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PHILANTHROPY *and* SOCIAL MEDIA

By the Institute for Philanthropy
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Think Philanthropy, created in 2008 in honour of the Institute's founder Hilary Browne-Wilkinson, is an ongoing series of projects, papers, talks and days of learning, based upon original research, which discusses the latest thinking and trends for strategic philanthropy and suggests practical next steps for those working in the field. The programme has been generously funded by William M. Dietel, Jon and Lillian Lovelace, and one anonymous funder.

The Indigo Trust is a grant-making foundation that funds technology-driven projects to bring about social change, largely in African countries. The Trust focuses mainly on innovation, transparency and citizen empowerment. The Indigo Trust makes grants to African projects or programmes, or to organisations which operate at least partly in African countries. They believe that access to information for all empowers people to change their own lives and communities. You can learn more about the Indigo Trust through their blog: http://indigotrust.wordpress.com/

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INTRODUCTION

What are 'social media'?

Throughout this paper we define social media as online or digital technologies that serve to connect people, information and organisations through networks.

The term evolved as a way to distinguish the emerging online information platforms from traditional 'broadcast media' – TV, radio, film, newspapers – by highlighting that these new tools were 'socialised' and allowed the audiences to contribute to their content. Social media have therefore become defined in relation to these existing media channels, but in fact they have their ancestry in existing social technologies, like the telephone and the letter. If traditional media connect people to information, social media connect people to people.

This definition includes the more familiar platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, and also a broader, and in many cases older, range of tools, from blogs and wikis to discussion boards, online chat, video platforms, email lists, and even social commerce sites like eBay. Any digital tool that allows individuals to talk to each other, individually and in groups, and particularly in public, may be included in this growing trend in social connectivity. The list of social media tools is growing all the time, as people discover new uses for the web and mobile technologies.

'Having the ability to tap into these new social media networks, to contribute to their creation, and to harness their reach and their capabilities, creates huge opportunities for socially-minded organisations.'

THE EVOLUTION OF WEB-ENABLED CAPABILITIES

Flow of information	Platform	Enables organisations, individuals and central agencies to:
ONE TO MANY	Traditional broadcast media — Web 1.0	• Generate content/data & push information out to the public via TV, radio, newspapers, film etc. • Make content/data available online • Push information directly to people's email inboxes
SOME TO SOME	Web 1.5	• Encourage key audiences to participate and connect with their own community • Engage stakeholders in cheaper, easier, more engaging ways – e.g. early versions of blog platforms • Invite response and comment to the information they put out

MANY TO MANY	Web 2.0	• Provide platforms for connectivity & participation
		• Enable stakeholders, partners & beneficiaries to talk to each other, exchanging information & views
		• Build communities
		• Engage in dialogue with their audiences through:
		  – Social networking sites (e.g Facebook)
		  – Real time information networks (e.g. Twitter)
		  – Blogs and wikis
		  – Online forums
		  – Video platforms
		  – Discussion groups
		  – Social commerce sites (e.g. Ebay)

Social media for communication

Social media, like traditional media, are fundamentally tools for communication, and their capabilities and forms will continue to evolve. Unlike previous media channels, however, which tended to be the tools of corporations and governments, they are widely accessible and generally cheap to use by ordinary people. They break down traditional information power structures by circumnavigating the barriers that people previously had to negotiate to get their message across, whilst giving them direct access to information and conversations with other individuals.

It is this capacity for supporting conversation that makes these tools so different. Across social media platforms, people are communicating continuously with each other about issues that they care about. They are doing this by writing blog posts, sending out links to them and reading and responding to the comments that readers have posted. They are uploading videos to YouTube and sharing links to other people's videos. They are using Twitter to ask questions or to respond to the 'tweets'[1] of others, and they are posting information about themselves and their friends on Facebook for their whole social network to see.

As they engage in these activities, social media users are developing and perpetuating networks of people, organisations and information online. They are using these digital networks not only to socialise, but also to learn from others, and to share what they know. As they learn from social networks online, they are also making changes to their behaviours offline, spreading knowledge and culture beyond the boundaries of their digital social networks, and filtering it into their day-to-day lives.

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[1] A tweet is an online posting of writing created by a Twitter user. From: http://www.techterms.com/definition/tweet

The growth and use of social media platforms means that individuals are becoming increasingly interconnected; the manufacture and distribution of information is becoming decentralised; and people are able to exert influence in ways and places that they could not before.[2] The result is that a much wider range of information is available for use[3], and the actions of governments, organisations and people are becoming more transparent and more open to challenge and engagement from their customers, beneficiaries, staff and citizens. In many developed countries grassroots social media are so pervasive that they are starting to drive traditional media sources such as TV, radio and newspapers.

Social media for social impact

Having the ability to tap into these new social media networks, to contribute to their creation, and to harness their reach and their capabilities, creates huge opportunities for socially-minded organisations. The barrier to mass communication is no longer technological, or even financial. The starting point for engaging with any of these tools successfully is having something interesting to communicate, and making sure that your message is delivered to the right people.

By doing this effectively, organisations can speak directly to their stakeholders and listen to what they have to say. They can become leaders in a particular field through regular and active contributions on social media platforms, connecting with others and debating issues. Even small organisations can make a big difference if their message is suited to this new popular media network. They can also gather

information more easily, process it and then re-distribute it, relying less on their own intelligence and more on the knowledge and skills of their supporters. By making programme materials available digitally and encouraging people to download and use them, small organisations can exponentially scale up the impact of their work.

To achieve any of these things, organisations must first find the online networks through which people are exchanging information of relevance to them, and then they must know what to do once they find them. With so many conversations going on among so many people, it can seem difficult to know where to begin. And even once you have become a participant or contributor, it can be tricky to understand what the impact or outcomes of your exchanges are likely to be.

Of course, social media communications won't reach everyone. The group that you might be targeting may not be active on particular social media sites, or perhaps they are not online at all. These tools are still very new. Although in some countries, they are showing signs of mass penetration, in others they are yet to make an impact. As social media are such new tools for the not-for-profit sector, it will take some time too before the full extent of their impact on social causes will be known.

What we do know now, however, is that there are organisations, groups and individuals who are using these tools to great effect. Some have completely revolutionised their work by using social media, whilst others are simply using them to make an existing project more cost-efficient, or better organised.

Whatever the scale of uptake, social media tools are having an impact on charities and grant-makers, and they look set to continue to do so for many years to come – so philanthropists and foundations can benefit from exploring the ways in which social media tools might further their work.

Many of the pioneering organisations using these tools effectively are supported by funders with a lot of expertise in this area, and their work can inform the grant-making community considerably. Often, these foundations are not only giving grants, but are also using social media tools for their own purposes, to have conversations and exchange information, focussing and amplifying the impact of their work. Like the organisations they support, they might be using the tools to raise awareness of a cause, or to connect with others working in the same area. Through their experiences of social media investment, we can start to learn about how best to nurture the growth of organisations using these tools effectively, and explore how best to enable others to do so.

Aims, content and approach of this paper

This paper was written by the Institute for Philanthropy in collaboration with leading information and communications technology funder, the Indigo Trust, and with input from experts, practitioners and funders working in the field, a full list of whom can be found on page 58. It is intended to provide an introduction to social media for philanthropists and philanthropic organisations interested in the potential of these tools for achieving social impact. This isn't an expert guide,

[2] D. Scearce, 2011, 'Connected Citizens' p. 25-27
[3] Ibid. p. 27
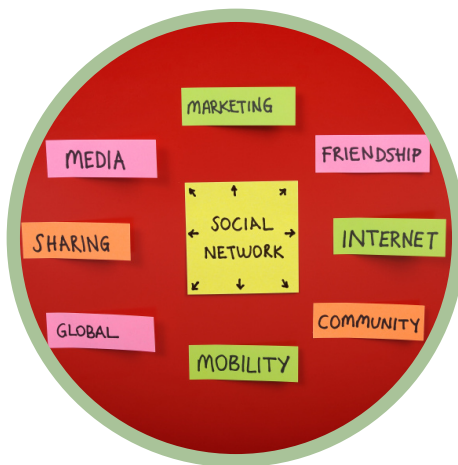
but it aims to help organisations get started and to know where to look for more help.

It is important to note that any tool can be used to achieve negative outcomes as well as positive ones, and social media are no exception. Tools that can be used to spread messages and connect communities can of course be used to discredit people or organisations, to perpetuate negative messages or to arrange violent events – as newspapers, radio and TV have been abused over the years so can social media be. While there are many important conversations to be had around the overall effects of these media in a wider sense, these issues are outside the scope of this paper, which is focused specifically on the applications of social media for positive impact.

Section One: Why use social media? Objectives and outcomes, highlights the purposes for which social media tools have been used successfully by not-for-profit organisations, and illustrates these objectives and their implementation through a range of examples. At the end of each sub-section, we offer advice for funders and practitioners to keep in mind when considering investing in an initiative to achieve that objective.

Section Two: Conversations with investors in social media, provides detailed case studies on the experiences of specific funders who have invested in projects that involve the use of social media for social impact. At the end of this section are tips and advice for those considering investing in social media to further social change work.

Section Three: How funders are using social media themselves, assesses the ways in which foundations are employing social media for their own organisational objectives, and offers tips and advice to organisations wishing to understand how social media tools can help them in their work.

Finally, we include at the end of the paper a list of further resources and the sources of our research, to allow readers to continue their investigations of this evolving topic.

Where possible, we aim to provide a broad view of the reasons why particular initiatives achieved their aims, and in so doing assess the contributions that social media strategies have played in that success. Although the well-known social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are mentioned within the paper, we do not refer to or analyse specific tools one by one. Rather, our approach is designed to be objective-led, because we have observed that initiatives in this area are almost always successful because they form elements of a strategy that is not exclusively played out on social media platforms. We also recognise that in such a fast-moving, innovative field, there will always be new platforms available, and focussing too much on the 'what' can distract from the 'how' and the 'why' of what is really an emerging set of practices for working in a new, networked world.

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WHY USE SOCIAL MEDIA? OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

The following pages set out eight objectives that social media tools have been used to achieve in the context of social change:

• communicating messages;

• knowledge sharing and reporting;

• overcoming barriers to inclusion;

• connecting people;

• improving service delivery;

• scaling fast;

• fundraising; and

• transparency and accountability.

Each objective is illustrated with real-world examples to bring to life the nature of these tools and what they can do, and to provide an exposition of what 'social media for social change' really means in practice. The multi-faceted nature of these tools means that in fact many of our examples achieve multiple aims – for example scale and messaging are integral parts of successful fundraising – but we have chosen to structure this section to draw out and clarify the various capabilities of social media as means to an end, rather than as ends in themselves.

At the end of each sub-section is some advice for funders and practitioners on 'points to remember' when considering funding or implementing projects that aim to meet these objectives.

When evaluating the success of a particular project, funders should always bear in mind how many people an initiative is reaching via social media as a proportion of the audience in total. This principle is applicable across all of the objectives listed below, and is a key indicator for measuring success.

First and foremost, social media are communications tools. They offer individuals and organisations an effective and inexpensive way to communicate messages to stakeholders and the general public. These freely-available tools can allow campaigners to bypass traditional media routes, which can be particularly important in situations where the traditional media are restricted by governments or other actors. And it is not only the technologically active that these messages can reach: as the content of traditional media becomes increasingly influenced by social media content, these tools are also becoming an excellent route to gaining mainstream press attention. Getting the word out has never been easier – as long as organisations have sufficiently interesting messages to project.

The messages in question might be about raising awareness of a particular project or campaign, sharing information, or simply enabling supporters to keep up to date with an organisation's progress. Different platforms are suitable for different messages and audiences, and most organisations will use a combination of platforms (social and otherwise) to get their messages across. The key feature of social media is that messages can be shared instantly by individuals through their own social networks, and the goal is to achieve this 'network' or 'viral' effect: to reach the point where a campaign's message is being passed on by other people.

Social media for campaigning and awareness

Invisible Children is a US-based charity that raises awareness of the war in Uganda, with a particular focus on children in the country being abducted and forced to fight in the conflict. On 25th April 2009 they organised The Rescue, an event across 100 cities in 10 countries in which people were asked to "abduct themselves in solidarity for those abducted."[4] Participants travelled to pre-arranged 'abduction centres' in their cities, where they waited until a 'mogul' (a celebrity, senator or public figure) arrived to rescue them by making a public statement on behalf of Ugandan child soldiers.

Participants were encouraged to upload YouTube videos to encourage public figures to 'rescue' them, and the campaign was widely promoted on other social media channels. Over 80,000 people participated, over 1,200

videos were made and 66 moguls rescued those who took part. The 400-person campaign in Chicago managed to attract the attention of Oprah Winfrey (in part through use of social media) who then gave seven minutes of her show to Invisible Children to promote The Rescue to an audience of more than 7.5 million.

The numbers reached through this campaign attracted the attention of the authorities: Congress responded to the campaign by drafting a new bill – the LRA Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act mandating the Obama administration to implement a comprehensive plan to arrest Joseph Kony and rebuild the war-affected regions of Uganda.[5]

Not all campaigns are as successful as The Rescue, however; many charities and commercial organisations have tried to achieve similar network effects only to find their messages falling flat. What made The Rescue so effective was that it was a unique idea which used social media as a core tool for on- and offline participation; it engaged members of the public in creating their own content to promote the campaign; and it embedded social media at the heart of the campaigning mechanic rather than simply using it as an add-on. YouTube and other social media tools make it easy for supporters to create and share content, but crucially The Rescue was able to convert participants' online enthusiasm to offline action, amplifying and solidifying the campaign's impact. If no-one had been interested in making their own content about the cause, however, their reach would have been smaller – the lesson here being that if you get the engagement hook right, the technology can amplify it exponentially.

Communicating messages of hope

Another recent example of a campaign getting it right is the 'It Gets Better' campaign, again based in the US. In September 2010, in response to a number of young LGBT[6] people taking their lives after being bullied at school, writer Dan Savage with his partner Terry created a YouTube video to inspire hope in young people facing harassment around their gender and sexuality. As their campaign statement puts it, they "wanted to create a personal way for supporters everywhere to tell LGBT youth that, yes, it does indeed get better.'"[7]

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[4] http://www.warchild.org.uk/news/the_rescue
[5] http://nightof.therescue.invisiblechildren.com/
[6] Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
[7] http://www.itgetsbetter.org/pages/about-it-gets-better-project/

Within two months, the project turned into a worldwide movement, with over 10,000 user-created videos viewed over 35 million times. It has received video submissions from many high-profile people and organisations including President Barack Obama, and has raised over $100,000 from more than 2,500 grassroots contributors to help LGBT youth.[8]

Through YouTube, the 'It Gets Better Project' has been able to communicate a simple yet compelling message to millions of people. The medium is conducive to supporter participation and personal contributions because individuals can upload their own videos replicating the message, and because YouTube makes it very easy for people to share links to videos and embed them in other websites.

As with The Rescue, the hard part was to create an engaging hook that encouraged many people to participate via social media. The technology gave the message a life of its own, and most of the time and money spent since then has simply been to keep up with the pace of the conversation.

Points to remember

An organisation's ability to tap into social media networks depends very little on creating new technologies, and much more on making effective use of the technologies that already exist. There are many platforms that are already well established and widely used, particularly amongst influential groups, and although it can be useful to build simple websites to aggregate activity and publish information about a campaign, most of the real action takes place elsewhere, across the social web, where people are already communicating.

Successful social media campaigns usually depend on the clarity of the core message (and particularly on whether supporters are able to explain it to their friends); and on the quality of the organisation's existing network which can be 'activated' to participate in the campaign. The organisations achieving the biggest impact from these tools are those which have a diverse network of engaged on- and offline supporters. Put simply, if you can give a large

community something really interesting to talk about, they will spread the word for you, and even a small community can achieve a powerful impact if all the members are willing to stand up as advocates and campaigners for the cause.

It is therefore crucial for organisations looking to use social media for communicating messages to engage and grow their community of supporters, and to treat online engagement as a core business activity, so that supporters are already participating in conversations when a campaign begins, and staff members are trained to respond. Just as networking, lobbying, building media contacts and meeting influential people are considered important in most organisations, so too social media are becoming key channels to find and form new connections, and to maintain engaged relationships with stakeholders and supporters.

The value of a community, however, lies in that community taking action to support a cause, so organisations should be considering how they intend to 'activate' their supporters for a particular campaign. Distribution of the core message online is crucial, but it is far less powerful if it is not also accompanied by offline actions. Create offline experiences in which supporters can participate, and they will talk about these experiences online and amplify the campaign. Rally a community of people to take action to spread a powerful message across social media and beyond, and even small organisations can have a big impact.

What all this adds up to is that the days of centrally-backed broadcast campaigns designed in isolation from their audiences are over. Broadcast to a passive population, even at huge scale, and your campaign will falter, the messages drowned out in the increasing noise of our information-rich society. Funders and organisations should consider whether social media communications projects have an engaged community already bought into the cause – in a networked world, having a passionate and committed community behind you can be more valuable than having the Prime Minister's backing or the best advertising agency in town.

'It is crucial for organisations looking to use social media for communicating messages to engage and grow their community of supporters, and treat online engagement as a core business activity.'

