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The Current Status of Social Media use among Nonprofit Human Service Organizations: An Exploratory Study

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The Current Status of Social Media use among Nonprofit Human Service Organizations:
An Exploratory Study

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Appendices

Abstract

THE CURRENT STATUS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE AMONG NONPROFIT HUMAN
SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

By James A. Young, Ph.D., MSW, MPA

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Social media has proliferated throughout the nonprofit sector over the last five years and

organizations use these new tools in a variety of ways. Little research is available on the use of

social media within nonprofit human service organizations (HSO) specifically. This study is one

of the first of its kind to explore how and why human service organizations are using social

media. The aim of this study is to understand the current status of social media use among

nonprofit human service organizations by exploring and describing the social media platforms in

use, associated practices with social media, the frequency of use, general satisfaction, and plans

for the future use of social media. A cross-sectional research design was selected and a survey

instrument was created for the study. Data were collected from 125 nonprofit human service

organizations in the Richmond, VA metropolitan area that were identified from a sampling frame

of nonprofit organizations.

The current status of social media use among nonprofit human service organizations is that HSO's initially adopted social media to engage the community. Although many HSO's continue to do this, promoting the HSO's programs and services has also become a top priority. This is primarily done using Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to share organizational newsletters and other information with their online community at least twice a day. On average, human service organizations have been using social media for more than five years and most plan to continue using social media in the future. Although HSO's report using social media less than ten hours a week, they are generally satisfied with the outcomes, but admitted more assistance is needed. This study establishes a foundation for HSO's to discuss the uncertainty of the future and to identify goals and strategies to help the HSO move forward. Increased understanding of why and how to use social media will also help HSO's to determine strategies for using social media that can add to the sustainability of the organization. Additional implications for HSO's and suggestions for future research are also discussed.

Chapter 1

Introduction

In the age of new media and a networked society, online participation and social networking have become an increasingly common development across the United States. Historically, groups congregated around physical locations or civic hubs such as the town square, town center, or the mall where individuals met and assembled to discuss the issues of their day. Although this is still going on, now people gather together or form groups online through websites like e-democracy.org (Clift, 2011) or social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. The swift rise of blogs and social media applications led *Time* magazine to feature "You," as its person of the year in the December 2006 edition. The idea that regular individuals could leverage the power of the Internet to establish a digital democracy, create content that rivals professional production, and build a community of collaboration (Grossman, 2006) is simply extraordinary. According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 78% of American adults use the Internet, and users of social networking sites has almost doubled since 2008 (Rainie, Smith, & Purcell, 2011). The nonprofit sector has begun to embrace the use of information technology, and more specifically social media, to participate in and facilitate community building, engage in fundraising, advocacy, and a host of other activities that relate to fulfilling their mission (DeVita & Fleming, 2001; Finn, Maher, & Forster, 2006; Hackler & Saxton, 2007; McNutt & Boland, 1999; McNutt & Menon, 2008; and Waters, 2007).

The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Center for Marketing Research has completed three surveys since 2007 examining the use of social media among the United States 200 largest charities as identified by Forbes magazine (Barnes & Matteson, 2009). According to their sample, charities are outpacing the public and private sectors in the adoption of social media technology at rate of 97% (Barnes & Matteson, 2009). The Center released an additional study

1

on the United States largest charities in 2011, which substantiates their earlier studies. This longitudinal data demonstrates that social media has become a crucial piece of the nonprofit communications strategy (Barnes, 2011).

Similarly, the nonprofit technology organization Idealware completed a survey of 459 nonprofit organizations in 2010 and found that a majority of respondents (83%) reported using some form of social media (LaCasse, Quinn, & Bernard, 2010). Despite this diffusion of technology across the nonprofit sector, both of these studies neglected to identify specifically nonprofit human service organizations (HSO) and the status of social media use among HSO's. Understanding why and how nonprofit human service organizations use social media is the aim of this study. This study used an exploratory cross-sectional research design to gather data on the current status of social media by examining five different dimensions: 1) reasons for social media use and adoption; 2) the social media practices of HSO's or what they use and how they use it; 3) how often (frequency); 4) expected outcomes or general satisfaction; and 5) future plans for using social media.

This chapter establishes the foundation of this study by providing definitions for nonprofit human service organizations and social media. The remainder of the chapter provides a statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. The last two sections describe the significance for social work and a brief overview of the study.

Defining Human Service Organizations and Social Media

The nonprofit and voluntary sector consists of a myriad of organizations and institutions that serve key aspects of society (Salamon, 1999). Concepts such as nonprofit, voluntary, philanthropy, civil society, non-governmental organization, third sector, charitable organization, and others have been used synonymously throughout the literature to describe these unique organizations that generally aim to create positive change. Muukkonen (2009) argues that this

"plurality of concepts" presents two dangers: firstly, scholars may not understand what others in differing disciplines are referring to, and secondly, the confusion of terminology when concepts are codified into legislation (p. 684).

Hall (1987) explains that the concept of nonprofit sector in the United States was adopted in part due to the 1969 Tax Reform Act and the scholars who influenced that piece of legislation. The United States Internal Revenue Service (I.R.S.) (2010) refers to nonprofit organizations as charitable organizations under its tax exemption code 501c(3). These organizations must not operate for the benefit of private interests nor may any of the organization's net earnings be distributed to private shareholders or individuals (IRS.gov, 2010). Salamon (1999) contends there are six defining characteristics that comprise a nonprofit organization:

1. An entity that is organized formally under American law, or institutionalized to some extent

2. Private, indicating that it is separate from government

3. Nonprofit-distributing, meaning there is no receipt of profits for their owners.

4. Self-governing, or equipped to manage their own activities

5. Voluntary, or that they involve some degree of voluntary participation

6. Of public benefit, or serving the public good. (pp. 10-11)

Several nonprofit theorists posit that nonprofit organizations materialize when government and or the private market fail to fulfill their functions (Hansmann, 1980; & Weisbrod, 1977), because it was not profitable or desirable to do so (Salamon, 1999). This form of market failure is often exemplified through nonprofit human service organizations such as nursing homes, organizations that serve the homeless, or agencies that provide services for individuals and families. In the past several decades, the private market has begun to compete with nonprofit organizations in providing these types of goods and services, and a growing body

of research has emerged to address the implications of this dynamic (Marwell & McInerny, 2005).

In response to private competition nonprofit organizations have sought to become more competitive, often adopting a variety of strategies to be sustainable in the face of a challenging market. Strategies include social entrepreneurship (Weerawardena, McDonald, & Sullivan Mort, 2010), concentrating on staying compliant with their funding base in addition to seeking new supplementary funding sources (Binder, 2007), and the implementation of technology (Finn et al., 2006; Salamon, 2005). Human service organizations, like others in the nonprofit sector, are engaging in several strategies to help fulfill their missions, and are adopting social media as part of those strategies.

What is a Human Service Organization?

