

**Nonprofit 911 – February 19, 2008**  
Online Fundraising in 10 Easy Steps  
with Katya Andresen  
Sponsored by Network for Good

The MP3 audio transcript can be found at  
[www.Fundraising123.org](http://www.Fundraising123.org) or [www.nonprofit911.org](http://www.nonprofit911.org)

**Jono Smith:** Hello and welcome to the February 19, 2008 Nonprofit 911 sponsored by Network for Good. My name is Jono Smith and I am the Director of Marketing here at Network for Good and we are really happy you joined us today. In case you are not familiar with us, we are a nonprofit just like you are and our mission is to help other nonprofits raise money online.

Nonprofit 911 is just one of the many free resources Network for Good provides that helps nonprofit organizations increase their fundraising and online marketing results. In addition to Nonprofit 911, we also provide online fundraising services directly to nonprofits like yours, including Custom DonateNow, which over 3,000 small-to-mid size nonprofits use today to process their online donations. In fact just last month, over 1,700 nonprofits raised almost \$2 million online with Custom DonateNow.

Well, today is not a sales call. I would invite you to visit [www.Fundraising123.org](http://www.Fundraising123.org) to learn more about how you can take a 60-day free trial of Custom DonateNow. We have had over 300 people register for today's call on getting started with online fund raising.

If you go to [www.fundraising123.org/february19](http://www.fundraising123.org/february19), you can download a copy of the PDF slides and follow along with our speaker. You will also be able to access an audio recording of today's call at [www.Fundraising123.org](http://www.Fundraising123.org) beginning tomorrow morning.

At this point, I would like to introduce today's speaker, Katya Andresen, the Vice President of Marketing here at Network for Good. Katya is the author of *Robin Hood Marketing*, a book about stealing corporate savvy to sell just causes. And she also maintains a personal blog on Nonprofit marketing at appropriately enough [www.nonprofitmarketingblog.com](http://www.nonprofitmarketingblog.com).

Katya traces her enormous passion for good causes to the need she witnessed serving as a journalist in Asia and Africa and as a nonprofit marketing consultant in Eastern Europe and Africa. So without further ado, please welcome Katya Andresen.

**Katya Andresen:** Thank you, Jono. Hello everyone, good afternoon. Thank you so much for calling in for some online fundraising basics.

I want to basically cover three things today. One, I want to give you a little bit of background about what is going on with online fundraising, why I think it is worth bothering to do it at all. And so, hopefully if you are on the call, you believe it is worth it. If not, this will convince you, but more importantly this should provide some ammunition if you are encountering resistance within your organization to implementing an online

fundraising program. You will find some of the quick statistics I am going to run through here useful.

Second thing is I am going to give you actually 10 rules for being successful at it, which are sort of based on our trial and error experience here at Network for Good. And if you find on your agenda, you will see #2 and #4 say "you can do it." I have that on there twice intentionally.

I hope the third thing I will achieve on this call is getting you over any intimidation factor with online fundraising. It is not rocket science. If you are a fundraiser/marketer, you have all the skill sets you need to do this well, and you can be successful at it. We are going to give you some steps for doing that today.

OK, so I am now on the next slide, I just wanted to put some numbers out there. So in 2006, which is the last full year for which we have statistics, \$6.87 billion was given online globally. And we expect that number last year, if I had to take a stab at it, I would guess it is somewhere between eight and nine billion. The numbers aren't out yet, but there is a lot of money flowing online. It is still a relatively small percentage of overall giving, but it is significant for a number of reasons I am going to talk about.

One is people tend to give a little bit more money online than they do offline. There is a little chart on here that you can give to any skeptics within your organization, but at Network for Good, the average donation in 2005 was \$137. It hovers between \$120 and \$140 in 2006 and 2007. You will see that the average outside of Network for Good is almost \$100, whereas offline direct mail you are more at around \$30. And we think that is for a couple of reasons.

One is the principle of opening. When you are online, you have a chance to really inspire people and get them engaged and give them a way to react immediately in that moment when they are feeling emotional. We call that a psychological opening and it kind of lets you act immediately on that impulse to give, which tends to make you a little more generous. And then if you are pulling out your credit card, which most people are online, people tend to spend more money on their credit card than they do with cash or a check. We also spend more than we should because of credit cards and that applies to charity as well.

So we find big, generous numbers, and we are finding that even for people who don't give online (and I am on the next slide about growing numbers), most research shows that more than 65% of donors visit websites before they make a donation to a nonprofit. So they go on and they check out your site. Your online presence is even important to people who aren't necessarily giving online.

There is an interesting bellwether I wanted to share on the following slide about crisis. After 9/11, about one in five gifts was online. After the Asian tsunamis, about a third. And after hurricane Katrina, half of all the giving in response to that humanitarian disaster was online. So if you look at crisis, it is sort of a bellwether or the vanguard of

giving. You see these numbers going up very quickly and we think that that's a predictor of what is going to happen with overall online giving in the next few years.

Another reason to think about online giving on the next slide about efficient numbers is it is cheap. It costs a lot less to raise a dollar. Direct mail acquisition of new donors can cost more than a dollar to raise a dollar. Telemarketing can be expensive. And when you raise money online through Network for Good, it is far less to raise a dollar or through any online means, because you are not dealing with the hard costs of a professional telemarketing firm or a paper going through the mail.

