

The **Digital** Future of Philanthropy

Engaging Donors With Online Video

A large, stylized black silhouette of a hand holding a megaphone, pointing towards the right. The megaphone has a circular horn and a handle. The background is a green gradient with faint vertical lines and a bamboo-like pattern on the left side.

**Jessica & Bill
Kizorek**

The Digital Future of Philanthropy:

Engaging Donors with Online Video

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Table of Contents

Survey Says 2

New Tools to Connect 3

Why Use Online Video? 5

#1: Effective Communication 6

#2: Education and Awareness 7

#3: Build Trust 8

#4: Empathetic Connection 10

#5: Fundraising..... 12

#6: Training Volunteers 14

#7: Effective Presentations..... 15

#8: Increased Media Coverage..... 17

Do's and Don'ts 18

Communicate Your Impact 20

About the Authors 22



Survey Says...

According to a new study released by Convio, Edge Research, and Sea Change Strategies, an out-dated approach to online fundraising may be costing non-profits as much as \$100 billion. The report surveyed significant donors whose average age was 51 years old and who gave an average of \$10,896 per year to charities.

Unfortunately for non-profit organizations, less than half of respondents thought that charities did enough to connect with them online. In addition, less than half were inspired by charity websites or considered them well designed.



So how can organizations better connect with these integral constituents?

“The main theme that jumped out at us is that major donors are very active online with the intention of becoming even more so when it comes to their philanthropic support. Based on what these important donors told us, we believe a tremendous opportunity exists for nonprofit organizations to better leverage their online presence to improve the online experience of the wired wealthy.”

Vinay Bhagat
Founder and Chief Strategy Officer
Convio

New Tools to Connect

The nature of the Internet is NOW. People want instant search, instant results, instant explanation and instant gratification. If you can't provide them with what they are looking for in this moment, they will move towards something else that will. When supporters have all the relevant information at their fingertips, they are left satisfied and clear about what your organization is actively accomplishing.

The Internet is allowing non-profit organizations to connect and communicate with their donors and volunteers like never before. Many foundations worldwide are using an array of multimedia technologies to illuminate public policy issues and to express the good they are doing in the world to grantees.

Foundations are not spending significantly more money in such efforts. However, their communications teams are busy rethinking the best use of available communication dollars.

Organizations slow to create a strong online presence risk losing the support that has historically sustained their efforts. Looking forward, they are also failing to reach an increasingly sizable community influenced largely by the Internet.

The Web is providing people more opportunities to contribute their time and money than ever before. To stay competitive non-profit organizations must learn to harness the power of the Web to attract and maintain volunteer's and donor's attention.

Non-profits which are adapting to Donor 2.0 are seeing rewarding results – an increase in web-traffic, broader interest in new sectors, greater interest in published work, and growth in the amount of donors.

Web 2.0 Tools

Website/Micro Sites
Electronic Documents
E-Mails
Blogs
Social networks
Video Storytelling
Live Video Feeds
Photo Sharing
Virtual Worlds
Podcasts & RSS Feed
Mobile Text Messaging

“Web 2.0 technologies allow organizations to do more with less. Ignoring them would be a missed opportunity.”

Ben Rigby,
Mobilizing Generation 2.0





Why Use Online Video?

Non-profit organizations, which rely heavily on creating a relationship and emotional connection with viewers, are shifting gears by sending out their message through online video. Paper reports, while important, only get them so far when it comes to evoking the true meaning of their programs.

Video allows organizations to communicate their message in a succinct way that is often difficult to achieve with words or pictures alone. Viewers get a chance to hear about the organization from the people that matter most – the ones who are being impacted by the program.