Nonprofit organizations have their historical roots based in religious organizations and groups or societies that developed long before government came into existence, and often emerged in the face of various market failures (Salamon, 1999). In fact it was the French political philosopher, Alexis de Tocqueville, who identified the nonprofit sector as "one of the most distinctive and critical features of American life" (Salamon, 1999, p. 7). This unique role of nonprofits is one of the main reasons the focus of this study is on nonprofit human service organizations (HSOs). The distinction of HSO is used to identify those organizations that seek to deliver human services and address human concerns. O'Connor & Netting (2009) explain, "organizations that fund, plan, advocate, and/or educate are in the human service business" (p. 8). Although one may typically think of a human service organization as a direct service provider, such as a mental health-counseling agency, the definition above also includes organizations that operate together to provide services on behalf of individuals. This may include an organization whose main function is advocacy for homeless individuals, yet they also work

4

with other organizations to help individuals' transition from homelessness to permanent and stable housing.

Human service organizations represent many aspects of the social work profession. Understanding how these organizations use social media will greatly add to the literature and form a foundation for future research as to why these organizations participate in this emerging digital environment. A key aspect of social media is participation among a number of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. The rise of these and other social technologies has many organizations mystified with exhilaration and trepidation as they begin to navigate this new interactive environment in addition to understanding the various concepts, definitions, and strategies that encompass this new medium.

What is Social Media?

Social media has been described as a platform for interaction and networking in a way that individuals can become content creators instead of simply content consumers (Hopkins, 2008). Content refers (but is not limited) to the images, video, text, or information that is freely available on the Internet. Kaplan and Haenlein define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Web 2.0 was coined as the next iteration of the Internet and many in the blogosphere are already debating what Web 3.0 may look like. Nevertheless, the key aspect of social media or Web 2.0 is that it allows many individuals to connect with many others both synchronously and asynchronously in a more dynamic way. Kanter & Fine (2010) define social media as an array of digital tools that are easy, inexpensive to use, and allow people to create and manipulate their own stories, photos, and videos to share them with others at almost no cost.

There are thousands of social media platforms on the Internet with many more coming online every month. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, which are among the most popular platforms but also include blogs, wikis, and other technological platforms. Kanter & Fine (2010) include text messaging as a social media tool mainly because it easily allows coordination and communication. Email may also be included in the social media realm, although some would say that email is passé and that most Millenials or those of generation-Y, born from the mid to late 1970's, see email as an antiquated technology (Johri, 2011; Whittaker, 2009; Young, 2008). Even though email is still very much utilized for a variety of purposes, in this study email and text messaging will not generally be considered social media because it does not serve as many functions as other social media platforms.

Blogging is generally regarded as one of the first methods or foundations of social media (Kanter & Fine, 2010; Smith, 2010). The last 10 years has seen a rapid evolution of what is possible with social media technologies and the amount of usage among them. For example, at the time of this writing, Facebook reported over 750 million users with 50% of them logging on every day (Facebook, 2011), Twitter reported 200 million users (Bosker, 2011), and YouTube, while not providing a specific number, claims that 24 hours of video are uploaded every minute (YouTube, 2012). Whether organizations are blogging, tweeting, creating videos, or posting content to Facebook, the fact is social media represents a powerful tool to reach many individuals and communities.

To further understand why social media has made such an impact in society, one needs to understand more about participatory culture and user-generated influence. Henry Jenkins explains, "Participatory culture is a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby experienced participants pass along knowledge to novices" (Jenkins,

6

Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, & Weigel, 2009, p. 3). Several forms of participatory culture include affiliations or memberships, expressions such as creating new content, collaborative problem solving, and circulation (Jenkins et al., 2009). User-generated activity involves the creation of new content such as videos on YouTube, articles in the blogosphere, podcasting, and images on Flickr. User-generated influence is not left to just creating content, rather it is also involves user-generated distribution in the form of sharing this content across space and time through social media like Facebook or Twitter. Participatory culture is also user-generated filtering or organization in the form of individuals tagging content on Delicious or Digg.com (Wesch, 2008).

The benefit of such user-generated activity in a participatory culture includes opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, diversification of cultural expression, development of skills, and a more empowered conception of citizenship (Jenkins et al., 2009). The process underway is what Jenkins (2006) describes as convergence, or "the flow of content across multiple media platforms" (p. 2). However, convergence is not merely a technological process, rather it represents a cultural shift to where consumers are encouraged to seek out connections and new information and move towards a participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006). Individuals, groups, and organizations lie at the center of this convergence of new and old media.

Michael Wesch (2008) highlights an interesting point that impacts human service organizations when describing this phenomena he explains that; "Media mediate human relationships, and when media changes, human relationships change"(11:50). Identifying why human service organizations use social media becomes critically important as these, and other organizations work to create trust and establish bonds within the community and increase their social capital (Saxton & Benson, 2005) within this new participatory culture. The social aspect of the web has become extremely exciting and is transforming society as individuals and

7

organizations establish connections online and expand their social networks. The ubiquitous flow of information, knowledge, communication, and content has impacted how conversations happen and how stories unfold in the media as well as in everyday life.

Social media is several things all at once as it continually evolves and innovates. The social media environment is perhaps best understood through an ecological lens. In defining media ecology Neil Postman (1970) explained that it looks into the substance of how media affect human perception, understanding, value, interaction, and whether media facilitates or impedes chances for survival. "The word ecology implies the study of environments: their structure, content, and impact on people" (Postman, 1970, p. 161). Social media ecology involves the platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, or YouTube and combines it with the user-generated activity of participatory culture. The ability to share information, connect, and develop new skills across time and space has become incredibly easy because of the structure of the Internet, the content that people are creating and sharing, and the impact on individuals, organizations, and society is apparent and extremely valuable.

Statement of the problem

Nonprofit organizations have been created for many purposes, and human service organizations make up only a small percentage of the nonprofit sector, yet they provide many important services to individuals, families, and communities (Salamon, 2002; Suarez, 2009). To date, research on social media use within human service organizations is nearly nonexistent. Chapter two highlights normative and scholarly literatures that are emerging within areas of the nonprofit sector. As HSO's seek to continue to be sustainable, provide crucial services, and compete in an increasingly competitive market, some argue they must acknowledge new and innovative strategies for dealing with the challenges they face (Kanter & Fine, 2010; Mansfield, 2011; and Saxton & Guo, 2011). Many nonprofit organizations have turned to social media to

assist with implementing these strategies and engaging new consumers, volunteers, and funders (Kanter & Fine, 2010; Quinn & Berry, 2010; and Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009). Indeed the normative literature is growing to assist practitioners with this implementation (Handley & Chapman, 2011; Kanter & Fine, 2010; Mansfield, 2011; Neff & Moss, 2011; and Safko, 2010).

The challenge for human service organizations is that many do not have the resources, knowledge, or time to utilize social media in a way that may yield a significant return on their investment. The amount of time needed for implementing and using social media has been cited as a major challenge (Waters et al., 2009; and Young, 2010). Resources such as technological hardware or infrastructure may also limit human service organizations in their attempts to capitalize on the social media movement (Ogden and Starita, 2009). The term "Digital divide" describes the gap that exists among those who benefit from digital technologies and those who have not (Fryer & Granger, 2008; McNutt & Menon, 2008; and Rogers, 2003). Although this largely affects individuals, HSO's may also reside on either side of this divide. Evidence suggests that the size of a nonprofit organization may determine whether it has a website or not (Kang & Norton 2004; McNutt & Boland, 1999; Saxton & Guo, 2011; and Schneider, 2003). There is no consensus on how to measure the size of an organization within the literature, although it has been done using the annual budget, revenues, or number of employees (Forster, 2008; Kang & Norton, 2004; McNutt & Boland, 1999; and Ogden & Starita, 2009). Saxton and Guo (2011) explain, "In effect, size predicts an organization's capacity to employ information technology for strategic functions" (p.276). The relevance here is that the digital divide hypothesis may hold true for the use of social media as well.

