

**Nonprofit 911 – July 7, 2009**  
**A Beginner's Guide to Online Fundraising and Marketing**  
with Jono Smith  
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)

**Rebecca Higman:** Now, I am happy to introduce our speaker. Jono Smith is Vice President of Nonprofit Marketing here at Network for Good where he is responsible for helping small and growing nonprofits reach supporters and raise money online. Prior to joining the team here at Network for Good, Jono spent eight years as the Marketing Director at SunGard Higher Education helping colleges and universities in the US, Europe and in the Middle East to use online technologies to better serve their students.

Prior to this, Jono served in the Clinton Administration as a special assistant to the Director of White House Communications, and he holds an undergraduate degree in English and Theatre Arts from Loyola Marymount University in LA.

So, without further ado, here is Jono.

**Jono Smith:** Thank you Rebecca and welcome everyone. I want to thank everyone very much for spending an hour of your time with us today. I know how busy everyone is even though it is summer time. I know there is a lot going on and so I am really happy that you joined us today for this teleconference. So, we are going to talk about how to get started from a beginner's perspective with online fundraising and marketing. And as Rebecca mentioned, I have some slides here that I will be walking through today. But, if you don't have the slides, I will try not to be too dependent on those as visual aids, but again, you can download those from our Learning Center and follow on if you wish.

So, let's start off here on slide 2. What am I hoping to accomplish today? Well, number one, I want to talk a little bit about the business case for online fundraising, and why you should consider investing some of your precious dollars in online fundraising.

Number two, I want to talk about the basics of an effective online marketing and fundraising strategy, specifically geared towards small and growing nonprofit organizations, how to select the right tools to support your strategy and the bottom line, I hope this presentation gives you not a bunch of theories and high in the cloud strategies, but some really practical advice and ideas that you can begin implementing or testing right away, as soon as this afternoon, as soon as tomorrow at your organization.

So, if you move to slide 3, I wanted to present a little bit about the business case for online fundraising. Now, I know many of you on the phone have "donate" buttons on your websites and many of you often say to us, "How do we get more people to click on those buttons? Perhaps online fundraising is really something that's reserved for only large organizations with large budgets."

But, in fact, that is absolutely not the case and through eight years of crunching all the numbers here at Network for Good and we process close to \$300 million, a true pattern has emerged. And that pattern is that small to medium size nonprofits account for over 70 percent of the online giving that we see here at Network for Good. So, this isn't just the domain of the large nonprofit organizations, this is something that even the smallest all volunteer very low budget organization can participate in.

And when we talk about 70 percent, you maybe asking yourself, "What budget category are we talking about here when we say small to medium size nonprofits?" And the majority of organizations that we work with here at Network for Good have a budget of less than \$250,000 a year. So, I hope that gives you some encouragement that online fundraising could be right for your organization.

Moving to slide 4, you may be asking yourself, "Well, that's all great, those are sort of general pie-in-the-sky numbers, but how much really can a small nonprofit organization raise? So, I went back over the last 12 months, I looked at April 2008 through April 2009 and specifically about 1000 nonprofits with a budget of under \$250,000 a year who are currently fundraising online with Network for Good.

And not surprisingly, this group raised almost \$10 million over the last 12 months. Now that is, as you can see here on slide 4, that is almost \$1000 a month or \$11,000 a year and think of how much more your organization could do with this additional income?

So, let's move into here on slide 5, the meat and potatoes and talk a little bit about who accounts for these donations. And on this slide, I sort of combine three generations or actually four generations of givers. Starting on the far left, you will recognize the greatest generation and the silent generation, basically individuals who were born between 1901 and 1945.

Now traditionally and still today, these individuals donate primarily by responding to either direct mail appeals or telemarketing and some combination of events. They account for less than 15 percent of online giving. However, they are occasionally visiting your website and they are occasionally reading your emails and although they may be accounting for a small portion of online giving, they are often researching your organizations online, either by going directly to your website or perhaps subscribing to your newsletter.

Now, let's move over to the middle, the Baby Boomers and these are truly the first generation of multi-channel donors. They give both online and offline, but leaning heavily towards online. And in that respect, they account for over half of online giving based on this donor-centric survey. And that's not surprising considering that these individuals were active web users both at home and at work.

And then there is Generation-X, which is the generation that I am a part of and this is really the first true web generation. And generally this generation is not very responsive to direct mail or telemarketing. Speaking from my own personal experience, I have never made a direct mail gift. I think maybe in my lifetime I made one or two telemarketing gifts and really about 95 percent of all the donations I have made to charitable

organizations have taken place online. And this group accounts for about 30 percent of online giving.

