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My Nonprofit's Ready for Its Close-up: Creating an Online Video Strategy
with Michael Hoffman
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The MP3 audio transcript can be found at
www.fundraising123.org or www.nonprofit911.org

Rebecca Higman: I'm thrilled to introduce our speaker, Michael Hoffman. Michael is the CEO of See3 Communications, a Chicago-based company specializing in video, web development and Internet marketing for nonprofits, associations, and social causes.

He is an entrepreneur who has developed international Internet companies as managing director of a venture capital investment group. He's an expert in online business development and marketing, and is frequently asked questions by organizations about marketing strategies and new media development.

His blog actually was named a must-read by the "Nonprofit Times," and he is frequently quoted in trade journals, industry blogs, and the mainstream press. He is the co-founder of DoGooder TV and earthfirst.com. And he is nationally sought-after speaker on topics such as online cause marketing, web video, and Web 2.0 for social change. So without further ado, here is Michael.

Michael Hoffman: Thank you very much. I want to thank everybody at Network for Good for having me today and thank all of you for taking time out of your schedule today to listen and then hopefully ask some questions around online video. I just want to say it's really amazing how far we've come in the world of online video. When we started See3 Communications, really with the idea of broadband being here and focusing on online video, in late 2004 and 2005, I went out to some conferences and started meeting with people, the universal reaction was, "Huh? What are you talking about?"

It's taken a few years, but I think that the impact that we're seeing with video online is something that everybody has realized is here and really the evidence of that is the kind of participation that we're having in this call today.

So I just want to say that one of the things that See3 began with really was focusing on the creation and development of video, and today we're really focused on also the strategy around using video as well as the development of the surrounding websites and marketing plans that go with that.

So what we're going to talk about today is, by its nature, very short. I think I have probably about a half an hour before I start taking some questions. So obviously, we can't cover everything here.

And the other thing to keep in mind is that not every organization is the same. When we talk about video strategy, the video strategy for PBS or for a big national organization, the Red Cross let's say, versus a local soup kitchen or a legal services group - there's so

may different kinds of organizations working in different sectors with different audiences and different needs, that really there is no one-size-fits-all video strategy.

And so the goal for today is to give you some things to think about, some strategies and some exercises and some view of what's happening in general with online video so that you can take that back to your organization and get started. And then once you're at a certain point, you can dig down into more information.

So hopefully, I'll give a range of information depending on the level that you're in, and hopefully it'll be useful.

And if you don't have the slides, that's fine. There's nothing that the slide are necessary for.

I think that one of the things that I've seen online recently is a little bit of backlash around video, and people saying, "Isn't text content still the most important content out there?" And I think that really that sets up a false dichotomy between text and video as to what's important.

The Web, when done well, is really remarkable in its ability to combine different kinds of content, to combine photos and multimedia content and video and audio and music and text together and to use it in varying degrees at varying times, and that's really the remarkable nature of the web.

But there's no question that video content has become really important online. It's something that organizations need to address. They need to address it not only because it's there and it's important, but because of user expectations. And this is I'm going to get back to a bunch today, which is that video isn't about video, just as your website isn't about a website for the sake of having a website, it's really about achieving your goals as an organization. So it's about educating people; it's about raising money; it's about bringing in advocates advocating for your cause. Those are the things that you need to do and these are strategies to do it.

So I think it's really important that we never lose sight of new tools, new opportunities and all of the things that we're hearing about all the time online aren't ends in and of themselves. We really need to think about what are we trying to achieve and how do these tools help?

So as somebody was talking to me about video versus text, I was thinking about sort of three things as evidentiary things that would tell me I couldn't escape dealing with online video.

The three things quickly that I've noticed - one is the President's fireside chats have now become YouTube videos. So the traditional radio address is basically a YouTube video where the audio of that is used. But the video is seen by a lot of people and excerpts of that video then can be shown all over the place. That's something very new and that really puts online video squarely within our culture. And in terms of elite culture policy making, online videos are then right in the center.

The second thing I was thinking was much more, let's say low brow - which was puppycam. I don't know how many people follow this, but there was somebody who trained some puppies and they put a live feed web camera on these puppies. The amount of traffic was just staggering. Millions of people came to watch the puppies because they were just ridiculously cute.