Broadcast media enables organisations to push messages out to the public; social media have now enabled the public to push back. The distributed nature of social media tools means that people who are living through and witnessing social issues and events can report what they have seen, send messages to organisations in real time, and share information with each other. The tools can be used to connect people around the world to share knowledge about global issues, and on a very local level to "crowdsource"[9] on-the-ground knowledge, tapping into diverse experiences to create a shared understanding of a specific event or locality. These same tools can be used within organisations to share knowledge between colleagues, and between organisations to join up the collective wisdom of different communities to create richer, deeper and more inclusive understandings of the world.

The capacity of social media for sharing knowledge quickly has become increasingly visible within the mainstream media, with citizen journalism and publicly-created footage forming a major part of the landscape of modern news. We now expect to see the police called to account by videos shot on mobile phones; news stories breaking on Twitter; and members of the public reporting directly on live events before the news cameras even arrive. Many forward-thinking social organisations are now beginning to harness this trend in live news reporting for specific causes, and there is a growing appreciation that gathering information from the 'front line' can be a powerful way to enhance the impact of a project, and to assist organisations in taking more targeted and appropriate action.

The impact of social media on knowledge sharing is only just beginning to be felt, but already we are seeing these tools help disaster efforts, broaden public discourse, and enrich our understanding of the human side of social problems. Charities working to research and communicate on global issues; organisations looking to improve the knowledge of their staff; and even governments seeking to understand the problems of their people, now have far more tools to gather information and share knowledge.

Publishing for the people

Ushahidi are a not-for-profit technology company who provide free software for information collection, visualisation and interactive mapping for social causes.[10] The platform works by aggregating individual reports about small-scale events submitted by journalists, NGOs and the public via SMS or web, to form a readable map providing a wider picture of events in a geographical area or around a particular event or crisis situation. The platform was originally developed to map violence in Kenya after the election in 2008, and has since been used for a wide variety of different social mapping exercises. For example, it was recently deployed by volunteers in the 2011 Japan earthquake to help pinpoint locations where people might have been trapped, to identify dangerous areas that should be avoided, and to point to supplies of food and clean water.[11]

The impact of Ushahidi comes only partly from the technology; it also comes from the extent to which people are willing to use the technology (and with what degree of accuracy), and to which the resulting information 'map' is then used by aid workers and local taskforces. As Ory Okolloh, founder and former Executive Director of Ushahidi warns, "Don't get too jazzed up about Ushahidi. It is only 10% of the solution. The other 90% is up to the people and organisations using the platform. If they don't have their act together, the Ushahidi platform won't change that. If they do and successfully deploy the Ushahidi platform, then at least 90% of the credit goes to them."[12]

Although still in its relative infancy, Ushahidi already represents an important example of how a simple social platform can assist in the collection and processing of citizen-gathered data, and put that data to work on improving communities and saving lives. The project continues to grow, and recently received funding from the Knight News Challenge for Swiftriver,[13] a new initiative to verify live news information across email, Twitter, web feeds and text messages to make it more accurate and reliable.

Akvo, a Netherlands-based not-for-profit enterprise, has shown that these techniques can also be applied to

[9] 'The act of outsourcing tasks, traditionally performed by an employee or contractor, to an undefined, large group of people or community (a "crowd"), through an open call.' http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crowdsourcing
[10] http://www.ushahidi.com/about-us
[11] http://www.technologyreview.com/communications/35097/?p1=A1
[12] http://irevolution.net/2010/06/16/think-again/
[13] http://knightfoundation.org/blogs/knightblog/2011/6/22/announcing-2011-knight-news-challenge-winners/

long-term development projects by adopting a similar principle of knowledge-sharing to improve water and sanitation systems in the developing world. They have created 'Akvopedia', a simple wiki system which shares data between NGOs on key technologies, service delivery, finance, promotion and support systems for water and sanitation in rural and urban settings.[14] Working on the same principle as Wikipedia, anyone can contribute or edit the content displayed on the platform. The resulting resource contains huge amounts of locally-relevant, practical information from people in the field on what they know works, meaning development teams can work more effectively and learn from each other's successes and failures. The content covers everything that local workers think is useful, from lists of potential funders for sanitation projects, to explanations of the advantages and disadvantages of using different kinds of pump in particular situations.

Knowledge sharing and citizen reporting can have a big impact in the developed world, too. mySociety's celebrated 'FixMyStreet' service allows citizens to report problems they have noticed in their communities. The FixMyStreet team sends that information to the relevant local authority, tapping into the power of local communities to identify the issues which need to be addressed in their areas.[15] It uses social media to make it much easier to report problems to the relevant authority.

Providing urgent information

When a devastating earthquake struck Haiti on 12th January 2010, the American Red Cross tweeted the news within fifteen minutes. They updated supporters frequently on what they were doing as an organisation, and what others could do to help. The overarching goal, explains Wendy Harman, Director of Social Strategy at the American Red Cross, was to "provide people with useful information." This objective is of paramount importance when a natural disaster has occurred, as people need information very quickly. Social media communications tools made it possible for more people to help, through work on the ground, donations from abroad and passing on information to others.

As Wendy says, "in the beginning moments after a disaster, our goal in using social tools is simply to acknowledge the disaster and let people who are hungry for information know that we will provide as much information about our response efforts and how they can help as soon as we can. It wasn't really about providing people with a lot of information, because no one really had any at the time. Rather, we had to acknowledge what had happened and to reassure people that we would provide more information as we received it." That update came some five hours afterwards in the form of a YouTube video outlining what had happened, how the Red Cross was responding and how people could help the recovery effort. Among the first information available on the quake, the video quickly became one of YouTube's 'most viewed', and has subsequently been watched over 1,225,000 times.[16]

As more information became available, the American Red Cross were able to share what they knew and how they were responding in real-time. This enabled supporters and those affected by the quake to understand exactly what was happening and how best to help. "Often," Wendy says, "people really want to help but don't know how. The best way to help those affected by disasters is most often monetary donations, so offering social communities easy options for both sharing the action item and giving has been effective." [17]

The Red Cross responded extremely quickly, enabling others to be more immediately helpful in the relief effort. This also accelerated the pace of donations. The rate of response on the ground at the time was possible because the technology and the online supporter community were already in place.

[14] http://www.akvo.org/web/share-knowledge
[15] http://www.fixmystreet.com/
[16] http://www.youtube.com/user/AmRedCross#p/u/0/PZf8MRYasss 13th June 2011
[17] Wendy Harman interviewed by the Institute for Philanthropy

'Organisations have never had more access to knowledge, nor more ways to connect their staff and partners together to share skills and experiences.'

Sharing knowledge within and between organisations

These tools also have huge potential for increasing the efficiency and efficacy of organisations themselves. Just as social media can be used to share knowledge between communities and organisations, they can play a key role in collecting and disseminating knowledge within organisations too. Many excellent examples of social knowledge management within organisations can already be seen in the commercial world, such as BT's successful 'Dare2Share' project to encourage staff to share their experience and insights via short video clips to inform their colleagues' future projects; and the BBC's use of forums and other social tools to share knowledge across teams, which has been operational for several years to great effect.

In the complex world of social action, knowledge-sharing often crosses organisational boundaries, so tools like FrontlineSMS are enabling NGOs to collect and send data from many different stakeholders without an internet connection via SMS to create a far richer and more integrated data set for frontline workers. Organisations have never had more access to knowledge, nor more ways to connect their staff and partners together to share skills and experiences.

Points to remember

As with using social media to communicate messages, any social media initiative aimed at sharing knowledge or reporting must have at its root the provision of useful information. In many cases, the task will be to gather a range of different data (e.g. reports from individuals, observations from other agencies) and aggregate and process them in a useful way. The scale and complexity of the task of collecting information will vary enormously depending on the context, but with established platforms and products such as Ushahidi, or a simple Wiki site, organisations can customise tools to gather or share data relevant to them.

When considering investment in a project of this kind, it is important to distinguish between situations where new communications infrastructure is needed, and those where existing tools can be used to communicate and share knowledge. Unless there is a clear gap in the existing tools available, organisations will most likely be best served by using established tools and datasets to gather or share information.

This is particularly relevant when it comes to sharing knowledge with supporters and stakeholders: gathering knowledge on a platform which is already being used to communicate relevant information will be much easier than creating a new one to spread your knowledge. When it comes to data-sharing projects, the most important thing is to gather an engaged, diverse community, and the technology should always serve that rather than being an end in itself.

The two most important factors in determining the success of a 'crowdsourcing' or collaborative project are the extent to which people are willing to contribute to the project, and the extent to which organisations are willing to use the information being gathered. Collecting information is often a hugely valuable activity, but only if the organisation has a concrete understanding of how it might be used to further their work. The more open an organisation becomes to listening to its community, the more enthusiasm there is likely to be from that community to contribute their knowledge to the cause.

There are many groups within society that are difficult to reach and may be excluded in some way, due to their age, disability or background for example. Although an excessive reliance on digital tools can exclude those who are not digitally skilled or connected, online tools can offer a great way to circumvent some of the barriers faced by certain excluded groups, as they offer safe, easily accessible routes to access services, socialise and become involved in activities or issues.

A safe space for those suffering discrimination

Savvy Chavvy is an online social network for young people in the Traveller community. It began in 2008 as a citizen journalism initiative to train Travellers to use social media to share stories about their communities with the wider public, and also with other Travellers who had stopped travelling.[18] The site was successful in attracting members, but it soon became clear that what was really needed was a private social network in which participants could socialise, rather than an outlet for reporting stories.

In an article in the Guardian about the site in 2008, Rosina Hughes, a Savvy Chavvy member, explained: "They have Gypsy hate groups [on other social networking sites], so it's important that we have our own space".[19] Recognising that these individuals had been excluded from existing mainstream channels, the site evolved into an online social network that requires registration and a login password for access, within which young people from the Gypsy and Traveller community discuss a broad range of topics from being bullied at school to what to call their dogs and horses.[20] In July 2008, Savvy Chavvy received a Catalyst Community Award from Gordon Brown for its innovative use of technology, and by November 2008 the site had over 2,200 members – a great achievement, especially considering the small size of the Traveller community.[21]

Savvy Chavvy's success can partially be attributed to the fact that there were no other existing platforms through which young members of the Traveller community could communicate without fear of discrimination. Whilst it is usually best for organisations to work with existing platforms, in some cases it can be worth building a new space online. Where there is an argument for building a new platform, organisations can achieve huge impact by filling a gap in provision.

Employment and skills-building for disabled young people

Social media are particularly effective at connecting and engaging disparate groups who are not, for a range of reasons, able to come together face-to-face. Whizz-Kidz's 'Kidz Unlimited' project works to build connection and community between an otherwise disconnected community of young wheelchair users. The tools give members a way to socialise that doesn't depend on physical access, broadening their experience and helping them learn new skills.

One part of the project, The 'Skillz for Life' programme, aims to equip young wheelchair users with essential life skills.[22] The programme is primarily delivered face-to-face, but the content of the sessions is also available online, so that those who are unable to attend an offline event are still able to participate virtually. Alongside the Skillz for Life programme, Whizz-Kidz provides connections to work experience placements and internships. Users can access a searchable database of wheelchair-friendly companies offering experience. These programmes exemplify how social media can serve to connect people who have something in common, and use this connectivity to offer new and better services.

Reaching and involving young people

Most charities know that social media tools are a great way to connect with and support young people. Young Scot, a charity that provides information for Scottish people aged 11-26, has run online forums successfully for years, encouraging young people to share advice in a supportive online environment, and now use social media tools to support young people and create opportunities for them to support each other. Youthnet also guides and supports many young people through online information and networking platforms, such as TheSite.org.

[18] http://onroadmedia.ning.com/forum/topics/652978:Topic:5525
[19] http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/jul/30/communities.socialnetworking
[20] Ibid
[21] http://www.socialbysocial.com/book/savvy-chavvy
[22] http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.220016024705134.59761.197671733606230

Social media are not purely the domain of the young however; in fact 2010 figures revealed the average social network user to be 37 years old.[23] As these tools become increasingly mainstream, the opportunities for involving diverse groups are growing. Social media tools can represent a more effective way of reaching and including disparate and hard-to-reach communities than more expensive traditional routes, and of building communities of interest between previously disconnected individuals.

Reaching and involving older people

"We find that in our training sessions the most common hair colour is grey. Older activists have a burning need to communicate and are desperate for modern, easy ways to do it" says William Perrin, trustee of the Indigo Trust and founder of Talk About Local which helps people find an effective voice online for their community. "In our experience working in some of the poorest or most isolated parts of Britain it's simply a myth that only younger people use this stuff. Peter has a great blog-based site for his village with Facebook and Twitter integration and embedded YouTube videos – he's 73 – http://crickladebugle. wordpress.com. Annette in West London is retired – she has brought over 700 people into a social network covering local estates – http://w14london.ning.com."[24]

Points to remember

Although they are not yet universally accessible, social media are well-suited to promoting greater inclusion, in many cases because they provide a flexible means for participation and require little other than access to hardware and an internet connection. Even very disadvantaged groups in society now have access to social media through the phones in their pockets. Young people are an obvious target for these technologies, but the demographics are shifting all the time and there are many other social groups beginning to adopt these tools to connect and communicate, increasing the opportunities for engagement.

Funders considering investing in a social media initiative to increase inclusion and involvement should always ask potential investee organisations whether they are active on the platforms where beneficiaries are already communicating. In most cases, projects will be much more effective if they utilise existing online spaces rather than building new platforms to engage a community. However, on the rare occasions where there is a good argument for building a new platform, funders have the potential to leverage huge impact by creating a simple platform for a specific community that currently does not have social tools to meet their needs.

There are of course wider debates about increasing digital access, and social media's power to involve diverse audiences is very much linked to availability of the technology. Campaigns such as Race Online 2012, a Central Government-supported initiative which works toward getting everyone in the UK online, is one of a number of projects educating people on the benefits of being online and providing them with access at a low cost. Many charities are starting to take on the challenge of giving the people they represent access to the powerful publishing and conversation tools online and this trend is growing.

Increasingly the trend in public services is moving towards 'digital by default' – offering people cheaper digital options first, before offering them other more costly forms of engagement. Achieving 100% inclusion on any platform will always be difficult, however, and it is important to acknowledge that online tools, although highly effective among some groups, will never be the right channel for everyone. A heavy reliance on new digital tools to communicate with disadvantaged communities will always carry the risk of excluding those without access to the technologies. It is therefore important to bear in mind that it is not the choice to use new digital tools that excludes people, but the choice to stop using other channels and move to digital instead. If digital tools are used to supplement existing methods of engagement and access, they can be powerful tools for increasing inclusion.

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[23] http://royal.pingdom.com/2010/02/16/study-ages-of-social-network-users/
[24] William Perrin interviewed by the Institute for Philanthropy

THE indigo TRUST

Institute for Philanthropy

4 : CONNECTING PEOPLE

Social media tools connect people to one another, and often this can be a valuable social objective in itself – helping people share advice, support each other and form thriving communities. Social media can be deployed to promote conversations between people who live near each other, to build cohesion and strengthen local communities. Online communities can also connect people who have something in common but who are geographically dispersed or otherwise unable to meet in person. There is evidence that these online communities are having important impact: a 2007 report found that "in medical studies of breast cancer and HIV patients, participants in online communities understand their condition better and generally show a greater ability to cope. In the case of HIV, there are also lower treatment costs."[25] Whatever the community, the great advantage of social media tools is that they enable organisations to step back and let people support each other, whether on their own, or with a little help.

Connecting communities of support

Mumsnet is an online network of parents that aims to "make parents' lives easier by pooling knowledge, advice and support". What initially started as a forum for parents to "swap advice about holidays, pushchairs and last night's TV" has now grown to become one of the nation's largest online communities for parents, receiving over 4 million visits per month and hosting discussions on everything from product reviews to breastfeeding.[26] The site continues to grow, and Mumsnet and its members have developed a number of successful campaigns and published several books about parenthood and related topics, becoming an important and influential community. The site has even played host to senior politicians, with the 2010 general election dubbed 'The Mumsnet election'.[27]

With parenting continuing to be high on the public agenda, Mumsnet and similar sites have shown that, by providing a platform to connect individuals who share common interests, they can achieve impressive social impact at national scale. Mumsnet's success is due in part to its ability to bring the small-scale conversations that occur between parents online, to

help more of them happen, and between a wider and more diverse community. In so doing, the site has vastly increased the number of positive conversations about parenting, broadening the pool of participants and drawing in many who would otherwise be excluded.

Mumsnet co-founder Justine Roberts, writing in The Times in 2010, sums up why parents are so attracted to the site: "Why settle for the wisdom of a single "supernanny" when Mumsnet can bring you the collected wisdom of two million parents? It's like having an army of gurus on tap, 24/7. But with better jokes."[28]

Virtual communities of interest and learning

The goal of the National Trust's MyFarm initiative is to "reconnect people and food,"[29] by helping them to learn more about food production. The Trust hopes to "encourage widespread debate around food and farming, as well as making people aware of the National Trust's role".[30] Towards this aim, MyFarm is building an online community of supporters (or 'farmers') of their farm on the Wimpole Estate, near Royston in Cambridgeshire. Users pay £30 to become a 'farmer' and are engaged in making decisions about the farm, from what kind of crops they should grow, to which sheep they should breed. Decision-making is based around three-week periods of discussion and debate over an issue on the MyFarm website, culminating in an online member vote.

Whilst still a very young initiative, the project attracted over 2,000 'farmers' in its first seven weeks of operation, and aims to sign up a further 8,000 members. MyFarm keeps people engaged by regularly uploading new content to their site, and by encouraging 'farmers' to interact with the material posted by commenting and participating in discussions.