Really quick, on the next slide, who is giving online? Network for Good did a big study about this last year and it is available at our Learning Center at [www.Fundraising123.org](http://www.Fundraising123.org). And what we found was online givers skew a little bit younger and again I mentioned, far more generous than other donors. Our average giver tends to be 38, 39 years old. They give a lot of money. If you leave in the high dollar donors, it can be as high as \$163 per person. These are statistics based on the first five years of Network for Good.

About men and women giving in equal numbers online - most of the people giving online have supported some charity before but a lot haven't given online before, which is interesting. So we are finding a lot of new givers constantly coming in online.

And I mentioned again, I don't want to hype online giving to the point where you are going to throw out your postage meter and stop doing direct mail. That would be silly. But it is tracking to the trends of online shopping and banking. It's just lagging by a few years. So, while it's a small amount, it's growing quickly.

So when are people giving online? That's the next thought. Well, they are giving I'd say at four different times. We call 'Disaster and December Giving' the first category. So people give when there is a humanitarian disaster and December. Those are the times when people choose online over offline often.

With disasters I already gave you the statistics. That's because people want to do something right away. With holiday, we find our biggest donation days of the entire year are December 30 and 31. They are generous procrastinators trying to get their donations in before the end of the tax year.

People give during business hours, which is interesting. They are doing this at work and it tends to be during the week. So when you think about when to send out those emails, you also want to keep that in mind.

They give when someone they know asks them to; that's important. When you're thinking about it, your appeals need to be as personal as possible. And if you can enlist any of your supporters to fundraise for you via email or things like fundraising widgets, that's something you might want to look at.

And the other time they are giving online is when they don't even have to think about it.

One of the beautiful things about giving online is people can set up recurring donations to you. And so we find that Network for Good, between 30 and 40% of our volume in any given month is recurring donations, which is great because you're just thanking those donors. You don't have to appeal to them. They are taking \$60 on average off their credit card every month to support you. And so, we really recommend when you ask for money online, you don't ask once. You ask for a recurring gift so that you have a steady stream of income from your supporters.

Why do people give online? The following is why. They say it is easier than writing a check. They think it is a fast way to provide disaster relief. They like often that it is anonymous, which isn't the happiest news for us. People complain that nonprofits send them too many appeals or don't report on where their money went. And people are very frustrated with their communication with nonprofits. So if you don't want a lot of your donors to be anonymous, you need to do a good job cultivating them and not making them feel like an ATM machine that you're hitting up for money all the time. And they like recurring donations, which I mentioned before.

So that's a little background. I hope you will tuck away those slides if you ever need to make an argument for online giving. Again, I think it's really important because it's good to get in this younger generation of donors, this group of donors who tend to be very generous and this group of people who can give you automatic donations every month. That's worth pursuing, even if it is still a relatively small amount of giving.

**Rule number one** is: get online now. And this gets to my 'You Can Do It' piece. It's not a sales call for Network for Good, but I do want to point out Network for Good can help you get online in 48 hours very painlessly. We even have a 60-day free trial for doing that.

We set up a page for you that is on our secure servers. It looks exactly like your website. We help you put whatever you want on that page. It is completely customized. We issue the tax receipts to the donor. We put the donation in your tracking report. All of that stuff we do for you.

So it's very simple to get online. You don't need to be a technologist. You don't even need to have a website. So you can do it. And it's worth experimenting for the reasons that I talked about earlier.

**Rule number two** (I'm on to the next slide): the secret to online fundraising is very, very simple. If you have listened to any of my Nonprofit 911 calls, you're probably tired of hearing me say this but, the secret of marketing is very simple. If you want to reach people, motivate them to action, cultivate a deep, profound relationship with them that's successful over time, you need to put yourself in their shoes and think about their perspective and appeal to that perspective.

I had a social psychologist who used to have a mantra that I thought was very useful. She used to say, "Don't tell someone to value your cause. Show how your cause relates to

their values." That's a really useful mantra because it's all about understanding our audience and what they care about and connecting to that. It's that simple.

And that makes marketing and fundraising into a conversation much more than a monologue. You're in bad territory if you've got a web page, an email, appeals and everything that relates to your online fundraising - or offline for that matter - is a monologue where you're talking at people and you're talking about, "This is our mission statement. This is why you should support us."

That's a monologue. What you want to do is figure out, "Well, what do people I'm reaching care about? How do they talk about my issue? And how can I appeal to them?"

I'm going to give you some examples of some great non-profits of all sizes that have done a really great job putting themselves in their donors' shoes. When I do workshops, I ask people in the room, "Tell me the last time you gave money." I have yet to hear in a workshop where anyone said, "Because someone had a really cool website." Or, "Because someone had a really well-worded mission statement."

People say, "Because a friend asked me," or, "Because I had a personal connection to this cause". That's what I mean about getting in the donors' shoes. We give for emotional reasons. We give for personal reasons.

So with the first law of online fundraising is: just don't forget that. This isn't about technology. It's about human bonds. It's not about wires. It's about connections to people. And you want to remember that great orientation you have with all you do offline so well and at your events. OK. Don't forget that. It works just as well online. In fact, it's even more important online.

So my next point just is, well, what do donors want? If you're trying to talk about what do people care about and how do they want to be treated, these are just some very general observations that you just need to remember in all of your appeals to be good at what you do.