What this shows me is most people's ability to fritter away time doing nothing. That's one of the things it shows. But, the ability to do something like live streaming was once a complicated and expensive undertaking for people to do. Today, it's no longer that. It's something that you can do on a YouStream for free. So, that opens up the possibility of live streaming to every organization, something that didn't exist before.

The third thing is the Flip Camera. If you don't own one of these, you should, or one of the knock offs. If you go to Flip.com - Flip really was an innovation because it did a couple things. One is it is an affordable tapeless video camera. The reason it's called The Flip is because it has a little arm that juts out of the side with a clip that plugs into a USB port.

So you then take the complicated work of digitizing video, and so just moving video from a regular camera into the website can be complicated. How do I do that? How do I plug it in? If you don't have firewire connections, which are going away, how do you get video onto the computer to then use online?

The Flip really lowered the level that was needed to do that. The quality of their cameras has continued to get better and better and smaller as well at the same time. They've had over one and a half million sold. Today, it's probably more like over two million sold.

They're actually giving away cameras and making lower cost cameras available to non-profits. So, I will find a link to make sure that everybody has... for their Flip Spotlight campaign, they don't want non-profits to be paying full price for their cameras. But, it's really lowered the bar and sort of taken away the last excuse to be able to do some video.

The next thing I just want to talk about was a way of thinking. I think again the purpose of this call, as much as anything, is to let you go back into your organization with a set of thought exercises and activities that you can do to begin thinking about video strategy.

So the slide that I'm looking at says your website is your channel. I think that that's a really important exercise to think about. The web is not TV. It's not the same as I said. It allows for the mixing of video content with all kinds of other content. But, the web is a place where increasingly people are watching video. So if you begin to think about your website in a new way, and that new way isn't opposed to the old way.

The old way was really a brochure. I think, that's really, if you had to force people into a box about how they think about their website, it's really a brochure. It's a brochure where you can click on the links and go to the next panel in the brochure. But it's still thought of or considered like a brochure. I think the new model allows us to think about your website more like a channel than a brochure.

So if you think, and some of you may have heard me say this elsewhere before, that if your local TV station came to you and said that you could program their channel for a day or a week, what would you want on there? What would you do and how would you do it? For most organizations, the answer would be panic and a realization that you didn't have enough content to program a television channel. But you would also be thinking about what it is you'd want to show. What would you want to tell people?

I think that's an important exercise to think about. If you could show whatever you wanted to and you had an audience that was watching, what would it be that you'd want to show?

That's really the idea around your website as your channel is that the website is not a place that can just have static brochure content anymore, it's a place that can also provide ongoing engagement with the activities that you are doing as an organization.

So it really relates to user expectations. Today, people are expecting to see things and to be shown things and not just told things. So especially if you think about organizations that deal, for example, in international relief, you turn on the news and you see those things live. You see things happening right away. And if I'm going to give money to something, then maybe I also would expect to see how that money's being used right away.

But it's not just those kinds of organizations that can benefit from that. It's really every organization. Talking about what it is they do and why they do it. What I'm always and really what got me into this line of work in the first place was having been a fundraiser for a Washington-based nonprofit, and really experiencing this gap between what is happening on the ground and what is possible for the supporters to see. That's the gap that video can help close.

Most of us who work in this sector are working here because we really care about the work that we're doing. It's incredibly passionate, hard working people making a difference in peoples lives all the time. And you just often read the driest and most boring things about that. So video is one way to bring those things to life.

And I've always thought that if you could have a supporter shadow your organization for some time, sit with the staff, experience the stuff that's happening on the ground, those supporters will be the most, they'd be sold for life, because they would see how dedicated and how important the work was. And you can't really do that in real life, but that's something that video can allow you to do.

So I want to talk about some strategies around online video that you can begin to think about. Part of it is in opposition to the way things have been done. The one is related to the dinner video. The dinner video is the classic way that nonprofits have experienced video as an organization. They spend money to make a video for a gala fund raising event. That video has always played a kind of important role.

People are sitting in a ball room somewhere let's say and don't know something about the organization. But you can't really see it in action in that ballroom. So they watch a five

minute, or more often 15 minute video about what the organization's doing and why it's important.

The problem, the dinner video isn't dead, but it is a dead end. It's a dead end because the project of the dinner video from a strategic point of view is expensive to do. And that video then becomes something that sits on a shelf most of the time, or even if you put it online, it's not necessarily an appropriate format of, let's say, 15 minutes long to be really useful online.