Enriching local life through social media: the rise of hyperlocal communities

The virtual nature of social media makes them well-suited to connecting people who share interests and issues all around the world – but they can also bring us closer to our neighbours. 'Hyperlocal' sites are websites based around small, specific local communities.

[25] Hampton, K. N. (2007). 'Neighborhoods in the network society: the e-Neighbors Study', Information, Communication and Society cited in E. Mayo, T. Steinberg (2007) 'The Power of Information' Government Review p.3.
[26] http://www.mumsnet.com/info/aboutus
[27] http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/feb/09/mumsnet-election-political-parties
[28] http://women.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/women/families/article7041544.ece
[29] http://www.my-farm.org.uk/
[30] http://www.my-farm.org.uk/about

They typically provide local residents with a forum to share information about their neighbourhoods and spur community collaboration, and are often run by local residents to improve the area where they live.

Hyperlocal sites like East Dulwich Forum, Brockley Central and Harringay Online have proved increasingly popular and successful in recent years according to a recent research study by Networked Neighbourhoods.[31] 42% of respondents said they have met someone in their neighbourhood as a direct consequence of using the website, and three quarters felt that participation on their local site had had a positive effect on whether or not people pull together to make improvements in their communities. People are also using hyperlocal sites to stay informed, with an emphatic 63% of survey respondents citing 'neighbourhood blog/website' as their main source of local news, beating television (7%) and the local newspaper (11%). They are also able to find local tradespeople and seek advice from fellow residents. 68% of respondents felt more able to influence decisions locally as a result of participation on their local site, and neighbourhood websites even appear to promote improved relations with local agencies and council officers.

With hundreds of hyperlocal sites already active in the UK[32] and more springing up all the time, new organisations are emerging to meet the demand. Talk About Local works all around the UK to provide people with "the simple skills and support to find a powerful online voice for their community."[33] It helps people set up their own hyperlocal sites usually using Wordpress.com, and trains interested members of the community to use a range of freely available tools to share online news and start conversations about their local area.

William Perrin, founder of Talk About Local, and trustee of the Indigo Trust, says "over the years I was involved in traditional community action in Kings Cross, North London. We were involved in all sorts of activities to combat crime, social injustice and physical degradation, amongst other things. But the information game you had to play in order to get involved – things like telling people what was going on, minutes of meetings etc. – was defeating us. I set up a simple website on a blogging platform – www.kingscrossenvironment.com – and found that it completely transformed the problems that we had been struggling to deal with in a very cheap way. Now, we have this fantastic network and we are able to respond much more quickly as we find out what is

affecting the community. Of course," William continues, "we still have to do all of the traditional community action stuff as well; the site just makes it quicker, easier and more effective."[34] William founded Talk About Local in 2009, and has recently worked on projects as diverse as celebrating a local festival online, helping women in an isolated village raise money to buy new street lighting and supporting people in a rural town in an online and offline campaign to bring its council to account.

Points to remember

Building communities isn't about building technology. Sometimes it can be worth building a large bespoke home for a community (particularly if they have unusual needs and requirements), but introducing new systems always risks alienating users, and for the most part, people who really want to talk to each other will use free tools like Wordpress and Facebook to start their conversations. Beware of trying to build communities for the sake of it: unless people want to talk to each other on a new platform, the technology will most likely remain unused. A safer approach is to encourage organisations to think instead about how to tap into the existing conversations happening online, supporting what's working already.

What matters most for successful online community projects is meaningful engagement from, with and between the participants. Thriving online communities usually combine two key elements: a strong rallying point that brings the community together; and one or more committed individuals at the heart of things to nurture the conversations and keep everything moving. Building communities online or offline is very human, at times emotional work, and it takes people and time, not tools and technology. But applied artfully the right use of technological tools can greatly speed up the building of a community and increase that community's power and leverage.

Funders should also remember that organisations seeking to grow their communities are nearly always best served by engaging with conversations that already exist, and adding value there rather than trying to build tools to connect communities that don't want or need another platform. If in doubt, ask the community, find out what they are using already to talk to each other and how they would like to connect, and make it easier for them to do what they want to do. This is basically a simple extension of the sound business principle of being customer-led.

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[31] http://networkedneighbourhoods.com/?page_id=409
[32] http://openlylocal.com/hyperlocal_sites
[33] http://talkaboutlocal.org.uk/faq/
[34] William Perrin interviewed by the Institute for Philanthropy

As social media tools become more commonplace, they are also becoming more central to our lives and more useful as practical everyday tools. There is a growing expectation from the public that they will be able to use their chosen social media platforms to access services directly from organisations, and tell organisations what they think about the services they have provided. Forward-thinking organisations are putting this expectation to good use by using social media tools to reach out to new communities and deliver services where the people who need them are already communicating.

There are a number of examples of private companies using social media tools to deliver services directly to customers, such as BestBuy's Twelpforce in the US, which uses shop staff to provide live support and advice to customers via Twitter. Customers tweet their tech-related questions to the Twelpforce account, and a BestBuy employee responds. Other examples such as getsatisfaction.com are changing the service dynamic by giving the customer a far greater role in managing feedback and service improvement suggestions. As this trend grows in the commercial world, charities are also beginning to deliver services via social media platforms, often finding them cheaper and more efficient alternatives to traditional delivery routes.

Supporting vulnerable people online

Beatbullying works with children and young people across the UK to help them make positive and lasting changes to their lives and outlook. In particular, they work intensively with those so deeply affected by bullying that they can barely face going to school the next morning. Beatbullying also works with young people that bully, helping them to take responsibility for their actions and build the foundations for change and improvement in their lives. All of the organisation's programmes are based on peer mentoring and activism.

Their award-winning[35] CyberMentors programme helps kids help other kids online. CyberMentors are young people aged 11-17 who receive two days of intensive face-to-face training from Beatbullying staff which gives them the skills and confidence to mentor offline (in their school or community) and online (on the CyberMentors website). 5,766 young people have now

graduated as CyberMentors and Senior CyberMentor Volunteers, with 99% rating the service positively, and 65% feeling more confident as a result of it.[36]

Many of Beatbullying's programmes are now delivered online, and the uptake of their digital services is impressive. Their main website had 1,365,816 unique users in June 2011, and more importantly hosts a high level of activity, including 704,540 mentoring interactions via private message, and many more via web chat. They have scaled their model by 600% by being online and have recently seen an increase in users coming from the US and Australia. The model is very cost effective too; using technology to leverage thousands of school-age volunteers allows Beatbullying to deliver high quality services very cheaply, and is particularly effective for milder cases.[37]

There are many other examples of organisations using social media platforms to deliver advice and support services. Young Scot and many other organisations have been using discussion forums for many years to enable young people to support each other, and are now migrating naturally over to platforms like Twitter and Facebook as their audiences embrace those tools. There are also innovative new ideas from organisations to improve public service delivery, like Futuregov's 'Patchwork' project which aims to integrate social media directly into social workers' case histories so that families can add their own stories to the official records. The NHS-backed mental health service Big White Wall also uses online chat functionality to give users a more cost-effective variant on face-to-face cognitive behavioural therapy, to assist patients with low-level mental and emotional health issues.

Improving services through feedback

Even if users are unable or unwilling to contribute to improving services directly, they can still use social media to tell organisations publicly what they think of their provision. In fact, as social media tools grow in popularity it is becoming impossible for organisations to ignore the views of the public. When HSBC cancelled its free graduate overdrafts in 2007, a large community of students rallied on Facebook and forced the company to reinstate the service (largely due to the simple instructions they posted on how to switch accounts to Barclays). A group

35 Third Sector Excellence Award 2009, Nominet Internet Awards 2010
36 http://www.beatbullying.org/dox/what-we-do/our-results.html
37 Interview with Sarah Dyer by the Institute for Philanthropy

of students in the UK used social media to drive one of the world's biggest banks to change its product line up.[38]

More famously, when Canadian musician Dave Matthews complained unsuccessfully about United Airlines staff breaking his guitar on a flight in 2008, he wrote a song called United Breaks Guitars, spent $150 on a video, and posted it on YouTube. The video has now received over 10 million views and helped knock $180 million off the United Airlines share price. Dave Matthews is now a well-known speaker on customer service, and United described the incident as "a unique learning opportunity".[39]

Most large companies now realise the need to monitor and provide customer services via social media channels. In fact on a recent Virgin America flight, when one passenger complained on his Twitter profile that his overhead light was broken, Virgin spotted the post and dispatched a technician to fix the problem before the plane took off.[40] Even notoriously unresponsive public train operators in the UK give replies to complaints or queries on Twitter in real time from their operations centres, often apparently knowing more than the guard on the train or staff answering phones. As expectations of commercial service providers grow, so too they will grow for charities and public services to provide 24/7 services to their beneficiaries through social media. As Patrick Daniels of Youthnet said in 2010, "part of working with the web is that the usual working hours just have to give a little if activities and service that we offer are really to be as accessible as possible for the young people we hope to reach."[41] For those willing to adapt, the benefits are far greater connection with, and understanding of, beneficiaries. As Louise MacDonald, CEO of Young Scot says: "It helps Young Scot as a charity remember what we're for, every day. It's the next best thing to having young people in the room."[42]

One site that has harnessed this trend effectively for social benefit is Patient Opinion, a website built by two doctors to give NHS patients a voice in our healthcare system. It allows patients to post their experiences of healthcare on the site, in public, and channels their comments directly to the public servant in charge. The site is designed to improve standards by making the NHS more accountable to its patients, and it has also become a channel for large numbers of thank-you messages and positive feedback to healthcare workers. The social nature of the site means that care services can now talk freely with their communities, creating huge potential for co-design and improvement of services, and building more connection between service providers and the people they help.

Co-design and co-production

The collaborative nature of social media tools also makes them very useful for co-designing products and services with the people who use them, to improve outputs and empower service users. Enabled by Design was started by social entrepreneur Denise Stephens, who founded the organisation after she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in her twenties. The site puts people with special physical needs in charge of shaping the products and services they need, by enabling them to post problems they face via video clips and suggest possible solutions. Community members and designers work together to create new products and services that are better-designed than the NHS alternatives. In time, they hope to create a co-designed market for innovation in disability care, and put people at the heart of designing the services they use[43].

[38] http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2007/aug/25/moneysupplement.studentfinance
[39] http://corp.visiblemeasures.com//news-and-events/blog/bid/9991/When-Customer-Service-Spawns-a-Hit-Viral-Video, http://www.the-chiefexecutive.com/features/feature99868/ and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YGc4zOqozo
[40] http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=complaints-through-twitter-2010-01-26
[41] http://www.youthnet.org/2010/10/engaement-and-support/
[42] Louise MacDonald interviewed by Andy Gibson
[43] http://enabledbydesign.org/about/

'Social media tools present great opportunities to engage service users in their services, and create more meaningful participation between providers and recipients of care.'

Points to remember

Organisations should always be looking for ways to improve the services they deliver, and ways to deliver them more cost-effectively. Service providers should already be taking advantage of the opportunities to hear feedback from their beneficiaries provided by digital tools, and at the very least should not be ignoring conversations that are already taking place.

The overwhelming weight of noisy customers using social media means that many organisations are finding they have little choice about whether to engage on these platforms; the conversations about organisations and their services happening online are making it increasingly untenable for groups to ignore what their service users are saying about them. The best organisations are responding to current and potential customers on social media using a similar casual, informal voice, breaking out of decades of stilted formality or hackneyed marketing-speak. Funders should always ask what sort of feedback organisations are receiving online, and whether they are engaging with the people they serve and using available tools to gather feedback and improve services.

We are still only in the very early stages of understanding what service delivery might look like on social media platforms, but already demand is growing for

organisations to engage on these channels and deliver services where their users already gather. And since social media are usually cheaper and quicker than using traditional delivery channels, in the current fiscal climate we can expect this trend to increase as organisations see the benefits of switching to digital. Social media tools present great opportunities to engage service users in their services, and create more meaningful engagement between providers and recipients of care.

For some organisations, and some services, improving services and increasing efficiency may well mean exploring the potential of digital tools. However there are many services that will never be able to be delivered online. Equally there are others that might benefit hugely from a more 'social' approach but which require careful handling of confidentiality and service user safety. Funders should always ask for the grantee to demonstrate why social media are the most appropriate tools for service delivery, as well as the kinds of support the organisation would provide to supplement online activity.

Be aware too that delivering services through social media channels requires a different level of commitment from staff to 'out of hours' support when customers often want questions answered, and also new skills and competencies that may not be present in organisations already.

6 : SCALING FAST

The two-way, real-time nature of social media communication allows organisations to involve supporters in their work more than ever before, and enables supporters to contribute directly to the organisation's mission. This has important implications for achieving social impact at scale, as the cheap, distributed nature of these platforms makes it easier to organise large groups of people to help with a project. Often they can contribute online, helping to deliver online services or doing simple tasks to add capacity to the core team.

For example, Beatbullying, profiled above, has managed to scale up its programme through the contributions of young volunteers who mentor new members through their CyberMentors website. Online communities such as Wikipedia have long relied on the efforts of members of the community to get to scale, and with supporters able to contribute to a cause simply by forwarding a message to their network, the boundaries between 'supporting' and 'volunteering' are becoming increasingly blurred.

Social media really come into their own however when they are used to organise mass participation and "on-the-ground" action. Examples such as Ushahidi show that immediate, accurate online information about a project can enable supporters to help more effectively offline. Forward-thinking organisations can go beyond this, to give supporters information to allow them to run their own projects, such the example of Talk About Local mentioned above. Crucially, social media also allow supporters to pass information and knowledge between themselves, and to organise themselves to take action without the organisation needing to be directly involved.

The result is that some organisations are finding themselves no longer constrained by the number of staff they have, and instead can grow exponentially, tapping into the skills and enthusiasm of their communities to deliver far larger programmes with relatively few central staff supporting the process. Supporters can find each other and organise themselves to take collective action to solve problems and contribute to an organisation's mission, and the greater the number of followers, the greater the potential capacity of the movement. This new level of participation achievable via social media allows organisations to scale programmes and services in radical new ways, by mobilising people to take action together.

Sharing the load

KaBOOM! is a national not-for-profit organisation based in Washington D.C. that aims to "create great play spaces through the participation and leadership of communities".[44] After a decade of excellent work building playgrounds in low-income areas, the organisation realised it wasn't growing fast enough to match the scale of the issue it had chosen to address. "We were doing great on the core model," says COO Bruce Bowman. "But the reality was we were only making a dent in the problem. We were building hundreds of playgrounds when we needed to be building thousands."[45]

At the same time, they were also receiving thousands of requests annually from local groups to bring a playground to their neighbourhood, whom they supported on a small scale through handbooks and training sessions. So KaBOOM! tried something new. It turned to the internet to disseminate its model, employing a suite of online tools – a social networking site, online training, do-it-yourself content and a Google-map mashup (a web page or application that uses and combines data, presentation or functionality from two or more sources to create new services[46]) – to empower local communities to self-organise and build their own playgrounds using free resources on its website.

According to a recent study by the Monitor Institute,[47] the results have been impressive. KaBOOM! has empowered more than 6,000 communities to build local playgrounds in the past few years, and in 2009 alone its online outreach efforts helped people build more than 1,600 do-it-yourself playgrounds - almost as many as the 1,700 the non-profit had built in the previous 14 years. Today, local communities build 10 KaBOOM! playgrounds for each one that KaBOOM! builds itself.

The online programme was funded by the Omidyar Network but KaBOOM! has struggled to make its funding case to more traditional foundations. "For some foundations we're already too big," Hammond says. "For others, we're too risky. One person even told us that reading our concept paper was 'like

[44] http://kaboom.org/about_kaboom/our_mission_vision
[45] http://community.acumenfund.org/profiles/blogs/inspiring-case-study-and
[46] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mashup_%28web_application_hybrid%29
[47] http://www.monitorinstitute.com/documents/Monitor_Institute_KaBOOM_Study_SM.pdf

reading a foreign language'."[48] The project has thrived though, largely because the support was already there from grassroots volunteers to participate. By tapping into this existing offline demand and facilitating it via social media, KaBOOM! radically increased the scale and ambition of their programme.

Other organisations and activities are similarly leveraged through social media. The micro-volunteering movement is using digital tools to enable people to complete small, quick tasks for social benefit organisations from their computers or smartphones. The idea is that many people would like to volunteer, but their schedules will not allow a large chunk of time or a regular commitment to engage in traditional hands-on volunteering activities. Instead, sites such as Sparked.com offer a platform where organisations can post small tasks or 'challenges' which will take between two minutes and two hours to complete. When members log in they receive recommendations of challenges they might like to try based on their skills and interests, and they also receive a weekly email of a recommended challenge. Tasks include proof reading documents, designing logos, filling in surveys and targeted brainstorming, and nearly 300,000 of them have been completed to date. The platform also offers the opportunity to rate the work of others and engage in conversations around the tasks with organisations and other micro-volunteers[49.]

Mass participation

The power of social media to mobilise large numbers of people extremely quickly for a cause is demonstrated by some well-known activist organisations, which regularly rely on their supporters to communicate messages on social media sites to achieve the critical mass they need to make their point.