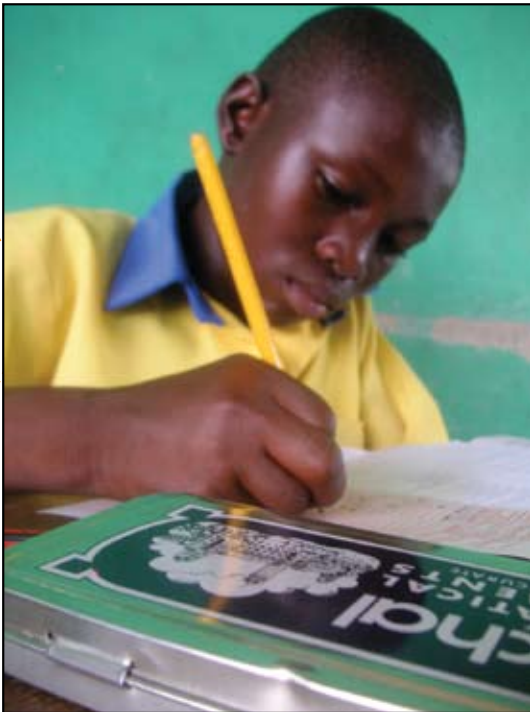
Non-profit media experts agree that, as a stand-alone medium, video is stronger than other channel because it offers a way for an organization to “bring the program home” to the potential or current donor. Additionally, using new avenues for distribution such as YouTube, Facebook and MySpace allows for more cost-efficient marketing. Here are a few reasons why they make a point to use video in their marketing mix.

#1 Effective Communication

Video is an effective communication tool because it brings stories to life. Video allows people to make an emotional connection with others halfway around the world that they would probably never meet.

“I can talk to our supporters about cocoa farmers in Ghana, but seeing their faces, and hearing their voices, that’s powerful. The video helps them relate to the people we serve as individuals, not just nameless people on the other side of the world.”

Emily Sollie
Director of Communication and Media Relations
Lutheran World Relief



Viewers make an instant connection with the person in front of the camera. That person is no longer just a name or statistic. The look in her eyes, the sound of her voice, her accent, her image, her body movements, and her words transform her into a real live person with her own beliefs, difficulties, and triumphs in life. In seconds the viewer understands relationships between people, places and things that are otherwise lengthy written descriptions.

Viewers thirst for stories, people, and relationships through which they can live vicariously. They absorb video through their eyes and ears, and then process the information with their brain and heart. Having everything come together simultaneously like that is not possible in other mediums.

#2: Education and Awareness

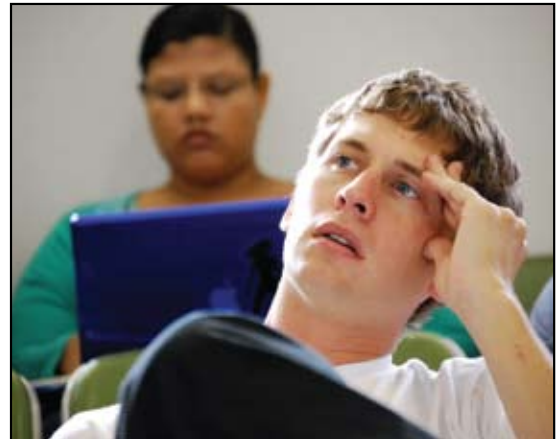
Video allows the donor to be at the site as the story is unfolding. It raises awareness of the issues, and positions them as real life problems—not just some media exaggeration. Since video shows the viewer what is happening, when it happens, it provides a much stronger sense of reality compared to a written impression. It gives the viewer a chance to personally judge how they feel about what they are seeing and how they want to get involved.



Video is easier to digest given that generations growing up don't have the propensity for reading that we used to. Video tells stories with immediacy in a way where you don't have to do anything other than take it in.

Whether a story is under-reported or widely misunderstood, placing a series of videos online provides supporters relevant background information and a thorough assessment of an issue. Educated individuals are far more likely to donate their time and money.

Larry Dixon
Chief Operating Officer
Doctors on Call for Service





#3: Build Trust

Like it or not, there are a lot of skeptics out there. Many people only believe it when they see it. Video allows donors to observe the real-world application of their gifts in a way paper reporting simply cannot provide.