So strategically, if have done dinner videos, or if you plan to do them, you can use the dinner video as a jumping off point to create other material. You can use your old dinner videos to mine for material that you may already have. So that's something I'm going to talk about in a minute.

But, if you have done dinner videos in the past, the first thing you should do when we hang up from this call is really look at all your old dinner videos and see if there's any scenes or people or comments or background that would be useful if you could imagine it in a new context. If it is, then you need to find the original footage.

One of the things that you need to do is, if you're in the process of developing a dinner video, make sure that whoever you're working with gives you all of the raw footage from the project and not just the final product. A DVD that syncs with music and scenes is great for the dinner itself, it's not very useful in repurposing. And repurposing is really one of the core elements of this new paradigm of online video.

The next slide here is building a media library. The idea is that if you want to have a channel, if you want to continually show people what you do as an organization, it's very hard to do that by creating a new major filming project every time you want a new video. It's just from outside the ability of 99% of organizations to do that, to have to create new footage all the time.

A media library is the same idea that you have in having photographs, but it's really having photographs and video and audio and all of the material that you can collect in a way that you can access it so that you can reuse and repurpose video.

We had an experience, for example, with the American Jewish World Service, where there was a dinner video and the dinner video spawned at least two dozen different video products - out of the same material that was originally shot for the dinner video.

And those products were short web clips and clips about... The dinner video was about lots of different activities. There were clips created that were about just specific activities. And those clips can live in different places online. They can be part of campaigns and then you can reuse and repurpose that material.

One of the things that you should do at the beginning - from a strategic point of view - is doing an inventory of your existing media. If you don't know what you have, that's a really good place to start, because how you think about what you can do this year and next year will be determined in part by what you already have.

I think a lot of organizations are surprised to realize that they actually already have some useful and interesting material when layered with some new interviews, let's say, or new editing, can really be useful and lower the overall cost of the project.

The other thing that I want to talk about is, the video is - and we mentioned this before - video is a means not an end. So the creation of a video, when you decide to create something, you really have to be thinking about what is it we're trying to do with that material?

Is this a video that we're trying to use just to deepen the engagement with our existing constituents? Is this a video we're trying to use as a hook for a specific fund raising campaign? It's important really to keep in mind that you have goals and what are those goals?

I wanted to say something specifically about fund raising. In our experience, video is not a necessary tool to get people who are already supporters of your organization to give money.

If there's somebody who donates every year at Christmas time, they're going to donate next year when you send them a reminder to do so. They probably don't need a video to do that. In fact, more likely, if they're a regular supporter, the video is going to get in the way because they're going to do that anyway.

So where you start to think about video in fund raising is to capture people who haven't given in a while or people you want to reengage, or new people that have some relationship with the organization but haven't engaged deeply enough to donate yet, as well as really just about engagement.

As I said, I think people are expecting more, to see on a regular basis what you do as an organization. Having a regular feature of new material is going to invite people in to experience what your staff and your people that you serve are experiencing everyday. That is going to have a long term impact on how people feel and how people feel connected to the organization.

Being strategic about what you create is also important. I think that we really are focusing and I'm sure many of you have heard this elsewhere, really focusing on ideas around integrated marketing. I'm sure some of you are thinking about how do you align your direct mail with your online activity, and really thinking about how do you create an entire marketing organization that's focused, where all the initiatives really fit together.

Video is no different than that. We often see because of the dinner video really sitting outside of many of these other initiatives, we often don't really see that. We see video as kind of on its own track. And I really think that it needs to be strategic and focused within what you're doing as an organization.

So if you haven't done this, one of the things you should do in developing a video strategy is to sit down and look at your calendar. The purpose of looking at your calendar

is to look at two things. One is where would be strategically be using video and what kinds of video would we use in those situations?

The other is what things do we need to capture this year that are important, that we'll never be able to get back. So, in terms of capturing, if you're opening a new center, or you're launching a new program, or you're serving your millionth person food. Whatever it is, if it's a milestone, if it's a major activity, you have to be thinking about, 'OK, we know that that's happening. That's on the calendar, let's not be scrambling at the last minute to figure out how we're going to photograph or video that activity.'

So taking the calendar and saying, "You know what, we realistically need five days for professional video production this year to get the most important things that we're doing this year. And we're going to add that material to our video library that's going to become the core material for our dinner video this year." And all of these things individually can become clips that end up on the website.

