



From adapting to adoption: Social Media Use by Small-to-medium-sized Human Service Nonprofits

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Create a Fundraiser Browse More

Search fundraisers

Home > Emergencies & Disasters > Houston Flood Relief Fund



Houston Flood Relief Fund

For: Victims of Hurricane Harvey
Houston, TX
Organizer: JJ Watt

\$3,284,700
of \$4,000,000 goal

Raised by 27,883 donors

DONATE NOW

DONATE IN SECONDS

Every Share Can Raise \$37

Share on **f**

180K SHARES

180K
SHARES

Share on **f** Tweet **t** Email **e**

The Story

Supporters (28k)

\$20 just now	Nadine Baldrige Not a football fan, but am now a fan of
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HURRICANE HARVEY RELIEF DONATION DROP-OFF

SPONSORED BY:  JUSTIN J. WATT
FOUNDATION



THANK YOU
TO ALL WHO DONATED & VOLUNTEERED!

\$200,000  \$37 million

A screenshot of the Omaha Gives! website. The header includes the American National Bank logo, the text 'AMERICAN NATIONAL BANK PRESENTS OMAHA GIVES!', and navigation links for 'Donate', 'Leaderboard', and 'About'. A search bar labeled 'Find Organizations' is on the right. The main content area features a large white box with the text '\$7,417,442*' and '50,351 donations to 960 organizations'. Below this, it says '* Preliminary numbers'. The background is a light beige color with several colorful circles (blue, orange, green, purple) scattered around.

AMERICAN NATIONAL BANK PRESENTS
OMAHA GIVES! Donate Leaderboard About Find Organizations

\$7,417,442*
50,351 donations to 960 organizations
* Preliminary numbers

On May 23, 2018, 960 nonprofit organizations participated in Omaha Gives and raised more than \$7.4 million.



Research motivations

- Increase our understanding of the social media activity of human service nonprofits and the relationship with organization's goal, mission, and capacity;
- Give suggestions for effective exploitation of social media to generate social capital, and to develop strategic and interactive stakeholder communications.



Research questions

- What are the influences of nonprofit leadership, organization mission and capacity on social media adoption and use for small-to-medium sized human service nonprofits participating in Omaha Gives?
- What are, if any, the purpose, strategy and future plans for social media use for small-to-medium sized human service nonprofits participating in Omaha Gives?



Rogers' (2003) Theory of Innovation Diffusion

Relative
advantages;
Perceived risks

- Leaders' perceptions of social media

Compatibility

- Organization's mission, capacity, strategy



Research Design and Data Analysis

- Data collection
 - ~ Semi-structured in-depth interviews
- Data analysis
 - ~ Directed approach (Berg & Lune, 2011)



Research Participants

	Organization type	Number of full time employees	Org age in years	Annual operating budget	Interviewee	Social media they are using
C1	Community improvement	0	15	\$217,077	Board chair	Facebook (Hasn't been updated since 2014)
C2	Community improvement	0	18	\$98,000	Board chair	Facebook, Twitter
C3	Community improvement	6	15	\$495,000	Associate director	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube
C4	Community improvement	3	3	\$480,000	President	Facebook
C5	Community improvement	0	50	\$118,000	President	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube
H1	Human service	3	16	\$175,000	Executive director	Facebook
H2	Human service	1	45	\$315,812	Development director	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vimeo
H3	Human service	2	40		Executive director	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
A1	Art & culture	0	36		Office assistant	Facebook
A2	Art & culture	0	25	\$30,000	Board member	Facebook
A3	Art & culture	1	100	\$12,000	Executive director	Facebook
E1	Education, youth development	2	43		Executive director	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube
E2	Education	2	18	\$292,000	Executive director	Facebook, Instagram
E3	Education	0	52	\$50,000	Executive director	Facebook
M1	Animal	0	23	\$100,000	Communication chair of board	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Vimeo
R1	Religious	0	9	\$30,000	President	Facebook, Twitter, YouTube
T1	Environment/advocacy	0	7	\$30,000	Former chair and board member	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube



Findings

1. Different platforms





Findings

2. Relative advantage

- Social media is helpful and valuable at reaching more people at less or no cost.
- O2: “On Facebook I have found that it would be easier and more effective to get people’s attention for nonprofits stuff.”



- O1, “As you and I both know that social media is a phenomenal way to reach people quickly, instantly... It’s a very quick way to mobilize people and get them all on the same page very quickly.”



Findings

3. Perceived risks

- Information overload;
- Balancing between communication and interaction with members and communication with public;
- Possible conflicts of online fundraising and traditional fundraisers.



- “The biggest challenge is what balance we have between too little and too much. Certainly I can spend all day long posting on Facebook. My job is fundraising, not posting on Facebook. So it’s not always my highest priority. But I also have to remember I am reaching hundreds of people pretty easily at no cost...If somebody posts all day long, I don’t pay attention.” (O3)



Findings

4. Organizations' missions

- “Our mission involves all our programs, all our events, all our attempts to educate community about different things. So we promote our programs on social media, our events, our educated community on social media, different things. They are pretty much the same thing for us.” (O2)
- “The three key words of our mission are: connect, collaborate, and communicate. That is social media, social media, and social media.” (O4)



Findings

5. Organizational capacity

- Limitation of time
- Lack of professional skills
- Lack of professional staff



Findings

6. Online fundraising

- Limited investment on online fundraising
- Reach the same donors of their traditional fundraisers



Discussions

- Currently, the small-to-medium sized human service organizations focus on how social media helps them to share information with partners and members and to raise awareness rather than on promoting conversation and dialogue.
- The limitation of time and professional skills and the concerns of information overload influence their use of social media.



Conclusion

- For small-to-medium sized human service nonprofits, they need to use social media creatively.
- The narrow or short-term vision of social media mostly is because of the limitations.
- How to use social media beyond the limitation of budget and resources should be thought based on organizations' needs and capacity.

Thank you!

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