Carrotmob, a campaigning organisation that encourages businesses to stock sustainable goods, similarly uses social media tools to galvanise a network to action. Rather than taking an oppositional approach, the group uses "the carrot rather than the stick" and incentivises businesses who are doing the right thing by organising 'carrotmobs' to come to a shop and buy everything from their shelves. Mobs are primarily self-organised by members, and overseen by a small central team who promote and support the movement.[50]

Points to remember

Online models provide more cost-effective ways to reach scale because, unlike offline interactions, the costs of inputs are not directly related to the potential number of people you can reach. For example, over a year, a transactional platform used by 100,000 people should not cost much more than a platform used by 100 people, whereas a call centre would need significantly more staff. No wonder then that so many organisations are looking at digital as a route to efficient service delivery at scale.

Social media platforms can increase this potential by allowing organisations to get out of the way entirely, facilitating connections and transactions between individuals with the organisation acting as a 'broker'. In many cases the service or action itself is not delivered or carried out digitally, it is merely arranged online. If the early stages of the internet saw organisations replacing human interactions with online software, now we are seeing software deployed to organise multiple human interactions around the same topic, creating the possibility of scaling up activities without reducing quality or intimacy. The quality of the results of these online interactions is not guaranteed, however, and organisations wishing to use this model should consider what kind of resources and support they might provide to best facilitate high-quality outputs – the online tools provided by KaBOOM! for example doubtless played a large part in the success of the playground-building programme.

An organisation will of course need to invest more human resources in managing a larger online network, as building and maintaining online communities takes time and effort, so there are still costs involved in handing over control to a community. It is true that many digital tools are free to use, and volunteer-run efforts can reach huge numbers of people with no financial resources whatsoever, but achieving this at scale takes time and money. Just because the tools are free does not imply that all not-for-profit organisations can be expected to leverage and engage huge online networks with no extra resources. The costs are primarily in staff time and training, not technology spend. This is human work, and it is always worth questioning proposals that seem to link technology costs directly to numbers of people reached online.

What is needed is the skill to deploy and use the existing technologies effectively to reach supporters, and a strong, clear model for them to follow to deliver the service. Some organisations are lucky enough to have technologically literate supporters willing to volunteer their time, but for many more traditional organisations, it takes resource to build or hire the necessary skills for successful social media engagement. What is most important though is having a compelling, proven model for impact that is sufficiently simple that almost anyone can deliver it. If an organisation has done the hard work of creating such a model, scaling it up through social media is often relatively easy. Question hard proposals that seek to raise large sums on a technology platform and little on people.

[48] http://www.monitorinstitute.com/documents/Monitor_Institute_KaBOOM_Study_SM.pdf
[49] http://www.sparked.com/about
[50] http://www.carrotmob.org/

In recent years, websites facilitating online donations have grown hugely both in number and in size, providing quick and easy ways for people to donate. The Blackbaud 2010 Online Giving report, aggregated from 24 months of online giving data from 1,812 US organisations, found that year-on-year growth in online giving was 34.5% compared to 2009, and that the percentage of total fundraising that comes from online giving has grown to 7.6%.[51] JustGiving, one of the UK's best-known fundraising websites, has facilitated over £770 million worth of donations to date[52]. The site allows organisations and individuals to create their own fundraising pages where supporters can quickly and easily make online donations, and is integrated so that fundraisers can automatically share their fundraising across their Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Donating via SMS is also becoming increasingly common, and the market is estimated to reach £96 million annually by 2014[53]. SMS giving has proven particularly effective in response to natural disasters: in just over one month after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the Red Cross had collected over $32 million through mobile donations for the relief effort.[54] In May 2011, Vodafone and JustGiving announced 'JustTextGiving', a new service to provide even the smallest charities with the opportunity to raise funds through text message.

With so many new digital channels for giving, the role of social media in driving donations is becoming increasingly fundamental to fundraising. Social media campaigns can direct existing supporters to online and mobile giving portals, or encourage people to donate via text. The Red Cross' SMS campaign was so successful in part because they mobilised their networks very quickly, both online and offline, spreading the word about the SMS donation number. Their analysis following the campaign shows that from the 12th – 14th of January 2010 there were 2.3 million tweets about "Haiti" and the "Red Cross," of which 59% were re-tweets sent by supporters, and on 13th January there were around 55,000 mentions of the word "text" on Twitter, largely because of the number of tweets encouraging people to donate.[55]

However, as one recent study notes, "raising funds online is not about technology, any more than raising funds through the mail is about paper".[56] Rather, personal relationships and messaging play an incredibly important part in online fundraising, and social media can help foster those personal relationships on a massive scale. The Red Cross was able to tap into its network of supporters very quickly to drive donations, but only because it had established this network in the first place. With digital donation technologies, it is now possible for the right fundraising campaign to turn the soft relationships of social media into hard cash for the cause. Naturally any fundraiser will examine carefully the relationship between the ease of use of a technology increasing the propensity to give and the commission charged by the technology provider.

Mobilising online communities for offline giving

One of the best-known examples of using social media to drive donations is Twestival ('Twitter Festival'), which connects online communities on Twitter and brings them together offline on a single day to raise money and awareness for a cause and enjoy a social event together. Since its inception in 2009, volunteers have raised close to $1.2 million for 137 non-profits, making the initiative the largest global grassroots funding project to date.[57]

The project works by promoting a city-specific event via Twitter, then encouraging people to turn up to that event and donate money towards a pre-selected cause. The events are organised by volunteers, and 100% of ticket sales and donations go directly toward the chosen project. In 2011, Twestival decided that their goal would be to encourage participants in individual cities to identify a charity or social group that was having a positive impact in their local community. That year, Twestival raised $566k, of which the UK contributed $73k, the largest amount raised by any participating country.

Twestival's success comes mainly from its strategy to mobilise existing online communities to raise money and awareness for a cause, rather than trying to mobilise the existing followers of the cause. The causes they select become talking points for

[51] http://www.blackbaud.com/files/resources/downloads/WhitePaper_2010OnlineGivingReport.pdf
[52] http://www.justgiving.com/about-us/
[53] http://www.guardian.co.uk/voluntary-sector-network/2011/may/09/text-giving-vodafone
[54] http://www.redcross.org/portal/site/en/menuitem.94aae335470e233f6cf911df43181aa0/?vgnextoid=43ffe0b8da8b6210VgnVCM10000089f0870aRCRD
[55] http://www.mobilemarketer.com/cms/lib/9410.pdf
[56] http://www.fundraising123.org/files/Community/Online_Giving_Study_2010R.pdf
[57] http://www.twestival.com/info.html

people who are already very digitally connected, and the events create a real-time focus for conversation which makes it much easier to create 'buzz' around the cause and stimulate online conversations. Critically, it taps into the social nature of these online communities, and gives people a chance to meet face-to-face and have fun together in the name of doing good.

Providing a personal experience

Another way that online platforms are transforming fundraising is through offering potential donors the opportunity to support specific beneficiaries and receive personal feedback, and to connect with other donors that share similar interests. One of the most astonishing examples of this is US site Kiva.org, which enables visitors to choose from a host of developing world micro-entrepreneurs seeking small loans to invest in income-generating activities such as farming or retail – ranging from a couple of hundred to a few thousand dollars.

Rather than donating to an abstract cause or organisation, the Kiva service is uniquely personal. Each potential beneficiary has a profile with a photo and description of what they need the money for, and visitors can choose to lend anywhere from $25 upwards to help the person or group of their choice reach their funding goal. The principal of the loan is repaid over time to the lender, who can then re-loan or withdraw the capital.

Kiva also takes this personal experience a stage further, offering lenders the option to join a 'lending team', a group of lenders based on interest or geography. These teams have a genuinely social element, allowing members to connect with each other and "rally round shared lending goals", and teams are also ranked on the site according to how much each has collectively loaned. The combination of social and personal experiences offered by Kiva has caught people's imagination and led to almost 700,000 people lending $230 million over the last six years.[58]

Another similar initiative, this time for donations rather than loans, confirms the value of the social web in promoting individual giving through providing a personal experience. Donorschoose.org was founded in 2000 by a high school teacher from the Bronx, who noted that schools in poor neighbourhoods lack basic classroom supplies, and followed a hunch that there are many people who would relish the chance to pay for a concrete resource to go to a particular classroom to support deprived children to learn. He therefore built an online platform where teachers can post specific classroom needs, such as books, science equipment or field trips, and donors can donate anything from $1 upwards towards the request of their choice. After the funding goal has been reached and the supplies received, donors receive updates and photos from the class that they have supported.

Like Kiva, Donorschoose also adds a further social dimension to the platform, offering opportunities for supporters to leverage their own networks through the creation of 'giving pages'. Individuals or groups can create an online profile page to encourage others to give to a project or area of their choice, which can be used to donate to an event such as a birthday or wedding, or their own fundraising actions in aid of Donorschoose, or to build online giving communities around a particular topic or location. The model has been a phenomenal success, with one in three schools in the USA having at least one teacher who has used the site, and over 200,000 requests funded to date.[59]

Points to remember

If you are considering investing in a project to raise funds for a cause, social media can provide powerful ways to amplify the impact of a traditional fundraising campaign, and even be a focus for fundraising activities in themselves if the proposition is right. In many cases, social media can also be integrated easily into a wider fundraising strategy.

[58] http://www.kiva.org/about
[59] http://a248.e.akamai.net/f/248/48906/2d/w.donorschoose.org/docs/DonorsChoose_org-NationalOverview.pdf

It is important to consider how an organisation plans to engage its audience with the cause or issue in question, and how quickly. Different technical platforms will be suitable for different purposes (for example SMS text donations for rapid response to disasters, versus web platforms for building communities of support and regular giving around local or specific causes), and messages may need to be communicated offline to drive audiences to social media platforms and engage them in actual giving.

Social media works in real time, so it is important that fundraising campaigns on these platforms give audiences clear things to talk about together. Sometimes this can be an immediate crisis or urgent issue, but some campaigns like Twestival create their own talking points through events and campaign days. Finding a good topic for conversation that directly links to donations can be a cost-effective and low-risk way to raise money online. Whatever the hook, make sure you have a clear route to the point of donation: every barrier means money lost, so the path from conversation to donation must be as smooth and intuitive as possible.

The proposition for the donor needs to be clear too. Is the request for a simple financial donation? Can you demonstrate how the donation will be used? Will there be any feedback to the donor once the donation has been made, or even some kind of return on their investment? The answers to these questions may help to assess how effective an initiative is likely to be in raising funds. Ask too how a donor can share news of their donation with their peers through online social networks, and feel part of a community group with others making similar donations. For example, can donors easily tell others about their donation on their existing social media accounts? Looking for opportunities to personalise and socialise the experience of donation can create a more satisfying experience for the giver whilst also creating more ways to invite others to give as well.

There are opportunities after the campaign is over too. Social media can be very useful for maintaining long-term relationships with donors, converting them into longer term supporters of a cause, so tracking who an organisation is talking to and matching social media conversations to donations is now an important part of donor management. As more interactions and communications move to these channels, keeping track of relationships across multiple channels becomes more difficult – but the people who are engaging most frequently with an organisation digitally can also be some of the highest-value prospects.

'If you are considering investing in a project to raise funds for a cause, social media can provide powerful ways to amplify the impact of a traditional fundraising campaign, and even be a focus for fundraising activities in themselves if the proposition is right.'

In a world where individuals can broadcast information online at the click of a button, it is becoming increasingly difficult for organisations and institutions to keep information about their activities private. Social media push organisations to become more transparent about their activities, by allowing small organisations and individuals to demand transparency from large institutions and hold them to account for their decisions and expenditure. These tools also provide institutions with powerful tools for sharing information with the public, removing the excuses for being closed and unaccountable, whilst also making it easier than ever to be open.

For social organisations and the public sector, becoming more transparent could be considered a goal in itself; providing stakeholders with a clear view of internal activities to allow those within and outside institutions to hold them accountable for good practice. Increased transparency can also allow supporters to help more effectively, to drive donations, build trust and connection with the public, raise awareness and gather support for a cause.

Donor accountability

Organisations that are able to be completely open about their social impact and how their money is spent can tap into social media and digital platforms to drive donations. New York based NGO charity:water has used digital media to highlight exactly where their supporters' money is going, and seen a remarkable upturn in fundraising as a result.

The charity's overarching aim is to bring clean and safe drinking water to people in developing nations. Promising to give 100% of funds raised to people in need, their mycharity:water platform provides supporters with proof that their money has been well-spent, using photos, video and GPS. They also provide information on the kind of water technology used, the population served and the cost per project. This means donors can see the exact impact of the money they have contributed. They have recently added a 'Dollars to Projects' feature, which tracks the number of dollars raised and matches them to actual projects delivered. It even allows individuals to show the money they have raised individually and what they have funded, and encourages sharing and

competition between donors (including celebrities such as Will Smith), to raise more money for the cause.

As of September 2011, since its inception in 2006 the NGO had raised over $42 million for 4,282 projects.[60] Scott Harrison, charity:water's founder, was named in The Nonprofit Times' 'Power and Influence Top 50 list' in July 2011. Considering the charity's relative youth, this is an impressive accolade, and one which Sean Stannard-Stockton, an investment advisor who specialises in working with philanthropy families and writes the Tactical Philanthropy blog, believes is partially down to Harrison and charity:water's effective use of social media.[61]

Holding Government to account

While some organisations are using online tools to become more transparent, many others are also realising the power of social media to fight corruption and push for transparency from institutions that are not so forthcoming. There are examples from all over the world of social media platforms being used to hold powerful institutions to account, from videos of police brutality recorded on mobile phones and uploaded to YouTube, to sites that provide citizens with information on their elected representatives.

One example of this is the Kenyan platform Mzalendo.com, which aims to monitor and open up Parliament and "demonstrate that it is both possible and necessary for Kenyans to demand and expect more accountability from public institutions."[62] The site was started by two young Kenyans frustrated by the lack of information on the activities of Kenyan MPs, which made it difficult for voters to hold them to account. The site includes MP profiles, news and updates on motions, bills and other activities, and any visitor is able to respond to content on the site by leaving comments and participating in discussion threads, or to submit new content such as blog posts, videos or information on MPs and political parties.

A similar service in the UK is mySociety's TheyWorkForYou.com. Covering the Westminster and Scottish parliaments and the Northern Ireland Assembly, the site provides information on members of parliament (including their voting behaviour, written answers, and expenses) as well as parliamentary proceedings such

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[60] http://www.charitywater.org/
[61] http://www.tacticalphilanthropy.com/2011/08/the-power-influence-of-social-media-in-philanthropy
[62] http://www.mzalendo.com/about/

as debates and upcoming motions. In the eyes of many Westminster watchers TheyWorkforYou is much easier to use than the official parliament site. The site currently receives on average 200,000 – 300,000 visits every month,[63] an impressive figure for such a small organisation and one that shows the power of social media to allow small initiatives to have a national impact.

On the campaigning side, another exciting initiative is Ipaidabribe.com, an Indian site that aims to "uncover the market price of corruption" by encouraging citizens to report instances of bribery – and also of good experiences with the authorities – which are then mapped into analytics that can be used to address areas of particular concern. As well as submitting their experiences, visitors to the site can participate in discussion forums, get tips on how not to pay a bribe, and ask questions of experts on particular cases. In less than a year, the site has received over 650,000 visits and over 11,000 bribe reports[64], and the data gathered has been used to reform the Karnataka State Transport Department.[65] Considering the size of the Indian population (1.2 billion in 2010[66]), Ipaidabribe.com's reach is relatively modest, yet it allows its small user base to have a large impact through the public sharing of valuable information.

Points to remember

Online drives for transparency and accountability focus primarily on access to information. Whether it is gathering reports from citizens living in the shadow of corruption to building a solid case for change, or allowing your donors to see in real time where their pennies are going in order to build trust, projects must ensure that they are presenting useful data that people want to see in a format that is easy to use and understand. "Real time" here is a key point: transparency on social media is not about publishing static reports, but opening up the activities of organisations on an ongoing basis so that stakeholders and supporters can observe, interact and critique, often for the first time.

Within non-profits themselves, it is ultimately down to the organisation to decide how far they will open up, and for what purpose. Sometimes supporters will demand openness and transparency, as many large charities have already experienced. Indeed, with so many tools available to share information, it is difficult to keep anything private unless it is securely shared with only a handful of people. It is therefore usually best to assume that all information can and will become public eventually, and to choose to be open unless there is a very good reason not to

be for example if providing information could put staff members or beneficiaries at risk, as can be the case for charities working with vulnerable people, or human rights organisations operating under repressive regimes. In a more networked world anything that is shared freely internally can easily become public, so confidential information needs to be kept separately and secure.

With sites such as Ipaidabribe where reports of criminal activity are uploaded by members of the public and uncorroborated by the organisation itself, there are also legal issues to consider. Ipaidabribe uses a complex programme which removes all mentions of individuals from reports, or they could be open to legal action from those mentioned. Organisations wishing to launch such initiatives should seek legal advice to clarify their position and responsibilities. For a non-profit a simple blog on wordpress.com, for example, is completely free and can be set up in minutes. Anyone on your team who can use Gmail or Hotmail will be able to use it. Staff can write on the blog by sending a simple email to a special address – the email is published as a blog post. This gives you global reach that shows up well in search engines for negligible cost – far less than printing a flyer or poster. The Indigo Trust uses a wordpress.com blog at http://indigotrust. wordpress.com/ to report on what's going on. Other services such as Posterous.com make it even easier.

Whatever the specific considerations for organisations, we are seeing a growing trend towards openness, facilitated by technology, in the public, social and even commercial sectors. Social media tools have made information more freely available to all than ever before, and made it harder than ever to keep secrets without good reason. Smart organisations, and funders, are embracing this trend and seeing remarkable results. Those that resist could find themselves exposed by critics, supporters, or even their own staff.