That's really thinking strategic. And then you can begin to think, "How do you fulfill that? How do we get that production." And you may also say, "Well, we have different tiers of activities. We have three things during the year that are super-important. And we have 10 more that would be great to have. Maybe those three things, we'll use professional videographers for, and maybe the other things the staff can do." And I think there's a tension here when we talk about strategy between immediate needs and long-term needs.

In long term, video is not going away. Video is becoming more and more important. And I think for many organizations, the need on a long-term basis is to develop more internal capacity to shoot video. And that means that you need to begin to think about where's the staffing around this going to come from, and who already in our organization has an interest in this. Who can begin to take a video camera out, take a course here and there, work on their skills, get better at it. Who do we want to invest in?

And we liken this to some extent to what we've seen with the web in general. Back in the early days of the web nobody had budgets for websites. It didn't exist. In 1995, I don't think there was probably an organization out there that had a specific budget for a website, maybe.

And that's obviously changed to the point where there's whole departments, depending on the size of the organization, doing online marketing and e-marketing and managing websites. And I think we're seeing a move in that direction slowly on the video side as well, really a recognition that documenting our work as an organization and figuring out how to do that has become something that isn't just a want-to-have but increasingly a must-have, and how are we going to do that on the long-term.

So thinking short-term, thinking one year out where are our opportunities, how we are going to fulfill those opportunities. And as well thinking in the long term, how do we develop over time the internal capacity to do more of this ourselves, more of this for less cost - and just more of this in general. And I think the "more" is important.

As anybody who is on the call here who is involved in social media and blogging or on social networks, there's really also a volume issue. You simply can't post one blog post, you have to keep going. And video online is similar in that you simply can't think that one video is going to do it. It's really part of the general move toward a transparency and accessibility of your organization, and showing your work.

In order to do that well and to do that over time, you need to think about where that internal capacity is going to come from.

The next thing I just wanted to talk about is the idea of viral video. And this I really need to throw out there because it's so common that people come to us and say, "We want you to make a viral video." I think that that needs some unpacking, because the expectations around viral video and viral in general aren't always what they seem.

Obviously, the idea of having a campaign be viral or a video be viral is that without a lot of marketing dollars that will be transmitted person-to-person, it's really word-of-mouth marketing. That it'll go on and on and reach lots of people that we wouldn't have been able to reach before or that we couldn't afford to reach if we were doing on a paid basis.

And so a lot of organizations have a goal of creating something that would be viral, that would get them out there. But I think that there're a couple points to make about viral videos.

First is that it's very hard to predict what things will go viral, unless it involves breasts or puppies, I guess, would be the shorthand for that. We all know the things on YouTube that people watch a lot. A lot of them involve kittens, and don't necessarily have anything to do with what your organization does. And in fact, if you created such a video and it did get out there, what would it have to do with you and how would it achieve your goals? And I think that's the other piece here, is connecting back to your goals.

One of the other things that we know for sure is that a video that's seen a lot on YouTube doesn't necessarily translate into any type of action. So the people watching on YouTube, the most likely action that somebody watching a YouTube video does after watching a YouTube video is to watch another YouTube video. And YouTube is designed for that to be the case.

So even if you watch a compelling video for a nonprofit organization that you got introduced to through that means, it's not necessarily going to translate into a click to a website or certainly not a donation.

So you again have to think about the effort that would go into spending on creating one viral video, when in fact if you think about the new paradigm where you're creating a lot of content, then you have much more opportunity for one of those things to be something that people connect to and spread.

And the other thing that I like to say when people talk about viral, is the idea of "viral to who?" One of the most viral videos that we did, or the most successful, I think was done for the Maryland State Teachers Organization, and I think the total number of users for

that video was maybe a thousand. Somebody said, "How can that be a big viral success when you only have a thousand views?"

And the answer is, the 19 or so members of the legislature that needed to see this saw it and passed it on. So that's the really important thing with viral is - Who do you want to see it? Who do you need to see it? Who's your target audience? And if it gets out to that audience and that audience shows it to each other, it's not really about the size of that audience, it's about whether it's connected to the right one.

The same with video. You could have many people watching video online that really have no chance of being advocates for your organization or donors to your organization. And then you have to ask yourself, did that make sense for us to do, even if we were "successful" there with viral.