So, why is this important? Well, I don't really want you to focus on demographics because that is not what defines donors, it is really their behavior. And we can see clearly a behavior that is represented by this Baby Boomer generation and generation-X accounting for 80 percent of online giving. And so this is a huge opportunity for you to customize your fundraising strategy for these individuals and tailor not necessarily for these demographics but tailor to their behaviors.

All right. So, moving on to slide 6, why are these individuals, particularly the last two generations I talked about, donating online and shifting much of their giving online? Well, it is obviously easier than writing a check. In times of national events, say World AIDS Day or a crisis like Katrina, it is a really fast way to provide relief and the third reason is anonymity. A lot of individuals today like to make anonymous donations and online giving is a great way to make an anonymous donation.

Fourth, recurring donations, online giving obviously makes it available to setup a recurring donation, saying monthly, quarterly or annually. And that is a growing trend among givers is setting up these online recurring donations. So, not only is it the ability to convert an impulse into an action, a donation, but also to support on an ongoing basis.

All right. So, moving on here to slide seven and slide 8, I want to go into the basics of an effective strategy and talk about the tactics you might implement to support that strategy - but first things first. There are some very basic steps that you should consider before diving into online fundraising. Some really simple things you can do to begin thinking about online fundraising.

And let me just walk through what these nine points are and then I am going to go into detail on each of these as well. So, number one, a lot of nonprofit organizations when they register their website, they have a really long address or they have some sort of cryptic acronym. And it is really important that your website address, your URL be decibel and simple and memorable and easy to remember, because you want people to return to your website so they can continue to engage with your organization and so you can continue to cultivate them.

Once they get to your website, you want to make sure that you are using design strategically. Unfortunately, nonprofits are in many cases the worst offenders when it comes to website design. And I am not saying you need to spend thousands of dollars on designing a fancy looking website, many organizations rely on volunteer designers from local community colleges or other resources that are available to them, but it is important because you are creating an impression when people visit your website that you do use design strategically.

Moving from design into content. A lot of nonprofits often convert their annual report or their offline newsletter and convert that into their website, but websites are a lot different than offline content. So, it is really important that you combine all the resources that are

available to you and begin to tell a story about your organization through your website, through pictures, videos, audio and so forth.

Once people get to your website, it is essential that there be a "donation" button and that it be prominent. And you should also have a way to collect people's email addresses on every page of your website, so you can begin to cultivate people by email and use those cultivations to drive people back to your website, so you can deepen your relationship to them.

Now, why is this important? Well, generally, people require several interactions with your organization or several different touch points with your organization before they would even consider naming you as an organization that they might support and going that extra step to actually donating to your organization.

Number eight, it is important that your organization can be found in search engines and I am going to talk a little bit more about that in a minute. And finally, you should publish your website's address in every communication, both online and offline. So, whether you are having an event or whether you are communicating with people online, you want to make sure that your website address is prominent and memorable.

All right. So, now I am going to walk through my 10 rules for effective online fundraising and marketing. And rule number one is related to the understanding of the difference between strategies and tactics. And we are on slide nine if you are keeping up with the slides. And an online strategy, as you can see here, is a plan of action for using the web and other digital mediums to achieve a goal or a set of goals.

Now, a lot of organizations when it comes to online fundraising and marketing, they jump right in and they focus on the tools first - these shiny objects, like the website and email marketing and things like Facebook. But, these are really just tactics that can be used to accomplish an end. And if you don't have a strategy in place first, it really doesn't make sense to consider which tactics to use until you know what you want to accomplish and how you want to accomplish it.

And to help you out, if you move to slide 10, I put together a really, really mini sample online strategic plan here. So, let's say that your strategy is two-fold, you want to create more giving opportunities for supporters and potential supporters online and you want to grow your database of emails. Well, in that case, once you have established those strategies, there are some basic tactics that fall right out of those strategies.

So, number one, you want to make sure that you optimize your website and your donation page for success. And I will talk about how to do that here in just a second. You want to make sure that you start monitoring your online reputation. You want to make sure you increase your findability on search engines. You want to be able to use email marketing to build relationships and drive traffic back to your website. And of course, you always want to be analyzing and measuring, so you can revise your tactics and optimize your strategies.

All right. So, let's move into now the how of actually how you do these things and that brings us to slide number 11. Just a second ago, I talked about the importance of optimizing your website experience and optimizing your donation page experience. Why is that important?

