Share pics of CVU’s, staff, etc.

Others allow you to host polls, add blog feeds, discussion boards, etc. You can experiment with these as you become more comfortable with Facebook.

You will be the default administrator for the page, which gives you the authority to post as your organization and to change settings. You can add other administrators by clicking on “Edit Page”, and scrolling down to the “Admins” box on the righthand column. Click on “Add Admins” in the upper right corner.

You can also put a badge on your website homepage that links to your Facebook account and shows the number of fans that you have. Again, go into “Edit Page” and click on “Get Your Badge” on the bottom of the righthand column

The metrics for your page are automatically collected in an “Insights” box on the righthand column. It shows you how many people “Like” your page, and how many people have interacted with the page (by “commenting”, “posting”, or “liking”).

Having a Facebook page is a wonderful way to get a large following in one place. People spend on average a lot more time on Facebook than most other sites, which you can capitalize on if you post often. Try posting a variety of links, updates, videos, etc. Thought-provoking comments that encourage debate and comments based around current events get a lot of response.

You and other staff members can start growing your fan base by inviting your friends and suggesting that they do the same. You can also comment on other organizations' pages and participate in discussions to draw people to your page. Be sure to advertise your Facebook page on your website, blog, and anywhere else you are online.

Using Facebook takes some time to grow a fan base and to figure out how to engage them. Give yourself time to experiment and be sure to learn from other successful nonprofit pages.

For more on Facebook, visit:

<http://www.diosacommunications.com/facebookbestpractices.htm>

<http://johnhaydon.com/2010/02/choose-admin-settings-nonprofit-facebook-page/>

Indian NGO's on Facebook:

<http://community.2020social.com/page/Indian+Non+Profits+and+Activists+on+Facebook>

YouTube



YouTube is both a video hosting site and a community site. You can upload all of your videos there, create a channel, and encourage people to subscribe to your channel as well as comment on your videos.

You can also customize your channel's look, "friend" other people, "favorite" others' videos and have a featured video. All of these will increase exposure to your channel and create a dialogue around the videos. Encourage commenting on your videos in all your communication channels (e.g. include the video in an email and tell people to visit YouTube and comment) and in the video summary, which will create more excitement and encourage people to send the video to friends.

It's important that you're constantly driving traffic to your YouTube channel if you want it to be successful, so include links in all your other outreach. Your homepage, tweets, Facebook page, etc. should all showcase the link. People love watching videos!

You might want to upload videos at intervals, rather than putting them all up at once, so you can constantly be adding new content to the site.

There are other video hosting sites (such as Vimeo), which are used heavily by some smaller communities (many artists prefer this site), but for maximum coverage YouTube is the best bet.

If your nonprofit is not already creating videos, try to find a staff member or volunteer with a digital camera or small video camera. Get in the habit of filming all organizational activities. Often a short, one-minute clip can tell your story more effectively than pages of text!

NOTE: Videos can greatly increase a web page's loading time. If you are reaching people with slower connections (people outside of major cities, for example), you should include a written transcript of all videos, so people can still benefit from the message even if the video doesn't load.

For more on YouTube:

<http://johnhaydon.com/social-strategy-tips/youtube-strategies/>

Twitter

Twitter is one of those communities that people don't like or even understand until they get hooked. Then they love it! Trust me, once you learn how to use Twitter effectively, it can be an incredible tool for conversation and outreach.

To use Twitter effectively, you need to dedicate a small amount of time, say 15 minutes, to your account everyday. You gain influence in Twitter only by accumulating a group of dedicated followers who read, share and comment on your content. Constant engagement in dialogue is the best way to gain followers and earn their support. Also, people expect immediate feedback on the site, which is why it's better to update at least once a day.

What's happening?

140

Latest: Commentary on Arizona's new immigration law (pic courtesy of @gawker): <http://bit.ly/8Zdvj> about 21 hours ago

Tweet



lisahodges
396 tweets

518 following 489 followers 36 listed

Top-sy
n. a search engine powered by tweets.

The basics:

To create an account, visit <http://twitter.com> and click on "Give it a Try".

