Decoding the Interaction: Nonprofit and stakeholder relationships in social media[1]

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Paper presented at ARNOVA's 2011 annual conference, Toronto, Canada

Abstract

The use of Twitter and Facebook has grown exponentially in the last five years. Nonprofits are increasingly using social media to communicate with stakeholders, but little is known about this interaction. Through the use of a survey and content analysis, this paper analyzes the tweets and posts on the Twitter feeds and Facebook pages of nonprofits in Jacksonville, FL. Semi-structured interviews with the executive directors of the nonprofits are then used to identify why the organizations use Facebook, as well as what they do with the information posted by followers. This paper seeks to gain a better understanding of social media engagement by nonprofits.

Introduction

The use of social media by organizations has become ubiquitous. An organization's Web site is no longer its sole online presence; an organization can be "Liked" on Facebook, followed on Twitter, and watched on YouTube. Moreover, nonprofits have been found to be widely adopting these Internet technologies (Barnes and Mattson, 2009). While the interactions between nonprofits and stakeholders have increased with time, and physical location no longer poses an obstacle, little is understood about this interaction. This paper seeks to gain a better understanding of social media engagement by nonprofits through an analysis of the online communication, and what the nonprofit executive sees as the return on investment (ROI), in this engagement. All note that it is important for nonprofits to use social media and Internet technologies in order to better communicate and build relationships with stakeholders. Still, how it is used remains relatively unknown.

Previous studies have measured the adoption and utilization of Internet technologies by nonprofits (Barnes and Matteson, 2009; Dumont, 2010; Saxton and Guo, 2009, Waters, 2007). More specifically, Waters et al., (2009) analyzed how nonprofits used Facebook, finding that while they were adept at providing information for transparency, they were less likely to utilize the two-way communication channels available to them. This paper further delves into how nonprofits are using Facebook, as well as Twitter, to see if 1) they have begun to utilize the available two-way communication

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[1] This paper is an early draft. The data is currently in the final stages of collection, and analysis of these data has just begun. As such, all findings are preliminary.

channels, 2) how they are using these channels, 3) the use of these mediums to be connected with other local nonprofits, and 4) what the organization does with the feedback provided through these channels.

To answer these questions, a content analysis is done on the Facebook pages and Twitter feeds on nonprofit organizations in Jacksonville, FL. While the findings may not be representative of the sector's use of social media, the sample population was chosen to also measure the use of social media to promote the interconnectedness nonprofits have with each other. Once the content analysis and networks are mapped, semi-structured interviews with the executive directors of the nonprofits are used to identify the main purpose of using Facebook and Twitter, as well as what they do with the information posted by followers.

As a result, the broader purpose of this paper adds to the understanding of how and why nonprofits are using social media, and the benefits derived from their use. In addition, it begins to map how nonprofits are connected to each other, and how they use this connectedness.

Literature Review

The literature on nonprofits and social media adoption is a new and growing body. Only recently have social media brought forth a new avenue for people to connect to each other, spanning the boundary of geography. The use of sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube has allowed people to overcome the obstacles of time and location in order to interact with each other and meet new people. In addition to individuals interacting with other individuals, these tools also help organizations build relationships with their stakeholders. This movement has not been ignored by nonprofit organizations.

A recent study has noted that nonprofits are outpacing private organizations in adapting these new technologies (Barnes and Mattson, 2009). Indeed, their study found that 79% of the nonprofits in their sample were using social networking and video blogging, an increase of 38% and 17% respectively from the previous year. Still, while the empirical research on nonprofit social media is lacking, the normative research is flourishing. A search done for books pertaining to "nonprofit social media" on Amazon.com produced over 40 titles, ranging from topics in fundraising and entrepreneurship to networking and guerrilla marketing. Indeed, more than 20 of these books have been published since 2008. These "how to" books have focused on the importance of having the board of directors behind social media and technology adoption (Patterson and Radtke, 2009), aligning technology with a nonprofit's mission (Ross, Verclas, and Levine, 2009), having a consistent message across all mediums (Hart et al., 2010) and how-to books on different social media platforms (i.e. Fouts, Kanter, and Setty, 2010; Martin, 2010). All note that it is important for nonprofits to use social media and Internet technologies in order to better communicate and build relationships with stakeholders. Indeed, it is argued that the "most fundamental change in the governance of nonprofit organizations will be the widening and deepening of the

organizational electorate, a set of people who have the right to participate in strategic decisions" (Saxton 2005, 35). In other words, engaging in dialogue with stakeholders is deemed increasingly important for the governance of nonprofits. While studies have demonstrated nonprofits to be widely adopting social media, their samples have consisted of mainly large nonprofits. Given that financial resources have been shown to be the dominant determining factor in technology adoption, the first research question this papers seeks to answer is:

> *Question1: Have nonprofits in Jacksonville, FL begun to utilize the available two-way communication channels?*

Today's nonprofits must engage with their stakeholders, whether face-to-face, traditional technologies such as the phone or facsimile machine, or online. No longer is the Internet a collection of brochure-ware, where Web sites do little more than provide information about the organization. Today Web sites can be dynamic, allowing nonprofits to engage in dialogue with stakeholders. Indeed, through the use of Web 2.0 technologies, dialogic theory "suggests that for organizations to create effective organization-public communication channels, they must be willing to interact with publics in honest and ethical ways" (Kent, Taylor and White, 2003: 67). This interactivity is the base from which relationships are built. To test the interactivity of nonprofits through social media, two questions are explored:

> *Question 2: How are Jacksonville, FL nonprofits using social media channels?*

> *Question 3: What are these organizations doing with the feedback provided through these channels?*

Social media, at the most basic level, allow for relationship development and maintenance. Recent studies have begun to better understand how nonprofits are utilizing these tools (Waters, et al., 2009; Waters, 2011). In light of the recent down-turn in the economy, and available funds decreasing at the state and local level, nonprofits now, more than ever, are confronted with the need to seek new partners and engage their stakeholders not only for financial assistance, but to stay informed about the constantly changing needs of the communities they operate in. To this end, the final question asked is:

> *Question 4: How do Jacksonville, FL nonprofits use these mediums to be connected with other local nonprofits?*

Methodology

        To better understand the utilization of social media tools by nonprofits, the snowball sampling technique was used. The sampling started with the two prominent nonprofits in Jacksonville: the umbrella nonprofit The United Way of Northeast Florida and the advocacy nonprofit The Nonprofit Center of Northeast Florida, and was completed in June 2011. The local nonprofits listed as being "liked" on their Facebook page and their followers on the Twitter feed were listed, and the Facebook and Twitter accounts of all the identified local nonprofits was coded. This process continued until the identified local nonprofits were exhausted. This resulted in the identification of 348 organizations, and 464 accounts: 129 Twitter profiles and 335 Facebook pages.[2]

        The identified nonprofits were sent an e-survey, and it remained open from August 30, 2011 through September 30, 2011. Two reminders were sent on a weekly basis to organizations that had not completed the survey. The e-survey was purposely kept short to increase response rate. Of the 278 surveys sent,[3] 22 surveys bounced back, indicating that the email addresses were no longer valid. Of the remaining 256, the survey was completed by 111 nonprofits, or 43%. These 111 organizations account for a total of 119 accounts on Facebook and Twitter. For organizations that had more than one account, the answers from the survey were applied to each account.

        In addition to questions about social media, the survey asked for some basic data, like the organization's annual budget. This variable was used to note the nonprofit's size, since a nonprofit's size has been found to be a dominant predictor in its adoption of Internet technologies (Forster, 2008; Saxton and Guo, 2011; Kang and Norton, 2004). Table 1 is a breakdown of nonprofits who completed the survey, categorized by size and service area, using NTEE's broad classification criteria. Each nonprofit's GuideStar profile was reviewed to determine the proper category. A category was assigned for nonprofits that did not file an IRS form 990 or 990EZ (informal organizations) based on what their focus was. The Executive Directors and/or the person charged with social media in the organization of the 10 nonprofits[4] who utilized social media the most were then interviewed.

        The findings are discussed next.

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[2] Six organizations had more than one account on the same social media tool (for instance, there were three separate Facebook accounts for one organization each representing a different program and/or activity) and many organizations had both a Facebook and Twitter account.
[3] Of the 348 organizations, 22 did not disclose an email address and 48 did not list a phone number.
[4] 8 have been completed and are in the process of being transcribed. The remaining two, one arts and culture and one environment/animal welfare organization, will be completed in the next week.