Well, this idea of usability actually is a donation filler. And this comes from a recent survey on website usability. And what we found out from this survey was that a number of people are basically leaving your website. They are abandoning your shopping cart or your donation form for some very simple and easier correct reasons.

Two in ten people on this survey said they couldn't even find how to donate. They couldn't find that big shiny "donate" button. Four in ten people said they didn't donate because the website was poorly put together either because of design or clutter pages or layouts. And four in ten people said they couldn't find the information they needed or they found the website content to be unclear. And so again, these are all easy things that can be corrected through improved content and improved design.

So, moving on to the next slide, let's talk a little bit about the donation page and what your donors see when they click on that "donation" button, because that is really part of this usability experience. So, on this slide here, I think we are on slide 12, you will see a basic shopping cart donation experience.

And I want you to think and put yourself in the shoes of one of your supporters or prospective supporters and think about what type of connection they might have with your organization when they land on a donation page that looks like this. For example, I have blurred out the name of the nonprofit here, but it basically just has the name of the organization and there is nothing about where the donations go. You can see that the donor is going to have to create a log-in to actually make a donation. It really doesn't represent this nonprofit's brand very well.

But, if you move to slide 13, you can see a customized donation page like the one we provide with our Custom DonateNow service from Network for Good. And I think you will agree the donor experience is thousands of times better here. It has a consistent brand's look and feel here with the colors and logos of this particular nonprofit; in this case this is Oregon 150.

It gives the donor the option of making a one-time or recurring donation. They can even dedicate their gifts. They can choose whether to make an anonymous donation or not. And then of course Oregon 150 has wrapped around their own content encouraging people to opt in for their email list for example.

So, let's move on to slide 14 and having looked at two different donation pages, I will talk about 10 different ways that you can optimize your donation page. Number one and perhaps most importantly is to make sure that your donation page looks exactly like your website, so that when people click on that "donation" button, they have a consistent interface from one step to the other.

Number two, you want to make sure that you offer both one-time and recurring gifts on your donation form. Now, I know a lot of people aren't fond of anonymous donations because how do you cultivate an anonymous donor, but if you turn off anonymous donations or if you don't offer anonymous donations, you are going to limit a certain segment of the population who is only going to make anonymous donations. So, I think that is another important thing that you should have on your donation page.

Number four, instant gratification when it comes to that tax receipt is essential. So, your donors expect that when they make a donation that they will get an instant tax receipt both online and automatically emailed to them.

Number five, you want to give your donors a way to tell their friends about a donation that they have just made, so make sure your donation page gives you the tell-a-friend option.

Number six, you may want to collect information about your donors. For example, if you are thinking about investing some time in Facebook, maybe you put a question on your donation page that says "Do you have an account on Facebook?" And if seven out of ten people say "No," that's a pretty good indication of where you should be spending your precious time and resources.

Number seven, you should give people on your donation form a way to opt in to your email newsletter.

Number eight, you want to give people the ability to make tributes or memorial gifts, to designate specific programs, and if you have thank you gifts or premiums, you want to make sure you can do that as well.

So, those are ten ways that you can optimize your donation page. I want you to consider your current donation provider, and if they don't allow you to check all 10 of those boxes, then it's probably time to consider a new donation service.

Rule number four. I've mentioned this a few times already, but I can't mention it enough, because nonprofits love to hide their donation buttons. Rule number four is to make your "donate" button obvious. Now, when you subscribe to Network for Good, we give you a simple "donate now" button that's big and bold. You can place it on your website, on every page of your website.

But, we also encourage our clients to get more creative. So, for example, we see malaria organization here that's saying "donate a bed net," and a clean water organization that's saying "make a donation" with the clean water background.

All right. So, let's move on to an example of a nonprofit that does some of these things right, or a nonprofit website that does some of these things right. And this website is for teens living with cancer. The name of the nonprofit you can see in the bottom left, and it's slide 16 if you're following along, is actually Melissa's Living Legacy Foundation. But, instead of putting their name front and center, because that doesn't have a connection to

cancer, they chose a tagline - front and center there at the top left - of teens living with cancer.

Number one. You can see that big "donate" button, right there in the middle of the page. You can help; click here to donate online. You don't need to scroll to see it. It's right there above the fold as we like to say.

Number two. Instead of pasting their mission statement or some sort of boring copy, this organization has put some really compelling copy there about their website. So, it says, "This site is for teens with cancer who have lots of living to do." You'll get straight information; we know what it's like. All the pictures and stories are of real teens with cancer. So, there you can see "stories" is a link. So, they're using storytelling on their website.