The majority of social media platforms are free to use and thus present a great opportunity for nonprofit organizations. However, the idea that these platforms cost nothing and

can therefore be used relatively cheaply to effect positive change for many nonprofit organizations is more of a myth than a reality (Ogden & Starita, 2009). Organizations just starting out or struggling to "keep their doors open" may not have computers or funds to purchase hardware and employ staff required to use this "free" resource (Ogden & Starita, 2009). An improved understanding of social media adoption by nonprofit human service organizations will help to establish a foundation for future research, identify reasons for using social media, and make sense of how participating in this new paradigm helps HSO's achieve their goals.

Purpose of this study

The objective of this study was to obtain descriptive data on the adoption and use of social media among nonprofit human service organizations. The descriptive data includes information on which social media platforms (i.e. Facebook or Twitter) HSO's use, how often they post content, their primary issue area or mission focus, and size of the organization. Since size was a strong predictor of information technology adoption (Kang and Norton 2004; McNutt & Boland, 1999; Rogers, 2003; Saxton & Guo, 2011; and Schneider, 2003), the digital divide may extend to social media as well. Identifying how and what types of social media HSO's use, this study also explored whether human service organizations fall behind their larger counterparts.

This study explored why HSO's are using social media, how often they use it, plans for future use, and whether it benefits the organization. Many social media experts (Kanter & Fine, 2009; and Mansfield, 2011) assert and discuss the variety of benefits of using social media in the nonprofit sector. However, little empirical evidence exists that examines human service organizations directly. As many organizations continue to adopt social media in various aspects, there is a need to gather data to more fully comprehend how social media is impacting these organizations. Questions such as: What are the implications of using social media? or What are

the perceived benefits of using social media? begin to shed light on this phenomena. Additionally, understanding the social media practices of these organizations, the frequency of social media participation, general satisfaction with social media, and plans for future use increases knowledge pertaining to the status of social media utilization among nonprofit human service organizations and fills a gap in the literature. Exploring and describing this information also provides HSO's a snapshot of their current status of social media use and initiates the discussion around how to further use social media to benefit human service organizations.

Significance for social work

This study has tremendous significance for social work. Identifying how HSO's participate in social media increases understanding and promotes innovative ways of providing services and reaching out to vulnerable or oppressed individuals. Henry Jenkins (HCD Media Group, 2009) explains how social media presents new opportunities for those who care about social justice issues, as individuals now have the opportunity to share their own stories and raise awareness about particular issues in a way never before imagined. A great example of this is the Mark Horvath, who, after losing his job and his home twice, decided that people in the United States needed to more fully understand homelessness in this country (Cabala, 2009). He founded a website (WeAreVisible.com) and created a social media campaign raising awareness about poverty and homelessness. By using tools like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, Horvath was able to connect with homeless individuals around the country and create opportunities for these individuals to learn about social media, tell their stories, get help, and maintain a community of collaboration and support.

Utilizing social media means working with a networked mindset, which is characterized by principles of openness, transparency, decentralized decision-making, and distributed action (Scearce, Kasper & Grant, 2009). Social media tools allow organizations to exploit these

11

principles and portray to the public just how funds are used, decisions are made, and how volunteer time is utilized. For example, organizations such as Kiva.org and DonorsChoose.org, employ the principles of social media through peer-to-peer philanthropy and allow individuals to choose and donate to specific projects. These organizations use video, images, and blogs to report on the progress of the projects, and individuals can continue to interact online by commenting and sharing with others in their own social networks by linking to the websites.

Another example of a few individuals who used creativity, innovation, and passion with social media are Joan Blades and Kristen Rowe-Finkbeiner who cofounded MomsRising.org. This nonprofit organization seeks to advocate and change policy to "create a more family-friendly America" (MomsRising, 2011). The unique aspect of this organization is that the staff and founders do not have a physical location. MomsRising exists virtually on their website and social media platforms. The staff often work and coordinate the operations via email or videoconferencing such as Skype (Kanter & Fine, 2010). The creativity and innovativeness was further demonstrated in 2009, when MomsRising created a video entitled "Mother of the Year" that allowed people to put his or her own mother's name into the video and send it via email or another social media platform. The video has been viewed over 12 million times and resulted in an additional 1 million new members for the organization (Kanter & Fine, 2010).

Perhaps the most well known example of using social media is the 2008 Presidential campaign of Barrack Obama, "where his political team utilized social networks to mobilize millions of supporters and raise over three quarters of a billion dollars" (Scearce, Kasper, & Grant, 2009). Obviously not everyone or every organization will see the success that the Obama campaign had with social media. Most organizations simply do not have the staff power to do so. However, the power of social media and participatory culture resides within the people who are passionate enough to mobilize and respond to an issue. The very heart of social work is about

creating connections and empowering vulnerable and oppressed populations. Individuals and organizations can leverage social media for this very purpose.

Although research is emerging on social media and the nonprofit sector, continued development of this area is warranted. The social work literature has generally focused more on the application of the Internet and social media in social work education or advocacy (Giffords, 2009; Houghton & Joinson, 2010; Kilpelainen, Paykkonen, & Sankala, 2011; McNutt & Menon, 2008; and Rockinson-Szapkiw & Walker, 2009). Additionally, the lack of social media research on human service organizations needs to be addressed in order for these organizations to more fully understand and employ social media tools or strategies. By doing so, nonprofit human service organizations will become more sustainable and innovative in the face of challenging and turbulent environments. The use of social media characterizes innovative strategies of organizational practice that can help nonprofit human service organizations to continue to provide many important services to individuals, families, and communities.

Study Overview

Information technology is radically changing the way in which the nonprofit sector operates. From communication and collaboration to fundraising and volunteer engagement, information technology is producing new avenues into traditional methods of organizational practice. Social media presents new opportunities for nonprofit organizations to build relationships, and work differently in an effort to make the world a better place (Kanter & Fine, 2010). The challenge is that little empirical evidence exists examining nonprofit human service organizations use of social media. The design of this study aids in making sense of the complexities of the digital environment and how HSO's navigate that environment. Chapter two begins with a review of the relevant literature on social media use by contrasting it across the three different sectors: government, business, and nonprofits. Chapter two also contains a

13

working definition of social media for this study, a theoretical model that parallels the principles of social media ecology, and a conceptual model that guides the overall study.

Chapter three begins with a statement on human subjects' research protections relevant to the methodology of the study and details the research design including: the objectives that were explored, the sampling procedures, a description of the variables, the development of the survey instrument, and the data collection and analysis plan. Chapter four presents the results of the study. Finally, a discussion of the results, the limitations of the study, and implications for future research are presented in chapter five.

Chapter 2

Literature and Relevant Theories

The literature on social media use within the nonprofit sector is emerging, and more research is needed. This literature includes a variety of academic disciplines ranging from business, marketing, public relations, journalism, communications, nonprofit and voluntary sector, media studies, and anthropology. The social work literature is scarce on the this subject as discussed in chapter one. The following literature review demonstrates the state of knowledge in the nonprofit sector by examining and comparing the development and use of social media in the private business and government sectors. A general background on information technology and utilization of the Internet in the nonprofit sector also is provided.