So I just want to run through a couple of different kinds of video, because when you're thinking about video strategy, you have to first of all think about your stories. What are the stories in your organization? If you had your staff in a room and you said, "Let's just write down what are our best stories. What are the stories we all tell when we think about this organization?"

That's a great exercise, because then you can think, 'OK, how could we tell that story visually? Do we have photographs? Could we do a slide show with narration, which is a kind of online video these days that can be done much less expensively? Do you we have video? Can we get video? If we all say this is our best story, why aren't we putting some video resources into telling that story?' That's a good question.

And what messages do we want to convey? Those are thing to think about. And then you have to think about what are the strategies, what are the different kinds of video that can tell those stories?

So I just want to run through a couple types of those. And we have some examples with a link that was sent that you can watch. I'm sure all of you know lots of other examples as well.

The documentary style is a very common one, and it makes sense because if you want to see the work you're doing on the ground, follow that, follow those people, follow those interesting organizations, people, activities.

And the thing about documentary style is, if you do it for a while, the longer you do it, the more material you're going to have to choose from. So the more you can document, it's certainly a case where this is where the documentation part of what we were talking about really pays off, because if you have a big library of activities, you can really choose the best stuff for that video.

The next is public service announcement. This is very common. And here you can use different techniques. It doesn't all have to be documentary style, it can be something where you're just really having compelling people tell their stories. And if you want to see PSAs, one place to look - and just in terms of style - the Ad Council helps

organizations produce a lot of PSAs. They come out of big agencies, they can give you some ideas.

There's a lot of times you can take somebody else's idea and say, "How would we apply that to us?" And develop something from that that becomes kind of derivative, but works, and works for you. So I certainly recommend that as another strategy.

Dramatic style. This is the thing that I mentioned that we did for the teachers, the example here where we staged something at a school that was kind of like the school from Hell. But the idea was to dramatize a certain situation, and there are times when that makes sense.

Man on the street is another one. Really great technique for getting issues that you want people to talk about, to go on the street and ask people. And people on the street will say the wildest things, funny things, things that you can cut together in funny way, and really bring a new approach to it. It's also a fairly inexpensive way to develop new video material and it can be used in combination with other kinds of material that you might have.

Animation. Animation has become very popular. Animation is probably one of the more expensive ways to do video online or video at all. But we've seen the old style flash animations. There was a period where that was all we saw. Every organization was doing some sort of flash animation piece.

And I think what we're seeing now are pieces that often combine animation with live video. And so there's some really good examples of that. The video that we did with NARAL, which I think there's a link to, which shows you how we took live spoken word artists and then use the animation to do things that we obviously couldn't do in real life.

I'm sure many of you have seen the "Story of Stuff," which is terrific thing done by Free Range Studios where they have somebody talking and there's animation that's describing what she's talking about. So there's all different kinds of styles that can incorporate animation successfully.

And a vlog, a kind of a do-it-yourself vlog. A webcam. It's really remarkable what you can do. And I think this goes in the same category of having your staff blogging or CEOs blogging. The idea to say, "Here we are, we want to talk to you, our supporters, about what we're doing." And to not feel that every single thing that you do has to be super-produced. It really just has to be honest, is the key.

And you can begin to do that. I think a lot of organizations have people in the organization that are terrific personalities, that are just that person who you would say, "Hey, that person should be on TV." You should do that. And that person may be in the finance department and not in the marketing department.

And thinking that way, thinking about who do we have that would be great, who would be good on camera. Can we use that, let's do some experimentation. It's totally fine to experiment. You don't have to have a launch that says, "We're going to do a video blog

every day for the next five years." You can just try it and see how it works and see what the feedback is.

I don't know how many of you have seen this "dia-vlog" thing, Blogging Heads TV. It's terrific. It's just basically a conversation between two people. These videos are an hour long often, and they're interesting and they're driving traffic. So for folks who are dealing with policy issues, for example, this is a great way to get people - a discussion that you would normally do as a lecture, you can do it online.

I just want to run through some cost factors, and then let's have some questions.

Cost is a big issue, especially with small organizations, and so I wanted to throw out that people wonder why it is that video costs what it does, and when we think about strategy and our budget, how should we think about costs. So I'm just going to run through some quick factors as to why some video might cost a lot and some might cost not so much.