The first thing is people want to be recognized. One of the most basic human needs is people want to be seen and heard. That's why social networks are going crazy. That's why reality TV is so big. People really like other people to recognize them for who they are, to listen to what they have to say, to see the world from their perspective. And so that's getting back to what I was talking about, about talking with donors and not at them.

They also want to be inspired. So be careful with how much you emphasize your need. You definitely want to talk about need and what happens if you don't have the resources that your organization needs to achieve its mission. But you don't want to get stuck on that because gloom and doom messaging ultimately makes people feel fatigued and powerless.

You want to figure out how to inspire them. You want to be inspirational. So, yes, we

have this need but if you gave here are all the wonderful things that will happen. And when they give, you don't want to go back to them and say, "Wow, we have even more need." You want to talk about what you have achieved so far and what more you can achieve together.

They also want to feel connected to others and to something bigger than themselves. A Buddhist would call that transcendence. But we basically want to feel that we are part of a larger vision. So this is getting back into that inspirational piece and forging that emotional connection.

Show people what difference they can be part of. Show them the change that they can help achieve. And you want to show them that they can make a difference that's going to make them feel great as a person.

I'm going to give you a couple of examples of what I am talking about putting yourself in the donor's shoes and appealing to what donors like. This is an example I often use on the next slide with Care. If you're not on any of the slides, it's a picture of a woman and it says, "She has the power to change her world. You have the power to help her do it."

And this is a wonderful website because it connects what a donor cares about. They are going after 30 to 50-year-old women here who want to feel control over their lives and feel empowered. And they are tapping into that quality of the audience and connecting it to what someone could do for a woman on the other side of the world with a picture of one woman that we feel connected to. This is a very nice example of online fundraising that connects to what a donor cares about.

The next example I want to give you is from Land Choices, which is a nonprofit that has been on a bunch of these 911 calls. And I have really enjoyed watching their website evolve as a result of them. And they have a really cool new campaign called "Super Size my Backyard," which is something we brainstormed together actually as a result of one of these calls.

It's a great campaign because it talks about why should you care about land conservation in your community. And you'll see that they have wonderful positioning here that is very donor-based. It says, "Helping preserve the places that you cherish, preserve your land, supersize your backyard." What if we could preserve clean water, natural areas and trees in new neighborhoods, while accommodating growth and preserving property values? See, these are all things donors care about.

We can. The only thing stopping us is outdated planning codes. Here are the great things you can do. Donate now. This is a beautiful example of what you should be doing online and off - putting yourself in the donors' shoes.

OK, enough on the psychology front. I just wanted to emphasize, don't get too carried away with all these little tips and technology pieces I'm going to be giving you next. Don't forget that rule number two.

**Rule number three.** Now, this sounds ridiculously simple. Make your 'donate' button obvious. But I have to say this is the rule that is broken the most next to rule number two - speaking to the donors' perspective. Rule number three I see broken constantly.

I have a really hard time finding examples of good websites to put on this page. A lot of websites you have to scroll down to find the 'donate' button. It's not above the fold in the website. Or I have to read an email really closely and get all the way to the bottom to find a 'donate' button.

You need to have a gigantic 'donate' button that someone can find in one second or less. Park your child, your mother, your loved one, your spouse next to you at home and say, "Find the 'donate' button." See how fast they can go. If they can't find it in a second, then you have got a problem.

And actually you should probably have two. There are some people like me who immediately go to the image on a page and look for a big button. There are other people who are perhaps more cerebral and look in the navigation bar. You should definitely have a button in the navigation bar, as well as a big button on the page for people who come with sort of both those kinds of mental frameworks.

This is a beautiful page from Malaria No More, which uses Network for Good to process donations. And this is a stunning example of online fundraising. People online are not like people offline. In direct mail often the longer the letter you do, the better the response rate.

That is not the case online. People online are skimmers. They are snackers. They are not there to read or take in a whole meal of information.

So what you want to do online is you want to have gigantic photos that are really incredibly appealing. You'll notice the squirrel and the woman on the Care site as well as on Land Choices. They all had really nice photos there that made you feel very engaged.

And there are a gazillion studies that show that the human face is hard to beat, as well as a puppy face, an animal face, some kind of face close-up is very good for conveying emotion as well as calling attention to what you are trying to say.

So there is a big face. And right next to it is a big 'donate' button. There is also a 'donate' button up here in the taskbar. And the other beautiful thing about this page is the image and the 'donate' button go together. There is a really clear call to action.

You had better look at your home page. If you want to do well with online fundraising, make it really easy what you're asking people to do. The Land Choices site does a great job showing they are asking you to join the 'Supersize My Backyard' campaign, donate to the campaign. There is a fact sheet to download. The calls to action are gigantic and unmistakable.

On this Malaria No More page there is a big 'I'll donate a \$10 bed net' button. You want to protect her from dying from malaria. You feel motivated to act right away. This is really great work.

The next page is the Network for Good home page. In addition to helping nonprofits like you raise money online, we let donors give money to any nonprofit in the United States through our consumer facing site [www.networkforgood.org](http://www.networkforgood.org).

And I'll tell you a story. When I first started working here, we had a really junky-looking, crowded home page. And it was like that for quite a while. But then I realized we weren't really walking our talk. And we stripped down our home page considerably and made 'give to your favorite charities' in one place - a very clear call to action - and made the 'donate' button about 10 times bigger than it had been. And our conversion went up 30%. So I can't emphasize enough how important the big 'donate' button is next to the clear call to action.