Following the literature review, the remainder of chapter two focuses on the relevant theories that provide the foundation for the study's theoretical model. The theoretical model establishes a paradigm, or basic set of beliefs that guides action (Guba, 1990), to understand social media use from an organizational and participatory perspective. The participatory perspective will be articulated later. The theoretical model undergirds the development of the survey instrument, which is discussed in chapter three. The theoretical model guiding this study is constructed using Contingency theory, Resource Dependency theory, Diffusion of Innovations theory, Media Richness theory, and is tied together with Social Network theory to help explain how the theories work together. The concept of social capital provides a basis as to why nonprofit organizations are so beneficial for society and is also included in the discussion.

Development of Technology in Nonprofit Organizations

In response to the rapid change and evolution of technology many nonprofit organizations have compared their organizational strategies with that of their for-profit

15

counterparts (Herman & Renz, 2004; Hughes, 2006; and McDonald, 2007). This comparison is nothing new as many organizations have sought to copy the successful strategies of others (Blake, Mouton, & Allen, 1987; Edwards, Yankey, & Altpeter, 1998; Herman & Renz, 2004; Hughes, 2006; Kanter, 1983; and McDonald, 2007), and evidence suggests that prior business experience can positively impact the outcomes of a nonprofit organization (Ritchie & Eastwood, 2006). Although nonprofit organizations have been adopting social media significantly more than business or government (Barnes, 2011; and Barnes & Matteson, 2009), many organizations continue to look to the private sector for examples or best practices. Much of the excitement around using social media centers on the idea of engagement with donors, volunteers, and the general public through various platforms in a cost effective manner. This excitement is evident in government, business, and the nonprofit sectors.

Social Media and Government

Many governing bodies at the local, state, and national levels use social media for a variety of purposes. For example, notifications about weather and road conditions, job announcements, emergency management, and other city services are offered through Twitter (Merchant, Elmer, & Lurie, 2011; and Riedyk, 2009). Social media also allows government to become more transparent and promote accountability by providing information on government decisions, rules and citizen rights, and performance (Bertot, Jaeger, & Grimes, 2010). Bertot, Jaeger, & Grimes highlight several studies explaining that trust in government, social capital, and empowerment of citizens increases with more access to government information and encouragement to participate in the democratic process. Initially citizens advocated for more openness and called on government to support them, as seen with the example of Steven Clift who started the website *e-democracy.org* in the mid 1990's. E-democracy is a term that can

16

mean a variety of things, and yet some would argue that e-democracy is an online process that involves the promotion of democracy and the health of communities, the creation of associations, and the building of relationships (McNutt & Boland, 2007). The process of creating and strengthening community trust and building relationships is akin to the social capital that many organizations strive to create within their communities. This generation of social capital is now starting to take place online (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; and McNutt & Boland, 2007).

Creating a culture of transparency and trust begins with small steps; however, social media appears to be able to amplify and speed up the process (Bertot, Jaeger, & Grimes, 2010). The speed and amplification of social media was apparent during the 2008 Presidential campaign, as discussed in chapter one, where the political team of Presidential candidate Obama used social media to increase funds and better connect with voters to inspire change (Scearce, Kasper, & Grant, 2009).

Social Media and Business

The business sector appears to be one sector where the strategic use of social media has exploded. Discussions around social strategies, social marketing, and being a social business now proliferate online and in the literature. Studies suggest that successful use of social media establishes or strengthens relationships and that the main goal of the company's social media strategy should be to connect with people (Piskorski, 2011). Others suggest that although social media allows for a greater exchange of ideas, businesses are not using social media to its full potential (Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010). Businesses are learning that successful social media use requires an attitude of contribution, willingness to experiment, meet a community's needs, and that their primary activity should not be advertising (Spaulding, 2010).

17

Piskorski (2011) highlights a few companies that employed successful social strategies. For example, American Express developed an online community for small business members of its OPEN credit cards. The forum provides business management tips and allows card members to connect with one another to share information or business services. Another example Piskorski highlights is the social gaming company Zynga, which creates games such as *Words with Friends* for mobile phones and other games for Facebook. This company encourages friends to connect, or play games, by reaching out on Facebook or through similar online invitations. This social strategy has helped Zynga acquire and retain a large customer base while reducing costs (Piskorski, 2011). These examples indicate how social media can help organizations.

There are challenges associated with this new digital frontier that may discourage some nonprofit organizations from moving forward and the increased use of information technology in general is not without controversy. Some have argued that technology provides no real cost savings and no gains in productivity (Kreuger & Stretch, 2000). Others have argued that technology, and specifically the Internet; can have negative effects on individuals and families because of its isolating effects (Kraut et al. 1998). However, others have challenged these findings and the research is generally mixed in regards to organizational effectiveness and the impact on individuals and communities (Weber, Loumakis, & Bergman, 2003). Findings in the literature seem to agree that technology, and more specifically social media, represents tools that create a new opportunity for communication and interaction, but that it is up to individuals and organizations to successfully implement those tools (Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, 2008; Kent & Taylor, 1998; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010; Waters & Jamal, 2011).

Social Media and Nonprofits

In light of the ever-changing market and the development of new business models and technologies, understanding what makes a human service organization successful is vital as many vulnerable and oppressed individuals seek services from a multitude of nonprofit organizations. The increased demand for these services has lead many organizations to implement new strategies, and be creative and innovative in order to become more efficient (Corder, 2001). Technology represents a modicum of organizational efforts to meet demand.

General technological innovations include using personal computers, fax machines, computer networks, the Internet, and email. Technology has changed the ways nonprofit organizations communicate, collaborate (Finn et al., 2006), and utilize organizational resources more efficiently (De Vita & Fleming, 2001). Activities such as advocacy have been transformed through the use of the Internet. Electronic advocacy or e-advocacy is the use of technology to influence key stakeholders and change policy (Dunlop & Fawcett, 2008; McNutt & Boland, 1999; and Suarez, 2009). Earlier studies indicated increased use of electronic advocacy utilizing email and fax-based strategies, as well as the plan to implement more web-based strategies (McNutt & Boland, 1999; McNutt & Menon, 2008).

Employing tools such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and online forums have the advantage of raising awareness of issues quickly and sharing opinions and knowledge. The protested Iranian presidential election in June of 2009 is an excellent example of social media producing impact. Despite limited resources and options for communicating to supporters, organizers of the opposition to the election's outcome successfully coordinated large protests using social media tools such as Twitter and YouTube. Iranian citizens protesting the election results also used social media to communicate their situation to millions of concerned people

19

worldwide (Parr, 2009). The Arab Spring political uprising in Egypt serves as a more recent example of the power of social media to organize individuals and create change. Wael Ghonim, a marketing manager at Google for the Middle East and North Africa, has been credited with starting the Facebook page "We are all Khaled Said," which amassed 500,000 members and detailed abuses by police and state officials and would later be crucial for organizing protestors (Crovitz, 2011).