Obviously the biggest thing is do you have to hire somebody to do it or can you do it yourself. That's an obvious one. And what can you do yourself. What we've done more than once is work with organizations that are shooting their own video, because they are documenting, but do the editing professionally.

And really a lot happens in the editing room. You can really turn mediocre footage into really good video with high-quality. And editing is one of those things that has a real steep learning curve. Again, you can really benefit from that.

But other cost factors, travel is one. If you're doing work overseas, if you have to send camera crews, those obviously can raise costs dramatically. Is it original production or are you using existing footage? A lot of projects now you can just take what you have and create something new. Just do a new voiceover, which can happen in an editing room, with text, and there you have a new video. That's obviously going to be less expensive than where you have to send a camera crew out, in-house or otherwise, to do that.

Issues of images, rights, and music often can increase the cost of a video. If you want to use a particular song and you need rights to that song, that can be very expensive. Also images. You just can't assume that an image you're allowed to use if it's not yours. If you're allowed to use it on the web or in a publication, that necessarily you have the rights to use it in a video.

And if you need certain stock footage, that pricing is sometimes not really set for lower cost in online video. Creative Commons is a great place to find things that you can use.

Does your video need animation and graphics? Translation and transcription, this is a big one - a cost that's often left off. Transcriptions are very helpful when you have a lot of footage, because you can do what's called a "paper edit." A paper edit is instead of watching all the footage, I'm going to read the transcripts, and I'm going to highlight things from the transcripts that say the things that we need to cover.

And then we can go in there and pull those selects from the video itself, string it together and decide does this work. So you can save a lot of effort and a lot of time in the editing room by using transcripts.

Broadcast quality and web quality aren't the same. So doing sound mix, for example, for broadcast is a whole different animal than doing your in-house video for your website. So if there's a broadcast needed, it changes the equation.

Live, do you want to have something live, or do you need multi-camera? If you're having a concert, for example, you often see shots from different angles. That means there's more than one camera crew there. Obviously, that's going to be a big cost factor.

I know that we're running out of time. Hopefully, I gave you some things to think about, but I want to open it up while we still have some time to some questions. And again, to ask a question you should send an email to fundraising123@networkforgood.org.

Rebecca: Wonderful. Thank you so much, Michael. First of all, I'd like to just kind of hop right in and first just give a quick website. Earlier Michael mentioned the Flip video and how there are discounts for nonprofits. And we'll make sure to put this link up in the email later when we send out the audio file. Thank you to Erica, who sent along the link. Like I said, this will be posted and emailed later, but for those of you taking notes, it is flipvideospotlights.com/home. So again, that'll be posted everywhere, but we've gotten a couple of requests saying, "Where can we get that, where can we learn more?" Flipvideospotlight.com/home.

OK. Since we mentioned the Flip Video camera, we had a couple of questions, for instance, from Katherine, who said, "If one does get Flip Video or some other end-user video camera, is there a particular editing software that we need to know how to use? Is there one that you recommend to create good videos?"

Michael: That's a great question that we get all the time. There are lots of different editing software for video, and I think in general we recommend that you go the Mac route if you're going to do it for the long-term. We've seen very successfully Macs added to all-PC networks. There's a lot less issues today than there used to be in terms of, you either had to be an all-Mac organization or an all-PC organization. Today, really you can add one iMac into your network or add that workstation, and very successfully. But there's lots of software. All of it has a steep learning curve. And what that means is unless you're really going to spend time with it, it's not going to do it by itself. So if you just want to do very basic stuff with Windows, you can get for free Windows Media Maker or Movie Maker. If it's not already on your system, which it's often bundled with, you can download it from Microsoft for free.

But the software that comes with Mac, the iMovie software, is really great. And the iMovie '09 is much better than last year's version. It's great. But that's pretty much as much as you need to begin to do in-house video.

Rebecca: Great! This is a question we get fairly often, especially when we're talking about other types of social networking, like Facebook and MySpace and managing

image. Amy wrote in and said, "What is a good way to keep unwanted videos, posted by others obviously, off of YouTube that misrepresent our organization?"

Michael: There's really no way unless there are copyright issues where you can send YouTube a takedown notice, basically, from the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. You can say they used something of ours that they weren't allowed to and that video has to go. Otherwise, it's very similar, as you just said, around the same issues that happen online. So on Facebook, if somebody's saying bad things about us, or blog comments, those kinds of things. You can manage your own comments in your videos, in your channel on YouTube.