Table 1: Sample Descriptives of Survey Respondents

Type	No Budget	<$100k	$100k-$500k	$500k - $2m	$2m - $10m	>$10m	Total	Interview
Arts and Culture	4	3	5	2	8	0	22	2
Education	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Env. /Animal	1	2	2	0	5	1	11	2
Health	0	4	2	2	1	4	13	
Human Services	1	5	5	4	12	1	28	2
International	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	
Societal Benefit	0	1	6	8	2	0	17	2
Religious	1	0	0	0	2	0	3	
Membership	3	8	1	1	2	0	15	
Unknown	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	
Non- (c)(3)	0	1	1	2	0	1	5	2
TOTAL	11	26	22	21	32	7	119	10
Interviewed				2	4	1		

Findings

This section discusses each research question in the order posed. First, utilization of social media tools are measured, then their usage is analyzed. Early information from eight of the ten interviews are then used to better understand how nonprofits are using the information they receive through these mediums. Finally, an early analysis of how nonprofits in Jacksonville, FL are networking with each other through social media. The next section discusses the implication of these findings.

Utilization

To understand the extent to which nonprofits are utilizing social media, three months of posts and tweets were analyzed on Facebook and Twitter, respectively. The 119 accounts from organizations that completed the survey and had Facebook profiles had a total of 4,243 posts, an average of 36 posts per nonprofit or 12 posts per month per organization. The tweets of the 55 nonprofits that completed the survey and had Twitter profiles were also analyzed. Table 2 displays the breakdown of the Facebook posts and Twitter tweets, by organization category. In total, there were 6,753 tweets, averaging 123 tweets per organization, or approximately 41 tweets per month per nonprofits. In regard to

communicating to fans and followers, Twitter was the more widely used medium, even though more nonprofits utilized Facebook.

Table 2: Sample Description

	Medium	N	Posts/Tweets	Mean per month
Arts & Culture	FB	22	989	15
	TW	9	1860	69
Education	FB	1	51	17
	TW	1	301	100
Environment/ Animal Welfare	FB	11	475	14
	TW	3	268	28
Health	FB	13	428	11
	TW	6	341	19
Human Services	FB	28	984	12
	TW	14	729	17
International	FB	2	24	4
	TW	0	0	0
Societal Benefit	FB	17	640	13
	TW	10	1152	38
Religious	FB	1	48	16
	TW	3	187	21
Membership Benefit	FB	15	262	6
	TW	4	594	50
Unknown	FB	2	48	8
	TW	1	72	24
Non-501(c)(3)	FB	5	294	10
	TW	3	1249	139
TOTAL	FB	119	4243	12
	TW	55	6753	41

Usage

When assessing how these nonprofits were using social media, different methods were used. First, the survey was used to determine the organizations' original purpose for adopting the different tools, the changes in the organizations' stakeholders attributed to teach tool, and the benefits the organizations have derived from each tool. Then, the posts and tweets for nonprofit that completed the survey for a one month period were coded. First, the reason behind the initial decision to start using the different social media was delved into. As seen in Table 3, health nonprofits were significantly less like to begin using Facebook for marketing purposes, while arts and culture nonprofits were significantly less likely to begin using Twitter for marketing. In addition, human service nonprofits were significantly more like to adopt Facebook to increase donations while arts and culture nonprofits were significantly less likely to begin using Twitter to increase donations.

Table 3: Reason Nonprofits Started Using Social Media

	Medium	Arts and Culture	Env. and Animal Welfare	Health	Human Services	Societal Benefit	Member Benefit	Non-501(c)(3)
REASON	FB	(N=20)	(N=10)	(N=13)	(N=27)	(N=22)	(N=13)	(N=4)
	TW	(N=15)	(N=9)	(N=8)	(N=25)	(N=21)	(N=7)	(N=4)
Marketing	FB	19	10	9**	26	21	12	4
	TW	8**	8	7	21	21	7	4
Feedback	FB	9	4	4	12	10	7	3
	TW	7	4	2	7	6	3	2
Donations	FB	7	4	3	15**	3*	1	0
	TW	0*	3	2	7	2	1	0
Legitimacy	FB	8	3	3	6	7	2	0
	TW	2	4	1	6	7	2	1
Transparency/ Accountability	FB	3	4	4	7	8	2	2
	TW	2	4	0	6	7	1	2
Volunteers	FB	3*	6	3	12	7	6	0
	TW	1	3	1	9	4	2	0
Raise Awareness	FB	17	10	11	24	20	13	4
	TW	10*	8	8	22	18	7	4
*p<.05; ** p<.01								

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The survey also inquired about how the organization perceived different social mediums changed the behavior of constituents. As can be seen in Table 4, human service nonprofits were significantly more likely to note that their use of Facebook inspired people to volunteer. Member benefit nonprofits also noted their use of Facebook drew more people to become members go their organization. Twitter was noted by environment and animal welfare organizations as moving people who follow the organization to donate to the cause as well as become members of the organization. Conversely, arts and culture nonprofits noted that their use of Twitter did not impact followers in a way that made them want to become members.