When it comes to combating skepticism and uncertainty, watching real people give testimonials on video is far more persuasive than written words on a page. As a result of valid concern

around accountability, NGOs are increasingly relying on video to help prove the proper usage of donated funds. Donors want to see proof that their money is being spent well.

Good video testimonials build confidence in supporters as they see and hear real people who are being impacted by the programs. Humans value the opinions of other human beings, and it's critical to have human-to-human contact in the realm of establishing a long-term relationship with your supporters.



“Our fundraising model depends highly on larger donations, and we often try to get our major donors out into the field. It would be nice if every funder could visit to experience first-hand how their donation is being utilized, but that is neither possible nor responsible. Video helps us to bridge the gap between these infrequent visits and the paper reporting for our ongoing contributors.”

Ray Stuart,
Technology Manager,
World Links



#4: Empathetic Connection

Video offers imagery and sound that brings a story to life. It also gives the viewer the impression that they are there...watching and listening. By seeing the before and after, the audience is left without a doubt that the organization is creating and implementing solutions for severe problems that might not be addressed if it weren't for their contribution.

Being part of the victory inspires donors. Stories based in overcoming adversity pull people onto the court rather than leaving them watching on the sidelines.

Seeing others taking action, especially those who have much less to give, can help motivate your target to take a more active role in a cause. Social scientists who study the behavior of groups call this a "Tipping Game." Once you get a critical mass of individuals to dedicate themselves to a cause, there can be an increasing number of others who then will take interest themselves. Telling the stories of both those who are helping and those who are being helped can contribute to this critical mass.

“ The ability of video to capture faces, moods, smiles and stories cannot be compared with photos or text. It elicits an emotional response that moves the viewer to want to be a part of the story through their giving.” //

Denise Roe
Special Projects Manager
MannaRelief Ministries



#5: Fundraising

A failure to fundraise is a failure to communicate. Video allows an organization to communicate precisely what it needs—be it donations, volunteers, powerful partnerships, or public endorsements.

Videos impact fundraising as prospective donors are attempting to learn more about an organization or make a funding decision. An effective video presentation communicates not only the why, but also the how and what of a project. Often a donor will share a video that impressed them with family members, friends, and co-workers, spreading the organization's message to an ever-growing audience.

For established groups, video provides illustration of both past successes and present toils. Potential donors can not only be assured that the money will be used in a proper way, but also that their donation will also make an impact on the lives of those they wish to help.



For a new or start-up organization video can be used like a grant proposal. With a video of only a few minutes an organization can illustrate the problem they wish to fix, the people whom they wish to help, how they intend to do so and with whom they intend to work. Most donors will stop funding an organization when they are not sure their gift was appreciated or that their gift was used to achieve what the organization said it would do. Many potential donors cannot travel to the distant places to see the programs organizations provide. Videos can bring those programs to a desktop or living room. Showing donors how the gift was through online video tells the donor and prospective donors that their organization is doing good things and solving problems.



“ Showing the gratitude of someone who benefited from the gift is a wonderful incentive for the donor to keep giving. They are left feeling proud of their involvement and fulfilled that their intention was met. ”

Rosanne Nichols
Marketing and Communications
Independent Consultant

#6: Training Volunteers

Informing and training volunteers on what they can expect on a trip to your location is a key aspect to confirming their participation. Custom-made videos to train volunteers will ease their concerns and increase their level of effectiveness. By communicating the positive experience of volunteers in the field, their endorsement boosts the chances that potential volunteers will actually end up on the trip.

Videos made for training purposes can substitute for the organizational staff that would normally deliver those messages. This not only equates to more consistent results, but also saves an organization a significant amount of money.

When you can demonstrate exactly what they are signing onto before they agree to sign on, the chance of capturing their commitment is much higher. Missions accompanied by video demos are often more effective than similar missions without video. Video salesmanship is especially effective when combined with detailed information, customer reviews and multiple photographs.



“We work in remote, rural areas all over the world, places most of our U.S. supporters have never traveled. Video helps them prepare for what life is like in these places, and gives them a deeper understanding of the problems we’re working to solve.”