**Rule number four** (I'm on to the next slide for those of you who are following along): put out three welcome mats. I have a colleague, Mark Rovner, who has done a couple of these calls with me. He's really wonderful. And this is a phrase I borrowed from him about the three welcome mats. And this is one of his clients, the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

And the way Mark puts it is, "There are three kinds of people who come to your website at least, if not more for some of you." I can just hear some of you thinking, "Oh, this is really nice but I have a lot of different audiences using my website. You know, I can't have one big image and one big call to action."

And what he says is, "You need to think about the different audiences you have and help them get where they need to go really, really quickly." And there are people who are going to come to your site who are ready to give right now. When I'm talking about the big 'donate' button, those are the people I am talking about. Those are the people that you want to not get in their way at all. You want to let them donate right away.

There are another group of people who kind of stumbled across you and are interested in you, but aren't sold on giving you a donation yet. So what do you do with those people? Well those people you need to make a case for giving to them. So you need to have some compelling content or a clear link to going to compelling content that's going to lead them into why they should want to support you.

So for that second audience, you need something just very interesting looking, whether it is a picture about an exhibit or events or here they have got 'Seafood Watch'. It tells you what fish to eat that aren't harmful to the ocean. They kind of give you different ways to engage, to start to develop a relationship. So that's a second welcome mat.

The third one are people who are there who aren't going to give it all. But they are there

to do research or maybe find, in the case of the aquarium, a show time, or just looking for some basic information. You want to have really solid navigation for them and enable them to find what they're looking for as well.

So, use the welcome mat. If you have a lot of audiences use the welcome mat approach and make sure each one makes them down the path where they need to go. Don't try to please everyone and have massive amounts of content for every single audience. Make it just clear places for each audience to click and take them down the route they need to go.

The next slide is *rules five through seven*. We have all of these summarized on one slide. And I think that you need to answer three questions in order to get a donation online.

The first one is probably the most important, which is, "Why me?" That's when I'm talking about putting yourself in the donor's shoes. Why should I care about your cause? What does this have to do with me and my interests? Why should this be something that I would want to support in my busy day? Why should I take the time to do something? That's the first thing you need to do.

Sometimes you can answer, "Why me?" with a compelling picture. Sometimes you can answer, "Why me?" by tapping into current events that people are talking about. Sometimes you can answer, "Why me?" by doing really good audience segmentation and understanding to whom you are sending an email appeal. But regardless, you really want to connect with what people care about.

The next one is, "What for?" What's going to happen if I give you my money? What kind of impact will result? What kind of social good? How will the world be a better place?

That's really important. Donors are getting more and more skeptical about us, unfortunately. And my same colleague Mark I was talking about before has literally run hundreds if not thousands of focus groups over the years with donors. And something that holds true over and over is that the first thing people say is, "Well, how much money is really going to go to the cause? You know, where is the money going?" So that is a really important question to answer.

And then the last question is, "Why now?" Unfortunately, we have a lot of things competing for our attention in any given moment. And so you need to lend a sense of immediacy to your appeal. Why should someone want to take action right now? So the 'Supersize My Backyard' one is good. It's talking about how there are certain regulations in the way right now to getting what you want for your land and your neighborhood and your community.

Malaria No More shows, "3000 children will die from malaria today, but you can prevent one of those deaths. You can do something right now." All of those sites have a really nice sense of immediacy. That's something you want to go for as well.

I'm going to give you a couple of examples of sites that answer some of these questions.

The next page is Save the Children. They do a nice job here of the 'What for?' in particular. So it's a little bit of a busy page, but you'll see they do have a big arresting image on there. And you can save the lives of children under five. That's pretty compelling. You can watch a video. You can learn how they are helping. There are lots of ways to get involved on here that gets to the, 'Why me?' question. The immediacy - saving lives is always good for a sense of immediacy. And then you see there is a lot of sense that there is accountability here.

So look at the bottom of that page. If you're not online, what they have at the bottom of their page is, "An organization you can trust." It shows how long they have been around. It shows where your money goes. "90% goes to program and services. 4% goes to management. 6% goes to fundraising." There is a pie on there.

It shows that they have been rated by Charity Navigator, the Wise Giving Alliance of the BBB. And so they have different fields of approval on there. Those are all really nice ways to show that this is an organization you can trust and answer the "What for?" question as well as getting around some of this donor skepticism.

**Rule number eight.** So how do you get started with online fundraising? Let's review where we are so far. So you need to get a button on your website. You need to make a clear call to action. Have a good-looking website that answers all those questions, has a big picture and really engages people.

But that's not enough. You also need to go out and find people. Just putting a button on your site won't alone constitute online fundraising. You have to get people to come to your site. And so there are a few ways to do that.

One obviously is to email them. And so, you know, I have on this slide 'If you build it, they won't come. So, email them.' You need to ask people to come and give to you. You need to be emailing your supporters. Network for Good has some tools to do that if you don't have that.

Do not email people out of your Outlook box. Do not. You will end up in their spam filter. You will end up having your organization blacklisted on spam lists. Do not do that.

What you need to do is use the tool from Network for Good or VerticalResponse, or Constant Contact or Emma. There are many email services out there. Go through one of those and email people. You really need to do that.

Now, I know your next question. I can predict it's going to be, "Well, how do I build up a list of email names? Should I go buy a list?" No. You don't really want to go buy a list. That doesn't work so well.

