CONVIO®
MOVE PEOPLE™

NONPROFIT WEBSITE FUNDAMENTALS

Building a Website That Supports Your Mission

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES:

- *Benchmarks for Measuring Your Website Performance*

- *Must-Haves For A Successful Website Redesign*

- *Keys to Successful Website Performance*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide was created by Convio Services with the expertise of working on Internet projects with more than 1,400 nonprofit organizations throughout the United States and Canada. It's designed specifically for nonprofit professionals as a handbook about the basics of building a website to support your mission. It describes how to design or redesign your website, how to drive traffic to the site, and how to measure your website's success.

💡 ***For more detailed best practices about online marketing,*** refer to the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this guide, or visit www.convio.com/our-research

INTRODUCTION

Your website can be one of the most effective tools you have in your marketing toolbox. While your email communications and fundraising campaigns reach out to supporters and potential supporters, your website is catching people as they come *in* to your organization. It's usually the first place that people go to find out about your organization. It's often where they go to donate. It's your chance to capture new supporters and get them more involved. It should reinforce your organization's brand and make the case to support your organization. ***So ask yourself: is your website doing everything it should to help you achieve your goals and support your mission?***

> ▶ ## Consider This:
>
> - **86% of major donors** go to an organization's website before making a new gift to that charity.[1]
> - **65% of donors** who use the Internet check an organization's website every time they give to that charity.[2]
>
> **Yet**
>
> - **57% of organizations** fail to clearly state their mission on their homepage.[3]
> - **96% of organizations** fail to make the case on their homepage to support their organization.[4]

With the right tools and approaches, your site can be a powerful vehicle for engaging constituents, driving donations and building enduring support.

This guide focuses on the fundamentals of how to evaluate and tune up your website so that it is truly working for your mission. With topics ranging from home page strategy and design to driving traffic to your website and evaluating your website's effectiveness, this guide will help you transform your organization's site into a powerful marketing tool that gets results.

---

[1] Convio experience working with more than 1,400 nonprofit organizations.
[2] Convio experience working with more than 1,400 nonprofit organizations.
[3] Nielsen Norman Group Report on Nonprofit Usability, March 2009.
[4] Nielsen Norman Group Report on Nonprofit Usability, March 2009.

IS YOUR WEBSITE AILING?

Whether your website woes are obvious or you're just looking to make some tweaks to make it more effective, *the simple step of examining your site with a critical eye is a step in the right direction.* You can start by knowing some of the most common pitfalls of site design. Take a look at the following signs of an ailing website, and use them as a guide to see if you can identify any areas where your site could use some adjustment.

▶ Seven Sure Signs of an Ailing Website

1. *Your organization's mission is missing.*
   Your home page should state your mission in about 15 words or less so that new site visitors can quickly understand exactly what your organization does.

2. *You spend more time building HTML web pages than creating your message.*
   Whether you are writing a paragraph for your home page, or crafting an email appeal, great content is the cornerstone of an effective website. Be sure to give it the time and focus that it deserves.

3. *Your content is "inside out".*
   If you use jargon and terminology that only insiders at your organization would understand or relate to, you risk alienating your site visitors.

4. *Your site visitors don't stick around.*
   In working with clients, Convio has found that more than 50% of first-time visitors will reach your site and leave within 30 seconds without viewing much of your content.

5. *Your site visitors can't get around without a compass and a map.*
   If your website navigation offers more than seven main options, you risk frustrating your site visitors and losing them forever.

6. *Your online donors want less (clicks, that is).*
   If site visitors must click more than once from any place on your website to make a gift, your site is not as donor-friendly as it should be.

7. *Your site visitors don't know how to get involved.*
   From your home page, could a first-time visitor quickly find two or three ways to get involved with your organization? They should be able to.

So, how do you evaluate these signs correctly? After all, you and your organization's other staff members may be too familiar with your website to accurately assess it from a new visitor's point of view. Try a test: Ask a few friends or family members to look at your organization's home page and talk with them about the items listed above. You may be surprised at how many areas of your website could use some TLC.

Why Pursue A Website Update Now?

If your website suffers from one or more of the seven ailments listed previously, it's time for a website update. But you may also have organizational and strategic reasons to update your website.

Here are a few situations that should let you know that it's time for an update:

- Your organization is updating its mission or vision.
- You are not meeting your online fundraising objectives.
- You need to acquire new email addresses.
- The demographic profile of your supporters is changing.
- The donor experience on your site is cumbersome.

4 MUST-HAVES FOR A SUCCESSFUL WEBSITE REDESIGN

Imagine a website that engages visitors to interact with your organization. They regularly return to your site and recommend it to their friends and family. Site traffic increases each month. It doesn't have to be just a dream. Whether you're starting a whole-website redesign, or just wanting to tune-up your site, the next sections will tell you how to start making your website dreams a reality.

I DO YOUR RE-DESIGN PREP WORK

When you're thinking about a website redesign, you can take some preliminary steps to ensure success. Whether you're redesigning it yourself or with a third party company, completing the following tasks in advance will save you time and frustration down the road.