The ability to engage in advocacy efforts differs among nonprofit organizations based on their funding, mission, and structure. Suarez (2009) suggests that even nonprofit organizations that may not normally engage in advocacy efforts are more likely to do so online via their agency websites. Additionally, Suarez (2009) suggests that nonprofits involved directly in advocacy efforts share commonalities with organizations that encourage citizen participation in government. This finding substantiates earlier studies that suggest nonprofit organizations are directly involved in e-democracy and e-advocacy efforts (Dunlop & Fawcett, 2008; McNutt & Boland, 2007; and McNutt & Boland, 1999). Electronic advocacy and e-democracy have had great appeal for the last twenty years as these techniques offer cost savings for mass communication and opportunities for more efficiency (McNutt and Menon, 2008; and McNutt & Boland, 1999). Furthermore, McNutt & Menon (2008) argued that newer mobile and social technologies would offer increased advantages by allowing activists to work in places where the social change occurs. However, activists' need to understand technology and how it fits within their organization (McNutt & Menon, 2008).

The integration of the Internet was found to be an important factor of the utilization of technology among nonprofit organizations (Finn et al., 2006). Internet websites have become commonplace within the for-profit sector, and many nonprofit organizations have begun to

20

implement their own websites. Evidence suggests that nonprofit organizations have been slow to adopt the use of free websites (Freddolino, 2003), and other web-based applications (McNutt & Boland, 1999). Some reasons for low utilization may include the digital divide as well as the size and budget of the organization, time involved, and staff power (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011; Saxton & Guo, 2011; Schneider, 2003; and Young, 2010). Regardless of slow adoption rates, Internet websites and social media present opportunities for nonprofit organizations to cultivate relationships and engage in new methods of fundraising online (Hackler & Saxton, 2007; Waters, 2007).

Research finds that the opportunity for nonprofit organizations to engage and cultivate new relationships online begins with designing engaging websites. Kang and Norton (2004) argue that nonprofit organizations often have not designed engaging websites. They contend that nonprofit organizations should utilize the potential of the Internet to increase volunteer, donor, and fundraising opportunities. For social media specifically, some have also argued that organizations are not using these new tools to their full potential by fostering engagement or dialogic interaction (Bortree & Selter, 2009; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010; Waters & Jamal, 2011). Historically, the cost of developing an engaging website and using interactive tools often meant employing a website designer or programmer, and may not have been cost-effective for many economically disadvantaged organizations. The current version of the Internet, Web 2.0, presents much better prospects for organizations to develop the opportunities outlined by Kang and Norton (2004), specifically: high quality design, interactive two-way communications, and functions that allow users to share the website with others through the use of application programming interfaces or API's.

21

A recent study examining the factors, as outlined by Kang and Norton (2004), also found that nonprofit organizations are not utilizing the potential of their websites to engage new donors, volunteers, and capitalize on the fundraising potential (Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009). Their sample consisted of nonprofit organizations in Europe and the authors found that these organizations recognize the importance for creating dialogue but neglect to incorporate it into their websites. The authors also found that the dialogic capacity of the website is related to the financial means of the organization (Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009). This contrasts to what Kang and Norton found and asserted that the Internet may be an equalizer among nonprofit organizations. Many may argue the paramount strategy in using social media should be to engage with and build a relationship with the public (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011; Bortree & Selter, 2009; Kent, 2008; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010; Waters & Jamal, 2011: and Young, 2010). Regardless of the organizational resources, many in the nonprofit sector continue to invest in technology, and social media specifically, to assist with strategic efforts.

One of the best examples on the use of social media in the nonprofit sector involves the American Red Cross. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, many in the blogosphere were criticizing the Red Cross for their slow response to this disaster (Kanter & Fine, 2010). In response, the organization initiated a social media campaign that started with Twitter and blogging in an attempt to increase organizational transparency and combat the negative perceptions. This strategy represented a shift in the organization, which now views social media as an opportunity to "engage in conversations with critics, educate them and the broader public about an issue, and improve what they are doing" (Kanter & Fine, 2010, p. 42). Currently, Twitter and Facebook are the two most widely used social media platforms at the American Red Cross (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011). Utilizing blogs and other social media tools has

allowed the American Red Cross to meet their social goals by engaging with the community, recruiting volunteers, and demonstrating transparency and accountability to the public (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011; and Kanter & Fine, 2010). The act of demonstrating accountability to the public helped to increase trust in the organization. Social media is an attractive outlet to do this as many individuals can interact with organizations via social media and in turn organizations can leverage this relationship to cultivate a relationship where those individuals may become ongoing donors (Kanter & Fine, 2010; and Young, 2010).

The increase in availability of Internet tools to engage in building community, attract new donors, and conduct transactions online has spawned a new form of fundraising. Organizations are now implementing website fundraising, also known as e-relationship marketing, e-marketing, or e-philanthropy. This type of fundraising requires organizations to view donors as partners in the process of mission achievement (Sargeant, West, & Jay, 2007). Therefore, designing websites with a focus of engagement rather than a static webpage with a simple donate here link is important (Brainard & Siplon, 2004; Sargeant et al., 2007). Effective nonprofit fundraising websites should focus on making the process of giving simple, such as providing a donation link on each of their webpage's, and ensuring that navigating the site is relatively easy. Many researchers argue enhancing the relational components of organizational websites will increase opportunities to engage new donors, increase fundraising potential, recruit volunteers, and build community (Hackler & Saxton, 2007; Sargeant et al., 2007; Kang & Norton, 2004; Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009; Waters, 2007).

A variety of organizations have seized the opportunity made available by the Internet and e-philanthropy to improve the relational components of their websites. Websites such as Kiva.org and DonorsChoose.org provide a clear explanation of how donations are used and

employ the principles of social media to allow individuals to choose and donate to specific projects. These organizations use rich media such as video on YouTube, images via Flickr, and blogs to report on the progress of the projects, and individuals can continue to interact online by commenting and sharing with others in their own social networks by linking to the websites. These organizations have learned lessons from the Internet, and more specifically participatory culture, which allow people to quickly and easily become involved (Brainard & Siplon, 2004) to help create positive change. Nonprofit organizations continue to evolve their technological strategies and implement key facets described above (Hackler & Saxton, 2007; Waters, 2007). The adoption of social media to impact philanthropy and fundraising is one more of the many ways this new medium is evolving organizational practice in the nonprofit sector.

New platforms for fundraising, including social media and text message donations, have provided organizations with new opportunities to serve their communities. The additional funds have also brought the challenge of demonstrating accountability and transparency of how those funds are used. Nonprofit organizations are using this new medium to demonstrate accountability and transparency. Saxton, Guo, and Brown (2007) explain that nonprofit organizations can connect more stakeholders to its mission, thereby increasing public trust and accountability. In their review of 117 community foundations, they found that online efforts were primarily targeted towards donors, grant-seekers, and the community. The authors highlighted several dimensions of responsiveness: prioritization of a stakeholder group, quality of interaction among that group, the extent to which the organization strives to meet the needs of its constituents, the breadth of its targeting efforts, and the extent to which it uses web-based technologies to do so (Saxton, Guo, & Brown, 2007). One of the main recommendations the authors made in that study is for organizations to implement more content and opportunities for

interaction (Saxton et al., 2007, p.169). Another study (Waters, 2007) focusing on engaging stakeholders through Facebook held a similar recommendation.