What you want to do is find the people out there that care. So one thing you can do is access the wonderful world of the Internet to find a passionate community out there who will probably care about your issue, who are already easy to find online.

When you go to the next slide, you'll see I have a home page for a website called the Medieval Pottery Research Group. I love this because it just shows how there are passionate and completely esoteric communities out there online. This is a group of people who just care about medieval pottery research. They have an entire site with 250 subscribers. So amazing. If there is a group out there talking about medieval pottery, there is definitely a group out there talking about your issue.

So how do you find them? Well, if you don't already have this set up, please, please do it. Go to [google.com/alerts](http://google.com/alerts) and set up an alert. Google will send you an email every time your organization or your issue is mentioned. So if you operate a pet shelter in Georgia or you operate a soup kitchen in New York City, you could put in all kinds of keywords and it will send you information whenever anything is going on online or people are talking about that issue or your organization name.

You can set up as many alerts as you want. Google sends you an email. And you can start to find these medieval pottery research group types for your issue online and start engaging with them and start asking people to email you for information and start building your email up.

Another way to build your list is to go to a website called Technorati. That's a website that is a search engine for blogs, sort of like a Google of blogs. Google has some blog search. Technorati has a great one.

So here I have typed in Alabama animal shelters and it is showing that there is a MySpace blog talking about it. This shows different places where people are online talking about animal shelters that happen to be in Alabama. So that is another place to engage with bloggers talking about your issue and posting comments.

A word of caution here - do not go onto blogs and anonymously post things about your non-profit. That's a really big no-no. The blogging community and online community is very big on truth, transparency and authenticity. It's fine to go to someone's blog and say, "Thank you so much for talking about Alabama animal shelters. By the way, I am from a nonprofit that does XYZ. I thought you might be interested in this and that. I love your blog. Here's how I reacted to this issue," and really engage in a dialogue.

What you don't want to go do is pretend to be someone else in posts. There have been a couple of well-publicized cases of this. It's called Astro-turfing because it's like fake grass for support. And it is very damaging when people find out about it. And they usually do. So don't do that. Engage in a transparent way.

So that's how you can find your way onto things like MySpace pages, like Alabama Hiking Trail Society I found on there would be a great place for environmental organizations to target.

The other great way to generate email addresses on the next slide is ***rule number nine***. Provide a mechanism for lead generation. By that I mean on your website not everyone is

going to be ready to give. But imagine if you got the email address of every single person that came to your website. You would have quite a nice list.

So how do you do that? Well you have to do more than say, "Sign up for our e-newsletter." That's just not enough. Most people don't want to get yet another newsletter. How do we do it at Network for Good? Well, when we're talking to you, we offer free weekly fundraising tips. And most of you decide to do that so we get the email addresses of just about everyone who comes to our nonprofit site.

Say there is an organization that is addressing health issues. You're with the American Diabetes Association. You might have a weekly list of tips on staying healthy, all those kinds of things where you offer someone something of value—some kind of information of value really attracts email addresses and allow you to build a list.

I put Obama '08 home page on here. Whoever you are supporting in this election, that's not what this slide is about. It's about this incredible lead generation. You can't even go to Obama's home page without getting the splash page asking you to join the movement with an email address and zip code. That's pretty amazing. So I bet he's got extremely high conversion on there because it's the very first thing you see. Not bad. Even before he asks you for money, he picked you up with that.

And then my next point is point number 10 - and I'm seeing, maybe I'm missing a slide here where point number 10 has disappeared - so I will share that with you. **Point number 10** is just to thank your donors. This seems really obvious but with online fundraising sometimes this falls by the wayside. You might forget to go into your donation tracking report and pull out folks and thank them. You need to do a really good job of acknowledging your donors.

If you use Network for Good, we issue a tax receipt right away. And that's a great start. But you want to go back to people and tell them all the wonderful things that you did with their contribution. That is so important.

And you may think this is about as silly as telling you your donation button should be good. But the number one reason people cite for not giving to nonprofits again that they have supported in the past is how they were treated by the nonprofit. So you really need to do a better job of engaging donors.

I also saw statistics that only 25% of people give to a charity the following year they gave to the previous year. These are terrible numbers. It's much easier - any business person will tell you - to keep a customer than get a new customer. So make sure you keep your donors once you win them over with these tools.

OK, so a couple of closing thoughts and then I'm going to move to questions. Don't get carried away by the hype. You still need to do all the offline stuff.

The next point is don't go off and get a merchant account with a credit card company.

That's silly. There are plenty of services like Network for Good. Obviously I'm biased. I think we have the greatest and least expensive service for raising money online. There are others.

Go ahead and use a service for raising money online. Don't feel like you have to go set up all this stuff yourself. You won't get good rates and it will be very onerous. You don't need to do that.

Third, and I'm coming full circle back to you can do it. All the same marketing principles apply. It's about the audience, not you. If you remember that and you remember the rules of engagement, you're going to do very well online as well as offline.

And you can do this even if you're small potatoes. My last example I want to give of someone who did great marketing online and offline really well is someone who came to a workshop of mine, Feet First. It's a small organization out in Seattle that believes in building walkable communities. And they've done a fantastic job getting their message out with no fundraising budget whatsoever online and off.

The first thing that they did that was really fun was they were trying to figure out, "How do we convey the idea of building a walkable community?" which doesn't sound very sexy on the face of it. It doesn't exactly motivate people to give money right now.