- ***Determine the goals for your redesign.***
  Have some conversations within your organization about what's working and what's not working with your current website. Document those conversations. Decide what outcomes you're expecting with the redesign so you can share those goals with your designer.

- ***Define your core project team.***
  Determine who in your organization will be responsible for making decisions about the new site. Include anyone who will need to approve the new design. Also include major content contributors—they'll want to have a say in what stays and what goes. And, don't forget to include any key strategists in your organization that know what types of people visit your website. Be judicious in deciding on the final project team since the larger the team, the more challenging it will be to get sign-off on key milestones.

- ***Create a comprehensive content map.***
  Create a spreadsheet of the content you already have on your website. From there, you can make decisions about what is important, what needs updating, and what is outdated.

- ***Consider your organization's brand identity.***
  If you haven't already done so, determine and document your organization's logo and color scheme so your designer will have some guidelines. Collect any photography that could be incorporated and also any print materials that may serve as a guide to your brand.

> ▶ ## Sample Website Goals
>
> - *Engage and build relationships with supporters*
> - *Promote a sense of online community*
> - *Solicit donations*
> - *Deliver services educating people about your mission*
> - *Build your housefile by acquiring new emails*

2 LISTEN

When you initially decide to redesign, it may be based on feedback from your site visitors. You may have heard from your supporters that your site is outdated or that it's difficult to find information. Alternatively, you could be redesigning because of a push from within your organization.

Either way, *it's important to keep in mind that your website is for the visitors.* Ask them what they want that they don't have today. Ask what issues they have with your current site so you don't make the same mistakes again. And, most importantly, listen to what they have to say.

You can have these conversations through an online survey or through individual conversations with your constituents. You can assess data you may already have from emails or calls about the website. Collecting this data and incorporating it into your must-have list is the first step to a successful, user-centered design.

> ▶ **The User Experience Audit**
>
> Consider working with a web usability expert to complete a user experience audit. This type of audit includes content and audience analysis, usability testing, and data analysis to ensure your website meets your organization's goals.
>
> 💡 *For examples of this type of audit*, see http://www.convio.com/portfolio
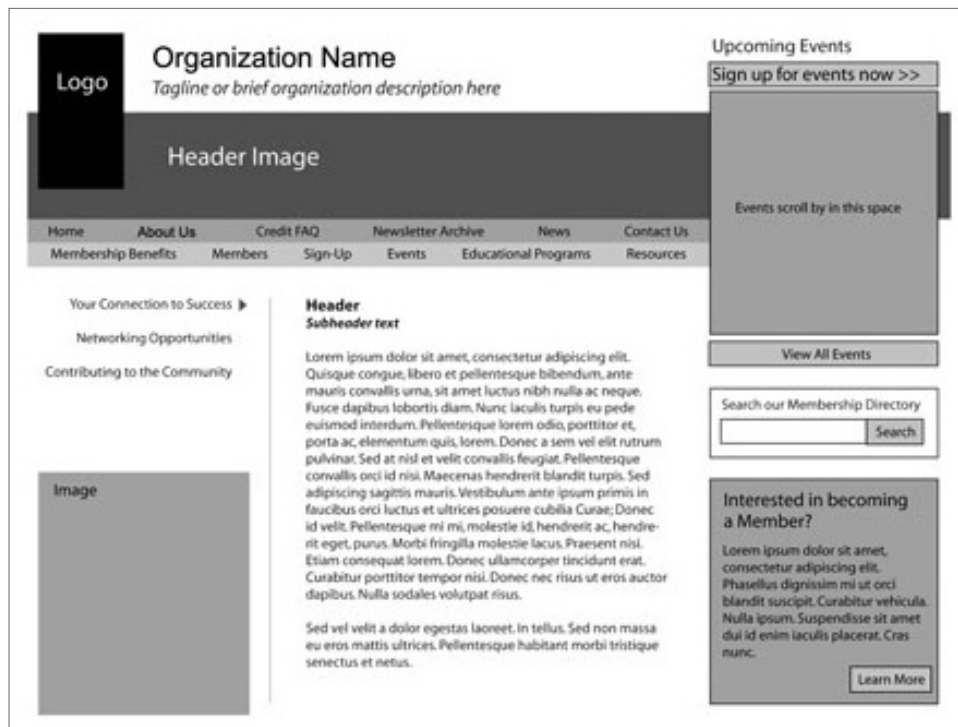
Use wireframes to test the structure of your website before you begin the design.

Once you've made some research-based decisions about your new website, you should test them using wireframes—basic visual guides used in interface design to suggest the structure of a website and relationships between its pages before the design has even begun. After all, if you don't have a strong underlying structure, there's no way to cover it up with a snazzy new visual design. Also, participants are more likely to provide candid, direct feedback to wireframes. They see an unfinished product and realize there's still time to make improvements.

Run your wireframes by a few members of your target audience. Ask them where they'd go to donate, learn more about you, or accomplish other key tasks. Then, make changes based on what you learn.

3 CONSIDER YOUR NAVIGATION

All the user research, wireframes, perfectly architected homepages and site designs don't mean much if the navigation doesn't work. While you need to do the user testing to ensure your navigation makes sense, the following guidelines will get you well on your way to navigation success.