Follow the steps to create a username and profile (you might want to use your organization's name as the username). You should definitely include link to your organization's website, and give a summary in the bio section to give people a good idea of what your organization does and why they should follow you.

If you "follow" someone, you will see their tweets in your twitter home screen, or feed. They can choose to follow you back (or not). Other users will only see your tweets if they follow you.

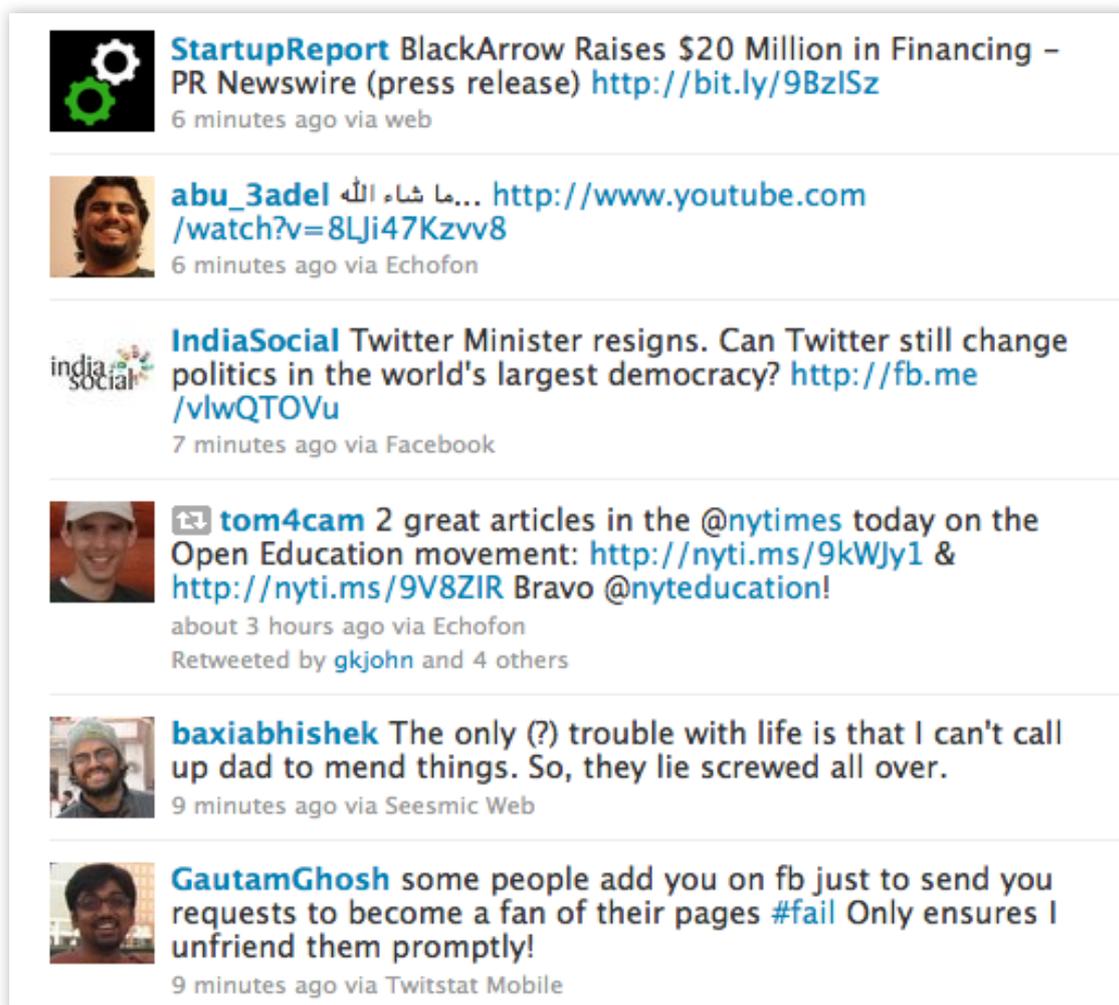
While the number of your followers doesn't necessarily matter (though your influence will grow as that number does), your ability to create conversations, post interesting tweets, give to others (by retweeting) DOES matter. You only have 140 characters per tweet, so you have to make them count!