So they started thinking about, well when do you care about the fact that you don't have a walkable community. And of course the answer was when you're out walking around and you can't cross the road. And so they decided rather than having expensive PSAs that they developed for radio or worrying about fliers, what they really needed to do was get people when they were out in the middle of the street.

And so the executive director of the organization bought a chicken suit. You can see a picture of it in my presentation. It was only \$125 used. And they had it marching around here. It's out marching with schoolchildren from a class where a little boy was hit by a vehicle. And so you have this great display of folks running around spreading the message offline. So that just emphasized my point. You still need to do things offline.

But then they did this great donate button on the next page where you click and it says 'click the chicken bawk walk'. They asked people to join. That's the whole recurring giving piece or renew. It's a really great site because they have carried through the chicken idea online. With the online donations it's much more fun to click the chicken than an online donation button.

All of that has added up to great media coverage. Of course all the local TV stations and newspapers love to take pictures of the chicken whenever it's out. People love to donate to the organization. You do get a little chicken when you are a big-time donor. And they have a MySpace page for the chicken, which you can check out in this presentation. So they are out finding supporters in MySpace, right?

They have posted their volunteer opportunities to Idealist. I highly recommend [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org) or sites like Idealist where you can put your volunteer opportunities in a big database where lots and lots of people go to look for volunteer opportunities. Your site is one place, but why not be part of a much bigger volunteer community where people can easily find you?

And then here is someone blogging about speaking at their organization. So here they are in a blog. This is just a beautiful job of online and offline outreach altogether. And they had no marketing budget, hardly at all. And they were able to pull it off. So I find them quite inspirational.

I'm going to take some of your questions now. I have a question from Jim who says, "If people donate during business hours, should we solicit at work email addresses?"

I would solicit to the email address that people have given you. Some people tend to do a lot of their personal affairs on their work email. That's fine if that's the address they have given you. If they have given you a personal email, I know many people, myself included, who check their personal email during the day at work. And so they are going to find your email message at work even if you send it to the personal account. It's all about what the donor wants. The email address that they give you is the one that you should be using.

Marissa wants to know, "How often should you thank a recurring donor?"

That's a great question, Marissa. One of the organizations I donate to monthly sends me the same form letter in the mail every month when I give online. It's exactly the same. And it's kind of lame. I've often thought, "Gee, you know I'm getting the same letter every month. And it's probably wasting a lot of money and paper. And it's certainly not inspiring. It's just a form letter. It's really poor."

So my answer to you is I think you should thank the donor every time they give. But if that means they are getting the same form letter every time, maybe not. You need to do a better job than that. And so what is best is if you look at your recurring donors, try to figure out if there's a way you can segment them and send them a different mailing every month thanking them, talking about different dimensions of your work and different great things that have been made possible with their support.

That's going to be a lot more compelling than the monthly form letter. If you can only do a monthly form letter, you can't afford to segment and provide better content, then I would thank them less often or provide a receipt acknowledging your getting the monthly donation. Thank them quarterly. It's better to have really fantastic communication a little less regularly than really bad, boring communication that comes very often.

Terre says, "Please repeat how Network for Good can help us set up a web page to take donations. And what is the 60-day trial about?"

If you go to [www.Fundraising123.org](http://www.Fundraising123.org), you will see on the bottom of the screen that there is a sign up for a 60-day trial. But the way the process works is, we validate you are a nonprofit. Then we set up a web page. It looks exactly like your website. And you can start collecting donations within a couple of days. It's really that simple. And then you might want to know, "How do I know when I get a donation?" You can set it up to automatically get emails when you get donations. You have an online donation tracking report you can go to anytime.

And then every month we send you a check or we can even do an EFT right into your bank account with all your donations. And so that's how the process works.

The 60-day trial just means we have our service where we set up the page. It looks exactly like your website. And you can completely customize the questions you want to ask, the donation amount, all that stuff. That service is \$29.95 a month but we are letting everyone on the phone today, because we just believe in getting you at least to try it out, 60 days free.

Steven wants to know, "What are the advantages of using Network for Good's email service?" Network for Good has an email service. Let me answer the question one way and then I will answer it specific to Network for Good.

The advantages of using any email service, including Network for Good's, are that you will be able to stay off spam lists and not end up in spam filters. I think I mentioned earlier, if you use Outlook, which a lot of nonprofits do - they cc people or send out mass emails that way, you're going to end up in spam filters. And you can also get blacklisted.

What you want to do is work through Network for Good or one of these other services because they work hard to have good relationships with all the providers of Internet access. And we will make sure that your emails are delivered and less likely to end up on spam lists.

Network for Good's email service is really easy to use. It's \$30 a month. You can send up to 10,000 emails for that amount. There is a charge if you send more than that. That's the structure that most use I believe VerticalResponse and Constant Contact have similar structures and about vaguely similar price points.

And it's well worth the money because the other great thing about those services, including Network for Good's, is after you send the email, you can go in and see who opened it, what percentage of people opened it, what percentage of them bounced. You can figure out if you have bad email addresses in there that you need to get rid of and clean your list. You can figure out what people clicked on, how many people clicked through to donate.

And so you can do all kinds of fantastic things from a marketing perspective. You can send out different versions of your email, test different messages, test different fundraising appeals. You can see which were more successful. You can start tracking

which donors gave how much money.