A content analysis of 275 nonprofit organization's Facebook profiles indicated that organizations sought to be transparent, but neglected to utilize the full potential of Facebook by posting external links, pictures, and discussions (Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009). Despite the lack of full utilization, Waters (2007) argues that nonprofit organizations will use social media more as it becomes ingrained in daily life. This is seemingly apparent, as many throughout the world have a Facebook account, and according to Facebook (2012), interact with it almost daily. Additionally, statistics on social media use demonstrate that Facebook is among the top utilized platforms (Barnes & Matteson, 2009; LaCasse, Quinn, & Bernard, 2010) in the United States. This is further demonstrated in the infographic displayed in Figure 2.1.

Ogden and Starita (2009) explain the increased use of Facebook among nonprofit organizations stems from the application *Causes*, which is an application that "allows users to advocate for and raise money for any non-profit" (p. 3). Facebook is not alone in the social media universe; Twitter also has many users in addition to YouTube and the newly created Google+ (plus) (2011). The number of social media platforms may add to the confusion and excitement surrounding how organizations can implement these tools in a successful manner.

Research on social media is beginning to develop frameworks on how to best use social media, and in the normative literature numerous books and blogs are devoted to the subject. A common theme among the research is that users of social media need to think strategically, be willing to experiment, and be open to new ideas. This means working with a networked mindset, which is characterized by principles of openness, transparency, decentralized decision-making, and distributed action (Scearce, Kasper & Grant, 2009). Kanter and Fine (2010) project this

philosophy onto nonprofit organizations and explain that these types of organizations "engage

people in shaping and sharing their work" (p. 3).
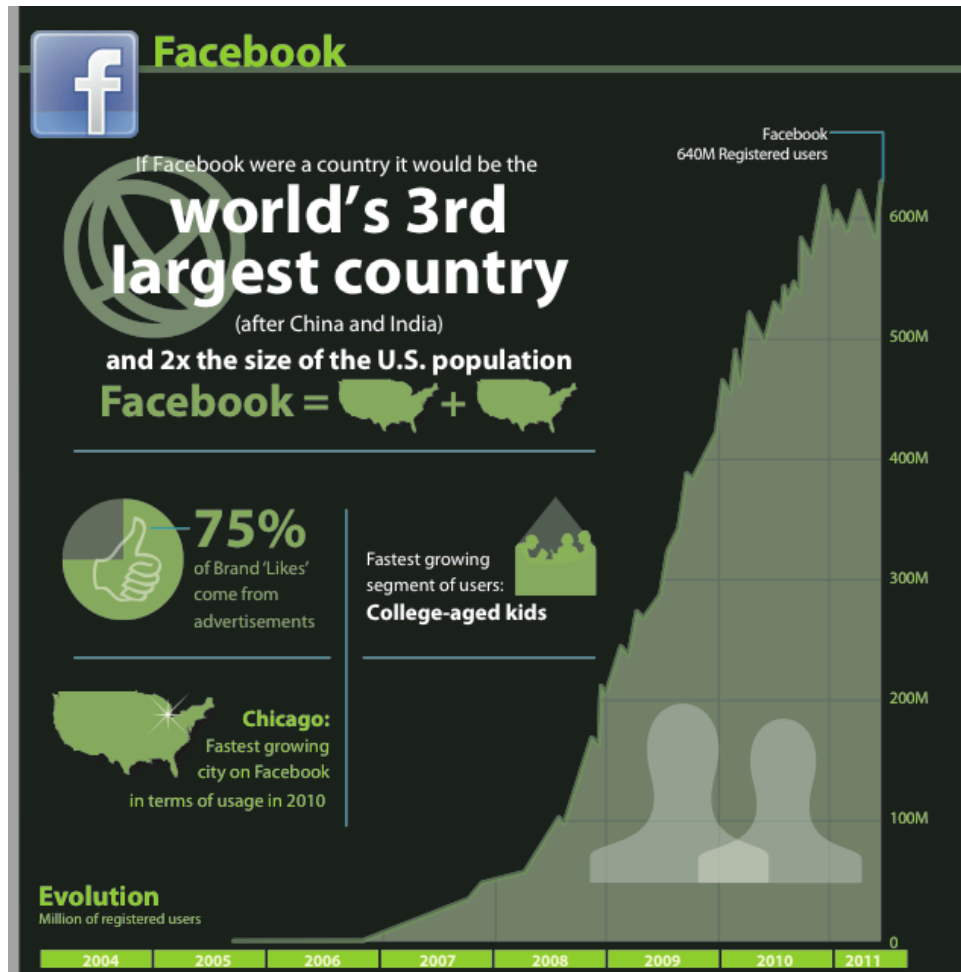
Figure 2.1
Infographic depicting the evolution of Facebook, used with permission by Henrikson (2011)

Others have explained that social media users should choose their applications carefully,

ensure that the applications align with the activities being selected, plan for integration, and to be

social (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Kietzman, Hermkens, McCarthy, and Silvestre (2011) also

explain that users should be cognizant of the available social media tools and how they align

with organizational goals. The authors also propose that users may act as a curator of social

media, which means understanding when to chime into conversations and represent the organization (Kietzman et al., 2011, p. 249). Realizing the potential of social media to assist organizations with a variety of organizational practices may help these organizations to sustain their operations. However, planning for a social media strategy and understanding how to become social as an organization are critical for successful use of social media. Being social is characterized by the culture of the organization and the openness to experiment with social media (Kanter & Fine, 2010).

The incorporation of social media as a strategy for a nonprofit organization coincides with the nature of what many organizations do, namely generate social capital and build community. Shafritz, Ott, and Lang (2005) contend one of the basic elements of the organization is a social purpose. This may be conceptualized as the mission statement of an organization. Throughout history, nonprofit organizations have attracted participants, obtained and divided resources, and coordinated activities (Shafritz, Ott, & Lang, 2005). Nonprofit organizations and social media both represent a means for individuals to participate, collaborate, and ultimately connect for some greater good. An explanation of the theoretical underpinnings will help further explain how nonprofit organizations are well situated to use social media in addition to providing a foundation for the design of this study.

Theoretical and Conceptual Models

There are many theories that could be applied to the study of social media in nonprofit organizations. The phenomena could be examined at various levels of organizational involvement from individual users to the organization and ultimately the collective of the community as a whole. The theories that make up the theoretical model for this inquiry includes: Contingency Theory, Resource Dependency Theory, Rogers Diffusion of Innovations Theory,

and Social Network Theory. The concept of social capital also helps orient the use of social media and participatory culture within nonprofit organizations.

Fawcett (1999) defines theory as "A set of relatively concrete and specific concepts and the propositions that describe or link those concepts" (p.4). A theoretical model usually acts as a precursor to theory and provides a framework for viewing the phenomena and understanding the research and practice traditions associated with a particular discipline (Fawcett, 1999). The chosen theories provide an ideological fit with that of social media and organizational practice. Despite scholars' best attempts, theoretical models are merely tentative formulations that represent efforts to understand phenomena (Fawcett, 1999).