1. *Follow the seven plus or minus two rule.*
This rule is based on the fact that people can only absorb about seven (give or take two) options in a list before they start forgetting the first options they read. That means you should have around seven main navigation options and that in each section, you should only have around seven options. This applies to drop-down, or flyout, navigation, too—however, if your main navigation options are named clearly, you shouldn't need to display drop-down options. Remember that it's okay to have some pages on your site that are not represented in the navigation.

2. *Be unambiguous.*
Try this: Say each of your main navigation options aloud alongside each of the other options. Do you get confused? Do some of the words mean something similar? If they do, think about how you could rename them to make them clearer. Chances are, if it's ambiguous for you, your users are confused. The navigation below is a good example of an unambiguous navigation since each choice is distinct.

WHO WE ARE	WHAT WE DO	PLACES	SPECIES	CLIMATE	ACT NOW

Organize your website into distinct categories.

3. *Represent your entire site.*
Identify your visitors' goals when they visit your site. Maybe they want to learn about your organization, read the latest news about you, take action on an issue, or make a donation. Make sure your navigation provides clear ways for users to access each of those goals. The following examples show two types of navigation, both from the same site, that provide options representative of an entire site. This particular schema uses an informational, or topical, navigation and an action-oriented navigation to provide a wide array of choices.

Topical Navigation:

Topical navigation can be very effective for guiding visitors through an experience path on your website.

WHO WE ARE	WHAT WE DO	HOW YOU CAN HELP

Topical navigation with mouse-over sub menu. **Pro:** *You save valuable web page real estate for content.*
Con: *Requires user to investigate further to see the entire set of options.*

Action-Oriented Navigation:

Action oriented navigation allows site visitors to take action immediately. They can simply click and go without mousing over a set of options. However, this style of navigation can take up more space on your web page.

» DONATE NOW

» JOIN OUR NETWORK

» BECOME AN ADVOCATE

» SHARE

Action-Oriented Navigation allows you to guide website visitors down a pathway of focused actions, increasing the likelihood of conversion.
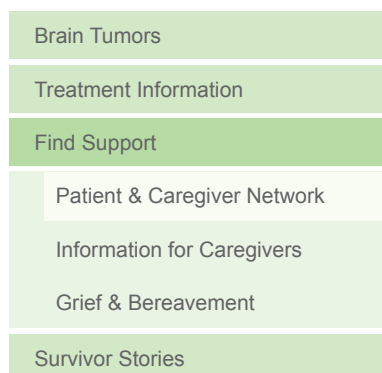
4. Take the navigation stress test.

The navigation stress test is all about seeing if your navigation does its job of getting visitors around the site. Your navigation should tell users where they are, where they've been, and where they can go. This test provides an easy way for you to check if your navigation is successful in doing these things. The following navigation schema shows how you can provide visual cues to users about where they are on your site through your navigation. First, you'll see the breadcrumb navigation that many sites offer as a way to see the path the user has taken on the site. Then, you'll see the left navigation from the same site that also highlights the section and page the user is on.

Breadcrumb Navigation:

Home > Patients, Family & Friends > Find Support > Patient & Caregiver Support Network

A breadcrumb navigation shows the path the user has taken on your site and indicates the page they are currently on.

Left Navigation:

Brain Tumors

Treatment Information

Find Support

Patient & Caregiver Network

Information for Caregivers

Grief & Bereavement

Survivor Stories

A left navigation shows a hierarchical representation of where the user is on your site.

SPOTLIGHT ON
VISUAL HIERARCHY

What catches your eye when you look at your website's homepage? What is the first thing you see and the first thing you want to click on? These are questions you should ask during a usability test to ensure your visual hierarchy is coming through clearly and consistently. Think of the visual hierarchy as the pecking order of a page's content, providing cues as to what's most important. If your organization wants, first and foremost, to bring in donations, then a compelling ask should rank high on your list. Maybe you'd rather get visitors to take an action alert or read a new study you've published. Your visual hierarchy should reflect your organization's goals, whatever those may be at the time.

You may be so used to looking at your website that you may not see a visual hierarchy anymore. Or, the one you do see may be artificially influenced by what you know is most important. In that case, have a friend take a look at your site and tell you what they see first. You could try a "five-second test" where you display the homepage for five seconds, and then close it and ask your friend to write down what he or she remembers. If your friend's list doesn't correspond with your organizational goals, then consider rearranging the page or redesigning certain elements. You'll likely see more clicks and actions taken as a result.

▶ The 5-Second Test

Display your homepage for five seconds—then close it and ask a friend to write down what he or she remembers. Effective websites tell visitors within seconds of their arrival:

1. Where they are
2. What they can do
3. Why they should act

4 DO SOME SPRING (CONTENT) CLEANING

In some ways, you can think of your website as a closet and your website content as your clothes. Every now and then, you just need to give it a good cleaning.