Network for Good also has another email solution in partnership with VerticalResponse through our suite. We have something called the Donor Management Suite. And that starts at \$99 a month. And what that does is it allows you to have everything together. A Custom DonateNow page and VerticalResponse for email, plus it all feeds into one donor database that stores all of your donors, shows you what they have responded to. You can call up one donor's account. You can see which emails they opened. You can see which emails they received. You can see when they gave. And it's a really nice place to keep all that information organized in one place. So that's another thing that you might want to look at.

Shannon wants to know, "How do you feel about forward to a friend viral marketing? Does this lead to good conversion rates?"

One of my favorite topics is viral marketing and friend to friend fund-raising. In fact Jono mentioned I wrote *Robin Hood Marketing*. There is a new book out called *People to People Fundraising* in which I co-wrote a chapter with Bill Strathmann, our CEO here, based on Network for Good's experience in this area.

We have been doing it for about a year and a half now with fundraising widgets where we enable people to go in and build a widget to raise money for their favorite cause. You can check it out at [www.sixdegrees.org](http://www.sixdegrees.org).

We have learned a lot about that. I mentioned at the outset of this presentation that one of the main reasons people give money is because someone they know asks them. And so I think forward to a friend is fantastic because if you can get supporters who are passionate about you asking their own friends and family for donations and reaching out to their own circles of influence, they are going to be much better at it than you are with that audience.

They just are because those people know them. They trust them. They want to hear what they have to say and are interested in supporting what they care about. So I'm a big fan of that.

Now, here are a few caveats. Just saying forward to a friend at the bottom of an email is not very compelling. Most people aren't going to click on that from just a mass email. What you want to do is target people who are most likely to do it, or are pretty passionate and let them put the appeal in their own words.

Just think about it. If you got a mass appeal from a friend, who obviously just did a forward from a friend versus a personal note that was clearly written by them, you are going to have a much harder time saying no to the personal note. So what Network for Good set up and you can go play around and set one up right now if you want - it takes about five minutes at [www.sixdegrees.org](http://www.sixdegrees.org) - you can go in and allow your supporters to set up their own fundraising badge or widget for your cause that allows them to upload

their own photos and talk about your cause in their own words.

And that's really important to forward to a friend. You need to give people the opportunity to personalize this because the more personal it is, the more effective it is going to be. You also have to make sure that the content you're giving them to forward on or to adapt or personalize is pretty darn compelling because people are only going to do that behavior if they feel passionate about something.

So if you can give them a sense of urgency - you know like, "We have a big fundraising goal. If we can raise X amount of money by X date then we can do this wonderful thing. Can you help us? Can you send this to five friends?" You really need to instill that kind of sense of urgency and that may be more likely to motivate people to send it along if you can do something like that.

So again, I believe in that model very much. But I just think that a forward to a friend button is not enough. You have to give people more of a reason to want to do that and enable them to personalize it and have the compelling content to back it up, to back up the ask.

If you want to know more about viral fundraising we just wrote a white paper on that a few months ago. And you can find it at [www.Fundraising123.org](http://www.Fundraising123.org). If you search for "The Wired Fundraiser" - that was the name of the white paper. It's got pages and pages of information on "Who are these people? How do I find them? Why do they give money? What types of things do they forward around to their friends and family? What are the secrets to succeeding at that?" - are all answered in that white paper.

Hal wants to know, "How much time would I need to spend per week to have an effective online fundraising effort?"

That's a really good question. You probably need a day or so to get up and running, to get a donate button up on your site if you don't have one already and to get an email program set up. So that would also be the first - you would have a little bit of investment of time there the first week that was higher.

I would also recommend having a donor database as well. So if you put those three things in place, you can have a successful online fundraising effort because you have the structure in place that allows you to do a lot of this in an automated fashion and lets you easily track what's working and what isn't working.

So you need those sorts of mechanisms to capture the email addresses, to send the emails, to collect the donations and to kind of track your results. Again, you know, maybe a day to get all of that set up. And we are happy to help you with that kind of thing.

I would say you probably need a few hours a week to send a thank you email to your donors—not just the receipt they are going to get through our services or through other vendors, but really to thank them and welcome them and ask them, you know why they

supported you or anything you want to ask or begin a conversation with them. You're going to want to send out something like that on a regular basis to donors who have come in.

You're also going to want to spend an hour or two a week doing the kinds of things I was just showing you here, going on to Technorati, checking your Google alerts, kind of looking at what lively communities online are already talking about your issue. And just commenting on a few blogs or engaging with some of those people because that's one of the wonderful things about the Internet. It's really easy to find these people who have a natural affinity.

It's virtually impossible to do that with direct mail. You have to blanket thousands and thousands of households and hope to find someone with that level of passion. Online we can do searches and are able to find those people. You want to spend some of your time doing that.

And then you also want to spend an hour or two a week composing and sending emails that not only thank donors but also planning appeals. We recommend people think about sending two or three email appeals that ask for money per year and about twice as much of that thanking donors and reporting on progress. So that's not an inconsiderable number of emails that are going to be going out. So you are going to want to pace yourself on those. If you average maybe an hour or two a week on that, I would say that would probably be enough to have a rolling campaign like that going.

Elizabeth wants to know, "Are the websites where the information and pictures change often much better than those where information is more general and photo information is not updated as frequently? We have a small operation and I don't know how often we will be able to change information, but I want to make sure our visitors come back frequently."

Those are great questions. I think first of all you don't need everything changing on your home page all the time. You know, don't panic and think you need new content every few days.

