

YouTube and Beyond: Using the Internet to Shape the Future

An introduction to
the Social Web for nonprofits

Introduction: the Internet

In 1836, the inventor Samuel Colt patented his eponymous revolver. The gun was nicknamed “The Great Equalizer” because it no longer mattered who was bigger or stronger or faster. In a fight, having a Colt made you anyone’s equal.

Today, the Internet is the new Equalizer. Anyone with an Internet connection can promote a message like a corporate giant, without a giant advertising budget!

Using the Internet to promote a cause is cheap, and the best way to reach a younger audience.

According to market research company IDC, most people with Internet access spend more time online than watching television.

The PEW Research Center has found that the younger someone is, the more likely they are to be online.

Using the Internet allows you to promote a cause with little or no financial investment. Most often, your principal investment will be time.

In three months, I doubled the number of visitors to Fifth Freedom's Web site, working just a few hours each week!

Definitions

What is the Social Web? First, to understand that, we have to understand what the *Internet* is.

The word “Internet” is a portmanteau, two words mashed together to create a new word. The *Internet* is a collection of *interconnected networks* of computers.

While most people think of it as a relatively new technology, the Internet is actually almost forty years old.

In 1958, the Department of Defense created the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), which would be responsible for creating new technology for military use. In 1969, ARPA created a computer network called ARPANET designed to decentralize information storage.

ARPANET first consisted of four connected computers: one at UCLA, one at the Stanford Research Institute, one at UC Santa Barbara, and one at the University of Utah.

Lo

Email was invented before the Internet, and even a few years before ARPANET. What was email like when it started? Imagine if the Post Office could only deliver your letters to people who lived in the same house as you.

A Brief History of the Internet

Barry M. Leiner, Vinton G. Cerf, David D. Clark, Robert E. Kahn, Leonard Kleinrock, Daniel C. Lynch, Jon Postel, Larry G. Roberts, Stephen Wolff

<http://www.isoc.org/internet/history/brief.shtml>

In 1965, you could only leave someone an electronic message if you were sharing the same computer. A mainframe stored all the information, and dozens of users would connect to it from a “dumb terminal.”

When you sent someone a mainframe email, all you were doing was saving a message to their directory. It was electronic mail, but the message didn't actually go anywhere.

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An engineer working on ARPANET named Ray Tomlinson added email to ARPANET in 1971. This allowed people to send messages to someone at another computer, one that they didn't share. Ray Tomlinson sent the first modern email in 1971. It was a simple test of the system, probably something like "QWERTYUIOP". His first real email was simply instructions on how to use the system, including how to use the "@" symbol.

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THE INTERNET VS THE WEB

The Internet is a physical network of computers.

The World Wide Web is a collection of interlinked documents referred to as “Web sites” or “Web pages.” The World Wide Web is data carried by the Internet.

If the Internet is a library, the World Wide Web is the books.

The Internet carries other data that is not the Web. The Internet also carries Instant Messaging, email, voice over Internet protocol (Internet “telephone calls”), and many other types of data.

The Internet has always been about sharing and building connections. First, the goal was simply to allow computers to share text files with each other. Then, the text files were annotated and linked together.

This system of links, called hypertext, was added to the Internet by a computer scientist named Tim Berners-Lee.

Thus, in 1991, the World Wide Web was added to the Internet.

 [This is what the hypertext for a link looks like!](http://www.fifthfreedom.org)

Hyperlinks connected one document with another. Like a spider's web, the documents built a mass of connections. A text file about the Civil War linked to one about Abraham Lincoln that linked to one about Ford's Theater that linked to one about the play *Our American Cousin* that linked to one about the playwright Tom Taylor.

THE SOCIAL WEB

The computers were connected. The files were connected. But what about people?

That's where the Social Web comes in. The Social Web is anything online that connects people with similar interests, and that helps those people share content.

That content can be personal information, links to Web pages, text, photos, video, or anything else on the web.

Social Networking

6 Degrees of separation

A friend of a friend of a friend of a friend.....

Everyone on earth is six social connections away from everyone else. You might not know someone personally, but you might have a friend who has a friend who has a friend who has a friend who has a friend who does.

If you try hard enough, you can connect everyone.

6 Degrees of Kevin Bacon

Supposedly, you can connect any actor in Hollywood to the actor Kevin Bacon.

- 1) Charlie Chaplin was in Picture People #3: Hobbies of the Stars with John Beal.
- 2) John Beal was in The Firm with Margo Martindale.
- 3) Margo Martindale was in Rails and Ties with Kevin Bacon.

These types of relationships form your social network.

Social networking is making connections and using those connections to your advantage.

One way to do that is through the Social Web.

A social networking Web site allows you to get a visual picture of who your friends are, who your friends' friends are, and who your friends' friends' friends are. You can expand your social circle, meet new people, form new friendships and business connections, and increase your presence in your community.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Facebook was founded in 2004 by a Harvard student named Mark Zuckerberg.

