



Social Impact Consultants

Discovering better ways
to solve social problems

Evaluating Community Engagement Using Social Media and the Web

**Twitter: #strategic eval
@FSGTweets**

Think Tank Session Prepared for:



Annual Conference – Anaheim, CA
November 2, 2011

Quick Session Poll

- ☐ How comfortable are you using social media and *analytical* web-based tools (e.g., Google Analytics, Facebook Insights)?
- ☐ How have you evaluated or assessed the use of websites or social media in your evaluation practice?
- ☐ What is one question you have about evaluating community engagement using social media and the web?

Session Schedule

1

Introduce the topic

2

Present an example

3

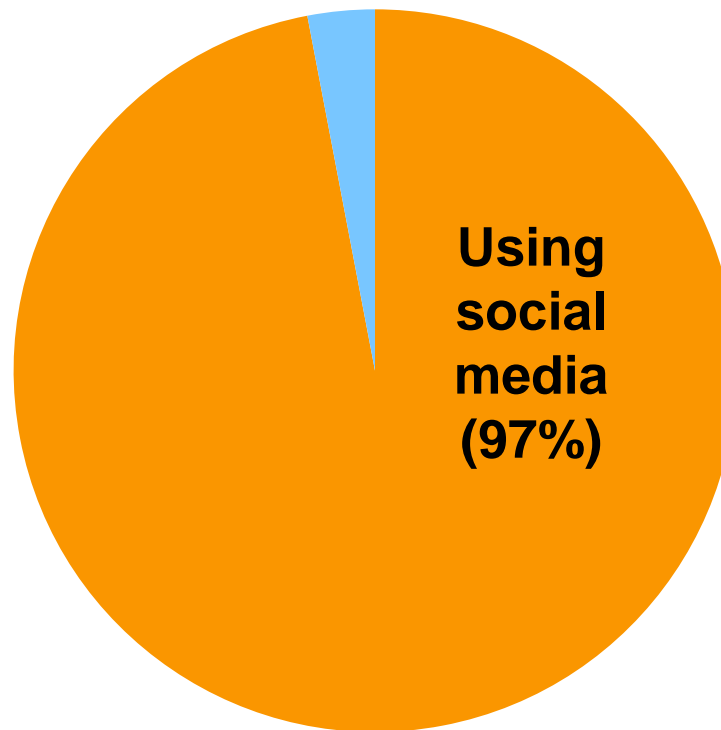
Break up into small groups and discuss

4

Share insights with the large group

Nonprofits of All Sizes, in All Sectors, in Nearly Every Geography Are Using Social Media

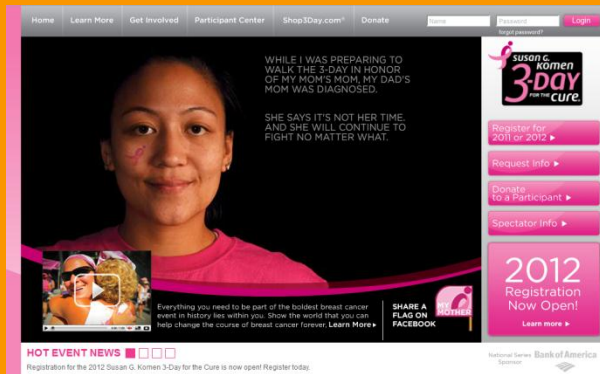
Use of Social Media among Nonprofits



Source: University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Center for Marketing Research (2010).

Several Nonprofits Provide Timely Examples of How Social Media Is Being Used to Reach and Engage Audiences

Marketing – Awareness Building



Fundraising - Development



Social Impact - Organizing



Social impact-organizing picture from *50 Social Media Tactics for Nonprofits* (<http://www.slideshare.net/chadnorman/50-social-media-tactics-to-help-nonprofits-meet-their-mission>).

When We Think About Using Social Media for Community Engagement, What Do We Mean?