Here is some twitter vocabulary:

@: This is a way to write directly to someone. @username shows that the tweet is directed to “username”. If someone writes to you in this way, it will show up in the righthand column of your home screen.

RT: Retweeting. If you read someone else’s tweet that you’d like to share with your followers, you can copy the text into your own tweet and put a “RT @username ” at the beginning. Retweets are a great way to gain some Twitter love. People notice when you help to popularize their material and many times are happy to return the favor.

#: Hashtags, to mark content under a particular category. For example, “#IndianElections” and “#IPL” are two hashtags in use. When someone clicks on the hashtag, all the tweets that include that particular hashtag will be aggregated in one place. You’ll get a sense of which hashtags are popular for your audience/sub-community the more you use the site.



The screenshot displays a vertical list of six tweets. Each tweet includes a profile picture, a name, and text content. The first tweet is from StartupReport, the second from abu_3adel, the third from IndiaSocial, the fourth from tom4cam, the fifth from baxiabhishek, and the sixth from GautamGhosh. The tweets contain various links and mentions.

StartupReport BlackArrow Raises \$20 Million in Financing - PR Newswire (press release) <http://bit.ly/9BzISz>
6 minutes ago via web

abu_3adel ما شاء الله... <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Lji47Kzvv8>
6 minutes ago via Echofon

IndiaSocial Twitter Minister resigns. Can Twitter still change politics in the world's largest democracy? <http://fb.me/vlwQTOVu>
7 minutes ago via Facebook

tom4cam 2 great articles in the @nytimes today on the Open Education movement: <http://nyti.ms/9kWJy1> & <http://nyti.ms/9V8ZIR> Bravo @nyteducation!
about 3 hours ago via Echofon
Retweeted by [gkjohn](#) and 4 others

baxiabhishek The only (?) trouble with life is that I can't call up dad to mend things. So, they lie screwed all over.
9 minutes ago via Seismic Web

GautamGhosh some people add you on fb just to send you requests to become a fan of their pages #fail Only ensures I unfriend them promptly!
9 minutes ago via Twitstat Mobile

Content:

While people love to make fun of Twitter as the “I post what I’m eating for breakfast” tool, it will not be successful if you indeed post such mundane details. Twitter is best used when you cultivate an interested and active group of followers/following. There are many, many NGO’s, Indian organizations, young activists, etc. using Twitter, and they can be very valuable to you as an audience.

It’s best that you stick mostly to information relevant to your cause, however Twitter is a tool people use for fun too, so you want to keep the tone conversational. This means you can always throw out a few ‘fun’ tweets as well.

Twitter users have short attention spans, so you need to learn ways to catch people’s attention. Time of day matters- if you post late at night, most people will miss the tweet (unless they’re checking in a completely different time zone). Because most people only view the most recent tweets, repeating tweets can often pay-off, as well as does posting at a time of day when others will be online.

Twitter Search:

To get the most value out of Twitter, finding great users to follow and understanding what people are talking about are both important. There are millions of tweets/day to sift through, so here are some useful search tools:

Some Useful Search Tools

- [Wefollow.com](http://wefollow.com) (A yellow pages for Twitter. This will help you find people to follow and engage with.)
- Twitter lists (Many people have created lists and displayed them on their profiles. When you find a great person to follow, check out their lists for recommendations of others to follow.)
- <http://tweepml.org/tag/nonprofit/> (A list of nonprofit Twitter users)
- <http://search.twitter.com/advanced> (Search Twitter in real time. You can search for users, keywords, hashtags, etc.)

For more on YouTube:

Twitter Resources:

http://nonprofits.change.org/blog/view/10_twitter_tips_for_nonprofit_organizations

<http://fundraisingcoach.com/2008/10/07/twitter-for-nonprofits/>

Indian NGO's on Twitter:

<http://community.2020social.com/page/Indian+Non+Profits+and+Activists+on+Twitter>

<http://twitter.com/adropofwisdom/indian-nonprofits>

Mobile

According to Wikipedia, there are currently 550 million mobile phone users versus only 82 million internet users in India. So while mobile outreach might be relatively new for nonprofits, it has a large potential reach.