Here's how: First, take a few minutes to really think about what you want people to achieve on your site and how you want your site to be perceived. Next, go to your site and click around it the way you would if your friend sent you a link to a site you'd never been to before (think: rummaging through a stranger's closet). Ask yourself a few questions as you click around, approaching the content like any clutter-cleaning project: Is there a consistent theme in what you have on your site, or does it seem disorganized? Are you too trendy in some sections? Has the content evolved with your organization? Are there areas of the site that never get updated? If so, is this because you simply have neglected them, or is it because they are no longer useful? These are basic questions, but the answers can reveal a lot about your site.

After this exercise, go back to the content map that you created (see previous *Do Your Pre-Design Prep Work* section). Add a column to your map and start prioritizing content. Remove anything you don't want on the new site.

Categorize this way:

1. Content that MUST be on the new site;
2. Content that should probably be there, but isn't extremely high priority;
3. Content that would be nice to have.

Then, move the "2" and "3" items into a separate spreadsheet and only focus on your "1" items to see what needs to be finessed, rewritten or completely overhauled.

> Keeping your website clutter-free is not effortless.
> But neither is finding information on a site that's in disarray.
> A neat, organized website is well worth the effort.

Like keeping a closet orderly, keeping your website clutter-free is not effortless. But neither is finding information on a site that's in disarray. A neat, organized website is well worth the effort.

OPTIMIZE YOUR SITE FOR SEARCH ENGINES

The easier it is for constituents to find your organization on the Web, the more your ability to attract new donors, volunteers and other supporters will improve.

The primary way that people look for information online is through search engines. **Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the visibility of a website** or a web page in search engines via the "natural" or unpaid ("organic" or "algorithmic") search results.

Search engines used advanced mathematical equations to analyze and sort websites. Websites that correspond to those equations (algorithms) with highest relevancy get top spots in search results. The algorithms Google, Yahoo! and Bing use are somewhat decoded through various tests by search engine optimizers, however, there is no way to truly know since these methods are proprietary.

SEO is not to be confused with "paid search marketing", oftentimes referred to as pay-per-click (PPC), which is marketing a website via paid listings or ads on search engines. An easy way to remember the difference: In Google™, when you type in a word and it returns a set of results, the site listings on the left are called natural or organic search results. The order in which they appear or the rankings is the result of SEO, while the advertisements on the top or right are the result of PPC, that is, organizations that have paid to have their text ads appear here.

▶ Measuring SEO Success

SEO requires an investment of time and a willingness to experiment. To determine the focus of your efforts, you should first have a good understanding of your organization's audiences and which search engines they use. Website reporting tools can provide this information.

Successful SEO is an ongoing, evolving effort, so go in with a goal in mind. Receiving top placement in search rankings may not be realistic given available budget and resources, but getting on the first page may be. Ultimately, your metrics may include improved result rankings, increased site traffic, increased number of repeat visitors and, most importantly, increased number of conversions. A conversion can be defined as more volunteers registered, more newsletter subscriptions or more donations collected.

Remember, entire industries have been developed around SEO, and strategies can get complex and expensive. Having quantifiable goals will help keep you on track as your content changes and you continue to optimize your site.

Perhaps the most important step in creating an SEO plan is to develop a list of keywords and keyword phrases. These are the words that most people likely will type into a search engine to find your organization. A list of 10-15 target keyword phrases is a good start. Once you've created your list of keywords, use them as much as possible throughout your website without making your web content sound convoluted.

Another important consideration in SEO is what and how other websites link to your website. As a nonprofit, your organization has advantages over for-profit businesses. People may perceive your website content as more honest and altruistic, so you may find it easier to get other webmasters to link to your site. Consider what partner and supporter websites could link to your website, and then ask their webmasters to link to your site.

Here's another tip: In addition to providing the actual search function, most search engines have a directory that visitors can browse. One example is Google's Open Directory, also called DMOZ (http://directory.google.com). Submitting to these directories is generally free. Note, though, that submitting does not guarantee improved results ranking; if you haven't optimized your site using the tactics outlined above, your site may not benefit from submission.

There's no doubt: SEO can get complicated. Start with the basics mentioned previously, and then take a look at SearchEngineWatch at http://searchenginewatch.com. It's a comprehensive resource for information about how search engines work, recommendations for SEO and PPC strategies, new search engine features, and latest news about the search engine market space.

💡 *For more helpful tips on optimizing your site*, search the Internet for best practice blogs. Some of our favorites are http://www.seomoz.org and http://www.seobook.com. If you're looking for professional recommendations or to outsource your SEO there are many local and national agencies that can help you improve.

▶ The Basics of Coding for SEO

- *Change TITLE tags to include the name of your organization and target keywords.* For example, rather than naming the volunteer registration page "volunteer-signup," an animal rescue group might try "volunteer-signup-shelter-Smithville-Animal-Rescue."

- *Don't focus much energy on meta tags* for description and keywords as these are becoming less important to search engines.

- *Use keywords in image ALT tags* as well as in the actual file name of the image.

- *Use conventional HTML*, such as H1 and H2, for the titles and subtitles on pages.