And then on the next paragraph, it says you can connect with others like yourself. Your friends will see what you really need. Your family will learn how to get a grip. So, not only is this for teens living with cancer, it's for their friends and for their family members. And then finally to tell their story, they have incorporated a video right there in the top left on their website. And it's certainly a great way to get your story out and something I would encourage your organization to do as well.

All right, let's move on to slide 17, which is rule number five, this idea of listening to understand. Now earlier, I talked about how demographics aren't as important as behavior. So, how do you understand the behavior of your supporters or your prospective supporters? Well, one way is to go out there and listen, because many of them are already having conversations about either your cause or your primary issue area.

Two ways you can do that are listed here on this slide. I'm just going to focus on one of the called Google Alerts. Google Alerts is a great, free service that allows you to essentially set up daily email alerts that will basically send you an email anytime somebody is talking about your cause or your issue area.

So, for example, let's say you are a homeless services organization in Pittsburgh, you could go in and set up a Google Alert for "Homeless in Pittsburgh," and once a day, or once a week, anytime that phrase or that keyword is mentioned either in the Internet, in a news story or in a blog, you'll receive an email with a link to that story. Then you can go out, click on that link and either insert yourself into that conversation or begin listening to the conversation, begin monitoring what's being said either about your cause, your issue area or your organization.

You might also set up search terms for all the names of the executives in your organization and everyone on your board. That will really allow you to monitor who's talking about your organization and the different people who are involved with it.

All right. Let's move onto rule number six. And rule number six is breaking the Outlook or the Gmail habit. And by that I mean if you're still sending your supporters emails by Outlook or Google mail, it's time to consider an email service provider.

Now, why is that exactly? Why is using Outlook, Google mail or Yahoo! Mail a bad idea? Well, number one, these services were designed for one-to-one email. They weren't designed for creating good-looking email newsletters and appeals. So, your emails may look terrible.

Number two. It's difficult to send to groups of people through these services. So, either you have to load people up in the "to" line or the "cc" line or the "bcc" line. And any of these things can cause you either to get blacklisted or to send your emails right into your recipients' spam, junk or bulk mail folders.

And when you send emails to 20 recipients or 100 recipients or even 1000 recipients through one of these services, you're going to get all of those bounce-backs, auto-replies and vacation replies right back into your inbox. All these things could add up to you basically violating the CAN-SPAM Act. And finally, you also won't know if anyone is actually reading these emails unless they click on the "reply" button and respond to your emails.

These six reasons are why service providers were created. There are hundreds of email service providers out there - we are one ourselves; we have a service called Email Now. So, if you're still sending your emails through something like Outlook or Google mail, I would strongly encourage you to consider an email service provider.

Once you have an email service provider, one of the great things it lets you do, moving on to slide 19, is to collect email addresses on your website. So, here is the Environmental Defense Fund. Front and center on their home page, they have a box where they ask people to opt-in for their email newsletter.

But, what you'll notice here, and what I really like about this opt-in box, is it's not sort of your typical boring "subscribe to our newsletter," but they have some really strong calls to action here. Get involved. Get tips to flight global warming. So, when people sign up, not only are they going to get these tips to fight global warming, they're also going to get a free low-carbon diet guide as a free gift for subscribing. So, this is just a combination of great messaging around the email sign-up form and a strong benefit exchange with the free low-carbon diet guide.

Moving on to slide 20, another benefit of using an email service provider is "tell a friend," or "send to a friend." Most email service providers allow you to put that widget on all of your email campaigns, which encourages people to forward your emails. And when people forward your emails, that creates multiple opportunities for the recipient to sign up and opt-in to your list.

There are many ways that you can fuel these sign-ups. One way is through contests. So, for example, once a month or once a quarter here at Network for Good, we'll run a contest around this "send to a friend" feature. For example, in this case, basically we offered people to be entered into a drawing for a free \$250 gift card whenever they forwarded our newsletter. And you'll see actually 93 people responded to this contest and forwarded our email.

All right, let's move on to slide 21 and rule number eight, which is to get serious about email outreach. Now, making the transition from print communications to email communications is a big step. There are a lot of things to consider. I just want to focus on a couple of those.

Number one is the subject line. Now, every email obviously has a subject line, and you have an important choice here. You can use something really boring, like June or July newsletter, in your subject line. Or in the case of the Environmental Defense Fund, you can have something a little bit more compelling that's going to create an incentive for people to actually open the email, like five tips to fight global warming.