You can use mobile phones to coordinate work among staff, carry out surveys, recruit volunteers, and many other tasks.

Mobile phones are mainly used to send text messages, or SMS's. You can send one-way texts (for example, asking recipients to visit your website), allow responses, collect names for a competition, and many more services.

Just like email, first you have to grow your mobile number list before you can start outreach. You can collect mobile numbers in all the places you collect email addresses- on your website, at events, and through partners.

Once you have your list, you need a way to send bulk SMS's. You will probably want to invest in a service that helps you manage sending bulk SMS's and handles other tasks, such as collecting responses and managing your list. There are many services out there, especially for Indian clients. When looking for a software, make sure to look for hidden fees on top of the cost of sending SMS's. Also, ask about language support if you plan to send texts in languages other than English.

Good software to start with:

www.frontlinesms.com

This free and open source software was designed for use in developing countries. It requires a mobile phone and laptop, but not internet connection. Check out the website for a good discussion and examples of mobile activism.

For more information

<http://mobileactive.org>

<http://mobiles.tacticaltech.org>

Online Press Release

If you are carrying out a major launch or campaign, an online press release is a great way to help attract media attention (including bloggers). The online press release will contain all relevant information about the project, as well as background information about your organization and current contact information. Like any press release, you need to clearly articulate the “hook”, or why media and bloggers should be excited about your event. Is it groundbreaking work? Will the impact be huge? The more you can convey this using exciting language, the more effective your press release will be.

After it's written, you'll want to publish the press release on your website, and make it easy to locate (include a link on your homepage and a “Media” tab in your navigation). You can send the release to major news hubs and bloggers that cover topics similar to your mission or cause.

For resources and examples of online press releases:

<http://www.nonprofitmarketingguide.com/resources/media-relations/nonprofit-press-releases-three-top-tips/>

<http://andienns.wordpress.com/2009/05/21/nonprofit-publicity-how-to-write-a-press-release/>

SEO

Search Engine Optimization, or SEO, is a complex process to boost your website's rankings in search engines such as Google and Yahoo.

There is an entire industry of consultants with detailed ideas about improving your SEO, but I will just give a few quick tips that cover most of what you can do without hiring someone.

Links: One major thing you can do for your nonprofit's website ranking is to increase the number of inbound links. An "inbound link" is one on another website linking to your nonprofit's site. For example, if you have a LinkedIn profile where you add a hyperlink to your organization's website, that would count as an inbound link. The more inbound links a site has (especially from highly-trafficked sites, such as Facebook and LinkedIn), the higher its search engine ranking will be.

Updating: Search engines favor new content over old, so the more often you can update your content, the higher your ranking will be. Blogs are particularly search engine friendly, but only if you keep them updated.

Relevant Content: Keywords, or the major topics of your site, let search engines know that your site is focused on particular information. The more you use relevant keywords, especially in the first paragraphs of any page and in the page title, the more these will contribute to positive rankings. For example, if your nonprofit works on animal rights, "animal cruelty" and "animal shelters" might be important keywords for you to put in your paragraph headings and titles.

Note: All of these practices fall under all other good practices we've talked about above! I would recommend that instead of worrying about SEO, worry about having great content that you keep updated and on-topic. If you are doing that and reaching out to others through a blog, Facebook, etc. all of the above will be taken care of.

For more in depth look at SEO, visit:

<http://seo.grassroots.org/>

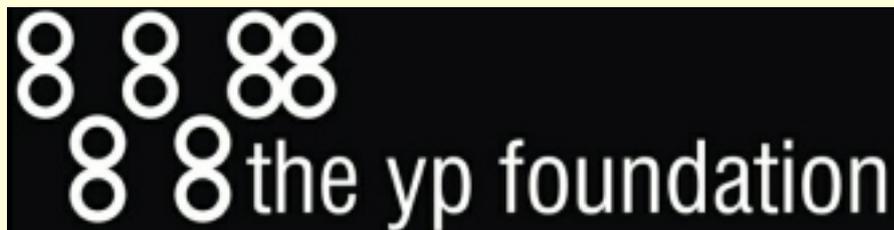
Success Stories

Wouldn't we all love to build an engaged and active community around our organizations? One that goes beyond what we've asked to contribute to our organizations' success? These two nonprofits have done just that. They have both worked on a social media effort over a period of time and adapted their strategy as they learned what worked and what didn't. I spoke with team members at each organization, and they gave great insight into their success and what they've learned along the way. Here is what they told me.