[63] http://www.mysociety.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/TheyWorkForYou_research_report-2011-Tobias-Escher1.pdf p4
[64] http://www.ipaidabribe.com/
[65] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-13616123
[66] http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3454.htm

SECTION TWO

CONVERSATIONS WITH INVESTORS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

In an emerging and fast-changing field, it can be helpful to hear directly from people who have already begun to invest in order to understand what they look for and how they approach such innovative work. In this section we explore how foundations are investing in projects and organisations that use social media, their reasons for doing so, and some of the challenges they face.

We have conducted detailed case study interviews, primarily with foundations but also with one recently established social enterprise that uses social media to achieve social change. We are very grateful to the following organisations for their detailed inputs and comments in these interviews:

1. John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

2. The Indigo Trust

3. The Barr Foundation

4. LocalGiving.com

5. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

6. Omidyar Network

7. Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts

We asked these organisations about their approach to, and objectives in, investing in social media projects. We invited them to describe the ways in which they measure the results of the programmes that they fund, and offer their advice to others seeking to explore this field.

We also asked our interviewees to what extent they, as funders, were using social media for their own objectives. What we discovered was that some had social media strategies prior to their investment in this field, whereas others had adopted strategies that had developed out of their investment interests. It also became clear that several funders had used their own experience of social media engagement both to inform their approach to investing and to shape their grant-making processes. (For more detailed information on how funders are using social media for their own organisations, see Section Three.)

We also provide tips and advice for those interested in investing in social media projects, drawn from the interviews and other sources, at the end of this section.

Mayur Patel

Vice President
of Strategy and Assessment
at John S. and James L. Knight
Foundation

The Miami-based Knight Foundation states as its mission to 'seek opportunities that can transform both communities and journalism, and help them reach their highest potential'. Established in 1950 by the Knight Brothers, founders of Knight Newspapers, the Foundation is a legacy to the communities where they had newspaper operations up until 1991 and to the profession of journalism worldwide, and makes yearly grants totalling around $100m. Knight has been proactive in its investment in social media projects, and is widely regarded to be at the cutting edge of funding in this field. In addition to traditional grant-making, the Foundation has established a for-profit mission-related investment fund as a piece of their endowment, allowing them to invest in start-ups focused on digital media.

Mayur Patel, Vice President of Strategy and Assessment at Knight, explains that the Foundation's investment in social media projects grew out of their journalism programme, as they recognised the need to respond to the rapid rate of change around the use of technology. "We realised that technology was not just disrupting the way people connect to information, it was also changing the way communities connect to each other," he notes. Building upon this observation, Mayur describes the Foundation's two goals in funding social media projects. The first is to focus on the information needs of communities in a democracy; how communities distribute, gather and participate in the creation of information and knowledge. The second goal is to invest in projects that facilitate community engagement through technology, for example platforms that aim to connect people to each other in ways that help them uncover underlying community assets, or to link them with causes they are passionate about.

When investing in social media projects, the Foundation looks carefully at mission fit and due diligence. This involves investigating broadly whether the potential grantee is open to experimentation within their proposed project, whether they have thought carefully about how they are leveraging social networks in the way they develop digital platforms, and if they have considered how they build a passionate and loyal user community. "We are really looking for teams that combine three types of skills," says Mayur, "though in combination these are elusive: a strong understanding around content; great programming skills, e.g. developer skills for technology; and finally, robust user experience skills and a recognition that design and design principles are important."

Measuring the impact of a grant to a social media project is something that Mayur contends is a challenge for all funders in the field, though he looks to online tools as a way of overcoming that obstacle. "The inherent nature of the web," he says, "allows us to gather information and data in an efficient way that was not possible before." The Foundation focuses on three criteria for assessing impact:

• scale of audience and reach – the extent to which the technology is attracting people;

• intensity of engagement – the extent to which people are increasing their involvement or taking leadership roles; and

• sustainability of the effort – whether the project is able to attract additional finance or earned income.

"GET AWAY FROM THINKING THAT TECHNOLOGY IS A BRIGHT SHINY OBJECT THAT WILL SOLVE EVERYONE'S TROUBLES."

Staying up to date with the rapid rate of technological change is also a challenge for the Foundation. "We try to be an organisation that invests at the leading edge of innovation, and to that end we do not want to fund anti-evolutionary activity," explains Mayur. "The key is to have the right people in-house who are savvy and effective. The ultimate goal is to be as native as we can be, and to keep educating ourselves by immersing ourselves on social media platforms."

There is of course a clear link between the Knight Foundation's own social media strategy and the focus of their investments. "Engaging with social media platforms has helped us achieve a major shift in mindset within our organisation. We find that it assists in engaging with our grantees and listening to what is going on in the field. The Foundation has subsequently made shifts in its staff and we have started to think more comprehensively about our communications functions."

As well as learning and engaging with existing grantees, the Foundation uses social media to tap into the networks of others working in the field, enabling them to keep up to date with the latest trends and developments. Mayur argues that one of the barriers to philanthropic investment in social media projects is that it often requires grant-making to very new organisations working in unknown territory, which can feel risky. The Knight Foundation has tried to mitigate that feeling of risk by employing social media to monitor grantee progress in real-time. To increase the security of investments, the Foundation also deploys various types of capital to social media projects, and it was partially to this end that they established their for-profit mission-related investment fund.

Mayur advises that the most important step for investors wishing to explore the opportunities of social media is to "get away from thinking that technology is a bright shiny object that will solve everyone's troubles. What social media can do is help amplify existing, and sometimes unrecognised, assets in communities, and bring more human capital to bear in addressing today's challenges."

Website: www.knightfoundation.org
Twitter: @Knightfdn

Established in 1999 by Fran Perrin, the Indigo Trust is a grant-making foundation that funds technology-driven projects, primarily in Africa. "Our general objectives are to help people find or create the information they need to make their lives or the places in which they live better," explains William Perrin, Trustee of the Indigo Trust. "Modern online media, whether social or not, can be enormously powerful tools for working toward those objectives. They represent the only way in which citizens can manage their own information economically and at scale."

As experienced practitioners in the field, the Trust often invests in building grantee capacity to use social media in countries where they are not well understood. "Often, people think that they have to build a new tool," notes Fran, "but there are lots of cheap or free platforms out there already that could be perfectly suited to an NGO's objectives. We try to stop people from trying to reinvent the wheel, and we love it when we see a project using free and existing platforms really well."

Knowing the capacity of existing tools is something that Fran and William contend is important for grant-makers, as well as NGOs responsible for implementation. "We are very clear in saying that there isn't a technology or social media solution for every problem," says Fran. "But in most areas of funding, whether it is in healthcare or education, in the UK or internationally, social media or technology will be part of the mix. If you are not looking at

where these tools might be used to further your objectives, then you are probably missing something quite helpful."

When assessing grant applications, Fran and William take care to ensure that their potential grantees have chosen the appropriate tools for the audience that they are trying to reach. "We recently received an application from the charity OneWorld for a project in Nigeria and Senegal which seeks to provide accurate reproductive and sexual health advice to young people via Facebook," recalls Fran. "The first question we asked was 'are kids in Nigeria and Senegal already on Facebook?' They were able to prove to us that they were, and that they were going to where teenagers were already hanging out. Every now and again you do see projects where people haven't tailored the tools to the people they're trying to reach – perhaps they are trying to use an SMS service and it's not in the local dialect, or the audience just don't use that kind of technology."

Supporting projects where the organisation already has the technology skills needed to implement their strategy is also a consideration for the Trust. "The group needs to have some understanding of the technology that they are going to use," says Fran, "though if the organisation has got the right idea, but needs a bit more support, we might bring in advisors or fund them to work in partnership with another organisation that has got a good track record. Similarly, a big challenge we have is making sure that the

technology that we fund is locally available. It is completely unsustainable for us to parachute in laptops, modems or whatever the project needs if the technology can't be fixed nearby."

When it comes to evaluating the impact of grants, the Trust often looks for proxy measurements, and will frequently build evaluation costs into the original grant. "Evaluation is definitely a challenge working in this field," explains Fran, "but we encourage grantees to set their own objectives – for example, to reach a certain number of people by a particular date. That doesn't guarantee success, but we find that that helps people to measure some kind of deliverable. Often, we have to rely on qualitative research, and collecting information of people's experiences using the tools can be very powerful."

"The great thing about social media projects," enthuses William, "is that in many cases, you can simply see the impact that they are having by going online yourself."

The nature of social media tools – in particular, that they are free and openly accessible – often means that you do not need a huge capital investment to develop a brilliant project that delivers national impact. William explains, "you could get a great idea coming from a very small group of people, and that project could have national reach. These media mean that an organisation doesn't have to be configured traditionally to deliver huge impact."

The Trust's philosophy of encouraging the use of existing, cost-efficient tools to achieve great impact is one that reaches into their own social media strategy. "Our first reason for using social media," says Fran, "is really that it is cost-efficient. Having a blog (http://indigotrust.wordpress.com/) and being active on Twitter (@indigotrust) allows us to reach a really big and wide audience with only one full-time member of staff. The tools are free and extremely easy to use. Our second objective is to communicate with people about our work – we want to showcase what we think are exciting projects, and we've often found that that is of great benefit to our grantees. For example, we sometimes act as a gateway investor to much bigger trusts, so we'll make a small investment in a project that's perhaps not very well known or quite young, and in time a larger trust will come in later with a much larger sum." The Trust also uses social media for networking and research, using the tools in combination with traditional methods to keep in contact with their grantees and even to find new ones.

"A big value for us and what we want to fund and support is improved transparency," continues Fran. "To maintain that, we have to live that value. Legally, we have to publish an annual report and accounts, but we don't think that's enough. We use the blog to publish information on all of the grants we make, and by autumn we will publish more detailed spreadsheets of data on our activities. We really believe that there is a huge opportunity for UK donors to be more transparent about their activities, and social media can provide one tool through which they might achieve that objective." Making information available online is not only easier than printing an annual report, but it is much more searchable and accessible to others, something that is very important to the Trust.

"Often," Fran notes, "trusts will be reluctant to be too visible online because they think that they will be swamped with applications and that will create more work. In fact, providing people with information about funding criteria can actually reduce the amount of inappropriate or irrelevant applications you'll receive."

"Other grant-makers, perhaps those funding in a contentious area that gets people excited, might worry about negative comments posted online," adds William. "But if you have a policy that says that all comments must be reasonable and courteous at the top of your page, you can use the delete key if they are not." Of course, what is published is really down to the organisation itself – you might choose simply to have a website that tells people how to get in touch, or you could be completely transparent and very engaged with a lot of the tools.

"The only way to learn is to get started," recommends William. "You really don't have to go out there and be the voice of MegaTrust Inc., you could use the tools on a private basis or encourage people within your organisation to innovate a bit. There might be someone within your organisation who has a real flair for these tools already, but they might be young or in a junior role. Putting it off or having a big strategy is rarely the best way to start. The best strategy to have when engaging with social media is simply to be sensible – behave as you would in a conference or a meeting, but at the same time don't be afraid to crack a joke or be sarcastic. Remember to be human."

Website: http://indigotrust.wordpress.com
Twitter: @IndigoTrust

Roberto Cremonini
former Chief Knowledge & Learning Officer at the Barr Foundation

The Barr Foundation is a Boston-based grant maker whose mission is to 'support gifted leaders and networked organisations working in Boston and beyond to enhance educational and economic opportunities, to achieve environmental sustainability, and to create rich cultural experiences – all with particular attention to children and families living in poverty.'

The Foundation first began to consider the opportunities of social media for social impact when looking at how to support organisations to work in more networked ways. In 2003, around the time that social media tools were beginning to emerge, the foundation led an investigation into how not-for-profits could do better work by operating in networks, or by structuring themselves as networked organisations. Roberto says that "during our study of networks, I started to explore some of the new social tools that were becoming available and realised that they could be used to build the technology infrastructure of organisations that wanted to work in a more "networked" way. This was a departure from the traditional view of an organisation IT infrastructure as a collection of systems that support typical internal functions (e.g., accounting, human resources, and development). It was from that starting point that we approached social media."

Not being a specifically technology-focused funder, the Barr Foundation decided that the best way to support organisations to use social media was through capacity-building and direct technical assistance such as training. This made sense as many of the technologies are available at no cost, but

people often underestimate both the time it takes to get to grips with using them and the skills needed to harness them effectively.

An example of this approach was an initiative to broaden stakeholder representation in the public dialogue about improving education in the Boston school district. Roberto explains that "one of Barr's theories of change was that parents and students have to be part of the conversation if we want to improve education. In the summer of 2010, the conversation was heating up on a lot of fronts and we thought that there was an opportunity to use social media to help parents and students have a bigger voice. We were particularly interested in incorporating more diverse points of view (such as those of immigrant communities) and being more inclusive. So we brought together several NGOs that were already working toward this goal and hired an expert to meet with them and help them create more coherent and aligned social media strategies. Some of the groups were already engaged on social media platforms to some extent so the meetings were also an opportunity to provide peer-learning opportunities to participants. In retrospect, it was quite a difficult process: we felt that our presence in the room as funders was noticeable, and it was often a challenge to coordinate dialogue. It was also difficult for the NGOs to 'warm up' to the consultant so the meetings did not continue after we stopped playing an active convening role." At the end of the day, the outcome was that students and parents did manage to organise themselves so that they had more of a voice and could congregate in public spaces for peaceful demonstrations.

"However,"– says Roberto – "it is difficult to make a causal link between our work with the NGOs and what happened last summer."

In Roberto's experience this is typically the case; measuring the impact of these kinds of projects can be difficult. "Often we are trying to experiment with new ideas and ways of working, but then we do not change or adapt the systems we use to measure results. What's particularly challenging in measuring the impact of networks is that most of our metrics are based on an organisational paradigm. We're used to looking at organisations as black boxes that – given some inputs – produce outcomes and outputs. But the "network way" is not as linear and clean. If you put a lot of different people or organisations together in a network and the network grows and works well, you eventually reach a point when you lose control of the outcomes. With social media, for example, this translates into one's inability to control the message beyond a certain point. Indeed, this is both the challenge and the beauty of networks. The impact may be wider, but much harder to track once you've lost control."

The Foundation has also tried convening groups of not-for-profits working in similar geographies or issue areas to encourage them to think of ways in which they could amplify their collective impact by working together or individually through networks.

An example of this approach can be found in the Barr Foundation's endeavour to connect environmental justice groups working along the Mystic River. "We wanted to see if several of our grantees could amplify their collective impact while combining resources by working in a more networked way. With the help of consultants, we convened them to become more aware of their similarities, differences, and the resources that each of them could bring to bear. We also began to

grow their digital infrastructure so that they could better communicate, both internally and with stakeholders and constituencies" says Roberto. "Initially, we didn't see much success – the groups were resistant to working in this way, and there was low uptake of the ideas we had suggested. However, sometime after we'd tried to build this network, the news got out that ExxonMobil were about to award a large settlement to a bird sanctuary to compensate for a recent oil spill on the Mystic River." The network that Barr had begun to grow with little early success was very quickly mobilised to formulate a bid for some of the Exxon settlement. Within four weeks the group had managed to put together a successful case and ultimately managed to win $1 million from ExxonMobil. "We didn't succeed at getting the small organisations to use social media," concedes Roberto, "but we did lay the foundations for a network to be activated when it was needed, and that was ultimately really successful."

There can be a lot of pressure for foundations to produce measurable results, but Roberto has found that "a lot of this 'net work' , particularly with social media, is more about building relationships than about funding projects or programmes." In this sense, the work becomes more emergent, less of a destination and more of a journey. "I think one of the most common fears among foundations when using these tools," Roberto reflects, "is to expose yourself to failure, and to admit that you might have invested a load of money in something that didn't do what you expected. But we mustn't forget that with a smaller investment in relationships today, we can build the "connective tissue" between the people that will work in more creative ways tomorrow and a lot can be gained from sharing our experiences along the way."

Website: www.barrfoundation.org

"WORKING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA IS MORE ABOUT BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THAN ABOUT FUNDING PROJECTS OR PROGRAMMES."

Marcelle Speller
Founder and Chief Executive

and

Lea Garrett
Marketing Manager
at Localgiving.com

Founded in 2008 by internet entrepreneur Marcelle Speller, Localgiving.com's mission is to 'enable philanthropic giving to small local charities and community groups throughout the UK'. Localgiving.com works by allowing people to search for UK charities by location and/or cause, donate to, and then receive feedback from those charities they choose to support. Having been vetted by their local Community Foundation, charities and community groups are able to create webpages on the site highlighting their mission, current projects and photos, as well as details of how a donation would help advance their work. "As a philanthropist, my objective was to help local communities from the bottom up," says Marcelle, "and if you want to do that, social media provide great ways to reach people at the individual level, allowing you to get to the grassroots."

Localgiving.com works to socialise a network based around philanthropy, opening up the idea of strategic giving to a wide audience whilst connecting donors to their local communities. Lea Garrett, Marketing Manager for Localgiving.com says "we are really passionate about changing the view of philanthropy and emphasising that strategic giving is important at every level – not just among the wealthy."

The website is not solely a tool for donors to find and support charities in a particular area, rather Localgiving.com is first and foremost a platform for small charities and community groups to showcase their efforts online as well as a source for online fundraising training. As part of this, Localgiving.com encourages these groups to use social media themselves.