The second tip here is to focus above the fold. Now, we talked about this idea on your website of things being above the fold, and that basically means that people don't have to scroll to see your "donate" button. But, this also applies to email campaigns. So, think, for example, if you use Outlook to read your emails. Outlook has that preview pane, where when you click on an email, you'll see a small portion of the email in your window.

Most people actually use that preview pane when they are going through their inbox to decide whether to open an email or delete it. So, it is very important when you lay out your non-profit's email outreach or your non-profit's email newsletter you think about that small horizontal or vertical frame in the preview pane where people will be taking a look at your email before they decide whether to open it or read it.

It is important to put a lot of your attention on those top four inches. It is really prime real estate when it comes to determining whether your emails get open.

The third tip I want to talk about here is personalization. Now for many organizations, personalization means, "Dear Bob" or, "Dear (supporter's first name)." Now, there is really a lot more you can do with personalization. Why is that important?

Well, personalization has been proven to boost response rates. So, don't just stop with the personal greeting of, "Dear Bob" or, "Dear Joan." You should consider segmenting your list on things like gender or geography, or anything else you know about your recipients.

So, you can personalize the content based on the people to whom you are sending. After all, showing that you know someone's first name is great, but showing that you really know them, that you really respect them, and you really care about them, you providing them great personalized content is obviously even better.

All right. Let's move on to slide 22. We are about wrapped up here for the Ten Rules for Online Fundraising and Marketing Success, and I will be happy to take your questions. Once again, just email your questions to fundraising123@networkforgood.org.

Here on slide 22 is rule number nine, which is, "Make your organization easy to find." Now when you type in the name of your organization into Google, for example, this is the St. Bernard Project in New Orleans, is your organization at the top of the Google search results? Is it in the top five, top ten, or is it not even on the first page?

Well, this is obviously a really important item here, because you want to make sure that when people are looking for your organization that they can find your organization.

So number one, let's focus on the people who know the name of your organization. You want to make sure that when people type in, in this case, St. Bernard Project, you can be found.

But, if people don't know the name of your organization, for example, if they are a Katrina survivor in this case, you want to make sure that if they type in Katrina Survivor that your organization will be near the top of the list.

There are two ways to do this. One is a little bit more complex, and that way is called search engine optimization. I am not going to talk about search engine optimization today, but just really quickly, that is what you see here with the orange arrow called organic.

So, when somebody types in St. Bernard Project, this non-profit has really strong search engine optimization, so their non-profit appears first. But, the second way I am going to talk about is through something called search engine marketing, and that is actually where your non-profit is paying for your organization to appear near the top of the search results in Google.

So, in this case, St. Bernard Project is purchasing some advertising on Google to make sure their organization appears for the things like Katrina Survivor and the name of their organization.

Now, I said search engine marketing and paid advertising, but the good news is that if you are a qualified non-profit organization, you can get this paid advertising for free, and I will talk about that in just a minute here. It is called a Google Grant.

But, moving on to slide 23, I talked about the importance of not only being found by the name of your organization, but also through some keywords like Katrina survivors, or in the case of Network for Good here on slide 23, we want people to find Network for Good when they type in, "how to ask for donations" into Google.

You can see that we are using our Google Grants on the top right there to have a free sponsored link from Google. So, whenever somebody types in "how to ask for donations," we appear there, and people can click and go straight to our website. We have also invested here in search engine optimization. So, we are the fifth search results in organic fashion.

All right. So, how does this work? Slide 24. Google offers this free in kind advertising program through Google AdWords, and it is called a Google Grant. Most non-profit organizations can qualify for this free grant. There is a short waiting list. All you need to do is go to [Google.com/grants](http://Google.com/grants) and complete a short application. Once you are approved, you will receive up to \$10,000 a month in in-kind advertising.

That will allow you, as you saw on the previous slide there, to create keywords, not only around the name of your non-profit, but around different search terms like "Katrina Survivors" or "Homeless Shelter Pittsburgh," or whatever may relate to your organization, so that when people go out in Google and search for your organization, they can find you.

That is really important, especially during a time of crisis or during the holiday giving season - in December, for example. So, if people are looking for ways to make a year end tax gift, they might go into Google and do a search for, "Akron, Ohio homeless services organization." And using a Google Grant, you can make sure that your organization appears in their search results so they can click on your link and go to your website and possibly make a donation.

And that leads me to slide 25, which is our final rule for online fundraising and marketing, and that is rule number 10 - "Put yourself in your donor's shoes."

When it comes to marketing, the biggest mistake that you can make is making it all about your organization, and all about you, and all about your mission statement. But, when it comes to the web and it comes to communicating with your supporters online, it is really all about your audience.