But really I think the answer in general is you need to overwhelm the negative with the positive. You can't hide from it. Sometimes you may choose to directly address it. And sometimes you may choose to ignore it. I think there's really strategic communications decisions in that and there's a not a once-size-fits-all thing.

But often the things that are negative are very marginal, and you don't want to bring attention to them by even addressing them. But really, if there's a hundred positive videos and there's one negative, that's a pretty good ratio. If you only have one video up there and there's another one that mentions your organization negatively, the question is first of all, how do you do more video, but also how do you empower the people who are positive to be producing their own content as well.

One way to do that is to ask them. Another way is to do contests; user-generated video contests can create a lot of positive media that then can be put on all the different sites. And again, overwhelm the negative with positives.

Rebecca: This question Ashley wrote in, and it actually encompasses a lot of other questions we're getting from other folks, so I'll just tackle Ashley's. And it's actually a couple of questions in one. She says, "Coming from an organization that is very new to the virtual world, we are beginning to dabble in the social media scene. Like most organization, we are extremely short-staffed and short of money. We would still like to get into the video scene, however, and my question is, how effective are short, small-budget marketing videos for nonprofits? Is this a worthwhile investment? We're looking at doing this ourselves, but how have other nonprofits fared from this approach? How would you recommend getting started? Should we put videos on YouTube? Should we host videos on our site?"

And we had another, this is all about getting started and how worthwhile it is. So then kind of a follow-up question from Rebecca is, "How do I convince the traditionalists and the naysayers in my organization that it is worthwhile?"

Michael: I think that there's a lot of talk in general about social media and how do we convince people it's worthwhile. One of the things that's done our job for us in many ways is just YouTube in general. For example, if you look on the most recent stats around online usage and the percentage of people's time that's being spent on online video, that's really the growing part of the web. And I really believe that the way the whole digital divide is going to disappear is going to be because of video. People are going to want to

have video, and just like the poorest people have television, they're going to want to be online.

And so we're really seeing just a tremendous interest in online video. So that's one thing. I don't think that there's a simple equation, though, that you can point to, "If you make this one video then this will have the result." So that makes it hard, because there really is a big focus on ROI.

And I think that if you're in a small, under-staffed organization, I think one of the ways to get started is with something like a Flip Video camera. It's something that you can point and press a button and shoot and say something and put it onto YouTube. Literally in 10 minutes you could make a video with your staff talking and put it onto YouTube.

I think that's really where you start; you start by experimenting. And you start by looking at what other people are doing. That's a good segue for me to just to plug that we have the Third Annual DoGooder TV Nonprofit Video Awards. And the entries are now... if you go to dogooder.tv you can see a lot of organization's video.

And the video awards have this year categories of staff-created videos and vlogs. The idea is really to showcase what some of the smaller organizations are doing. And as always the awards are sponsored by NTEN and will be given at the NTC, the Nonprofit Technology Conference in San Francisco in April. And the Flip Spotlight folks are a sponsor this year.

I think just looking at what other organizations have been doing and finding those organizations in your sector - and you can search on DoGooder for different types of organizations and see, as well as YouTube. The YouTube nonprofit channel and search, and really see what other people are doing - but also experiment, begin to start.

I do think that overall it is important to be transparent and begin showing what you do, and videos are a really good way to do that.

Rebecca: Just a really quick question that we got from Margie. She said, "Please repeat where you can get images, rights, and music easily."

Michael: Creative Commons is one place that you can get music and images, where you can have rights to use them without expense. And I think we can post a link somewhere on our link there, where there's a link to Creative Commons search. If you just Google Creative Commons, you can do it. As well as on Flickr, you can do a Creative Commons search through Flickr, because people who upload images to Flickr can designate them as Creative Commons. Creative Commons is like an alternative copyright. It's basically a way for people to say instead of "all rights reserved," which is the standard copyright, this is saying "some rights reserved." So most often saying that you have to have attribution, but you can use it. And so there's a lot of material there.

In terms of music, if you're going to do a lot of it, one of the things we do - we make a lot of video - we have subscriptions to rights-free music archives. So we can search for hundreds, thousands of different tracks and tunes and things that we can use in video. But

there's real expense to that. And there are different kinds of rights - free CDs that you can get on the music side. But again, it depends on how much volume, how much you're going to be using it.