Emily Sollie
Director of Communication and Media Relations
Lutheran World Relief



#7: Effective Presentations

Many non-profit organizations are run largely by volunteers. In addition to being used as a stand-alone vehicle, video can be used to supplement speeches made on behalf of the organizations. Presentations depend on clear and concise communication to engage hearts.

When you approach an audience with a

video, you have a standardized message. You put your best speakers and proponents in front of your valued audiences. It increases the reach because the same message, same tone, same smiles, and same data can be sent independently to groups that have little to no experience with your organization.

“We always hope a volunteer can communicate the message, because they may or may not put the “oomph” behind it. Not everyone is powerful in their speaking, and oftentimes we only have one shot to make an impact.”

Larry Dixon
Chief Operating Officer
Doctors on Call for Service



#8: Increased Media Coverage

Sending out an electronic press kit (EPK) makes it easy for media contacts who will instantaneously have everything they need to properly communicate the story. Having a press release online means faster, cheaper distribution to media outlets. Some can distribute a story to 16,000 media outlets in one shot. Providing the press with all the material they could want online cuts down on their questions as well as increases the chances of heightened exposure through media coverage. Additionally, staff will spend less time contacting, convincing, and communicating with the press.



An EPK can also make local coverage of a story much more effective. Few local stations could afford to send a camera crew to document the work of an international non-profit. Many organizations have volunteers from across the country and around the world and therefore have connections in a variety of communities. Having a ready-made EPK will give news editors a further reason to cover the story, allowing for a piece of “soft news” with a local connection without much time commitment on their end.

“The more a prospective donor knows about an organization’s work, the more they will talk about it to others and fund it. This is the formula all organizations seek to achieve.”

Rosanne Nichols
Marketing and Communications
Independent Consultant



Do's

- Make two versions of your video - 90 seconds & 8-10 minutes
- Lots of close ups to compensate for screen size
- Place it on a variety of sites - Website, YouTube, MySpace, Email, Blog
- Good compression is critical
- Streaming or Progressive download is best
- Tell a very specific story or instance
- Use video as a core design element of your website
- Spread the word that your video has arrived
- Measure the results