What is clear from Table 4 is that there is a correlation between social media and the actions of fans and followers. For instance, there are correlations between fans and followers becoming clients of arts and culture, environment and animal welfare, and human service nonprofits and both Facebook and Twitter. Similarly, there are also correlations between event attendees and the social media for environment and animal welfare, health, and human service nonprofits, although not both types of social media tools analyzed are correlated with these actions.

Table 4: Changes in Stakeholders Attributed to Social Media (by medium)

	Medium	Arts and Culture	Env./ Animal Welfare	Health	Human Services	Societal Benefit	Member Benefit	Non-501(c)(3)
CHANGE	FB	(N=21)	(N=11)	(N=13)	(N=28)	(N=22)	(N=14)	(N=5)
	TW	(N=15)	(N=9)	(N=10)	(N=25)	(N=21)	(N=7)	(N=4)
Volunteer	FB	4	6	5	15*	7	4	0
	TW	0	3	2	2	2	1	0
Donate	FB	5	4	3	9	4	2	0
	TW	0	3*	0	3	1	1	0
Become Member	FB	5	6	1*	8	11	9*	3
	TW	0*	4*	1	4	5	1	1
Become a Client	FB	8**	6**	0	0**	3	3	0
	TW	5*	4**	1	0*	1	1	0
Attend events	FB	16	11*	4**	15	16	9	3
	TW	9	6	5	7*	12	3	2

*p<.05; ** p<.01

Perhaps the most important aspect to understand social media use is understanding how their use benefits the organization. Table 5 notes the benefits, the number of organizations that noted they have either some or a substantial effect, and whether there was a correlation between type and benefit. As can be seen, no correlation was found between Facebook pages and an increase in traffic to the nonprofits' Web site, while there was a correlation in Web site traffic and the Twitter profile, but only for arts and culture and environment and animal welfare nonprofits. One finding of note is that while it is found that, social media is not a good tool for nonprofits in regard to receiving donations, save for environment and animal welfare organizations, the results here confirm that.

The benefits derived from social media discussed so far - increase Web site traffic, moved people to action, increased donations, and increased the email list - have benefited the organization. However, social media are designed for relationships, where both parties interact and receive benefits. Interestingly, few correlations were found between symmetrical relationship models: providing additional information to constituents, enhancing relationships, increasing the understanding of constituents, fostering discussion, and building an active online community. A correlation was found between arts and culture and non 501(c)(3) nonprofits and the provision of additional information to constituents, but none for Facebook. Similarly, the only correlation found between nonprofit type and the social medium's usage to increase the organization's understanding of its constitutes was the use of Twitter by non 501(c)(3) nonprofits. Still, correlations were found between Facebook and enhancing relationships for environment and animal welfare organization, and by the use of Twitter for arts and culture and non501(c)(3) nonprofits.

Table 5: Effects Benefiting the Organization Attributed to Social Media

		Arts and Culture	Env. or Animal Welfare	Health	Human Service	Societal Benefit	Member Benefit	Non-501(c)(3)	Total
BENEFIT	FB	(N=22)	(N=11)	(N=13)	(N=28)	(N=22)	(N=14)	(N=5)	115
	TW	(N=15)	(N=9)	(N=8)	(N=25)	(N=21)	(N=7)	(N=4)	89
Increased Traffic to Web site	FB	13	10	6	15	18	11	3	78
	TW	0*	6**	1	7	6	1	2	23
Moved people to action	FB	13	10*	6	13*	16	11	3	72
	TW	0**	5*	4	6	6	1	2	24
Increased e-mail list	FB	5	5	2	8	7	4	1	32
	TW	0*	4*	0	4	5	1	2	16
Increased donations	FB	10	10**	4	16	11	8	1	60
	TW	0	0	2	3	2	1	1	9
Provided additional info to constituents	FB	16	11	11	21	20	11	4	94
	TW	3*	7	5	9	12	3	4*	43
Spread info widely	FB	18	11	9	21	17	13	4	93
	TW	2**	7	4	11	13	3	4*	44*
Enhanced existing relationships	FB	15	11*	7	22	15	12	4	86
	TW	2*	5	3	10	8	2	4**	34
Increased understanding of constituents	FB	13	7	4	12	10	10	4	60
	TW	2	1	1	4	6	1	3**	18
Found new partners	FB	7	6	6	14	5	8	2	48
	TW	1	4	2	8	7	1	2	25
Fostered discussion	FB	12	9*	4	12	13	10	4	64
	TW	2	4	0	4	10**	2	3*	25
Built active online community	FB	12	9	6	15	14	12*	3	71
	TW	2	5	3	7	7	2	4**	30
Enhanced our online presence	FB	17	11	10	17**	21*	13	4	93
	TW	2**	6	5	10	13	4	4*	44*
Increased awareness of org.	FB	18	11	10	20	20	13	4	96
	TW	0**	7	5	10	14	4	4*	44**