Rebecca: We're getting a lot of questions just in general about what outlets you recommend people actually put videos on. You mentioned YouTube a couple of times. And other questions about - just kind logistical questions like, "How long are effective videos? So if we were to make a dinner video, how long should it be? Or if we were putting something on our website?" So: Where and how long should videos be?

Michael: I think, in many ways, we see very short videos doing very well. So the average video on YouTube is something like a minute and a half long. So thinking about what you can do there makes sense. But I think the idea that people won't watch longer videos online is not true. We see that particularly around television. If you look at Hulu.com, which is the second biggest video site out there, which is all television, it's all content that's longer form, and people are spending a lot of time online.

So it's really about, is it engaging? Dinner videos - We try to keep dinner videos around 7-10 minutes long. People get bored quickly sitting there waiting for their salads or whatever they're doing. So we think that's good.

We made a lot of 3-4 minute web clips that are longer than those 1.5 minute clips because you want to tell something more complicated, but are less than five minutes so that the commitment to the video is not extreme for the user.

In terms of getting it out there, I think people often mistake the fact that YouTube has a lot of traffic with having a lot of traffic for you video. And again, the right kind of traffic. We've put videos up at YouTube and at Metacafe and Vimio, and we've had more views in other places than YouTube.

But again, it's not just about views. So one strategy that's common is the strategy of putting video in as many places as possible. And the advocates for that strategy say, "Why not? I'm going to get different people watching in different places."

There's a company called TubeMogul, which allows you to upload video to one place and they'll automatically upload it your accounts in all these other places. And so that saves a huge amount of effort in terms of if you're going to do that many times, you don't have to manage all those accounts separately. And they'll also give you stats from all those different accounts into one.

But often the best place for your video is on your own website, and depending on the size of your organization, you may prefer not to have a YouTube button there, not being shown other people's videos afterwards on your site. And having something that we call a "white label" video hosting solution, that would be one that you could manage all your content, basically a content management system for video for your own website. There's a real expense in that, but if you're committed to video, that's where you might end up.

Rebecca: And then just a last question that's kind of a two-parter. You mentioned a lot of different types of video. First, can you just define what a viral video is for those who aren't familiar with it?

Michael: A viral video, like any content that's called viral, the idea is that it's like a virus, it's passed from person to person. So those emails that you get that say, "You've got to watch this video and send it to 10 friends," that would be a viral video where lots of people watch it. If I put a video on YouTube, for example, with no promotion, and somebody saw it and told their friends who told their friends who told their friends, and the next thing you know you wake up and there's 500,000 views to that video, that would be a viral video.

And so viral is really just a shorthand for word of mouth marketing, where you're not doing paid promotion, but it's spreading from person to person. And that's why I was saying it depends on who those people are, not just how many of them there are.

Rebecca: So then that leads into the next question, which Kendra wrote in - and actually a few people have written in with the same question. "In your experience, what have you found to be the most effective type of video production?" Is it a vlog or a documentary, and I assume it's different for different projects. But if a small nonprofit wanted to get started right away, what should be their first action step, where should they turn first?

Michael: I would say two things stand out for me. There really is no single answer, but one is the documentary style. If you're doing work that if you had somebody with you to see that work it would be really compelling, then that's what you want to do. You want to document that. If I could be there. As opposed to that, if what you really want to convey is an idea, then other strategies can make sense. One that we've seen that's been very successful is the strategy of using text and some animation. If you go to "Good Magazine," which I think is at good.is, they have videos where they use this technique. It's all post-production, there's no actual camera work involved.

But they tell some story or some information using text and music and some animation. And the animation can be very simple, or it can just be text on the screen. Many of you I'm sure have seen the "Girl Effect" video, which I think there's maybe a link to on our site. That's a video that only uses text to tell a kind of story to convey an idea.

So those are the two ways I would think about it. If you have real activity, real people, real stuff, you want to document that and use a more documentary style. If you have an idea that you want to convey, you can do that by using photographs, text, voiceover, words, things that are just post-production.

Rebecca: Great! Thank you again, Michael. We really appreciate it having you today. I just want to thank everyone else who joined us on the call. We really appreciate you taking the time out of your busy schedules to learn a little bit more about how you can integrate video into your strategy.

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