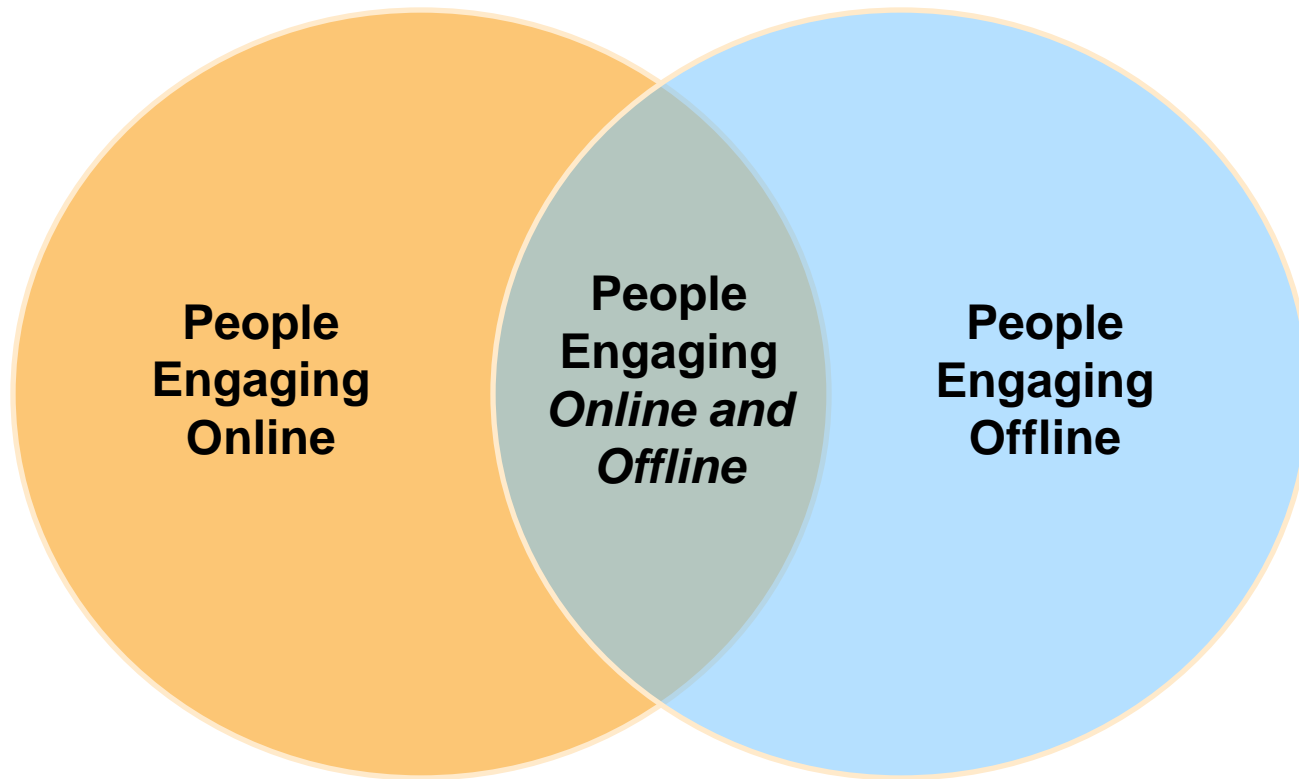
A social sector definition...

- **Community Engagement:** The process of ***working collaboratively*** with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people.

A media-centric definition...

- **Engagement:** Whether a media project's users are moving beyond just consuming content to a range of more ***participatory behaviors***, such as co-creation, redistribution, commenting, or action

Often We Use Methods to Collect Data on Online and Offline Engagement and Analyze at the Intersection of Both



For example, does filling out an online petition or sharing photos through a nonprofit Flickr account increase participation in “real world” activities?

Nonprofits Can Use Any Combination of Online Social Platforms to Promote Community Engagement



Source: Universal McCain Comparative Study on Social Media Trends (March 2008)

Tools to Evaluate Community Engagement

Common tools for monitoring and evaluating web and social media content

- Google Analytics
- Facebook Insights
- Tweetreach
- YouTube Insight
- Flickr Stats (API)
- URL Shorteners (e.g., bit.ly dashboards)

Tools that aggregate metrics from several sources

- Twitalyzer - combines Google Analytics with Twitter visitors
- Ubervue (*fee*)
- PostRank (*fee*)

For more information, check out IdealWare, which has a consultant directory and lots of free resources on social media marketing