*p<.05; ** p<.01

While survey respondents were able to note the benefits they associate with the use of Facebook and Twitter, what is not known is what types of posts and tweets they are using to produce the noted results. While the final version of this paper will delve much deeper into the connection between the types of posts and tweets and the perceived benefits of the medium, this paper begins that analysis through the coding of one month's Tweets and Facebook posts from six of the organizations that were interviewed. The final paper will have at least three months of tweets and Facebook posts from all survey respondents coded. The tweets and posts were coded in HyperResearch using grounded theory. For this analysis, each post from six organizations was read and its purpose was determined. The types of nonprofits represented were two non 501(c)(3) nonprofits, one human service nonprofit, one environment and animal welfare organization, one arts and culture and one societal benefit nonprofit. As more posts were coded, more typologies emerged. Table six notes the organizations' service area, the main themes that emerged, and the count for each theme's use by nonprofit type. Once the first nonprofit's tweets were coded, the same coding scheme was used without any additional categories. Notes were taken as new topics emerged and will be used for coding the full data set.

Table 6: Count of Tweet Types

	Medium	Call for action	General Info	Org Event	Other org event	Org Progra	Other org Program	Reciprocity
Non-501 (c)(3) 1	FB	2	0	7	3	7	0	0
	TW	5	102	71	11	29	24	21
Non-501 (c)(3) 2	FB	0	5	11	26	7	12	3
	TW	5	15	14	74	21	13	42
Societal Benefit	FB	1	20	19	4	3	15	7
	TW	4	37	23	1	3	4	2
Human Service	FB	1	1	3	0	3	1	1
	TW	2	12	2	2	0	0	7
Arts and Culture	FB	3	5	22	4	9	4	5
	TW	2	27	19	15	26	7	14
Environmental/ Animal Welfare	FB	10	1	19	4	3	7	7
	TW	8	3	22	5	1	10	2

While the initial coding is preliminary, some patterns are beginning to arise, as can be seen in Table 7. An ANOVA analysis was done to measure the difference between the use of each type of tweet by nonprofits in different service areas. This test will be conducted as well on Facebook posts in the final paper. First, different types of nonprofits appear to utilize social media in different ways. For instance, there is a significant difference between the types of posts and each type of nonprofit, save the promotion of other nonprofits' events through retweeting their posts or crafting a post to draw followers to other nonprofits events.

Table 7: ANOVA on Types of Tweets (Preliminary)

Test of Homogeneity of Variances	Levine Statistic	df1	df2	sig.
Call for action	14.626	5	1069	0.000
General Information	107.822	5	1069	0.000
Org. event	45.418	5	1069	0.000
Other org's event	4.172	5	1069	0.001
Org's program info	26.045	5	1069	0.000
Other org's program	7.849	5	1069	0.000
Reciprocity	30.166	5	1069	0.000

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	sig.
Call for action	Between groups	0.442	5	0.088	3.789	0.002
	Within groups	24.929	1069	0.023		
	Total	25.371	1074			
	Welch Statistic: 1.467; sig. .201					
General Information	Between groups	11.222	5	2.244	19.309	0.000
	Within groups	124.26	1069	0.116		
	Total	135.483	1074			
	Welch Statistic: 21.401; sig. .000					
Org. event	Between groups	5.314	5	1.063	9.128	0.000
	Within groups	124.476	1069	0.116		
	Total	129.79	1074			
	Welch Statistic: 11.649; sig. .000					