- *Decrease the amount of code in pages*. Copy that is higher on the page in HTML source code will be more heavily weighted by search engines. You can accomplish this by eliminating unnecessary tables and placing JavaScript and CSS styles in external files.

MANAGING YOUR CONTENT

Keeping your content up to date so that your supporters stay in the know is key to your success. Relevant content is the most powerful tool in your web arsenal for inspiring people to take action and building your constituency.

But as you add more content over time and your pages grow in number, your site also grows in complexity, and you'll need an efficient way to manage your content.

Content management systems (CMS) are a must-have for any organization that needs to update, add, or remove content on a regular basis without having HTML skills or asking a technical resource to do so. A CMS will relieve you of manually managing content and help you streamline your updates, saving you time and adding value to your constituent resources in the form of more timely, relevant, and easy-to-find web content.

> ## ▶ Getting Started
>
> The best website redesign will fall flat if you don't have proper processes in place to keep your website updated. Take time to identify who is responsible for what content on your website, and hold a regular meeting with content owners to ensure that everyone is synchronized.

With a CMS, you can:

- Have a professional site with relevant, up-to-date content even with a limited budget
- Distribute ownership to multiple content authors to keep messaging relevant and up-to-date
- Easily manage the structure, appearance, and navigation of your website
- Develop professional and attractive page templates to ensure consistent branding and imagery throughout the site
- Engage visitors with highly personalized content and encourage interaction through blogs, surveys, polls, donations, custom forms, and more
- Archive old content for future reference

💡 While content management systems are now widely adopted, not all are created equal. Choose carefully. **For more information on how to choose a CMS,** visit http://www.convio.com/cms.

> ## ▶ In Case of Emergency...
>
> A CMS can really come in handy when you need to communicate at a moment's notice. For example, you can create an "emergency mode" home page version based on a simple design. Then, when an urgent event occurs, you simply have to choose from a set of pre-planned options (such as headline and image) and publish from your CMS.

CASE IN POINT
JEWISH NATIONAL FUND

JNF realized that it needed a website that demonstrated the scope of its vision—serving as the "central U.S. address for all things Israel"—and that would be flexible enough to adapt to its evolving mission in the years to come.

Website Home Page

Website Before Redesign

Wireframes For Redesign

Convio helped JNF improve the donation experience for existing supporters and attract a younger audience with its website redesign.

Using the best of what the Convio software suite has to offer, JNF:

- Launched the new JNF.org, powered by Convio CMS and eCRM (constituent relationship management tools) in early 2009

- Put in place a new creative strategy that offers a new online brand for JNF and all of the audiences they appeal to today

- Implemented focused marketing on its website, tailored to each target audience group's needs

- Encourages effective, personalized online interactions between constituents and the organization through the new website—which allows visitors to engage with JNF to do everything, including manage their purchases of trees to be planted in Israel, communicate directly with the JNF branch in their area, and receive dynamic content and messaging based on their areas of interest

DRIVE TRAFFIC TO YOUR WEBSITE WITH THE HELP OF SOCIAL MEDIA

While your website is a critical marketing tool for your organization, consider this: Your web presence is equally important. Your web presence is the complete landscape within which your website exists: email, social networking, search engines. How are people going to find that well-organized, compelling new website that you created if you don't spend time on your broader web presence?

Online channels and communications, such as Facebook™ and email newsletters, should link back to your site for more information. The idea is to tell prospects and supporters about the resources available to them on your website and keep the website content current and informative so that visitors will return.

Here are some ways to think outside your site to drive more web traffic.

> ▶ **Website Promotion**
>
> In addition to promoting your website through online channels, be sure to include your URL in offline communications (eg., ads, brochures, business cards, direct mail, phone hold recordings, or voice messages).

Social Media is Key to Reaching Your Supporters.

Increasingly, organizations are leveraging social media to increase website traffic and brand awareness. Social media is a collection of Internet-based communication channels and tools that enable individuals to share information and develop a dialogue with like-minded people. It can mean anything from blogs and social

> ▶ **Social Media Basics**
>
> Social media is a way to make more people aware of your cause, drive traffic to your website, and empower supporters to share your fundraising programs with their personal network.
>
> *Social media conversations occur on:*
> - Blogs (and micro-blogs)
> - Online chat & message boards
> - RSS
> - Widgets
> - Social networks
> - Social bookmarks
> - Podcasts
> - Video & photo sharing websites
> - Virtual worlds
> - Wikis

networking websites to bookmarking websites. Don't be afraid to start small with one set of applications before trying something else. There are a lot of high-impact, low-cost things you can do to get started.