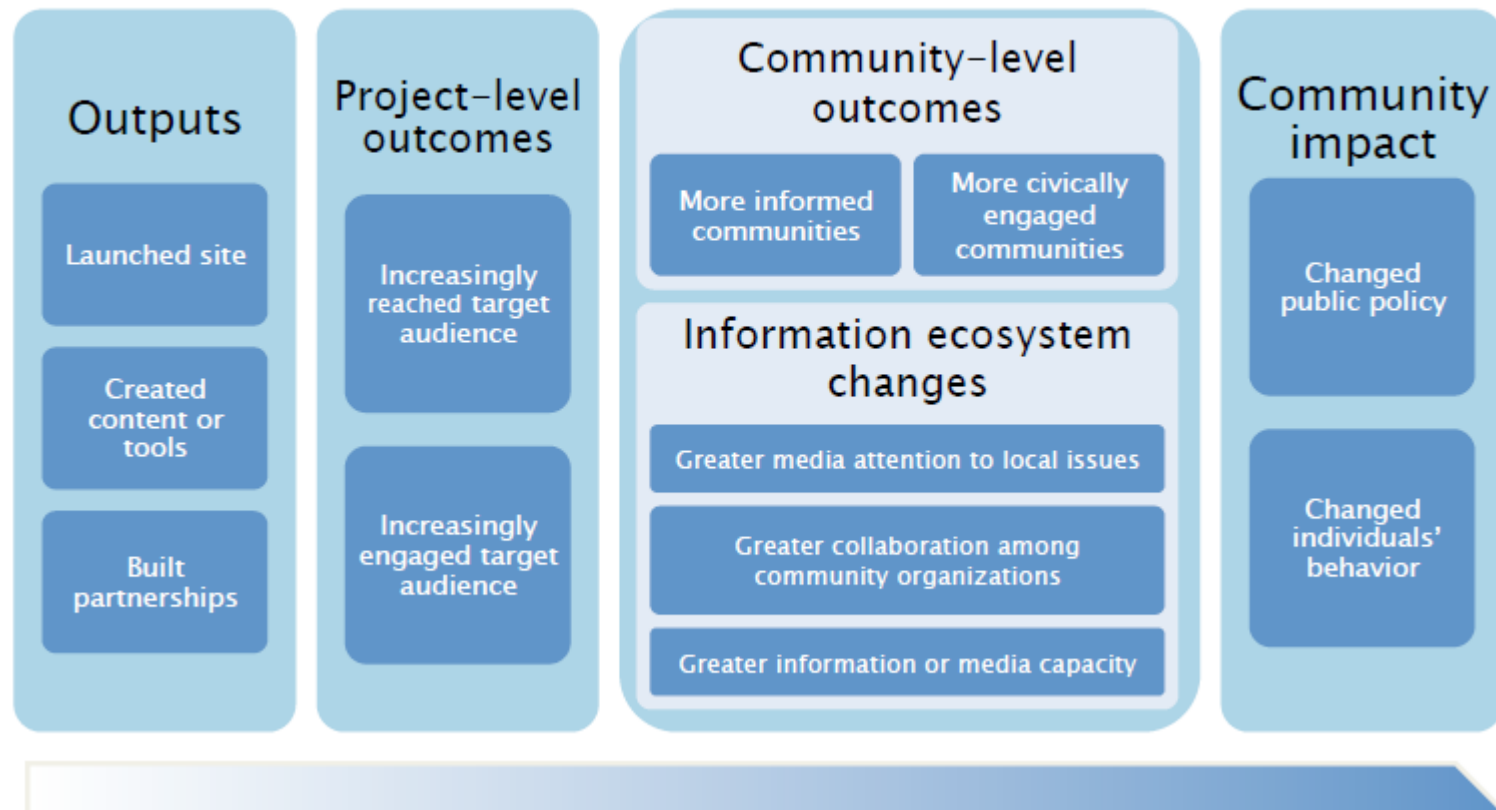
How Did FSG Get Involved with Evaluating Web and Social Media Activities?



- Conducting a developmental, strategic evaluation of the Knight Foundation's Community Information Challenge (KCIC)
- More than 70 unique community information projects have been funded by Knight to make progress toward the goal of *creating more informed and engaged communities*
- As the initiative evaluator, we collect data from grantees to inform questions, such as:
 - How well are information projects *reaching* their target audience?
 - In what ways are communities more *engaged*?