"Using social media tools is an extremely effective way for charities to promote their Localgiving.com webpage in order to fundraise and engage with supporters," Marcelle explains, "time and money spent on building a network online will go much further than the same amount spent on printed materials, for example." Lea adds: "Localgiving.com works with very small, vulnerable charities; they don't have huge budgets, and they can't invest a lot in digital campaigns. Social media are the way they can get the word out, raise awareness and access new donors in a relatively cost-effective way." She continues: "The great thing about the community organisations that we work with is that their projects are in and for their local community, so the local businesses and residents are a natural network for the charities. These days, donors expect more than just to make a donation – they expect an experience that gives them an opportunity to engage with the charities they support – and these groups have an edge because they have an established local social network in their community."

Localgiving.com also plans to enhance the networking elements of its own website, making it an interactive social tool for individuals and charities to use to build community online. One aspect of this is enabling individual supporters to create profiles where they can highlight their areas of geographic and philanthropic interest, which could also be connected to their Facebook or Twitter accounts. "Something that we'd also really like to encourage is collaboration between different groups within

"TIME AND MONEY SPENT ON BUILDING A NETWORK ONLINE WILL GO MUCH FURTHER THAN THE SAME AMOUNT SPENT ON PRINTED MATERIALS"

a particular community," adds Lea "so it's not just about connecting donors to not-for-profit groups, but also about connecting them to each other to share resources."
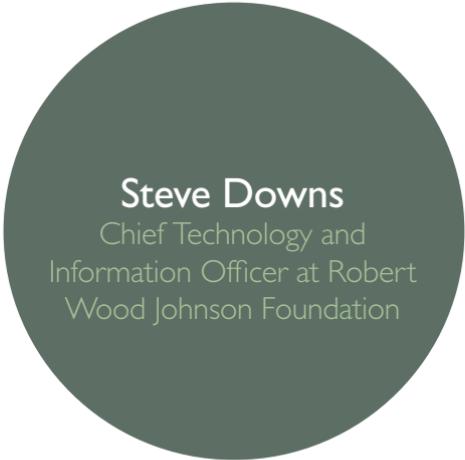
To promote these ideas and the website itself, Localgiving.com uses other social media tools to communicate with stakeholders about its work. "Being active on social media platforms allows us to reach many people very quickly at a very low cost – that's especially important to us as a start-up" Lea explains. "A big challenge we've faced," she adds, "is that we've got a very wide range of stakeholders. Our community is comprised of Community Foundations, small local charities and community groups, donors and various other community bodies including subgroups of charities and supporters – and we want to reach each of them. It is particularly difficult to make messages relevant to both donors and charities. We need to retain the 'local' element of it all while also understanding that each person has a different definition of community. Bringing all of those components in whilst maintaining our core values and brand consistency is a challenge. However, one of the things that I think is so great about social media is that they allow you to experiment in putting messages out to see what works, and that's been very helpful for us, especially as a new enterprise." Marcelle agrees, "you can, to some extent, track and assess your online efforts with social media without making a huge investment. Less so than with

a website, but you can analyse click-throughs and levels of interest, which is helpful. Re-tweets on Twitter and Facebook 'likes' do not necessarily convert to donations, so we need to ensure that those who express an interest in Localgiving.com actually reach the website and find what it is they are looking for."

Marcelle and Lea believe that teaching organisations how to use and benefit from the internet can be an even more valuable gift than money. "Localgiving.com is all about developing relationships and exposing charities' work to more people. Almost everyone is using social media as a networking tool in one way or another, so incorporating our website into social media websites (and vice versa), gives people a variety of places to start discussing local charities," says Lea. "Try to view everything as a learning process. There are loads of tools out there, and you'll find that there is an online community for everything." Marcelle advises new users to look before they leap: "Don't just go charging in because you might turn people off by not using the norms of those media. Make sure you have a basic strategy." Lea also warns that it is important not to make social media seem larger and more important than they are; "essentially they are a faster, more efficient version of word of mouth communication."

Website: www.localgiving.com
Twitter: @Localgiving

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), working from offices in Princeton, NJ, is the USA's largest philanthropy devoted solely to health, granting approximately $350 million per year. The Foundation's mission is to improve the health and health care of all Americans, with grant-making focused around seven areas, ranging from issue specific programmes such as childhood obesity, to supporting innovation and innovators working toward RWJF's mission.

RWJF engages with social media platforms in three important ways, explains Chief Technology and Information Officer Steve Downs. The first is through institution-wide channels, such as the @RWJF Twitter account. The second is on departmental or programme-specific platforms, where each team has its own communications effort that is managed by an external communications firm, and is responsible for the delivery of a specific social change-oriented communications strategy for their programme. Finally there is engagement on an individual staff level, where many of the Foundation's staff members are on Twitter and other networks, and the @RWJF Twitter page links to a list of those staff tweeting about their work.

RWJF first started engaging with social media when they realised the potential for increased learning and participation: "we carried out an institution-level strategy exercise a few years ago, with the intention of working out which direction and what themes we would focus on as an organisation," Steve explains. "We had noticed what was going on with work on web 2.0 around us, as well as some emerging trends in the philanthropic sector,

and felt that we needed to contribute. I think we saw that engaging with social media could afford us greater opportunities for learning from our peers and stakeholders, and also that we could become more participatory as an organisation by being active online."

The Foundation's current work in engaging with social media platforms is focused on growing their networks in size and diversity, and being active in their development. An important part of this, says Steve, is ensuring that there is an interactive element to digital initiatives. "As a relatively well-known name, we have a lot of people coming to our website every day, but really we want those people to react and share what they've found. Our work in social media, as a result, is about trying to encourage meaningful connections and engagement." Steve admits that working out ways of encouraging interaction can be tricky, however. "It can be really disappointing when you've posted something on a blog, for example, and you know that people are reading it, yet no one actually responds. That's more about the fact that when you've put work into something, it's hard when you don't get the result you want."

Measurement of results is largely focused around levels of online interaction, and this is currently being done within each programme area. Steve admits, however, that it is difficult for the organisation to feed back what has been learnt from individual evaluations to wider institutional strategy, which makes it hard to monitor overall impact. "We have had a few notable instances where our efforts have really snowballed though," he says, "there have been times where a staff member or team has posted

on an external blog, started up a debate about something, which has then ultimately got the mainstream media involved."

Steve also sees great potential for foundations to use their social media presence to support their grantees: "RWJF has a strong brand and following, and as such we try to be amplifiers of our grantees' impact. Making sure that we talk about their successes online is an important part of this. We've also found that being involved ourselves has made us more knowledgeable when assessing grant applications that involve social media: exposure and participation at foundation level will predispose you to being supportive."

"Our efforts in this space are really growing", asserts Steve, "although initially, it was difficult to persuade some people within our staff team of the benefits of being active on social media platforms. Some expressed concern that using the sites would take up too much time; others weren't convinced of the benefits of engagement. We argued that it is a fundamental part of any RWJF staff member's job to remain up to date with the latest developments in the field, and that contributing on social media platforms is an efficient way to do that. I think, also," Steve continues, "that foundations are, in general, quite risk averse. With social media, you can often put a lot of time into something and not get much in return, and the fact that measuring return is so difficult makes that initial investment even harder."

To overcome some of these challenges, Steve recommends that foundations set aside time to practice using the platforms. "It sounds really simple," he says, "but it's very hard to know what social media really means until you do it. Conducting small, focused online experiments allow staff to learn about the potential for social media within their work. I think a big fear for anyone initially is about exposing their ignorance – about talented people feeling vulnerable online because they're not familiar with how it all works. Our approach is to say 'you don't have to pretend to be smart, you just have to show that you're interested', and I think that's great advice for getting going with social media in general." Starting small and encouraging experimentation are important lessons to be drawn from RWJF's example, and according to Steve it is well worth the effort: "We've really seen the benefits to participating: we are getting connected with people we wouldn't have before and we're becoming well-known voices in the fields in which we work."

Website: www.rwjf.org
Twitter: @RWJF

Todor Tashev
Investment Partner at Omidyar Network

Omidyar Network (ON) was established by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar and his wife Pam in 2004. ON is a philanthropic investment firm, which seeks to 'create opportunity for people to improve their lives by investing in market-based efforts that catalyse economic, social and political change'. Towards that end, ON is a strategy-driven investor in both for-profit and not-for-profit organisations. In 2011, the firm had committed a cumulative total of $448 million since its inception, of which $211 million was for-profit investments, and $237 million was to not-for-profit organisations.

ON holds a broad affinity with technology, explains Todor Tashev, Investment Partner at the firm: "We believe that its use can enable efficient scaling and amplification of social impact, whilst serving to facilitate connection, transaction, communication and engagement between agents." ON invests in social media in two ways: first, across all programme areas as a tool that the majority of its investees use for their own objectives; and secondly, within the Consumer Internet and Mobile investment area, where the goal is specifically to 'enhance individuals' quality of life by enabling them to connect with others, make more informed decisions, access products and services efficiently, and take action on what matters to them'.[67]

The Consumer Internet and Mobile portfolio includes, amongst others, Guidestar, an online database of information on non-profit organisations; DonorsChoose.org, an online charity where teachers post specific funding requests for classroom needs and donors can donate to pay for all or part of the request of their choice; and Creative Commons, an organisation that develops, supports, and

stewards legal and technical infrastructure that maximizes digital creativity, sharing, and innovation. When considering an investment, ON broadly assesses an organisation's ability to scale, amplify and enable social impact. More specifically, it looks for alignment around four foundational principles:

- sustainability
- capability to execute strategy
- focus on tracking impact; and
- a dedication to good governance.

ON also looks for an aptitude for continued innovation in its investees, which Todor believes is critical for organisations working in the rapidly changing field of technology. Rigorous selection criteria help mitigate the risks associated with investing in a new field, and pave the way for long-term funding relationships – grants typically span at least three years. As ON focuses on every aspect of an investee's potential to foment social change, they almost always fund operating support, preferring to invest in organisations and entrepreneurs and let those teams deploy capital as they wish, rather than restricting funds to specific projects.

Metrics for measuring impact are agreed between ON and investees at the beginning of their relationship. With some variation depending on whether the organisation is for-profit or not-for-profit, these criteria will always include measures of engagement, reach and cost to serve. In both cases, ON investment partners will typically take governance roles within investee organisations, a concept borrowed from venture capital, and one which helps Omidyar Network keep track of strategic direction and impact and more effectively provide assistance to investees.

[67] http://omidyar.net/investment_areas/media-markets-transparency/consumer-internet-mobile

With for-profit investees, the first step in measuring impact at the end of the investment period is to assess the organisation's financial success. "This stems from our contention that if the company, by virtue of the business it is doing, is providing positive social impact, a good proxy of whether or not it has delivered that impact is how financially successful it has been," Todor explains. "For example, when we invested in Digg, an online news aggregation platform, we saw their concept as a great way of democratising access to information – the more people that use the platform, the more financially successful it will be, thus creating wider social impact."

To measure the impact of not-for-profits, metrics have to be more specific, explains Todor. An example is ON investee Wikimedia Foundation, the non-profit that is behind Wikipedia. "We test their outputs against two criteria: the first is financial sustainability – we fundamentally believe that financial sustainability via a diversified income stream allows an organisation to have continued social impact; the second examines the number of unique visitors to the site, and the number of contributors."

Todor advises that the most important step for a not-for-profit looking to engage with social media is to learn which tools are most suited to conveying the organisation's message. For funders, that means helping investees identify which platforms are most relevant to their objectives, and which will yield the highest return on investment. Because the tools are evolving quickly, it is difficult for organisations to know which work well and which are less effective, and helping grantees figure this out is a worthwhile investment. Measuring what works for a particular organisation is key, and this entails defining hypotheses and gathering related data, however organisations often do not have the skills and knowledge to do this. ON has in-house experts who work with investees, and can also connect them with appropriate networks.

ON actively encourages investee engagement both on and offline, using its position as a highly-networked organisation to convene investees and experts, and developing its own network. "We are, in many ways, in a unique position among investors in that we fund both for-profit and not-for-profit organisations. Our situation allows us draw upon lessons from being integrated into the for-profit ecosystem, where it's easier to take bigger risks, and to share them with others," Todor explains. To this end, ON convenes an annual Executive Forum, which brings together leaders of investee organisations to share knowledge and experiences.

ON is also actively embedded on social media platforms, with the goals of sharing insight, approaches, and information about their investees. Todor talks of one initiative led by ON. "In 2008, we tried to set up a working group on one of the established social networking platforms for all of our investees, to encourage organisations to network amongst each other, and to share insight. The take up wasn't as high as we had expected. Perhaps we were a little early in trying to engage people in that fashion and the focus of the group we set up was too broad. But we know that investees are interested in this kind of forum, so we'll keep iterating our idea to make it work."

From this experience, Todor draws wider lessons for engaging with social media: "the key thing with social media," he explains, "is that everyone's still working out how to use the platforms, and as with anything relatively new, you need to continue to tweak your approach if something doesn't work out. One of the great things about social media is that you can really quantify things. To get the best outcome, you need clear hypotheses that are data-driven, which you can then test and adapt as you need to."

Website: www.omidyar.net
Twitter: @OmidyarNetwork

"THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP FOR A NOT-FOR-PROFIT LOOKING TO ENGAGE WITH SOCIAL MEDIA IS TO LEARN WHICH TOOLS ARE MOST SUITED TO CONVEYING THE ORGANISATION'S MESSAGE."

Victoria Hornby
Former Executive at Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts

Victoria Hornby was until August 2011 an Executive at the Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts (SFCT), the operating office of eighteen grant-making trusts established by three generations of the Sainsbury family[68]. She has experience working across many of the Trusts, focusing on disability, disadvantaged communities, criminal justice, climate change and the environment, paediatric palliative care and social investment. She is also an Adviser to the Charles Dunstone Charitable Trust.

Between them, the SFCT have supported a small number of projects using social media over the last few years, which have turned out to be successful investments. The True Colours Trust was one of the first of the trusts to make a grant in this area in 2005, providing a grant to the Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM) campaign to 'employ full time staff and begin its work to lobby for significant improvements for disabled children and their families'[69]. As part of their work, EDCM uses Facebook and Twitter as an advocacy tool, updating supporters on the latest developments with the campaign, and raising awareness of the cause through social media networks more broadly.

Victoria explains that the Trusts have often approached grant-making to social media projects with an understanding that digital and social media tools lend themselves to the efficient delivery of certain services within particular areas. Their experience shows that strategic investment in social media projects can be an effective way of enhancing various different programme areas, and need not be a standalone funding strand.

Something that social media tools can do very effectively and efficiently is to build and connect communities of interest that may be physically separated by geography; where the issue is one of isolation, social media tools whose primary function is to share information and connect users are a great fit. An example of this is a grant made by the Monument Trust to Media for Development, a not-for-profit organisation which uses different media to reach, engage, and empower isolated communities in the UK and internationally. The Trust funded the development of YoungDads.TV, an online TV channel which employs digital and social media tools such as informational videos (how to change a nappy!) and social networking to champion and support young men in their roles as fathers. Research commissioned by the Monument Trust, and conducted by Lemos and Crane[70], found that there are few places where young fathers can find support among peers, as they tend to be less connected to local services and networks than young mothers. YoungDads.TV, which is co-designed by young fathers and built upon user-generated content, makes headway in connecting and developing a community of young fathers online where there are few opportunities to do so offline. The original grant in 2009 was £150,000 to be spent over two years, and Monument Trust has recently approved a second grant of £190,000 to continue the work for the next two years.

Social media can also be a good way to deliver medium to long-term services, Victoria explains: "social media tools can be really useful for providing support to people who are no longer at absolute crisis point, or where face–to–face

[68] http://www.sfct.org.uk/
[69] http://www.truecolourstrust.org.uk/edcm.aspx
[70] Available: http://www.lemosandcrane.co.uk/home/index.php?id=204285

interaction might prove to be a barrier to a service user's development.'' Victoria points to the provision of support to servicemen and women affected by post-traumatic stress disorder as an example where this kind of approach might be successfully deployed in combination with other interventions.

While Victoria sees the great potential of social media, she notes that there are unique challenges associated with funding in this area. Not least of these is the issue of measuring the impact of grant-making to social media projects, partly because the use of social media for social change is still new (which can in itself form a barrier to philanthropic investment). The Trusts' approach to measuring impact has thus far been conducted on a case-by-case basis, and Victoria argues that this is the correct approach to measuring impact for these types of projects. ''Measurement metrics are only meaningful if they are specific to individual cases'', she says. ''For example, in the case of YoungDads.TV, when assessing the impact of

our grant, we would want to know how many users the site had attracted, how many had continued to use the site and at what rate new users were joining. As the site's development so relies on user-generated content, we would also want to understand how many people were contributing and how regularly, as well as how many new contributors the site was attracting. We funded YoungDads.TV initially to see if it would work, and our measurement metrics must take that into account.''

Victoria advises that being open to new opportunities, and educating the staff and board of a grant-making organisation, are important elements in getting to grips with these new social media tools. Gaining an understanding of how long a digital project takes to execute is key too, and might be achieved by talking to potential or current grantees about their goals and objectives for a social media project, whilst building positive case studies from those relationships.

Website: www.sfct.org.uk

"SOMETHING THAT SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS CAN DO VERY EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY IS TO BUILD AND CONNECT COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST THAT MAY BE PHYSICALLY SEPARATED BY GEOGRAPHY."