Bookmarking websites are a great place to begin. First, add bookmarks for key website entry pages on delicious.com, digg.com, reddit.com, and stumbleupon.com. Second, make sure your users can easily bookmark pages on these websites. Services like addthis.com and sharethis.com are easily integrated into most content management systems and allow your visitors to bookmark your pages and share content with others. Check your web analytics package for an increase in traffic from referring sites.
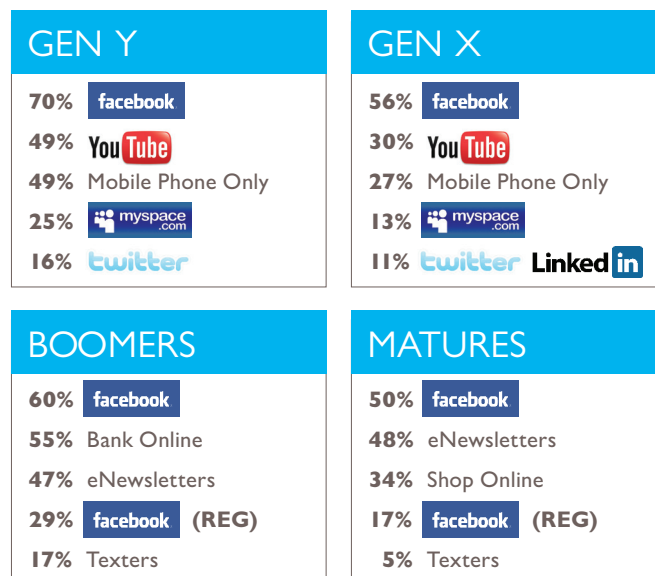
If you are a registered 501(c)(3), you can also set up a Cause on Facebook (http://www.causes.com) to promote your organization and your website. And, if you are using Convio Online Marketing products, look into the Facebook extension (http://open.convio.com/extensions/facebook.html) which is available to all Convio clients. It allows you to publish events, fundraising and advocacy campaigns directly to Facebook and drive people to your website for more information.

Also take some time to look into the YouTube™ Nonprofit Program (http://www.youtube.com/nonprofits). YouTube has thousands of organizations as members of this program who are using video to drive traffic to their websites and get people to take action such as donate or volunteer.

There are many, many more ways to promote your organization and its website through social media. Just remember that you don't have to do everything at once. Start small and see what works for you.

All generations of supporters are using social media and social networking to some degree. Whether your mission or goal is advocacy, fundraising, acquiring supporters, retention, or conversion, integrating social media and social networking into your marketing mix can significantly impact the effectiveness of your online programs.

GEN Y

- 70% facebook
- 49% YouTube
- 49% Mobile Phone Only
- 25% myspace.com
- 16% twitter

GEN X

- 56% facebook
- 30% YouTube
- 27% Mobile Phone Only
- 13% myspace.com
- 11% twitter Linked in

BOOMERS

- 60% facebook
- 55% Bank Online
- 47% eNewsletters
- 29% facebook (REG)
- 17% Texters

MATURES

- 50% facebook
- 48% eNewsletters
- 34% Shop Online
- 17% facebook (REG)
- 5% Texters

Media habits by generation. While all segments have a different dispersion of platforms and channels, social media plays a prominent role in the communication preferences of every segment.

CONVERT YOUR SITE VISITORS TO REGISTERED USERS

Once visitors arrive on you site, be sure you're doing everything possible to convert website visitors to registered supporters. Here are three quick tips for gathering contact information and email addresses from your website:

- **Give site registration prominent placement.**
  Dedicate a consistent area of your home page to promoting online registration. Place it in an eye-catching spot to reflect its importance. You might also use an image or graphic to draw attention to it. Don't forget to promote registration throughout the rest of your website, too—consider including a registration link in your page footer so the message will be included on every page of your site.

- **Provide quick online registration.**
  Use a web-based registration form that allows site visitors to register easily and quickly. Remember that the more information you request, the less likely people will be to complete the entire form. So, think carefully about the information you want to capture, and minimize the number of required fields— name and email address should suffice. You can always ask for more information about the individual through follow-up communications.

- **Promote the benefits of online registration.**
  Make registration compelling for your site visitors. Create special benefits for registered members, and link to a separate page explaining the perks, such as free email newsletters, or advance notification of upcoming events.

> ► **Communicating With the Next Generation of Donors**
>
> Research from Convio about contrasting charitable habits of different generations shows that for the foreseeable future, there's unlikely to be any single communication channel that plays a dominant role. The web/email and direct mail, though, will likely be the primary channels, augmented by new media channels such as social media.
>
> But, remember: No single communication channel is as important as the quality of your message and your ability to inspire and engage the hearts and minds of your supporters.
>
> 💡 *For tips on effectively communicating with Generation Y, Generation X, and Baby Boomers*, refer to: *The Next Generation of American Giving* (see *Additional Resources* section at the end of this guide).

Build Constituent Profiles

Once you've captured site visitors' email addresses, consider gathering more data. **Data about your supporters can help you better understand your constituents** and how they like to interact with your organization. It can be used to recognize trends, compare campaigns, and identify what is (or isn't) working. Armed with this information, you can create effective, customized, targeted website content and email communications that demonstrate an understanding of the relationship your supporter has had—and wants to have—with your organization.

Follow these guidelines to gather more profile information:

- ***Use online surveys.***
  A simple online survey can allow you to gather almost any type of information simply by asking constituents to respond. By using an online survey tool, you can automatically add what you learn about them to their profile in your database.