We Developed a Broad Framework to Help Identify the Outcomes of Community Information Projects

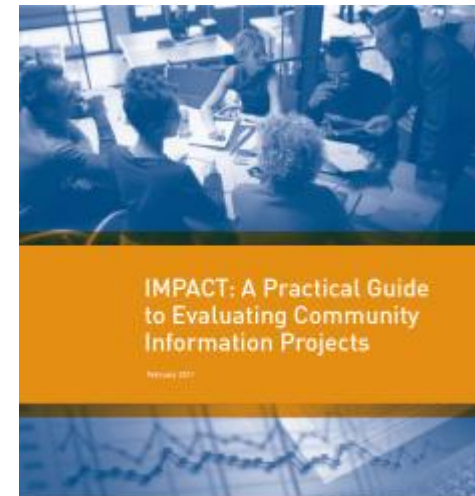
Figure 3. Outcomes Framework for Community Information Projects



Challenges for Evaluating Community Information Projects

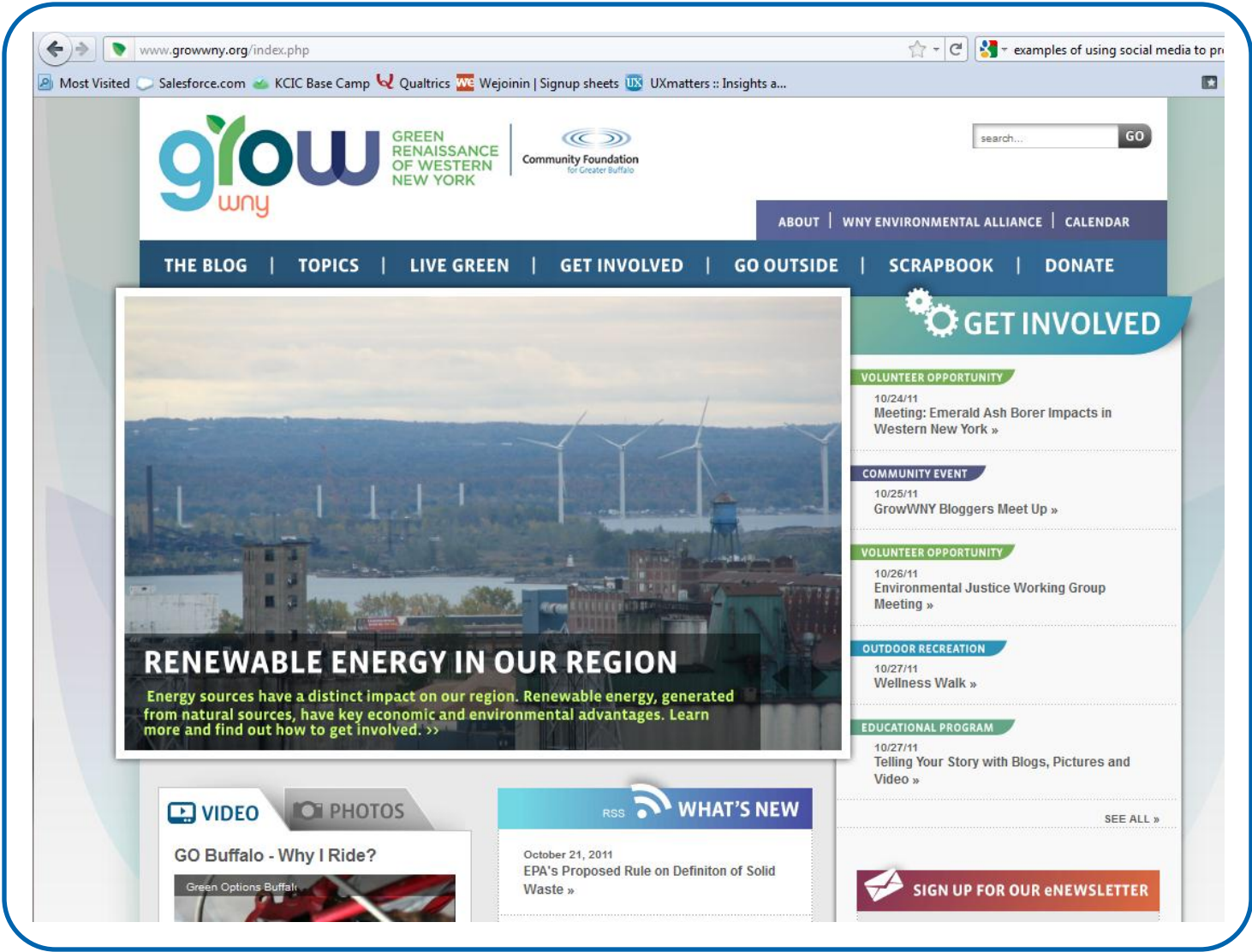
1. How do I know which outcomes to evaluate?
2. What can I learn from analyzing website or social media data?
3. How do I make sense of the vast amount of online information that's available?
4. What is needed to answer the question: "Are we having an impact?"