Other org's event	Between groups	0.162	5	0.032	1.002	0.415
	Within groups	34.632	1069	0.032		
	Total	34.794	1074			
	Welch Statistic: 2.095; sig. .066					
Program Info	Between groups	1.228	5	0.246	6.555	0.000
	Within groups	40.5052	1069	0.037		
	Total	41.280	1074			
	Welch Statistic: 3.676; sig. .003					
Other Org's Programs	Between groups	0.417	5	0.083	2.003	0.076
	Within groups	44.528	1069	0.042		
	Total	44.945	1074			
	Welch Statistic: 1.510; sig. .187					
Reciprocity	Between groups	2.501	5	0.500	6.830	0.000
	Within groups	78.295	1069	0.073		
	Total	80.796	1074			
	Welch Statistic: 8.659; sig. .000					

By analyzing the types of tweets, a better understanding of the connection between the types of tweets an organization sends to its followers on Twitter emerges. To measure the difference in the use of the type of tweets among the different types of nonprofits, the Gabriel post-hoc procedure was use since it is the most powerful measure of the difference between samples that are unequal in size (Field, 2005). The only type of organization that differed in posting calls to action was the environment and animal welfare nonprofit from all the others, with it being significantly more likely to tweet for action among followers. There was no significant difference between any other types and their use of using Twitter to activate their followers.

The use of Twitter to provide general information, such as community information, hours of service, or the weather, is significantly different between both of the non 501(c)(3) nonprofits (p<.001). The arts and culture nonprofit posted significantly fewer general information posts than on non 501(c)(3) nonprofit (p<.001), the societal benefit nonprofit (p<.001), and the human service nonprofit (p<.01). The societal benefit nonprofit tweeted more general information that one of the non 501(c)(3) nonprofit (p<.001), and the environment or animal welfare nonprofit (p<.001). The human service nonprofit used significantly more general information tweets than one non 501(c)(3) nonprofit (p<.001), the arts and culture nonprofit (p<.01), and the environment and animal welfare nonprofit (p<.001).

When looking at tweeting information about the organization's events, there was a significant difference between the two non 501(c)(3) nonprofits (p<.001). The first one was also significantly more

likely to tweet information about its events than the human service nonprofit (p<.05), and the other non 501(c)(3) was significantly less likely to tweet information about its events than the societal benefit nonprofit (p<.01) or the environment and animal welfare nonprofit (p<.001). No significant difference was found between type of nonprofit and their use of tweeting other nonprofits' events.

There was a statistically significant difference between the type of nonprofit and whether it tweets information about its programs. Both non 501(c)(3) nonprofits were less likely to tweet about their programs than the arts and culture nonprofit (p<.01). In addition, the arts and culture nonprofit tweeted significantly more about its programs than the societal benefit nonprofit (p<.01) and the environment and animal welfare nonprofit (p<.001). There were no significant differences between the different types of nonprofits and tweeting about other nonprofits' programs.

Finally, reciprocity plays a large roll in social media usage, at least among individuals. Posts marked as reciprocity thanked other Twitter users for retweets and mentions, as well as thanking individuals or organizations. The decision was made to include direct mention of individuals and other nonprofits without direct messaging them since some of the nonprofits link their Twitter feed to their Facebook page, negating the ability to direct tweet. One non 501(c)(3) was significantly more likely to tweet reciprocity posts than the other (p<.01). In addition, one was also significantly more likely to tweet reciprocal tweets than the societal benefit nonprofit (p<.001) and the environment and animal welfare nonprofit (p<.01). The environment and welfare nonprofit was also less like to use reciprocal tweets than the human service nonprofit. Indeed, there is a significant difference between the types of tweets used and the service are of the organization. Next what is done with the information that a nonprofit's followers and fans leave for the organization on their Facebook page and tweet to the organization directly.

Feedback

To understand what a nonprofit does with the feedback it receives through social media, interviews were conducted with six nonprofits.[5] All organizations that were interviewed noted that their social media was maintained by a full-time employee, but the percentage of time of the individual's position dedicated to social media ranged from 0-10% (environment and animal welfare), to 51-75% (1 non-501(c)(3)). Five nonprofits: two human service organizations, two arts and culture organizations, and one societal benefit organization had a full-time employee dedicating 11-25% of their time to social media. The remaining three, one non501(c)(3) organization. one societal benefit organization, and one environment/ animal welfare organization, had a full-time employee dedicating 26%-50% of their time to

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[5] As mentioned, a total of ten interviews will be done, but at the time of the writing nine were completed and five were transcribed. These findings are predominantly taken from the transcriptions, but notes from the interviews are also used, where applicable. None of the transcripts have been coded, so the data here is in narrative form.

social media. All interviewees have actively engaged Facebook, four for one to two years, and six for more than 2 years. Twitter engagement varied from 6 months (3 organizations) to 1-2 years (5 organizations). Only two have been actively using Twitter for more than two years.