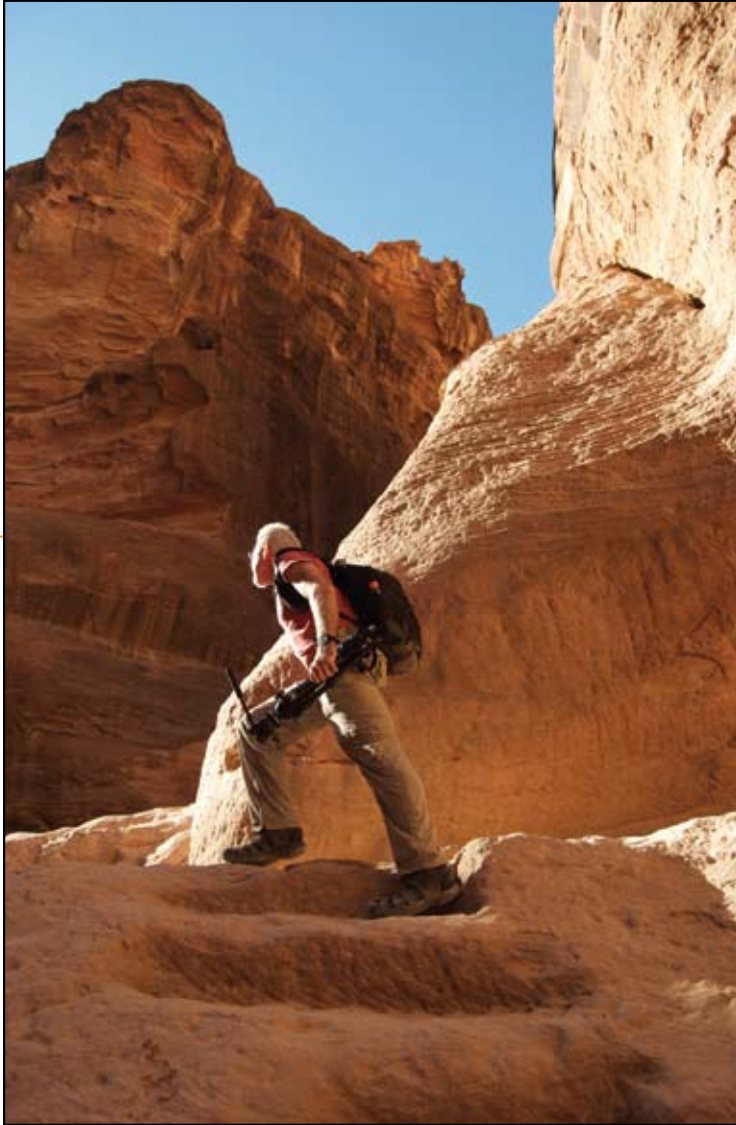


Don'ts

- Don't bury your videos deep in the website
- Don't make people wait too long – they will leave
- Don't make an amateur video if you want it to represent the quality of your work
- Don't embed YouTube videos on your site - compression is terrible
- Don't generalize or be vague when you produce the video
- Don't let your videos go stale

“Online video is hands-down, no-contest powerful...
The pull is undeniable. So move on it.”

Nancy Schwartz
Editor/Publisher
Getting Attention blog and e-news



Communicate Your Impact

There's an increasing recognition that nonprofit organizations have been operating in the dark. Up to now, there has been a general lack of understanding about the importance of their role on a global scale.

The Internet has thrown open the doors to shed light on the gigantic impact that nonprofits are making. It is your job to provide an appropriate online experience to give your supporters the opportunity to deepen the understanding of your organization.

Using sight, sound, and motion provides an opportunity to illustrate how the organization interacts with the world around them. This type of communication can be aimed at the public, existing donors, granting foundations, or the media.

It's one thing to remember a name, logo, or catch phrase. It's another thing to completely associate the brand with its values, mission statement, societal interactions and global victories.



“What everyone is starting to grasp is that if you want to keep up with the rapid change around you, you also have to practice proactive rapid-fire change and experimentation, and that takes a mind-set and culture that praises trial and error, and when something fails, that is also praised and not frowned upon.”

Marc Fest
Vice President of Communications
Knight Foundation

About the Authors

Jessica Kizorek

Partner, Two Parrot Productions



Writer, consultant and video producer, Jessica is an invigorating new voice on Internet marketing, video and online consumer psychology. In her new book, "Show Me: Marketing with Video on the Internet," Jessica explores how businesses can harness the power of online media to influence a culture of consumers basing purchase decisions on a brand's Internet presence.

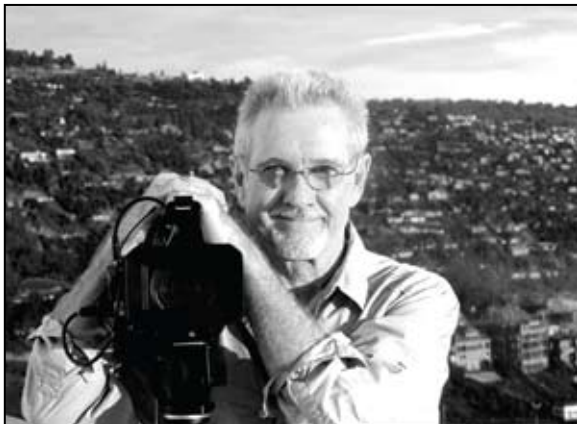
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Her video production company, Two Parrot Productions, has been featured by the New York Times and CNN for its contribution to NGOs around the world.

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Bill Kizorek is the senior partner of Two Parrot Productions. He has appeared on, or helped produce, segments for Oprah, 20/20, Dateline, BBC, AM Singapore and the four major U.S. television networks. He is the author of ten books on video and risk management, and was recently featured by the New York Times for his extensive travels and philanthropic missions.

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Mobilizing Generation 2.0

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