First, the site was limited to Harvard students, then Ivy League students, then college students in general. Now, it is open to anyone over the age of 13.

Facebook is a tool to help people connect with each other, both online and in the physical world.

First you create a profile. The profile contains personal information, such as your name, where you went to school, your hobbies, your favorite music, anything you like.

Anyone can search for your name and ask you to join their list of contacts.

Facebook calls your list of contacts your “friends.”

Once you join the site, people will ask to be your friend by sending you a “friend request.” You’ll get friend requests from all sorts of people: people from your church, your coworkers, people you went to high school with and haven’t spoken to in twenty years...

After you create a profile, you join a network. You should join at least one, but you can join as many as you want. Networks are people from the same region, students or alumni of the same college or high school, or people who work for the same company.

Joining a network helps people find you on the site, and keep in touch with you.

FEATURES

- ❖ **Friends list – Stay in touch, share, & help each other**
- ❖ **Status – Your day in one sentence**
- ❖ **Poke – What's this for?**
- ❖ **Photos – Share pics with friends**
- ❖ **News feed – What's he up to?**
- ❖ **Chat, IM, & Wall posts – Blah, blah, blah...**

How nonprofits can use Facebook

CAUSES

Collect donations, organize events, spread news, and more.

Causes raised \$2.5 million for 20,000 nonprofits.

The O Campaign for Cancer Prevention = \$75,000. Love Without Boundaries = \$94,000

More important than the fundraising, however, is the marketing. When Facebook users add your cause to their profile, all of their friends can see it. Knowing that their friends support a cause encourages Facebook users to want to learn about it and support it themselves.

Even if you
don't get big
fundraising
bucks, you can
still recruit
people.

Facebook
causes are a
fundraising
opportunity
and a free
marketing
opportunity
combined.

In 2007, a monks in Burma led a series of peaceful, antigovernment protests. The government's response resulted in the deaths of many of the monks, and also journalists and civilians.

Alex Bookbinder, a Canadian college student, created a Facebook cause page called "Support the Monks Protest in Burma." In ten days, it had over 140,000 members. A short while later, it had half a million.

The group organized political protests across the globe that were attended by thousands of people.

Group moderators went on to create BGAN, the Burma Global Action Network, a nonprofit that raises awareness of political issues in Burma.

<http://www.burma-network.com/>

<http://apps.facebook.com/causes/110345?m=de0957a2>

Facebook Pages

When businesses, bands, and public figures create pages, they have “fans” instead of “friends.” You can use updates to keep your group’s “fans” informed about news and upcoming events.

Facebook pages allow users to post discussion messages. When a Facebook user becomes a “fan” of your cause, all of their friends see. This helps in promotions.

Your page is indexed by search engines, so people searching for your organization can find it.

Facebook Marketplace

You do not have to sell anything actually related to your cause.

Buying a new computer for your office? Sell the old one.

People will see “Our nonprofit has a computer for sale. For more info, visit our Web site: WeHelpPeople.org.”

Not just a free ad... It's an ad that makes you money!

Privacy Warning!

Facebook profiles are
Change your privacy
prepared to treat your
resume!

visible to the public!
settings or be
profile like a second

Social Linking

The Social Web also acts as a collaborative filter.

As Theodore Sturgeon once said,
“Ninety percent of anything is crap.”

There is a lot of content online, and most of it is not very good.

This collaborative filter helps weed out “spam,” unwanted advertising. Everyone with an email account has gotten spam, but spam also appears in the Social Web.

You don't have to be selling something. If you try to promote a Web site or blog in the wrong way, you can get your message deleted or even get your account banned.

You're surfing the Web at work, and you come across an article you would like to read later. You bookmark the site. At home, you have time to read the article, but the bookmark is on your computer at work, not your laptop at home. Save your bookmarks on the Internet, instead of a computer!

Delicious.com allows users to save their bookmarks to the Web site, rather than locally on a computer.

Instead of being tied to a single browser, you can log in to your account from anywhere with Web access and get your bookmarks.

When you post a bookmark on the site, you can also “tag” it. “Tagging” is marking a piece of content with a relevant, descriptive word.

AAPD.com has been bookmarked and tagged with “disabilities,” “voting,” “politics,” and more. That way, anyone who comes across a link to AAPD.com can tell at a glance what the site is about. Also, anyone searching for those terms on Delicious will get AAPD.com as a result.

Every time someone posts a link to a Web site, article, photo, or any other piece of content, it acts as a “vote” on Delicious. The content with the most votes gets listed as “popular.” Any popular content is sure to be seen by thousands of users.

Delicious and other social bookmarking sites represent a huge opportunity for free advertising. Just a few bookmarks on Delicious could bring you thousands of visitors. More visits to your Web site means more donations, more recruits, and more support for your cause.

While many people use Delicious just as a bookmark storage bin, everything posted to Reddit is intended to be shared.

Posts to Reditt are voted up or down by other users. Users can view the most popular posts or the newest, or they can sort by topic.

The most popular posts are related to political news, technology, computers and Internet, and funny videos and pictures.