One human service nonprofit noted they utilize feedback to reshape programs, plan for future needs, and to better measure how to adapt to a changed environment ("emerging issues"), while the environmental or animal welfare nonprofit noted that its dominant use use was to push information out to constituents. One non 501(c)(3) nonprofit noted that the main use of social media was currently to push information out to fans and followers, but they hoped to better utilize the dynamic, two-way flow of communication in the future. Indeed, the use of social media to interact with fans and followers, if not stated explicitly, was alluded to in all the interviews. The societal benefit nonprofit stressed the importance of using it for "engagement", but they are still trying to find the best way to achieve that goal. While they have many friends and followers, they noted the key is to figure out how to get them to become active in the organization, to attend events, become a member, or make a donation. Indeed, this desire to move fans and followers to action was noted by all interviewees. None have figured out how to achieve this yet.

In regard to responding to what followers and fans post, all interviews note that they respond to all questions and concerns. Twitter was not as widely used, and when it was, it was linked to the Facebook account for simultaneous posting. Still, there was a consensus among all the organizations interviewed that they do not get many posts, indicating that that both the organization, as well as their fans and followers, are still seeing social media as a tool for organizations to communicate with people, but not vice versa. However, one human service organization did note that most of the feedback they receive via social media was supportive, which was corroborated confirmed by the other organizations interviewed, however, the negative or neutral feedback received dealt more with customer service issues, which were handled just as any complaint or concern would be handled in person or through another mode of communication. Indeed, all the interviewees said that all feedback was replied to, and negative feedback, while rare, was handled in such a way as to provide more information to the individual or to correct a situation. One environmental / animal welfare nonprofit noted that while they reply, they do remove the post in a couple days, even though the director would prefer to remove the post immediately. The person charged with handling the social media for the organization won the argument to leave the posts up (while rare and only for a short period of time) with the argument that the only people who will see the negative comment are the ones who go directly to the organization's page since it is not included in the newsfeed of the organization's fans.[6] And for the human service nonprofit, their goal was to "turn

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[6] This may change with Facebook's new platform.

lemons into lemonade" and to use negative feedback, when appropriate, as an information tool to educate fans and followers of the challenges facing the organization.

The human service organization also noted that they use the feedback to adjust policies, when needed, but this was rare. Indeed, the organization noted that the policies are from the top, down, and social media is a tool to implement and inform people about those policies. The other human service nonprofit noted how integral social media was for them to understand and monitor changes in the environment, and allow them to adjust programs and policies as need to adjust to these changes. The societal benefit organization noted that it does take it feedback into consideration regarding policy, but it was not the main goal of using social media for the organization. Still, it does learn from the feedback to know what works and what does not work.

Both one of the non 501(c)(3) nonprofits and a societal benefit nonprofit noted using the feedback as a asymmetrical communication tool, taking the feedback in to reformulate future messages to get fans and followers to act in preferable ways, but without taking that feedback in to adjust the organizations' policies. Although the nonprofit did say that while many fans like their posts and pictures, they are still trying to figure out how to combine the "warm and fuzzy pictures with data and stories" to get people to be more active in involvement and donations. Indeed, this move towards a more strategic approach to social media's use was mentioned in many interviews. Interestingly, none of the organizations interviewed to date noted the use of social media to form or strengthen networks with other local nonprofits, which is discussed next.

Networks

To understand how nonprofits were using social media to network with other nonprofits, the organizational data from the original snowball sample was used. While compiling the snowball sample, all the local nonprofits were identified, in addition to which nonprofits were connected to other nonprofits, and on which mediums. This information was to measure if there was a significant difference in following or "liking" other local nonprofits based on a nonprofit's service area. No significant relationship was found, indicating that nonprofits, regardless of service area, are just as likely as others to like or follow other local nonprofits. This was extended to looking at whether nonprofits in different service areas were significantly more likely to follow or like other individuals or organizations, Again, no significant relationships were found.