IMPACT Evaluation Guide



<http://www.informationneeds.org/evaluation>

An Example: GrowWNY, Buffalo NY



How Can We Evaluate GrowWNY's Success in Increasing Community Engagement?



1

Who is using GrowWNY?

2

To what extent are people participating online?

3

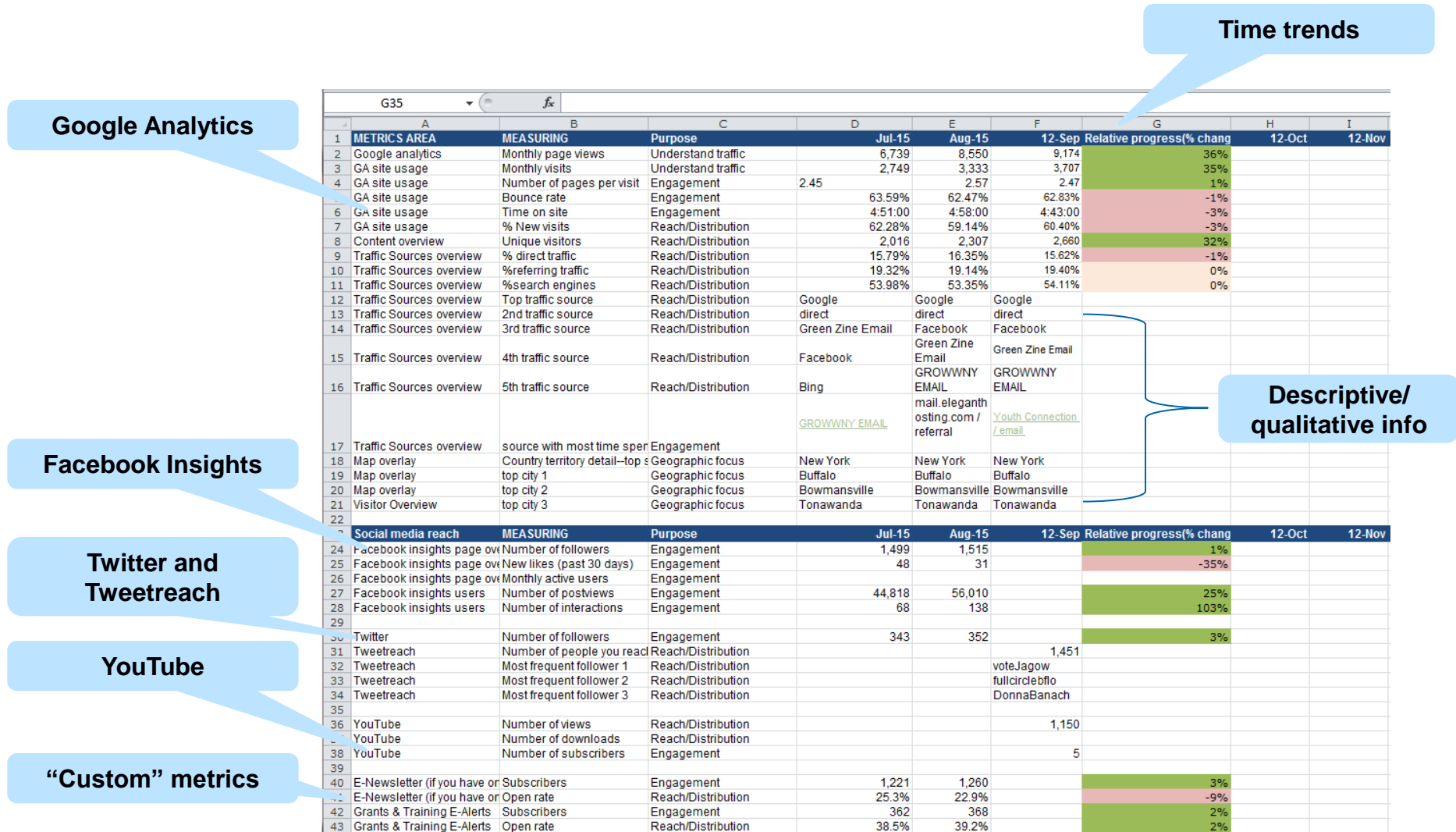
In what ways are people becoming more engaged?