Figure 2.2
Theoretical Model organizing relevant theoretical approaches for the study of social media in Nonprofit Human Service Organizations
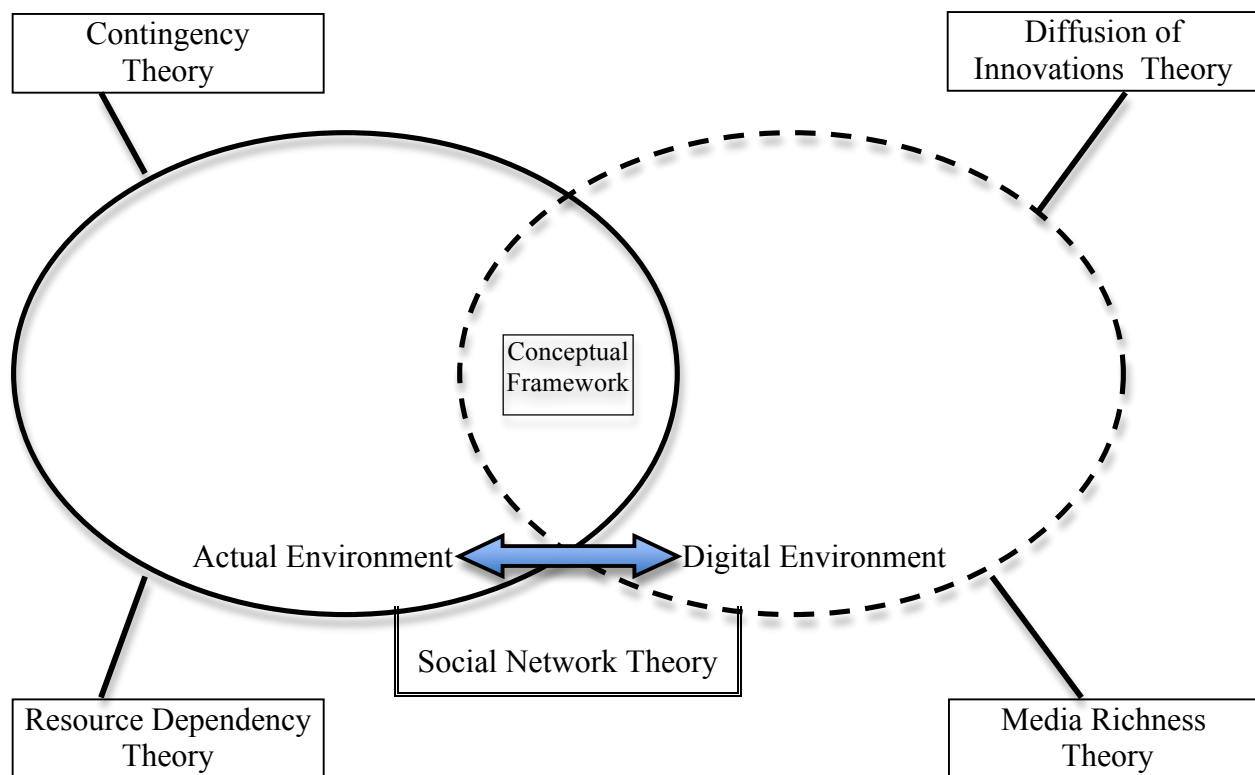
The theoretical model, represented in Figure 2.2, provides the perspective to construct the conceptual framework (Figure 2.3) and guides the research design and methodology. The conceptual framework highlights five dimensions to construct the concept of social media use among nonprofit human service organizations, lies at the heart of the theoretical model. The environmental context is important for this study as the theoretical foundation of Contingency theory and Resource Dependency theory both acknowledge the importance of the environment within which an organization operates. The actual environment and the digital environment overlap and the arrow between them represent the convergence of technology and everyday facets of organizational practice and societal life. The conceptual framework organizes the type

Figure 2.3

Conceptual Model of the Current Status of Social Media use among Nonprofit Human Service Organizations
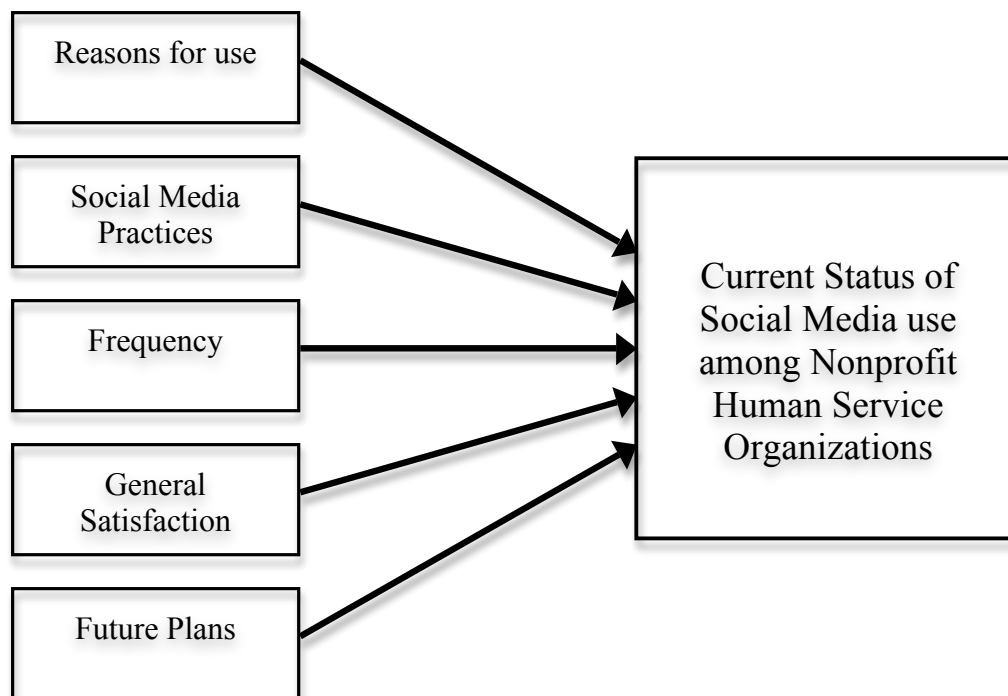
of information being collected. The questions that make up the five dimensions include: 1) why are HSO's using social media (Reasons for use); 2) what are HSO's doing and using (Social Media Practices); 3) How often do HSO's use social media (Frequency); 4) what are the expected outcomes (General Satisfaction); and 5) What are the future plans for the implementation and use of social media (Future Plans). The variables and attributes that construct these dimensions are further articulated in chapter three.

The remainder of the chapter provides a primer on the chosen theories and how they connect with social media. Two organizational theories are purposely chosen to help tie into the overall framework of social media in nonprofit human service organizations. The other theories have been used in organizational analysis as well; however, they are mainly chosen to help orient the participatory nature of social media, as described in chapter one, to its use in the nonprofit sector.

Contingency Theory

A traditional and well-researched organizational theory developed during the sixties, contingency theory is primarily the work of Burns and Stalker (1961), and Lawrence and Lorsch (1967). The theory is a subset of the contingency approach, which postulates that the effect of one variable on another depends upon a third variable, which moderates the relationship between the first two variables (Donaldson, 2001). In the contingency theory of organizations, organizational effectiveness stems from fitting characteristics to contingencies that reflect the situation of the organization (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). Contingencies may involve the size of the organization, strategy, and the environment (Donaldson, 2001). Organizational effectiveness is a prime concern in contingency theory, as "much of

organizational theory has tried to explain the success or failure of organizations" (Donaldson, 2001, p. 6).