Story One: YP Foundation

YP Foundation website: <http://www.theypfoundation.org>

The YP Foundation is a nonprofit based in Delhi with a great online presence. They clearly understand the overall tone they want to convey. Their website immediately communicates their enthusiasm and youth, and their active blog and Facebook page illustrate the organization's constant activity.



Let's take a closer look at some of the elements of their social media outreach:

Key Messaging: I spoke with Managing Trustee, Ishita Chaudhry, who commented on their overall messaging, "We knew as a group the vibe we wanted to give was one of positive change, being young, fresh and also doing serious work." They describe themselves as "a youth led and run non-profit in India that develops young people's leadership skills to take action on issues that young people are passionate about." Their key messaging can possibly be summed up in one phrase: "The organization... promote[s] the uninhibited expression of young people."

Website: Their website uses friendly pictures and bold colors to attract their target audience: youth. They use the words "we" and "us" throughout, conveying their sense of a community movement without a distinct hierarchy.

Remember how we talked about highlighting the most important elements on the website? YP Foundation's website highlights large pictures and their many programs (the core of their work) in a prominent slideshow.

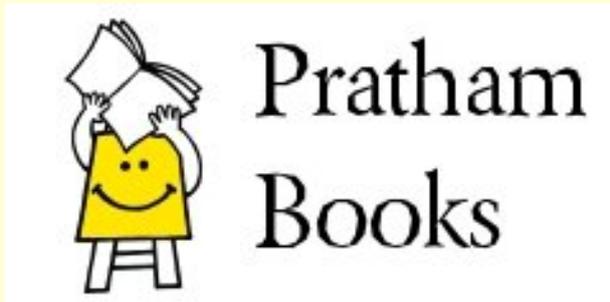
Blog: Web Consultant, Gaurav Vaz, explained the goals behind the organization's blog, "The blog has been set up to replicate the way the YP foundation works. We have so much happening on ground under various projects ...so we are featuring regular updates from the various people that are actually doing the work on ground with attractive imagery to ensure that we hold your attention while you read through!"

Ishita recommends varying the writers for your blog: "I would definitely suggest keeping it simple, have someone update the information - who is doing the work but get someone who isn't working with you, to give you perspective, because how we see and describe our own work isn't always how others understand what we've written."

Facebook: They have some challenges with their Facebook community, saying it "has grown and now we use it to give people strategic updates on the work we are doing. Which we also need to find a better way to do, because a lot of people on the group aren't active - people tend to join Facebook groups more in solidarity for a cause, and don't always want to be bothered by 10 messages a month...I would suggest NGOs start with a small website straight away, and connect to Facebook (if that's their target audience, but it's also a great way to spread awareness)."

Overall Goals: I asked them to comment on their overall goals. Gaurav answered, "The aim is to some day become thought leaders in the domain that we work in. Where our website and more specifically, our blog will be where we can make official statements, right from things that are happening our organization to our take on various things happening in the domain we are in! Right from our opinion on Government policy to updates on our work in Delhi's slums!"

Summary: All in all, the YP Foundation has certainly put a lot of thought into their online work, and come to understand where to focus their efforts. Notice that it's taken them several years to get there. Use this as inspiration- even if you aren't where you want to be, don't give up!



Success Story Two: Pratham Books

Pratham Books blog: <http://blog.prathambooks.org/>

Pratham Books is an organization dedicated that publishes affordable books in multiple languages for Indian children. They have become famous in social media circles for the active community they've created through their website, blog and social community involvement. I asked Maya Hemant, who heads their social media efforts, to give some insight into Pratham's online outreach.

Goals and Blog: She explained that at this point, Pratham Books has developed a clear sense of what their blog is about and what their goals are: "Our blog is a resource which talks about publishing, reading, literacy, kidlit, learning, non-profits, events and more. It allows for longer and more meaningful conversations through the comments system and it also drives conversations on our twitter and facebook profiles."