How would you evaluate success in these areas?

Source photo by Kate Mini Hillman on GrowWNY Flickr photostream (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/growwny/6035588130/in/photostream>).

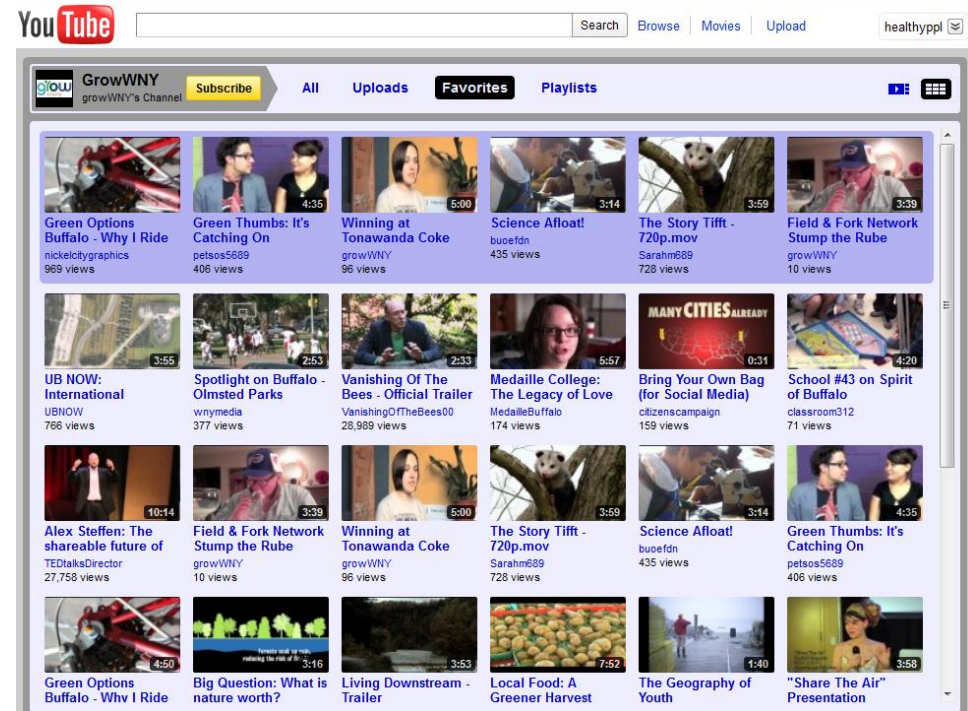
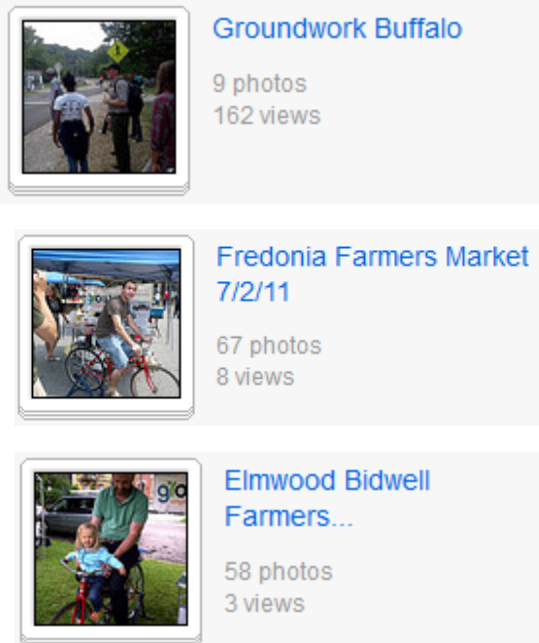
Creating an Excel Spreadsheet Can Help Track Multiple Data Sources in One Place



Analyzing Qualitative Data from Social Media Sites Can Provide Important Information on Community Engagement

Use Flickr to See What Activities People are Engaging in Offline

Watch YouTube Videos to Understand Offline Engagement and Inspire Nonprofits to Build their Media Capacity



You might consider viewing partners' websites or high-traffic platforms to assess what's happening beyond the project-level