I think what you do want is a big compelling picture, a clear call to action and then some fresh content that is rather automated because we are a small operation here too at Network for Good in many ways. And so what we have done is we set up some nifty tools and you can do the same.

You could set up an RSS feed to your home page. That stands for Real Simple Syndication, but basically you could set up a stream of news about your issue that goes onto the home page that's completely automated. You don't have to do anything. And that feeds fresh content in.

You might want to change your website picture maybe once a month, every other month.

I don't think you need to do it that often. I think it's nice when people return that they see a familiar face. So I wouldn't get too carried away with that.

I would leave sort of one area on your home page that you can either fill with an RSS feed if you just have no time at all to ride data content—that enables you to highlight timely issues. So, for example, a lot of animal shelters used Network for Good to fundraise soon after the Michael Vick scandal in Georgia. That's a football player who was involved in dog fighting and cruel treatment of dogs. And that's an example of when a lot of people are suddenly paying attention to an issue and you would want to update your home page to reflect people's interest and show what you're doing in that area.

So let it be driven by your audience. And when there is something you think is compelling to your audience that needs to come up, that's the time you would want to update it. Don't just feel like you have to update it for the sake of updating it or because you had a press conference or because you have a new report out, unless it's really timely and a lot of people are going to be really interested in it. I wouldn't be too worried about calling attention then on your home page.

I would much rather that you spend your time on providing fresh, compelling content in your thank-you emails to your donors and in your appeals, in your outgoing correspondence. That's probably where you need to put the bulk of your efforts because people who are coming to your site are coming to explore because they don't know you very well or they are coming to give. And so those folks don't need huge, vast amounts of fresh content as much as the people who you are emailing and thanking.

Dick wants to know, "Could you please repeat the three or four lists you mentioned?"

I talked about Google alerts. So go to [google.com/alerts](http://google.com/alerts) and it's self-explanatory. Basically it says, "When do you want to get alerts from us? What words do you want us to look for online?" et cetera. The other one was Technorati.com. And that's the site where you can search for a lot of different blogs. You can also set up a watch list on there, which is pretty nifty, where you can put in your organization name or information on your organization and check out what bloggers are saying. That's a nice tool that's on there.

I'd start with those two, because you don't want again - to Hal's point about how many hours do I need to spend on this - those two won't take a long time but will have high yields and lots of information.

Karen wants to know, "Do you recommend icons with amounts of donations such as \$50, \$100?" I think those can be very convenient. What you need to do though is experiment with them. Our Custom DonateNow tool lets you do that. It lets you configure and test different amounts. I would say, the average donation online for us tends to be \$100, but there are also \$25, \$50 levels. There may even be \$200 levels.

I think it's not a bad thing to recommend amounts, but I think it's also nice to let people give what they want. So to have an open field as well where people can decide how much

they want to give, so that in case it is a smaller donor you are not going to lose them if your amounts are set too high, you are not going to lose out on a major gift because you seem to have them capped.

It's a great way to find out about the psychology of your donor by testing different giving amounts and different orders and seeing what happens. That is something I probably didn't hit enough today which is online fundraising is great because you can really cost effectively test different things.

Never send out the same email message to everyone. At least divide your list in half and try to tweak it two different ways and see which does better or which gets opened more, which results in more donations. You can try changing the language because you can go in and change it with our tool around your donation page.

What is the message that you have around it that makes the case forgiving? Try one message for a while and then try another. Try changing the giving levels and see what happens.

People are notoriously bad predictors of how they are going to behave and they kind of tell you what they want to hear or how they want to be viewed. You don't really know until you go and test it. So you really want to try out some different things, because it's cheap and ultimately it will make you more efficient because you will have very high-level confidence about what works and what is going to be most effective.

Kit wants to know, "Do I [Katya] have any experience with online fundraising outside of the US?" Not really. I can tell you there is quite a lot of online fundraising going on in the UK and in Australia as far as I know.

If you want to email me back and ask me if there is a particular country you want to ask about, I am happy to let you know. I would also tell you that the one experience that we have had is that a lot of our wired fundraisers, not non-profits as much as just regular people who are using our widgets to fundraise, have been raising money from friends and family overseas. We see that because we accept donations internationally through PayPal, through our widgets and then on our Custom DonateNow product we also can accept international donations. We see those coming in, but we see them heightened when their personal fundraising campaign is going on.

It's not surprising that US-based non-profits would do better when it had supporters out who had friends in another country asking them to support rather than just an appeal going out internationally. That tends to be more effective. That is about all the insight I have on that question.

I want to thank you so much for joining us. If you had a question I didn't get to, feel free to email us at [fundraising123@networkforgood.org](mailto:fundraising123@networkforgood.org) and we will answer your questions, even if we didn't get to them today.

Also feel free to send a link if you have colleagues that you think should hear this information. Please share it. We want to help as many people as possible. I was pleased to hear a lot of you on the phone today are interested in getting set-up with our services. Again, you can sign up for the trial on [www.Fundraising123.org](http://www.Fundraising123.org) or go ahead and email us at [fundraising123@networkforgood.org](mailto:fundraising123@networkforgood.org), and I or one of my colleagues here will be happy to help you get set-up.

Thanks again so much for joining us for this call. I know that your time is short and valuable, so I am honored to have an hour of it, and I hope it was well spent and that you raise lots of money as a result. Have a good afternoon and thanks again for joining us.