Online marketing is not a monologue, and we have that mission megaphone there to illustrate this point. But, you are not the target audience for these communications. You need to look at the world from the point of view of your audience rather than your own.

So, it is really important that good marketing is all about listening to your audience, acknowledging their perspective, and having a conversation with them based on that perspective.

A good marketing relationship is like any other relationship. It is based in listening and conversation, and it is not simply a monologue, and it is not simply taking that mission megaphone and shouting out to your mission.

So, how do you make your messaging sing? Well here is an example on slide 26 of an organization with a really confusing name who did something to make their messaging sing.

The Alopecia Society is focused on a disease that makes your hair fall out. It is basically a support group that makes you feel OK about having this disease. The benefit of associating yourself with this support group is to build self esteem in women who are predominately affected by this disease. It is also to increase awareness that being a bald woman doesn't necessarily mean you have to have cancer.

So when it came to choosing a name for this organization, instead of calling themselves the Alopecia Areata Society, and instead of registering [www.alopeciaareatasociety.org](http://www.alopeciaareatasociety.org), they did something pretty extraordinary.

If you move to slide 27, you can see that they named their organization Bald Girls Do Lunch, because one of the biggest ways that they build self esteem is through these lunches and through different virtual events that they have.

If you Google, "Bald girls do lunch," you can learn more about this fantastic organization and how they have taken some really confusing jargon and a disease that really has been typically misunderstood, and through some simple basic marketing principles really made their messaging sing.

All right. So, let's move to slide 28 and really quickly summarize our ten rules for an effective online fundraising and marketing program. Number one, we talked about the importance of understanding the difference between strategies and tactics.

I know many organizations feel pressure from board members and other individuals to jump on the bandwagon and try out the latest thing. I hear people all the time say, "Somebody on my board said we need to be on Facebook or we need to be Twittering, or we need to have a blog." But, until you understand what your strategies, objectives, and goals are, it is really too early to be thinking about your tactics.

Number two, focus on the donor experience, I can't say this enough. If you are providing a poor donor experience on your website or on your donation page, if it doesn't reflect your brand, then you are undoubtedly losing donors. And you are undoubtedly having people drop out of your donation page before they make a donation.

Which leads us to rule number three, and remember to optimize your donation page around those ten steps that we talked about, so when people do go to your website and you have that obvious donate button and they click on it they are going to make a donation.

Number five, listen and understand. We talked about setting up Google alerts so you can monitor the conversation about your organization.

Rule number six, make sure you break that Outlook habit and get serious about email outreach and use all the wonderful features that an email service provider like Network for Good Email Now can provide to grow your email list with things like 'Tell a Friend', and email sign up forms. And to be able to monitor all of your email results through great reporting that a service provider will offer.

Number nine, take advantage of a Google Grant to make sure that your organization is easy to find on Google and in search engines.

And finally, number 10, make sure that whenever you are creating communications, whenever you are getting ready to send out an email or make a change to your website make sure you ask yourselves, does this really speak to our donors? Are we speaking in our own voice or are we considering this is the voice of our donors? And are we putting ourselves in our donors' shoes in these communications?

Last slide, slide number 29, before we move on to questions. We would love to help you with some of these different challenges. We can do that in a number of different ways here at Network for Good. We can help you get donations on your website with our custom donate now service. We can help you send beautiful email appeals and email newsletters and now online surveys with our email now service.

We provide a steady stream of training and resources through our learning center at fundraising123, which I hope all of you have become familiar with. And you can contact us at anytime whenever you do have a question about online fundraising or marketing. When you subscribe to our services we take that a step further, we provide unlimited phone, email and chat support for all of our subscribers.

The remaining slides, I will leave you to look at those after our call today. I just wanted to include some bonus tips on inspiring your supporters. And with that, let's go ahead; we have time for about 10 or 15 minutes of questions. I would love to hear your questions or comments about fundraising and marketing.

**Rebecca:** Great, thanks Jono. Yes, we have a number of questions already so I am just going to dive on in. OK, here is our first question. It says, "Most of our individual donors are older, in that greatest and silent generation portion you mentioned earlier. Not to be morbid, but I know they won't be around forever. How can I convince management that online fundraising is worth fitting into the mix now?"

**Jono:** Great question. The first thing I would say to them is ask management if they realize that this older generation is actually visiting your website. And that a certain segment, I would say at least 15 percent, if not higher, of this older generation has an email address. And while they may not be making online gifts today they are researching your organization online. And then I would point them to the research that we have here at Network for Good, and that has been duplicated by numerous organizations, about how much money is being raised currently online from those generations from 1946 through 1980, which accounts, as I mentioned earlier, for about 82 percent of online giving.