Their blog began as "an internal experiment to document the work we do and highlight work that others do in the same space. It's been far more successful than we imagined it would ever be."

Community: Maya talked about the heart of social media outreach: creating an engaged community. She says, "The interesting bit has been how the blog has been instrumental in building a community – a community that cares about reading, a community that believes in our mission and a community that participates. The blog is now not just something that we solely curate. Many members of our online community mail us with information that they think would be of interest to other community members, inform us of initiatives that need everyone's support and contribute to make the blog a vibrant space."

They've done such a good job of developing a community, that members have taken actions on their own to further Pratham's mission. "One person went to a government school to talk to the principal about buying books while others we know have developed an iPad app with our books at their own cost."

Twitter: Here's a great example of how Twitter can benefit your organization:

“We read about about a bunch of kids in Kolkata who went around with a van full of books to reach kids who didn't have access to books and even went on to teach the kids how to read. After reading about this initiative, one of our trustees volunteered to sponsor some Bengali books if we could find these kids. We mailed the news bureau which published the article, but were unable to get a response. So, we decided to see if the Twitter community could help us. Withing half an hour of sending out a tweet, we had a volunteer who said he would get us the information and by the next day we had an address and contact number. Within a few days, Bengali books were sent by us to these kids. From this story, we decided to start an initiative which would allow our online community to participate...to help these kids as well as other kids.”

Summary: Through a lot of thought to their goals and constant dedication, Pratham Books has built a wonderful community around their cause. Take a look at their blog and see what you can bring back to your organization to replicate their success.

SEE YOU ONLINE!

General Resources

<http://www.tacticaltech.org/>

Tactical Tech is an international NGO (with an office in Bangalore) with lots of great tools for nonprofit technology. Take a look at the “Toolkits + Guides” section.

<http://nonprofitorgs.wordpress.com/>

A blog maintained by Diosa Communications (a nonprofit tech consulting firm) full of valuable tips and resources.

<http://www.fundraising123.org/social-networking>

Network for Good (an organization dedicated to promoting nonprofit fundraising and marketing) has put together this learning center. This link is to their “Social Networking” section, but be sure to check out other sections, like Marketing and Fundraising.

<http://www.nonprofitmarketingguide.com/blog/>

Kivi Miller’s nonprofit social media blog. Browse through her blog posts or do a search to find information on all kinds of nonprofit tech goodies.

<http://beth.typepad.com/>

Beth Kanter is widely considered one of the foremost authorities on social media for nonprofits. The techniques she covers are at an intermediate level, but she has some wonderful resources.

<http://community.2020social.com/page/Indian+Non-Profits+and+Activists+on+Social+Media>

A list of Indian nonprofits who use different social media tools.

http://www.netwitsthinktank.com/site/c.ifINKZOzFmG/b.5287149/k.A3A9/Social_Media_for_Nonprofits.htm

Another blog with some great, detailed tips and insights into nonprofit social media.

Worksheet:

Goals:

List at least three goals for your social media outreach. Remember to make them clear, simple, and actionable.

Review these with other staff members and leaders in your organization. They should tie into your overall organizational goals.

Example:

1. Increase our blog readership to get feedback on our literacy program.
2. Increase understanding of childhood diseases in India.
3. Create an engaged community of urban mothers around infant health.

Your goals:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
4. (optional)
5. (optional)

Notes:

Target Groups:

Brainstorm a list of all the different groups of people you want to reach online. Then, pick 3-4 to focus on.

Examples of target groups: young, urban mothers; preschool children; young, tech professionals in large cities; Indian students in the UK; etc.

Target Group Brainstorm:

Now create a fictional user profile for an individual in one of your target groups. Remember, you want to be able to picture the person you want to reach when you do your outreach.

Sample:

User Profile for _____ Target Group.

Name:

Age:

Education Level:

Profession:

Motivation for Coming to your website/blog/Facebook page, etc.:

Online Behavior + Where do they Connect:

Time Online per Week:

Favorite Websites and Social Communities:

Previous Interaction with your Organization:

Call to Action:

Notes on the two example Calls to Action in the Guide:

Save the Children:

GiveIndia:

Brainstorm on some Calls to Action for your organization. Be sure to make some large, and others simple and small.