- ***Capture data based on online behavior.***
  You can gain valuable insight into your supporter's interests simply by capturing data as they click through your website. By embedding trackable links in content on your website, you can flag a registered visitor's profile with information about their particular interests. If supporters respond to an email invitation for a volunteer fundraising event, for example, you can automatically capture this data and use it to send them future event information, or perhaps a volunteer newsletter.

- ***Integrate offline and online data into a single view.***
  If yours is like most nonprofit organizations, you probably already have a significant amount of information about your supporters stored in one (or more) offline databases—and spreadsheets, and scraps of paper. As you gather more data, consider using a constituent relationship management system that is built specifically for nonprofits to help you consolidate this information. Convio's Common Ground CRM system, for example, is a complete fundraising and donor management solution that helps you track the details of every relationship in a single database—from prospects, donors, and staff members to volunteers, event participants, and board members.

💡 ***For more information about integrating your offline and online data into a single view***, refer to *Toolbox for the Modern Nonprofit: Donor Management Made Easy* (see *Additional Resources* at the end of this guide).

MEASURE YOUR RESULTS

Driving traffic to your website is just one piece of the puzzle; **you need to be measuring the traffic to truly understand your online marketing effectiveness**. The relative success of your website can be judged on a variety of criteria, depending on your goals and objectives. As you learn more about your constituents' online preferences, polish your message, and develop benchmarks for your website, you'll be able to fine-tune your strategy. Here are a few key metrics and benchmark numbers to help you evaluate your results:

- **Monthly Unique Website Visitors**

  When used effectively, your website can convey the importance of your organization's mission and help you register new constituents so you can continue to communicate with them via email and motivate actions, such as making a donation or signing a petition. In the seminal research about the online behavior of mid-level and major donors, The Wired Wealthy study, Convio learned that 49% of online mid-level and major donors will always visit a nonprofit's website before making a first-time gift online or offline. Measuring your monthly unique website visitors will, over time, show you how well your website changes are working.

- **Website Traffic Growth**

  The growth in your website traffic year-over-year is a good indicator of whether or not your website tactics are working. According to the Convio Online Marketing Nonprofit Benchmark Index™ Study, from 2008 to 2009, web traffic growth continued for most nonprofits, but at a slower rate. Web traffic growth in 2009 was in the single digits at 6% compared with double digit growth seen in previous years.

- **Registration Rate**

  The registration rate describes your success at converting website visitors into registered constituents by getting them to voluntarily give their email address. This may happen by someone making a donation, advocating, buying a ticket for an event, purchasing an item via an online store, signing a petition, or joining an email list. The significance: Adding constituents to your email file gives your organization a way to continuously re-engage with them using email. A registration rate of 2 to 3% typically is good.

💡 **For more information about metrics and benchmarks for websites and email list**, refer to the *Convio Online Marketing Nonprofit Benchmark Index Study* (see *Additional Resources* at the end of this guide).

💡 **For more information about the online behavior of mid-level and major donors**, refer to *The Wired Wealthy: Using the Internet to Connect with Your Middle and Major Donors* (see *Additional Resources* section at the end of this guide).

SPOTLIGHT
WEB ANALYTICS

Web analytics can give you valuable feedback about your users, trends, and the effectiveness of your site design and content. But don't take that feedback as scripture, because there are too many variables for these metrics to give you the full picture. Here are several myths about web analytics that could mislead you:

▶ Three Web Analytics Myths... Busted!

1. **MYTH: Analytics tell us why our constituents do what they do.**
   BUSTED! Traffic data tells us how visitors use your site, but not why. To get the "why," nothing beats talking directly to your constituents. Ask your constituents about their reasons for coming to your site and their experience using it.

2. **MYTH: Accuracy is the goal.**
   BUSTED! There are too many variables in the medium of the Web to expect hard and fast numbers. Cookies are disabled, pages are cached, or a script is pinged twice— any number of scenarios can combine to make your numbers less than 100% accurate. It doesn't really matter. The data you derive from web analytics is still good enough for useful insights.

3. **MYTH: Traffic data is all numbers—hard quantitative stats, my friends.**
   BUSTED! Analytics is less about hard numbers and more about directionality. By observing changes to your key metrics over time, you can get a sense of how effective your website changes are.

Analytics are a useful way to get information on what's working, but don't forget to look beyond the numbers and rely on insight from your constituents, your research, and common sense.
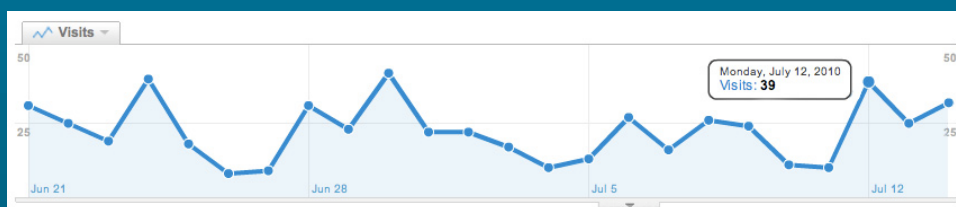
Tracking website analytics helps every organization move from subjective to data-backed decision making. Google Analytics is a free solution that can provide invaluable information about how your web pages are performing.