For example, last year about six billion dollars was raised online. You can tell your management team that at Network for Good of the nearly \$300 million that we processed online almost 70 percent of that goes to small organizations, and that the median age of those donors is about 40. All of the research and all of the trends, I think you can arm yourself with that data and really build a strong business case for focusing on a younger generation of donors.

**Rebecca:** Great. I feel like this probably comes up a lot; this person wrote in and said, "Is it enough to be fundraising just through social networks? We have a page on Facebook and it is not really getting a lot of traffic, what am I missing?"

**Jono:** Great question, is it enough to be fundraising just on social networks? I would say absolutely no. Number one, when it comes to social networks online fundraising is definitely not a silver bullet. There is not a great deal of money being raised online on the whole through social networks. There have been some isolated incidents through different contests and events where large sums of money have been raised through social

networks, but the vast majority of online giving is happening through, what we like to call, the Web 1.0 channels, like your website, and like email.

Let me just add a caveat to that - it really all comes down to the behavior of your donors. I would do a little research and find out what percentage of your donors who have a Facebook account are using Facebook actively. If it is a high percentage, then absolutely continue to use Facebook as a cultivation mechanism. But, if it is your only online fundraising channel I think you are really putting yourself at risk for ignoring a lot of potential donations, particularly in December and the whole holiday giving season.

When people are thinking about making those year-end gifts, they are probably not going to think to go to Facebook to make that gift. They are going to go to your website, or they are going to go to one of your competitors' websites. And if you have been cultivating them all year round through email marketing and through email outreach, they are going to be much more likely to give, and probably much more likely to make a higher gift.

**Rebecca:** Our next question is from Kathy. Kathy wrote in and said: "I read, based on donor surveys, that donors do not like recurring or monthly giving because it feels like they are paying a bill or that they are committed. What are your thoughts on that?"

**Jono:** I have never heard that statement actually. I personally am a big fan of recurring giving because I know that I can't make huge gifts to charity, but I get great satisfaction from being able to make small recurring gifts to charity. I don't want to talk about political fundraising because I don't think there are a ton of parallels. But, obviously from this last presidential election season, we saw candidates who took advantage of both small dollar donors and small dollar donors who were giving through recurring gifts.

I think the next thing you can do is ask a small segment of your donors. Do a quick telephone or email survey of a small group of donors and get their impressions about recurring giving. But, from my own personal experience and from everything I have read I haven't really seen a lot of that negative sentiment around recurring giving.

**Rebecca:** Great. The next question came in from Martine. Martine says, "Do you have any tips for increasing my page rank on Google search? I have added Meta tag keywords and we still don't come up on the first page of Google. One of our web pages comes up on the second page of Google, but it is not our home page." I know we are not going to get into the full search engine optimization today, but do you know of any resources maybe we can point Martine to?

**Jono:** Absolutely. Number one, there is a non-profit organization called grassroots.org that offers free search engine optimization consulting for fellow non-profits. I would go to [www.grassroots.org](http://www.grassroots.org) and sign up for one of their free search engine optimization audits and get yourself in the cue there. They can provide you some great free consulting to help you increase your search engine rank. But, just really quickly, the best thing you can do to increase your search engine rank is to create and produce great content. We haven't spent a ton of time trying to manipulate our own search engine rankings here at Network for Good from an organic sense. What we spent a lot more time on is trying to produce

great content, which is directly tied to our mission and to what we do. And Google really responds to fantastic content.

Putting out great information content, videos, audios, stories about your organization and publishing them on your website, or through a blog, and getting those into Google is a great way to get Google to recognize you and to help increase your page rank.

**Rebecca:** Cathy writes in and says, "How do we use our website and/or other online tools to 'listen to your donors'? How can we be in dialog with our donors through the web and email?"

**Jono:** There are a number of ways you can do that. One, I will point to something that we have just launched in our own learning center. If you go to fundraising123.org, and I hope you will take advantage of this, you will notice that there is a big red feedback button on the left side of your screen. When you click on that button, it is basically a suggestion box where you can provide suggestions to Network for Good about our training, our services, anything like that. A simple suggestion box like that is something that you could implement on your website to begin engaging your supporters. Number two, the biggest way to listen to your supporters, that most non-profits just don't do, is to ask them. I am not talking about doing a big complicated survey, but for example, calling five donors a month, or emailing five donors a month and asking if they could schedule a half hour or 50 minutes of their time.