Activity: Evaluating Engagement Using Social Media and the Web

1. Breakout into **pairs**.
2. With your partner, **review your case example and write down a few ideas** for how you would use social media to evaluate community engagement. Ask the following questions:
 - *To help answer the program's key evaluation question, what are 1-2 ideas for what kind of data collection or analysis you could conduct using social media?*
 - *As the program evaluator, what other information would you want to collect to help the program answer its key question?*
3. Join other pairs that discussed the same case and **share your proposed solution**.
 - **Identify** common themes, practices and challenges.
4. Rejoin the large group and review the case examples. Ask one member in your group to **present your solution** back to the large group. **Identify** insights and great practices. (20 minutes)

Scenario 1: The Future of the American Symphony

- **Stated Goal:** To bring together voices from diverse cultural perspectives and the general public to explore three topics relevant to the Twenty-First Century American Orchestra:
 - How orchestras connect with their communities
 - How orchestras balance creativity and innovation with artistic traditions and practices
 - What orchestras can learn about changing audience patterns and engagement strategies from looking outside their own industry
- **Program Design:**
 - Organized by SF Symphony on the occasion of their Centennial (2011-2012 Centennial Season)
 - Participation by 7 major metropolitan orchestras in the U.S.
 - In-person events, including 3 live public discussions in San Francisco and 4 behind-the-scenes roundtables with visiting orchestras
 - Web interviews and blogs
 - Podcasts

Key Evaluation Question: Who is participating in these conversations?

Scenario 2: Citizen Journalism at The Rapiidian

- **Stated Goal:** To increase the flow of local news and information in the Grand Rapids, Mich., community and its neighborhoods. We hope to empower neighborhood residents to report the news from the inside out. We are an outlet for Grand Rapiidians to become more than just content consumers but also providers by becoming citizen journalists.
- **Program Design:**
 - Online platforms developed and maintained by the Community Media Center (CMC), including therapidian.org website, Facebook page, Twitter feed, Flickr photo bank and RSS feed
 - CMC also provides tools, training, and support (e.g., manuals and guides, technical training, support and editorial staff) to citizen journalists
 - Main platform (i.e., the website) features articles, photos and other content, organized according to the following topics: Neighborhoods, Metro (e.g., business, government, safety, health, education), Culture (e.g., arts, music, sports), Commentary (e.g., editorials, opinions), Nonprofits, Calendar of events, and Marketplace (i.e., advertisers' coupons and offers)

Key Evaluation Question: To what extent are we getting more residents to report or provide content as citizen journalists?

Scenario 3: Getting Young Latinos to Vote

- **Stated Goal:** To bring new and diverse voices into the political process in Los Angeles by engaging youth, media, technology and celebrities to promote positive change. In 2012, **Voto Latino** plans to register 600,000 young Latino voters in Los Angeles city and county.
- **Program Design:**
 - Blogs, article reposts, infographics and reader comments about relevant issues (e.g., Obama courts Latino celebrities in Hollywood, changing demographics of Latinos in the US)
 - Power Summit, a training conference for young organizers
 - Coalition of celebrity spokespeople promoting the cause through videos and in-person appearances
 - Voter Registration information and state-specific registration links from the www.votolatino.org website
 - Mobile phone campaigns sent through text messages

Key Evaluation Question: How many young Latinos are registering to vote in the 2012 election cycle?

Scenario 4: Solving Community Challenges through Online Contests in Minnesota

- **Stated Goal:** To create a fun and engaging way for Minnesotans to learn about critical issues affecting the state, develop creative new solutions for addressing those issues and be inspired to act. We try to get EVERY Minnesotan thinking and talking about an issue at the same time.
- **Program Design:**
 - Partnering with Ashoka Changemakers, the Minnesota Community Foundation developed an online Challenge website
 - The most recent challenge is “Ideas for Addressing Water Issues in Minnesota,” for which the program:
 - Maintained a website to collect ideas, as well as votes for and comments on those ideas over a four-week period
 - Promoted the Challenge at events, such as the Minnesota State Fair
 - Convened a judging panel to pick the finalists
 - Created videos about finalists’ ideas
 - Awarded \$15,000 to support implementation of an idea
 - Maintained a facebook page, twitter feed and YouTube channel
 - All online participants need to register or provide an email address to submit, vote for or comment on an idea

Key Question: In what ways are Minnesotans building a community dialogue about an issue of importance (e.g., water issues) through MN IdeaOpen?

Thank You!

For further information, please contact:



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