WEBSITE SUCCESSES TO INSPIRE YOU

Nonprofits of all sizes and missions are using Convio to improve their websites, accomplish their online goals and drive results for their mission. Here are a few examples to inspire you:

American Health Assistance Foundation

- Experienced a **63% increase in online giving** in the first nine months after their new website went live

- Page views to the site increased 9%, unique visitors by 29% and **total visits by 25%**

- **Online gifts increased 46%**

Children's Defense Fund

- Improved internal website traffic and better staff understanding of content organization and integration, resulting in **less time to maintain the website**, often due to dynamically driven and related content automation

- Google organic **search visits increased 23%**

- **Average time on website up 15%**; bounce rate improved 1.37%

Jewish National Fund

- New site offers **effective, personalized online interactions** between constituents and the organization, allowing visitors to engage with JNF to do everything—including manage their purchases of trees to be planted in Israel, communicate directly with the JNF branch in their area, and receive dynamic content and messaging based on their areas of interest

- **Site visits increased 500%**

- New site enabled the creation of **new online initiatives** to improve education and awareness while leveraging integrated fundraising tools to better engage donors and create a consistent web presence across all online properties

UN Foundation

- ***Improved search engine optimization*** resulting in referrals from Google's organic search to climb more than 260% year-over-year

- Increased the number of unique visitors for one of the UN Foundation's websites by 45%; the corresponding ***email list grew by 26%***

- Showed a ***77% jump in unique page views*** for the organization's main website, and a 50% increase in the average time visitors spent on the site

Church World Service

- Mother's Day campaign ***raised $9,617 online*** through 233 gifts in seven days, using an email list of approximately 31k. 73% of all funds raised were driven by emails

- Saw a ***286% increase in eCommerce*** catalog revenue from the same period the year prior

- ***60% of donors took advantage*** of the campaign's eCard functionality, sending 135 eCards to 178 recipients

💡 More Success Stories

For more examples of real world success, visit: http://www.convio.com/portfolio

HOW CONVIO CAN HELP YOU

Convio provides software and services that help nonprofits more effectively attract, engage and cultivate supporters. As a web-based platform, Convio is a cost effective solution that will grow with your organization and can integrate with other systems to extend your online reach.

Web-based Software Suite

- Fundraising
- Donor Database & Management
- Events
- Peer-toPeer Fundraising & Events

- eCommerce
- Web Content Management
- Advocacy
- Email Marketing

Strategic and Technical Services

- Strategy Consulting
- Campaign Management
- User Experience & Research
- Analytics

- Website Design Services
- Technical Design & Integration
- Custom Development
- Training & Support

WHY CONVIO IS DIFFERENT

Passion
Our team is passionate about helping nonprofits further their missions and achieve real results. Over 75 percent of our client services staff has worked in the nonprofit sector. Meet our team and see examples of our work with clients at www.convio.com/portfolio.

Trusted Strategic Advisor
Convio is the preferred technology and services partner for over 1,300 nonprofits of all sizes – including over half of the top 50 charities – helping them to achieve tangible results through:

- Database management & segmentation
- List building & donor acquisition
- Advocacy & outreach
- Fundraising

- Event participation & fundraising
- Website engagement & conversion
- Online & multi-channel strategies
- Training & support

Track Record of Innovation & Results
We're a pioneer for online and integrated marketing for nonprofits. Here are just a few examples:

- **Industry Benchmarks** – launched the industry's first benchmark study which we publish annually
- **User Engagement Pathways** – created the concept of defining clear communications paths via email and website to increase engagement and conversions and build this into our product
- **Accessibility** – partnered with Easter Seals to develop a first-time program to offer accessible technology, job training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities
- **Convio Go! TM** – launched the industry's first affordable, guided fundraising program resulting in a return of $3 for every $1 spent
- **Driving Results** – In 2009, nonprofit organizations used Convio to process $921 million in online donations, completed 51.5 million advocacy calls to action, and sent more than 3.8 billion emails to constituents with an industry leading deliverability rate in excess of 95 percent.

💡 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ***The Next Generation of American Giving*** is available at http://convio.com/nextgeneration
- ***Toolbox for the Modern Nonprofit: Donor Management Made Easy*** is available at http://convio.com/donormgmtguide
- ***The Convio Online Marketing Nonprofit Benchmark Index™ Study*** is available at http://convio.com/benchmark
- ***The Wired Wealthy: Using the Internet to Connect with Your Middle and Major Donors*** is available at http://convio.com/wiredwealthy

ABOUT CONVIO

Convio is the leading provider of on-demand constituent relationship management (CRM) software and services that give nonprofit organizations a better way to inspire and mobilize people to support their organization. Convio Online Marketing, the company's online marketing suite, offers integrated software for fundraising, advocacy, events, email marketing and web content management, and its Convio Common Ground™ CRM system helps organizations efficiently track and manage all interactions with supporters. All Convio products are delivered through the Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model and are backed by a portfolio of best-in-class consulting and support services and a network of partners who provide value added services and applications focused on the unique needs of nonprofit organizations. For more information, please visit www.convio.com.