Or you might hold conference calls with your executive director or the chairman of your board, and then you could post those conference calls as an MP3 audio file on your website so the people who can't make the calls could still listen to them at their leisure. And then create different opportunities for people to provide feedback on that and start a conversation with them as a result of those different interactions.

**Rebecca:** OK. We have a question from Brita and it is actually a good follow up to your last question from Cathy. Brita says, "Our website is static and difficult to modify. We do need to do a major overhaul, but we need to be able to use the website now to collect people's information and reach out to them. Do you have suggestions for easy ways to invite participation, collect information and learn about our donors that can be incorporated into an existing site without too much pain and suffering? And then, I guess as a follow up, do you have more ideas for not making your marketing a monologue?"

**Jono:** You don't need some sort of fancy-schmancy web content management system, or invest in throwing out your whole website and starting from scratch to do these things right. I would just go back to the basics of making sure you have a big bold donate button that is above the fold on every page of your website so people don't have to scroll to see it. Number two, if you don't have an email newsletter I would think about establishing one. It doesn't have to be weekly, it could be monthly or quarterly. But, that is certainly a great way to begin a conversation with your donors and start cultivating them.

Number three, a lot of non-profit organizations are considering starting blogs, or have started blogs. And if you do have the resources to devote to creating great content on a regular basis, say once or twice a week, starting a blog could be a great way to do that.

Just a quick story of an organization that I recently heard about at a conference, this was a theatre company and they were in a small town. They had a show coming up and they were trying to basically grow attendance and also grow ticket sales in a younger demographic. They wanted to start a blog, but they knew that they did not have the resources to maintain a year round blog; so what they did was they set up a blog for just a short period of time around the show. I think they called it 'The Backstage Blog' and they launched it about a month or two before the show was supposed to take place.

Basically, they asked everyone who was participating in the show, either as an actor, performer, musician, or a lighting crewmember or a stage crewmember, or usher, to write content for this blog. They basically got them onto a schedule so that they were assured that they would have plenty of content for this blog.

Basically, they launched this Backstage Blog and they never made a promise that this was going to be a permanent thing. This was just related to the show and so it was happening based on a small time period. And as a result of having this really interesting conversation from all these people who had firsthand experience with the show, they were able to accomplish some of their goals and grow their ticket sales despite a down economy and reach into a younger audience. And also push a lot of great content out to the search engines.

**Rebecca:** Here is another good one. The question says, "Many people are familiar with shopping cart services on websites like PayPal, like you showed. If we use a custom service instead, will customers still feel secure donating to us and entering their credit card information?"

**Jono:** Absolutely. I think that is one of the biggest misconceptions with custom services and why people stick with the ugly looking merchant account page or the ugly looking shopping account page, which doesn't really reflect your brand is they think it won't be secure. But, any reputable online fundraising provider, somebody who is going to build a donation page - not a shopping cart - that looks exactly like your website, and that is obviously something that we do here at Network For Good, is going to make sure that the donation page is secure and is going to follow all of the standard and latest security mechanisms that are on the web.

If you are thinking of switching from PayPal or a shopping cart to something else, I would absolutely ask your potential vendor there what type of security they provide. And usually it is easy to see. You can go to a donation page of one of their customers and it will have some type of seal on there, some sort of lock or encryption. But, yes that is pretty much standard with most services today.

**Rebecca:** All right, we have a question about email. The questions says, "You mentioned including an email option on your donation form and then rule six and eight were about not using Outlook and doing email marketing. What role does email play in actually raising money online? Maybe I am behind the times, but I thought online fundraising just meant having a donate button on your site."

**Jono:** Great question. You should have a donate button in just about every email communication that you send out to your supporters. Your newsletter, for example; you should have a donate button in your newsletter. While your email newsletter may not be about donations, it is more about cultivation, if somebody just feels the impulse to make a donation, well then you should have that donate button in there so they can convert that impulse into action. And certainly, there are a number of organizations who are sending strictly fundraising emails who are having success with that. Generally, it needs to have a call to action that is timely so there is some sort of event taking place to drive the donation from that email. Simply just creating an email and sending it to people and asking them to make donations because times are tough is probably not going to work out. But, finding a compelling event to send a fundraising appeal around and incorporating your donate button into all your email communications is a great way to convert that impulse into an action.

**Rebecca:** Excellent. Well, it looks like our hour is already up; I think I am going to wrap things up. Thank you so much Jono for the presentation today, I am sure our listeners learned a lot.

Thank you so much, everyone, we look forward to having you on a future training. Have a great day.

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