The opposite relationship was also examined: if there was a significant difference in the number of fans or followers nonprofits had, based on the organization's service area. This is important because it is an organization's fans or followers that receive the tweets and posts in their news feeds. In other words, instead of an individual having to go to the organizations' page, the information provided by the

organization is pushed out to the individuals. Again, no significant relationship was found between the number of fans or followers and organization has and its service area. The only significant finding was that non-501(c)(3) nonprofits were more likely to have more fans and followers than arts and culture (p<.05), health (p<.01), human service (p<.01), and societal benefit nonprofits (p<.01). The implications of these findings are discussed next.

Discussion

   While nonprofits have argued to be early adopters of social media (Stone, 2011, Mansfield, 2010), many nonprofits are still trying to figure out how best to utilize these tools. As one societal benefit nonprofit noted,

> we have been using Facebook and Twitter for more than two years, and they are still
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> testing different types of posts and the responses and actions they get from them. Some
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> work. Some don't. We do more of what does work, and less of what doesn't work.

Numerous interviewees noted that their organization was moving towards a more strategic approach to social media usage, but first they are trying to determine the connection between different posts and the actions they promote. For instance, one societal benefit nonprofit noted that they recently, for the first time, posted about a board training. While they have done these trainings on regular intervals, they had never let people know via social media. She noted that the turnout was far higher than what they were used to, and this involvement also included a significant registration fee. So they will start using social media to announce their workshops in the future. Still, while she noticed an increase in the number of attendees and related it to social media, she did not ask how they learned of the workshop. This was consistent with other interviewees as well. Many believe there is a benefit to using social media for the organization, and they noted it in the survey, but they do not measure the results of their posts and tweets, other than analytics, likes, fans/followers, and retweets. They have not been able to make a distinct connection between posting about an event, and then knowing how many people attended the event, or learned about it, through Facebook or Twitter. However, there is a desire to measure social media more systematically, but there are time and resource constraints in the way of full measurement.

   This paper further sought to provide a better understanding of the relationship between nonprofits and social media. It was shown that nonprofits are utilizing social media tools but to different extents, and many are still failing to fully utilizing the interactive nature of the mediums. Future analyses will delve deeper into understanding what other organizational characteristics are impacting this relationship.

   It was also found that a nonprofit's field of service is significant to the types of tweets it sends.

In addition, there was no significant relationship found between nonprofits, regardless of service area, and their use of social media to network, be it with other local nonprofits or just with fans and followers in general.   This area has much potential, once more organizations' posts and tweets are coded, and the coding is refined. The findings here are very preliminary, with no variation between different organizations in the same service area.

The use of feedback by the nonprofits interviewed was interesting. Some commonalities were that they answer all feedback in the same manner they would any feedback they would receive through a different medium, and that they did not remove negative posts from their pages. However, there are many differences, especially in regard to how the organization uses the feedback.   Some noted that it is used to reshape messages to get followers and fans to agree with the organization's policies, programs, and issue stance. Others use feedback to stay attuned to their environment and make any organizational adjustments that are needed to remain relevant and vibrant. Still, far more were the former, not the later. Once all interviews are completed, transcribed, and coded, the data can be measured against organizational characteristics from the 990 or 990EZ and the survey. The data-set is very dynamic and rich, and also allows for longitudinal studies of the same nonprofits, as well as new ones. Some nonprofits that I have engaged in conversation noted much interest in this project. In one instance, the executive director was wondering why she was not sent a survey, because she would have been very interested in filling it out. Her organization was on the recipient list, but it never opened the survey, indicating that that the email account was not monitored. The next panel will be sure to include this organization, as well as others like it.

Conclusion

This paper is derived from preliminary data from a rich and dynamic data set. The data presented here only begins to scratch the surface of the relationship between nonprofits and social media.   Once the data is completely collected, coded, and analyzed, it will be seen if the preliminary findings hold. Still this is a place to start to delve into an understanding of nonprofits and social media, beyond the prescriptive approach taken in much of today's how-to manuals. It will be interesting to see what variable comes into play in the utilization of social media and the benefits derived from each social medium. The survey goes beyond Facebook and Twitter to include blogs, YouTube, and LinkedIn. While gathering the needed data for each site is a feat unto itself, if it is done, a very clear model may begin to emerge for nonprofits about which social media tools should be used to achieve the desired results, and how they should be used. As noted, this paper only begins to scratch the surface of understanding this relationship.

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