Examples:

Help us raise 2 Lakhs for our new animal shelter. Donate Now!
(This would be a big one.)

Visit our website to sign our petition to end animal cruelty.
(Simple and small.)

Your Calls to Action:

Timeline:

Take a look at the sample calendar to get an idea of what should be included on yours. Note that if an email had to be sent, or a website updated, I scheduled the content to be finalized the day before. This ensures that everything will be ready on time, especially if the person writing the content and the person updating the website are different.

Social Media Calendar Apr 2010 (India Standard Time)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29 Post on Twitter and Facebook	30 Finalize content for Website	31 Post on Twitter and Facebook Update Website	1 Finalize blog post	2 Post blog post Post on Twitter and Facebook	3
4	5 Post on Twitter and Facebook	6 Finalize content for Website	7 Post on Twitter and Facebook Update Website	8 Finalize blog post	9 Post blog post Post on Twitter and Facebook	10
11	12 Post on Twitter and Facebook	13 Finalize content for Website	14 Post on Twitter and Facebook Update Website	15 Finalize blog post	16 Post blog post Post on Twitter and Facebook	17
18	19 Post on Twitter and Facebook	20 Finalize content for Website	21 Post on Twitter and Facebook Update Website	22 Finalize blog post	23 Post blog post Post on Twitter and Facebook	24
25	26 Post on Twitter and Facebook	27 Finalize content for Website	28 Post on Twitter and Facebook Update Website	29 Finalize blog post	30 Post blog post Post on Twitter and Facebook	1

Metrics

Look at the sample metrics worksheet I've provided. Modify it to include metrics that make sense for your organization. Note: Feel free to measure weekly metrics if you anticipate quick change in your numbers.

Campaigns

Take a look at the Pink Chaddi Campaign: <http://thepinkchaddicampaign.blogspot.com> and answer the following questions:

What were the goals of the campaign?

Over what time period did the campaign take place?

What tools did they use (website, blog, Facebook page, etc.)?

Were they successful? How can you tell?

Key Messaging:

Notes on World Pulse's messaging:

Your Key Messaging:

Tools Checklist:

Website:

Analyze your organization's website. Use the following questions as guidelines:

Mission statement (or summary) prominently on homepage?

Important elements on upper part of homepage?

Designed for your target audience?

Can you easily update your website's content (text, photos, video)?

What is the tone of your website content? Is it appropriate for the audience?

Does your organization have a...

- Blog
- Facebook Page
- Youtube Channel
- Twitter Profile

About Lisa Hodges

Lisa came to India in March, 2009 as a consultant for Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT). She and her colleague, Gayatri Buragohain, co-founded Joint Leap Technologies to provide web consulting for nonprofits. She works with nonprofits to craft their communications and social media outreach. She has also led several workshops on social media and online fundraising for nonprofits.

She began her career at Chicago Gateway Green, a well-established environmental nonprofit. There, she worked as the organization's techie as well as directing marketing and sponsorship for the launch of TREEcago, a large-scale urban canopy renewal program in collaboration with the City of Chicago. She graduated from the University of Chicago in 2006 with a BA in Mathematics.

Contact Lisa at lisa@jointleapttech.com or on Twitter at [@lisahodges](https://twitter.com/lisahodges).

About Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT)

Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT) is a pioneering nonprofit organization committed to empowering women through technology. The mission of FAT is to empower women by enhancing women's awareness, interest and participation in technology. We work towards this by breaking societal stereotypes and attitudes, encouraging and enabling women to feel capable and comfortable in working with technology, and collaborating with other women's organizations to enhance their work by using technology.

In 2009, the FAT team started a for-profit company called Joint Leap Technologies with aim to create a sustainable funding source for FAT. Joint Leap Technologies and Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT) together form a social hybrid. The majority of our profit is donated to FAT to carry out their mission of increasing women's participation in technology fields. Together, we work to help nonprofits expand their capacity through technology.

Email: projects@fat-net.org

Website: www.fat-net.org