TIPS *and* ADVICE *on* INVESTING *in* SOCIAL MEDIA

Although this is an evolving field, there are nevertheless various common lessons emerging from the work of innovative organisations and individuals. What follows is a selection of tips drawn from research and interviews with funders and practitioners.

WHAT TO REMEMBER	Social change happens offline. Ask how the initiative is going to precipitate action through online engagement.
	The community probably knows more about their needs than you do: figure out what they want to do and support them to do it.[71]
	There isn't a technology or social media solution for every problem, but if you are not considering how these tools could help further objectives, then you are probably missing something very helpful.[72]
	Be clear on your objectives from the start, but be prepared to shift your focus and follow new opportunities as you learn what your community wants.
	Not every social media project will work perfectly, but ones that really take off will be bigger than everything else, so be prepared to test concepts and try many things.
WHAT TO AVOID	Don't be seduced by quick-win case studies – the impact of social media initiatives often takes some time to develop.
	Do not try and build new communities or campaigns unless there is a clear demand: think instead about how to support what is working online already. Go to the places where people are already having their conversation.
	You do not need more expensive technology to reach more people online using social media: beware of projects that make a direct correlation between technology costs and numbers of people reached.
	Before considering the creation of a new technical platform, see if there are already tools available that could be used for the same purpose: usually there are, and people are already using them. Using someone else's platform can drastically reduce cost and risk and speed up your time to action, but you might have to surrender some control or trim your requirements to meet what's available.
	Beware of top-down communications campaigns masquerading as social movements: unless the messages and actions are genuinely driven by the community, they will not benefit from the true power of peer networks. Good social media campaigns put people in control and reflect their values, rather than telling them what to do.[73]
	Don't bolt on a "social" dimension to a project that doesn't work that way. Projects that use these tools most effectively are designed to work in a social way from the start, and are integrated across every channel.
	Don't second guess who can and will use social media: in many cases you will be surprised how diverse the users of these tools can be.

[71] Andy Gibson interviewed by the Institute for Philanthropy
[72] Fran and William Perrin interviewed by the Institute for Philanthropy
[73] Andy Gibson interviewed by the Institute for Philanthropy
[74] ibid
[75] Sean Stannard-Stockton interviewed by the Institute for Philanthropy
[76] Allison Fine interviewed by the Institute for Philanthropy
[77] Andy Gibson interviewed by the Institute for Philanthropy
[78] Lucy Bernholz interviewed by the Institute for Philanthropy
[79] Diana Scearce interviewed by the Institute for Philanthropy
[80] Fran and William Perrin interviewed by the Institute for Philanthropy
[81] Andy Gibson interviewed by the Institute for Philanthropy

WHAT WORKS	Create content that is 'remarkable' – that is, worthy of remarking on – and people will pass your message on for you.[74]
	The greater an organisation's reach, and the more active their community, the more effective an online campaign will be. This is not simply a measure of size of audience, but of the level of engagement, loyalty and, most importantly, advocacy of the community.
	Use the tools that audiences and beneficiaries are already using, and tap into the conversations they are already having, and the things they already want to do.
	Social media thrives on playfulness and fun, so don't cut those out in an attempt to be too "professional".
	If in doubt, speak to the potential beneficiaries and audiences for a project (either digitally or face-to-face), try things out and see how they respond. You don't need to design projects in isolation from their communities any more.
WHAT TO INVEST IN	Invest in capacity to support projects and organisations that are already engaging people effectively online, and support them to scale up what is working.
	Rather than funding grantees to launch a specific social media strategy, support the human and technological infrastructure they need to figure out and implement a strategy that is right for them.[75]
	Social media are 24/7 channels, so organisations may need extra support to keep up the necessary service levels to make services really successful.
	Investing in technology is often a distraction. Funding people to communicate via these channels, manage communities and create or promote compelling concepts can pay huge dividends when the technology is already there.
	Ask how the community can help with the delivery and scaling of a campaign, and support organisations to do the vital engagement work needed to tap into the power of their networks. Investments in relationships are hugely valuable in a networked world.
WHAT TO MEASURE	It is crucial to understand how many people are being reached through social media compared to the size of the potential audience in total – an audience of 100,000 sounds like a lot for example, but as a percentage of 5 million it looks less impressive.
	Agree measurement metrics at the outset of the relationship, but also remember that engaging with social media platforms can be unpredictable and that can be a good thing.
	Go beyond easy metrics like hits and views. Look for engagement and offline impact.[76]
	The advocacy levels of your community – the likelihood that your customers will recommend your services to their friends – is the most powerful and important measure of your reach in a networked world.[77]
	In such a fast-moving field, you can't wait for studies to prove that something works. Donors and not-for-profit organisations should make small experiments, make mistakes, iterate and then try again.[78]
WHERE TO START	Join or create a community of practice and share your experiences.[79]
	Educate yourself – speak to people who know.[80]
	Don't expect to know everything: these tools are still new and we are only just starting to understand their impact. Academic work is weak in this area, they are playing catch-up.
	Seek professional support where necessary – but beware of consultants who do not have experience of building their own projects that have actually delivered social impact. Only people with hands-on experience can give reliable insights into how such a new field really works. Beware of anyone who may be labelled a 'guru'.
	Do your research. Before trying to create a new campaign or project, find out if there is anyone else doing it successfully already that you could support instead.
	Most of these tools are available in your pocket right now, so there are no excuses for not having a go yourself. Try them out and see how they work first hand![81]

HOW FUNDERS ARE USING SOCIAL MEDIA THEMSELVES

Just as operating charities and social benefit organisations are harnessing social media to further their work (as exemplified in Section One), we know that foundations also use social media tools for some of the same objectives. Some choose, for example, to use social media to tell people about the impact of their programmes. Some use online tools to engage with their stakeholders, or to learn more about the work of others to inform their own programmes. Others are active in online networks relevant to their work, seeking opportunities to influence wider audiences.

However, foundations and trusts play unique roles in the ecosystem of the social sector, and as a result also hold the potential to leverage social media tools for different and specific objectives, some of which were highlighted in Section Two. From those case study interviews and from our discussions with other experts and our wider research, we have identified below some of the objectives and goals that foundations commonly have in engaging with social media.

ACTING AS A LOUDSPEAKER
FOR GRANTEES' WORK

By being active contributors to social media sites, foundations can not only position themselves as leaders on certain issues, they can also promote the work of their grantees. Often, foundations have well-respected brand names and extensive existing networks. Using their position and profile to promote grantees' work both on and offline can be very beneficial toward raising awareness of a group's work or of a particular programme area.[82] "If you see an inspirational beneficiary of one of your grants on a field visit," William Perrin suggests, "with their permission talk about the experience with your supporters on social networks straight away – don't wait until the annual report."

MAKING INFORMATION AVAILABLE

Non-profit technology expert Beth Kanter believes that one way in which foundations might amplify their impact through social media is by making their data publicly available. "Foundations are repositories of a great deal of knowledge", she notes, "they hold vast amounts of information on social problems in particular areas, as well as data from grant evaluations, applications and impact".[83] Making that data available can be invaluable for grantees and other stakeholders, and social media platforms such as wiki sites can be effective tools to achieve this.

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation's Organisational Effectiveness capacity-building programme provides a great example of how this might be done. The 'OE Wiki', which the Foundation has likened to a "glass filing cabinet",[84] makes internal thinking and resources on the Organisational Effectiveness programme publicly accessible online, and allows visitors to comment, provide feedback and join discussions, or even become members and add original content. By making this information public, the Foundation has created a space for collaborative learning with grantees, funders and other stakeholders, and has also found that the wiki is enabling the

team to work more efficiently, and that it acts as a useful resource for grantees and colleagues.[85]

INVITING STAKEHOLDERS INTO
INTERNAL PROCESSES

Other foundations have used social media to invite stakeholders to input into processes that are normally internal and opaque. In 2006 the Case Foundation conducted a research project to assess whether the millions of dollars that had been funnelled into service and civic engagement programs in previous years had led to those activities and values becoming embedded more deeply into Americans' lives. The resulting study, 'Citizens at the Centre: A New Approach to Civic Engagement', found that "embedding civic engagement more deeply in communities would require going beyond asking people to plug into programmes that encouraged them to 'do good'. Rather, there was a need for the creation of more civic spaces that would allow diverse groups of people to connect with each other... discuss what matters most, form solutions, and take action together to address them".[86] With this research as a starting point, the Foundation conceived the Make it Your Own Awards (MIYO), a grant-making initiative to support and showcase citizen-sourced efforts around the country. Whilst developing the programme, the Case Foundation staff realised that they too needed to 'walk the talk' and involve citizens in the process. So they took the unusual step of designing a grant programme that "would be almost entirely shaped by people outside its doors – from determining the grant guidelines and judging criteria to reviewing applications and voting on the winners."[87]

Applications were invited from individuals and small local groups for ideas to improve their communities. Panels of judges narrowed applications to a shortlist of 20 community projects, which was then opened up to a public vote to decide the four which would win the largest grants. The Top 20 also received smaller grants, along with capacity-building support. By March 2008 15,232 votes had been cast and the Final Four winners had been selected, all of whom

82 Todor Tashev of Omidyar Network, Steve Downs of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Fran and William Perrin of the Indigo Trust highlight the importance of foundations using social media to promote their grantees' work in Section Two.
83 Beth Kanter interviewed by the Institute for Philanthropy
84 http://packard-foundation-oe.wikispaces.com/
85 http://packard-foundation-oe.wikispaces.com/Wiki+Journal
86 http://www.casefoundation.org/case-studies/make-it-your-own-research/introduction
87 Ibid

were committed to making their communities better places to live through citizen-centred engagement. Two years after the grants were awarded, the Foundation commissioned a comprehensive evaluation of the programme, and the results were impressive. 80% of those awarded grants were still highly engaged and moving forward with their projects, and a majority of those who had applied but had not received a grant had moved their projects forward.[88]

By integrating the methodology of the types of community interventions they were advocating into the fabric of their programme, the Case Foundation demonstrated their commitment to true citizen-centred community development. The design of the programme, using citizen input to identify the most promising citizen-centred projects, also very likely contributed to the success of its outcomes. In opening up the grant-giving process, the foundation was not only funding community projects, but was also using its own activities to encourage direct civic participation in the process of philanthropy, which of course also impacts communities and affects civic life.

ENGAGING PEOPLE TO HELP SOLVE PROBLEMS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

As we noted in Section One of this paper, social media can be useful tools for not-for-profits to gather opinions from stakeholders. As in the MIYO example above, foundations can also use the social web to invite original ideas from people who might not necessarily be engaged with the philanthropic community or think of applying for a grant, and in the process raise awareness of a particular cause or issue.

The Minnesota Idea Open was developed to help Minnesotans learn about critical issues affecting the state, to develop creative new solutions for addressing those issues and to be inspired to act[89]. Developed by The Minnesota Community Foundation and

Ashoka Changemakers with support from the Knight Foundation, the project uses social media tools to encourage people living in Minnesota to come up with ideas to help solve a particular social issue.

So far, the initiative has run eight challenges. In 2010, the project invited participants to think of ways to tackle obesity in the state, encouraging them to submit them to the central Idea Open website and discuss them via social media. As well as being able to debate and discuss other ideas on the site, participants could also watch YouTube videos on, and discuss and comment upon, the ideas of others. The site received over four hundred applications for its first challenge in 2010 – these were subsequently narrowed down to three through an open voting process on their website. The winner received a $15,000 grant toward developing their idea.

Whilst still a relatively young initiative, the project highlights one way in which foundations can use social media to raise awareness of a particular issue by inviting audiences to come up with specific ideas on how to tackle it.[90]

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

As foundations become more engaged with media platforms, their activities inevitably become more transparent to outsiders. Most communications between individuals or groups on social media platforms are open for anyone to see should they so wish, and this feature of social media can be beneficial for any kind of organisation. Those who view conversations from the outside could turn out to be potential supporters who take on a role of spreading the message to others, or they may be able to offer suggestions as to how to improve programmes or even help deliver services. Sharing learning and information that can improve the work of others in the social space is also an indirect way of advancing an organisation's mission and wider social agenda.

[88] http://www.casefoundation.org/case-studies/make-it-your-own-research/introduction
[89] http://www.mnideaopen.org/thestory
[90] Interview with Jennifer Ford Reedy by the Institute for Philanthropy

Some foundations have intentionally invested in conducting strategic experiments into using digital technology and social media to increase their organisational transparency. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation's OE Wiki, mentioned above, is an example of an initiative that has been successful in opening up internal information to a wider audience, making learning, thinking and processes public.

Glasspockets.org, a project of the US-based Foundation Center, aims to catalogue transparency and accountability practices among US foundations. The site gathers information on twenty-three types of transparency and accountability practice, from providing information on governance and grant-making information to publishing performance measures. Visitors to the site can see clearly the information that a foundation openly makes available. Incorporated into this, the site also assesses the extent to which a foundation communicates with its stakeholders. Glasspockets.org is a valuable resource for foundations interested in investigating social media and communications tools for transparency.

In a similar vein, the Foundation Center also runs the 'Grantsfire' system, which uses an innovative new format called hGrant and allows foundations to submit and post grant data electronically in near real-time[91]. Anyone can then view information about where a foundation has given a grant, how much money they have given and for what purpose.

Tools like Grantsfire represent important advances in making it easier for foundations to be more open about what they do, by engaging with digital tools to publish information, and making that information useful to other stakeholders by aggregating it in near-real time and presenting it in a clear and user-friendly way.

SOME DATA ON FOUNDATIONS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

• According to a new survey of communications staff by the US-based Communications Network for 155 private and community foundations, 93% of them currently use social networks[92]. 44% of communications staff members said they spend up to 10% of their time "posting content, interacting with audiences through interactive media, adapting content, producing media, and developing new-media campaigns." 45% of foundation communication officials said they devoted between 11% and 50% of their time to social media, and 3% said they spent more than half of their time on social media.[93]

• A September 2010 (US focused) Foundation Center report[94] noted that one-third (33%) of foundation leaders use Facebook regularly, and that a similar number (30%) regularly read blogs. Respondent foundation leaders appear to be cautiously optimistic about the potential of social networking/Web 2.0 services to help further the work of philanthropy in general, but are often uncertain how best to use them to further the work of their own foundations.

[91] http://maps.foundationcenter.org/rss/grantsfire/
[92] http://philanthropy.com/blogs/social-philanthropy/more-than-90-of-foundations-use-social-media/28788?sid=pt&utm_source=pt&utm_medium=en
[93] Ibid
[94] http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/social_media.pdf

A ROADMAP *for* ENGAGING *with* SOCIAL MEDIA

	ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

INVESTIGATION PHASE	• Recognise that people may already be talking about your issue(s), or even about you.
	
	• Search for blogs, hashtags on Twitter & channels on YouTube where people are talking about things you care about or want to influence.
	
	• Listen to what they are saying; choose whether or not to participate in their conversations.
	
	• Observe how people are using the media in conversations that are relevant to you.
	  Ask yourself questions like:
	    What are the norms people are following?
	    How are they exchanging information?
	    How regularly do they talk to one another?
	    Is the number of participants growing?

INITIATION PHASE	• Think strategically about why you want to use social media, perhaps looking at what other similar organisations are doing, e.g
	    To make better-informed decisions
	    To build up your networks
	    To advance an influence agenda
	
	• From your listening activity, identify needs that you can meet or a discussion thread on which you have an opinion. Do you have stories or a theory of change that can enhance the conversation?
	
	• Ask yourself 'what can I bring to the community, and what will I gain?'
	
	• Remember to use a human voice, not a promotional one.

IMMERSION PHASE	• Decide you are committed to sustained engagement.
	• Develop a sustainable, user-centric approach:
	    Select your key participants/audiences (small or large; global or local; broad-based or specific-issue-related)
	    Set key strategic goals: e.g. communication, profile, fundraising, advocacy etc.
	    Build a dialogue with your audiences/stakeholders
	    Commit yourself to a specific level of transparency
	    Create value for your participating audiences
	    Address the challenge of "member acquisition"
	    Consider how you will resource your engagement
	    Look at how you will sustain your engagement and the interest of your audiences
	    Consider how you will measure success

Note: We have attempted to describe above the journey you might take towards building and engaging in an active social media strategy. The ultimate destination of an "immersion phase" will not be suited to everyone however; where you sit on the spectrum of engagement will depend on your interests, your goals and your resources.

*The structure for this diagram was suggested by Dave Ormesher, who reviewed this paper in the final stages of its development

TIPS

- "The only way to learn is to get started." (William Perrin)
- "When you go to a cocktail party, you don't have a script going in; you listen for a while and then add to, or participate in, the conversation". This same approach can be applied when starting out using social media (Sean Stannard-Stockton).
- "Create a learning culture." – create some safe places where people can learn together. (Diana Scearce)
- "Remember that when you're starting out you don't have to pretend to be smart, you just have to show that you're interested." (Steve Downs)
- "Use your social media networks as reference librarians – no one can read everything, and they can help you sift through what's relevant." (Lucy Bernholz)

- Set yourself some initial goals as you start exploring and using the tools available. These may change, but have some idea of what you are trying to achieve.
- "Find a safe place to experiment; find one programme or issue or area you want people to talk about, and allow staff time and space to try things out." (Allison Fine)
- Consider social media training for staff members – this could include communications staff (who may need to change their mindset from a focus on traditional media), programme staff and even some senior staff and stakeholders.
- Think about how much information you want to make visible in your initial discussions.
- Reflect on what will be useful to bring back to your stakeholders from your discussions.