Users submit content to be shared, and users can vote up a story, called “Digging” it, or vote it down, called “burying” it. Popular stories are on the front page, and unpopular stories are “buried” on deeper pages.

Digg has so many users that, when sites becomes popular on Digg, they often crash, becoming temporarily unavailable.

The most popular posts are related to political news, technology, computers and Internet, and funny videos and pictures.

StumbleUpon is software *and* a Web site.

You can download a special toolbar for your Web browser that allows you to “channel surf” the Internet. The controls are simple: stumble, thumbs up, thumbs down.

Just one or two votes can generate thousands of hits (page views). Even though the site promotes itself as a means of “channel surfing” the Net, StumbleUpon users stay on a site longer than Digg users. This means they will read more of your content.

One way to use StumbleUpon is by giving the “thumbs up” to any Web site that links to yours.

Visit all the sites that link to you, and give them the thumbs up. This will drive extra traffic to those sites. When those sites get visitors, they will see your link and many of them will click. You gain traffic by helping other people.

Simple, homemade videos have attracted millions of viewers. Over 30 million people visit YouTube each day, and they watch over 100 million videos.

If your group applies to be a part of YouTube's nonprofit program, you will have the option of adding a "Donate" button next to your videos, which will allow you to collect donations through Google's online payment system, Google Checkout. YouTube is a marketing opportunity and a fundraising opportunity combined.

VIRAL VIDEOS

**What makes a video
a “viral” video?**

- Under 5 minutes long**
- Have a good title
and thumbnails**
- Have good tags**
- Designed with the
YouTube audience
in mind**

VIRAL VIDEOS

**The 5 keys to YouTube
POPULARITY:**

- **Humor**
- **Cuteness**
- **Music/Dance**
- **Pop Culture
References**
- **“Sex Appeal”**

Advertising is content, content is advertising. You could be selling the cure for cancer, but if your ad is boring, people will still turn it off.

Unfortunately, most people don't care about your message, your organization, or you. Why would they watch your video? Why would they go to your Web site? Is it useful? Is it entertaining? If not, how can you rewrite it or redesign it so it is?

Once you have something useful and entertaining, you have to promote it.

Without
Promotion
129 views
In 2 weeks

With
Promotion
1,132 views
In 2 weeks

Last summer, the AAPD posted two virtually identical videos promoting the Ohio Presidential Forum in Columbus.

I helped to promote one, but not the other.

In just two weeks, the video I helped promote had over ten times the views.

PROMOTIONS - INTERNAL

First, get your channel page ready.

Each YouTube member has a “channel”, a page of information about them. Customize this page, add information about your organization, a link to your homepage, and anything else to create a good impression.

If you have a Facebook page or a collection of links on Delicious, add links to them here, as well.

When you post a video, you should add a link to your Web site in the video’s description. You can promote both your site and the video at the same time.

PROMOTIONS - INTERNAL

On YouTube, there are five things that draw attention to a video:

- 1) The number of views**
- 2) The number of external sites linking to the video**
- 3) The number of comments**
- 4) The number of five-star ratings**
- 5) The number of users who have favorited the video**

PROMOTIONS - INTERNAL

YouTube awards “honors” to each video - the most views, comments, and so on for each day - winners get more attention

Pick a day for everyone in your group to act in a coordinated fashion. 200 comments in a single day would get the video noticed more than 20 comments each day for a week.

If the video gets enough attention, it might get featured on the front page, which means tens of thousands of people will see it.

PROMOTIONS - EXTERNAL

WHERE TO POST YOUR VIDEO

Social bookmarking sites are a great place to post your video and get more attention. Use good tags and have friends, family, and coworkers also post the link.

Select “share video” to share it on Facebook, Delicious, and other Social Web sites.

Embed the video on your Web Site’s front page. Your Web site’s visitors will be added to your view count on YouTube.

PROMOTIONS - EXTERNAL

EMBED YOUR VIDEO

If your organization has a Web site, embed the video there first.

Next, send an email to anyone you know who has a blog or Web site on a similar topic and ask them to embed the video as well.

I would also recommend adding a message like “please embed this video at your site or blog” to the video’s description text.

YouTube is famous for having some of the worst comments on the entire Internet. People post spam, racist messages, homophobic messages, and other offensive things.

If you are going to use YouTube, check on your videos once a week and delete anything offensive.

DO...

- ...make all your Social Web content accessible**
- ...create content about the Social Web**
- ...make a call to action**
- ...give people an incentive to help**
- ...reply to comments**

DON'T...

- ...always use the same password**
- ...post “spam”**
- ...break copyright law**
- ...lie about your content**
- ...use the Social Web without a schedule and to-do list!**

DO'S AND DON'TS

Wrapping Up...

Even groups with no budgets can use the Internet to promote a cause. It just takes a little creativity, a little knowhow, and some time in front of a computer.

It also takes friends. In order to promote something on the Social Web, you need support. You need people to friend you on Facebook, bookmark your site, and watch your YouTube video.