- Don't think of using social media in isolation. Use it as part of an integrated communications plan that includes traditional media. (Traditional media organisations are some of the best at using social media, so observe what they do and learn from them).
- Embed engagement with social media across your organisation.
- "It's best for social media platforms to be engaged with across your organisation. That means that you are going to have some junior employees using them. Often, they'll be engaging with them already – you are just bringing them into the fold." (Sean Stannard-Stockton)
- Use your position as a respected organisation to help make connections between people both on and offline.
- Whilst mistakes might seem very visible, they are also easily rectified.
- Respond quickly and transparently.
- "Learn to improvise. Not everything has to be planned, and you can train your organisation to respond well to unexpected opportunities." (Andy Gibson)
- "Your staff are all people who care deeply about the issues around them, so trust them to share that publicly. Make their passion part of your strategy." (Andy Gibson).
- A little can go a long way. "One tweet a week makes up 50 communications with your audience a year – it's free and gives you much more contact value than through traditional media" (Bruce Bonafede).

"The not-for-profit sector should be in a position to benefit from these tools more than any other area of society."

Conclusion

In 1876, Chief Engineer to the British Post Office, Sir William Preece, said: "The Americans have need for the telephone, but we do not. We have plenty of messenger boys."[95] Predictions about the value and impact of social media in the distant future are similarly fraught with difficulties. We have too little knowledge about the conditions in the world to come, or the potential uses that will be found for these tools in future society, to make straightforward predictions.

What can be said with confidence is that these tools are here to stay, at least for the foreseeable future. We are in the throes of a transition in communications as great as that from telegraph to telephone, print to radio, or radio to television. Just as the commercial world is embracing them, so the social sector must too. The rules are slightly different for organisations dealing not with commercial markets but with the most vulnerable, underprivileged and marginalised in our society, but nevertheless there are few organisations that have not already been touched by these tools, and still fewer that can afford to ignore them.

Communications have changed, with the growing noise levels in our society making it harder and harder to broadcast messages to passive audiences. Not-for-profits will need to follow the examples of the commercial world in finding ways to create experiences that people will talk about, tapping into networks to spread messages to active and engaged communities. So too they will need to follow the commercial world in embracing customer feedback online, offering services in more innovative ways, and tapping into new channels and models for receiving money. They will also need to find ways to deal with the growing pressures on organisations themselves posed by an operating environment in which staff are more connected, beneficiaries can talk to each other, and campaigners can raise issues at national levels without the need for support from any authority.

The not-for-profit sector, however, should be in a position to benefit from these tools more than any other area of society. People are using social media to talk about the things that matter to them, and good campaigns and social

causes should find it much easier to engage audiences and encourage supporters to advocate for them than shoe manufacturers and drinks companies. Social media tools give more power to ordinary people, and most ordinary people care about the world they live in. The opportunity for organisations with good causes and powerful messages to scale up their efforts and build movements has never been greater.

The role for funders in this new landscape is complex and challenging. First, grant-making organisations may want – or be obligated – to deal with these challenges and opportunities themselves, tackling issues of transparency and donor accountability and learning to work in new, networked ways. Beyond that, grantmakers will increasingly find themselves compelled to understand and embrace the fundamental power of these tools, and to support the social sector to make the transition to this new world. With the majority of organisations beginning to engage on some level with social media, funders may find that their grantees or potential grantees are far more advanced in the use of these media than they are, and they may be

[95] Quoted in Social by Social, 2009, by Andy Gibson, Nigel Courtney, Amy Sample Ward, David Wilcox and Prof. Clive Holtham

asked to fund activities that they do not fully understand. This reinforces the importance of developing an understanding of these tools, but may seem daunting to those not familiar with the technology. Funders may find that they do have the skills in house but in unexpected places that challenge hierarchies of competence. The intern or the temping student on the photocopier might have the social media skills your managers do not. On the other hand, funders may find that some organisations have very limited experience of social media, and in this case too it can be helpful to have a basic understanding to help weed out bad ideas or suggest good ones. Not-for-profits need funders willing to back them in harnessing their communities online, and sometimes need advice from those funders on constructing projects and campaigns that take advantage of the new opportunities available. Small, digitally-led projects need funders who understand their value and will back them to scale their efforts. Larger, more traditional organisations may need help making the transition to a more agile and open way of working.

It is important to remember that all of this takes money. Not as much money as big advertising campaigns or investing in buildings and call centres, but nevertheless there is a cost to using these tools, usually in staff time, training and experimentation, and that needs to be paid for. Some donors and grant-makers may wish to concentrate on funding small experimental projects and learning the ropes; others on scaling up those organisations that are already doing good work in a digital space. Some may want to support their existing grantees and established institutions to make the transition to using social media platforms; others may want to create their own projects to disrupt the sector and challenge other organisations to do better.

Whatever their chosen approach, grant-makers – and by extension society – will benefit from increasing their understanding of the power and potential of social media. When organisations have powerful, well-tested models for achieving social impact at massive scale using technology, they need to pitch their

projects to people who are informed about the basics and understand what questions to ask. Without that, many great opportunities may pass us by, and projects which have genuine potential to help people and improve society may fail to receive the backing they need to gain traction and reach scale. And in a time of global economic uncertainty and massive public spending cuts, cost-effective methods for achieving social impact at scale are needed more than ever before.

The challenge for grant-makers, then, is to be sufficiently well-informed to make good investments in this emerging field and ensure that the projects that can achieve real impact get the support they need. We hope that this paper is a good starting point for navigating these new platforms and understanding their potential. What follows is a set of further reading to help you explore social media and what it means for not-for-profits in more detail. The only way to really understand these amazing new tools, however, is to try them out yourself.

Further reading

ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SOCIAL CHANGE:

1: Beth Kanter and Allison Fine, *The Networked Nonprofit* (2010)

This practical guide shows not-for-profits a 'new way of operating in an increasingly interconnected world: a networked approach enabled by social technologies, where connections are leveraged to increase impact in effective ways that drive change for the betterment of our society and planet'.

2: Beth Kanter's blog – www.bethkanter.org/

Co-author of *The Networked Nonprofit*, writing on 'how networked non-profits are using social media to power change'.

3: Andy Gibson, Nigel Courtney, Amy Sample Ward, David Wilcox, and Prof. Clive Holtham, *Social by Social*, OpenMute (2009) – www.socialbysocial.com

The book introduces the ways in which new technologies can be used to create social impact, aiming to make accessible the tools needed to engage a community, offer services, scale up activities and sustain projects. It's a useful handbook for anyone interested in social media tools for social good.

4: Lucy Bernholz's blog http://philanthropy.blogspot.com/

Founder and President of Blueprint Research and Design, and noted philanthropy analyst, Lucy Bernholz, writes an award-winning blog discussing the business of philanthropy, often with a focus on technology.

5: Diana Scearce, 'Connected Citizens: The Power Peril and Potential of Networks', Knight Foundation and Monitor Institute (2011).

Scearce examines how increased interconnectedness between citizens is affecting the ways in which communities interact, and identifies an 'emerging set of network-centric practices that are making a difference today and hold promise for citizen engagement and community information in the future'.[96] The report also suggests ways in which philanthropy can accelerate positive effects of these networks and mitigate the negative.

6: Lucy Bernholz with Edward Skloot and Barry Varela 'Disrupting Philanthropy – Technology and the Future of the Social Sector'(2010).

'This monograph explores the immediate and longer-term implications of networked digital technologies for philanthropy'.[97] The authors contend that digital technologies are fundamentally changing the philanthropic landscape, and make several predictions for the future based on these trends.

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[96] Connected Citizens: the power peril and potential of networks', Spring 2011, by Diana Scearce, Monitor Institute and Knight Foundation. P iii.
[97] Lucy Bernholz with Edward Skloot and Barry Varela 'Disrupting Philanthropy – Technology and the Future of the Social Sector' (2010). p.1

ON INVESTING IN SOCIAL MEDIA:

7: The Network of Network Funders

A community of practice for grant-makers who are intentionally investing in and working through networks, made up of 25 core participants from 14 different foundations across the U.S. They are 'connecting, pooling, and deepening learning about networked approaches to grant-making so funders can be increasingly intentional and effective in catalysing and strengthening formal and informal networks'.[98]

They have a 'useful resources' page on their Wiki, which points to further reading on this topic: http://networksguide.wikispaces.com/Network+Resources

Diana Scearce is working with on a funder's guide to social networks for social change. Draft versions are available on a wiki (here: http://networksguide.wikispaces.com/6-7+Draft+Funders+Guide) and the paper will be published in September 2011. The Monitor Institute's blog is also a useful resource on 'Networked Funding' http://www.workingwikily.com/

8: The Case Foundation's 'social media for good' resource – http://www.casefoundation.org/topic/social-media

This site contains a lot of practical information and advice on using many popular social media platforms, as well as aggregated lists of the latest news and articles on the topic.

9: Katie Paine's blog deals with social media measurement – http://kdpaine.blogs.com/

10: Jeff Perlstein, 'Amplifying Social Impact in a Connected Age', ZeroDivide (March 2011)

This report investigates technology-related grant-making for social benefit. It contains an assessment of the extent to which philanthropy is currently supporting technology, and offers recommendations for improved support in this area.

ON USING SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN ORGANISATIONAL
TOOL WITHIN FOUNDATIONS:

11: The Young Foundation's blog on Digital Social Innovation – http://yfweb.wordpress.com/

12: The Indigo Trust's blog is a good example of a Trust using a blogging platform to great effect –
http://indigotrust.wordpress.com

13: Glass Pockets – http://glasspockets.org/

A website of the US-based Foundation Center, focusing on transparency and philanthropy. The site's blog, Transparency Talk, hosts discussion on the latest strategy, findings and best practice on the topic of foundation transparency http://blog.glasspockets.org/

14: Philanthropy411 has compiled a list of funders and funder networks on Twitter:
https://philanthropy411.wordpress.com/tag/socialmedia/

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[98] http://networksguide.wikispaces.com/For+Newcomers

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Perlstein, J. 'Amplifying Social Impact in a Connected Age', ZeroDivide (March 2011)

Scearce, D. 'Connected Citizens: the Power, Peril and Potential of Networks', Knight Foundation and Monitor Institute (2011).

ONLINE RESOURCES

Acumen Fund – www.community.acumenfund.org
Akvo – www.akvo.org
Akvopedia – www.akvo.org/wiki
Amercian Red Cross – www.redcross.org
American Red Cross: YouTube channel – www.youtube.com/user/AmRedCross
Ashoka Changemakers – www.ashoka.org/changemakers
The Barr Foundation – www.barrfoundation.org
BBC – www.bbc.co.uk
Beatbullying – www.beatbullying.org
BestBuy – www.bestbuy.com
Beth's Blog – www.bethkanter.org
Big White Wall – http://bigwhitewall.com
Blackbaud – www.blackbaud.com
Brockley Central – http://ww.brockleycentral.blogspot.com/
BT – www.bt.com
Carrotmob – www.carrotmob.org
The Case Foundation – www.casefoundation.org
The Center for Effective Philanthropy – www.effectivephilanthropy.org
charity:water – www.charitywater.org
The Chief Executive – www.thechiefexecutive.com
The Chronicle of Philanthropy – www.philanthropy.com
Communications Network – www.comnetwork.org
Creative Commons – www.creativecommons.org
Crickleade Bugle – http://cricklade.wordpress.com/
Digg – http://digg.com/
Digital Social Innovation at the Young Foundation – www.yfweb.wordpress.com
DonorsChoose – www.donorschoose.org
East Dulwich Forum – http://www.eastdulwichforum.co.uk/
eBay – www.ebay.com
Enabled by Design – www.enabledbydesign.org
Every Disabled Child Matters – http://www.ncb.org.uk/edcm/home.aspx

Facebook – www.facebook.com
The Foundation Center – www.foundationcenter.org
FrontlineSMS – www.frontlinesms.com
FixMyStreet – www.fixmystreet.com
Futuregov – www.wearefuturegov.com
Get Satisfaction – www.getsatisfaction.org
Glasspockets – www.glasspockets.org
Grantsfire – http://maps.foundationcenter.org/rss/grantsfire/
Guardian – www.guardian.co.uk
Guidestar – www.guidestar.org.uk
Harringay Online – http://www.harringayonline.com/
HurriyetDaily News – www.hurriyetdailynews.com
Indigo Trust – http://indigotrust.wordpress.com; www.twitter.com/indigotrust
JustGiving – www.justgiving.com
Invisible Children – www.invisiblechildren.com
I Paid A Bribe – www.ipaidabribe.com
IRevolution – www.irevolution.net
ItGetsBetter – www.itgetsbetter.org
Kaboom – www.kaboom.org
KD Paine's PR Measurement Blog – www.kdpaine.blogs.com
Kings Cross Environment – http://www.kingscrossenvironment.com/
Kiva – www.kiva.org
Knight Foundation – www.knightfoundation.org; www.twitter.com/knightfdn
Knight News Challenge – http://www.newschallenge.org/
Lemos &Crane – www.lemosandcrane.co.uk
Localgiving.com – www.localgiving.com; www.twitter.com/localgiving
Make it Your Own Awards – http://miyo.casefoundation.org
Media for Development – http://www.mediafordevelopment.org.uk/
The Minnesota Community Foundation – www.mncommunityfoundation.org
Minnesota Idea Open – www.mnideaopen.org
Mobilemarketer – www.mobilemarketer.com
Monitor Institute – www.monitorinstitute.com
Monument Trust – http://www.sfct.org.uk/monument.html
MTV – www.mtv.com
Mumsnet – www.mumsnet.com
MyFarm – www.my-farm.org.uk
MySociety – www.mysociety.org
Mzalendo, EyeonKenyanParliament – www.mzalendo.com
National Trust – www.nationaltrust.org.uk
Network for Good – www.fundraising123.org
The Network of Network Funders – http://networksguide.wikispaces.com/Network+Resources
Networked Neighbourhoods – www.networkedneighbourhoods.com
NHS – www.nhs.uk
The Nonprofit Times – http://www.thenonprofittimes.com/
Omidyar Network – www.omidyar.com; www.twitter.com/OmidyarNetwork
OneWorld – http://oneworldgroup.org/
On Road Media – www.onroadmedia.ning.com
Openlylocal – www.openlylocal.com

Institute for Philanthropy

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation – http://www.packard.org/
Packard Foundation Organizational Effectiveness – www.packard-foundation-oe.wikispaces.com
Patient Opinion – http://www.patientopinion.org.uk/
Philanthropy 2173 (Lucy Bernholz's blog) – www.philanthropy.blogspot.com
Philanthropy 411 – www.philanthropy411.wordpress.com
Posterous – www.posterous.com
Race Online 2012 – http://raceonline2012.org/
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation – www.rwjf.org; www.twitter.com/rwjf
Royal Pingdom – www.royal.pingdom.com
The Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts – www.sfct.org.uk
SavvyChavvy – www.savvychavvy.com
Social by Social – www.socialbysocial.com
Sparked – www.sparked.com
Tactical Philanthropy – www.tacticalphilanthropy.com
Talk About Local – www.talkaboutlocal.org.uk
TechnologyReview – www.technologyreview.com
TechTerms – www.techterms.com
The Site – www.thesite.org
The Times – www.thetimes.co.uk
TheyWorkForYou – www.theyworkforyou.com
TransparencyTalk at Glasspockets.org - http://blog.glasspockets.org
The True Colours Trust – www.truecolourstrust.org.uk
Twestival – www.twestival.com
Twitter – www.twitter.com
Ushahidi Swiftriver – http://ushahidi.com/products/swiftriver-platform
Ushahidi – www.ushahidi.com
U.S. Department of State – www.state.gov
Visible Measures – www.visiblemeasures.com
WarChild – www.warchild.org
Wiki – www.wiki.com
Wikimedia Foundation – http://www.wikimedia.org/
Wikipedia – www.wikipedia.org
Whizz Kidz – www.whizz-kidz.org.uk
Wordpress – www.wordpress.com
WorkingWikily at the Monitor Institute - www.workingwikily.com
W14 London – http://w14london.ning.com/
YoungDads.TV – http://www.youngdads.tv/
Young Scot – www.youngscot.org
YouTube – www.youtube.com
Youthnet – www.youthnet.org

Acknowledgements

About the Institute for Philanthropy

The Institute for Philanthropy
We are one of the world's leading organisations providing international donor education. We believe that if people who have the capacity to give are provided with the skills, knowledge and networks to do so effectively they will increase the size and impact of their giving. We work closely with a global network of over 200 wealthy families, and partner with companies, trusts, foundations and schools. We act as a forum for the development of new ideas and produce original and practical research on a range of issues, including the management of charitable assets, philanthropy during the economic downturn and funding for core support. We also convene gatherings for learning with leaders in the field, including accomplished philanthropists and academics.

OUR VISION
We look towards a world in which philanthropists from around the globe have the skills to make significant contributions to the pressing issues of their time, in their own giving and in networks and partnerships with others.

OUR MISSION
We work to increase effective philanthropy in the United Kingdom and internationally. We do this by

- Providing donor education
- Building donor networks
- Raising the awareness and understanding of philanthropy

If you have any questions about our work or to find out more, please email us:
contact@instituteforphilanthropy.org

Or visit us at:
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