Drawing upon a systems framework, contingency theory views organizations in terms of the overall environment, and those organizations are in a constant state of flux, which affects the overall performance (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Donaldson, 2001). Morgan (2006) provides a visual account of how organizations, and their subsystems interact with their environment in Figure 2.4, and illustrates how everything depends upon everything else. Thinking about organizations in this manner helps one to recognize the influence of the external environment in the overall fit or success of the organization. This assertion builds on that of Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) who argue that effective organizations succeed by achieving a degree of differentiation and integration compatible with environmental demands. The Lawrence and Lorsch study further demonstrated the idea that organizational subsystems interact with their own environments or sub-environments, and that organizations need to be structured more organically to adapt to those challenges as everything depends upon everything else (Morgan, 2006).

Social Media

Environmental
Suprasystem

Strategic
Subsystem

Technological
Subsystem

Managerial
Subsystem

Structural
Subsystem

Human/Cultural
Subsystem
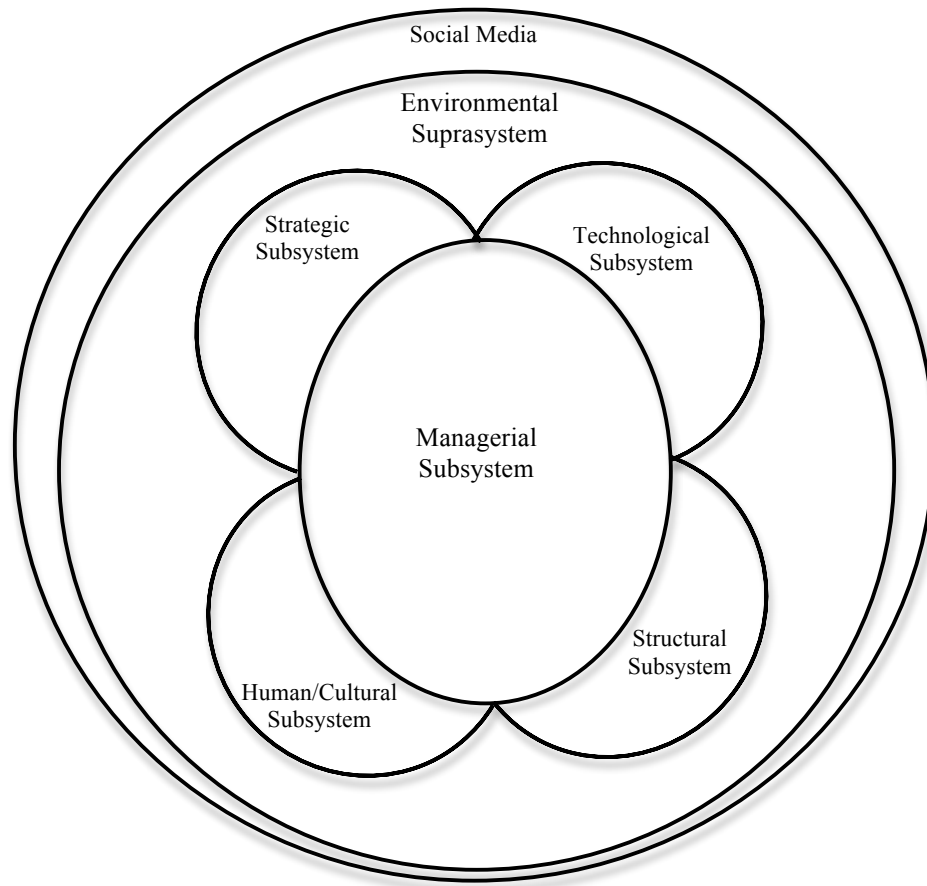
Figure 2.4

A Contingency View of Organizational Subsystems and Social Media: Adapted from Morgan (2006). Social media is represented as encompassing the entire framework as this new medium holds potential to transform each subsystem in relation to the external environment.

Contingency theory opposes the classical management view of believing there is a single best way; instead, the best way depends on several factors. Early studies that helped form this, "It depends" idea (Mone, McKinley, & Barker, 1998), explained that successful organizations aligned themselves in a manner compatible with their technology (Woodward, 1958). Burns and Stalker (1961) also found that successful organizations adopted an approach to management and organization, which was in harmony with the demands placed upon them by their environment, particularly in regards to the degree of technological and market change.

The American Red Cross, as highlighted previously, serves as an example of an organization aligning with technology. The American Red Cross launched a social media campaign soon after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 to correct misinformation, obtain information from the public, tack conversation trends, identify influencers, and build relationships (Kanter & Fine, 2010). Beginning with blogs and moving to other social media platforms such as Twitter, catalyzed the internal adoption of social media and the shift in the Red Cross's relationship with the world (Kanter & Fine, 2010). This organization became more organic as opposed to mechanistic, and utilized social media to engage with their community online and off. This transition and adoption has helped the American Red Cross to become a notable leader in the use of social media for the purposes of community engagement, fundraising, and education (Kanter & Fine, 2010).

Several studies (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Mone, McKinley, & Barker, 1998; and Woodward, 1958) demonstrate that many choices have to be made in the process of organizing and innovation, and that the success depends upon achieving a balance between strategy, structure, technology, and the external environment (Morgan, 2006). The implementation of social media illustrates new challenges and uncertainties nonprofit organizations face when thinking about the technology, participating online in a new digital environment, and how this matters to their own constituents or community. Social media presents the opportunity for some organizations to become more open, transparent, de-centralized, and interactive with their community (Kanter & Fine, 2010; Waters et al, 2009; Saxton et al., 2007).

Structuring the organization in this manner is one of the main tenets of contingency theory (Burns and Stalker, 1961; Donaldson, 2001; Morgan, 2006). The work of Burns and

Stalker (1961) established two main concepts within contingency theory, namely that organization and management can be distinguished as either "mechanistic" or "organic." A mechanistic organization is one that focuses on hierarchy and bureaucracy, where tasks are divided into specialized roles and employees are dependent upon their superiors who retain the knowledge and information and centralized decision-making authority (Donaldson, 2001). The organic organization is just the opposite. This organization understands that tasks may be shared and employees work in a network and collaborate in a fluid dynamic way as employees use initiative, creativity, and joint responsibility to complete their work (Donaldson, 2001). Organizations structured organically especially have to account for the influence of their environment on the various subsystems that interact with one another. Burns and Stalker (1961) illustrated when change in the environment happens routinely, such as technological or market conditions posing new challenges, open and flexible styles of organization and management are required. Large, mechanistic organizations can have trouble adapting to technological change and fitting organizational characteristics to their environment in a way that meets the needs of their stakeholders (Donaldson, 2001).

The challenges described above comprise another aspect of contingency theory that helps explain the challenge of social media and nonprofit human service organizations. The concept of uncertainty involves technology, technological change, environmental instability, and innovation (Donaldson, 2001). This uncertainty is due in part to changes in the environment and technological change (Burns & Stalker, 1961). This uncertainty causes organizations to become more organic in order to fit the needs of the environment, and the organization is ultimately shaped in part by its environment (Donaldson, 2001). This idea has merit when thinking about how so many individuals are using social media technology, and how those individuals interact

with various nonprofit organizations. The adoption of social media by nonprofit human service organizations may be in response to its broader environment of community stakeholders, volunteers, and donors causing these organizations to become more organic and influenced by individuals outside of the organization. Moreover, studies have demonstrated that uncertainty, as described previously, requires a participatory and organic organization (Donaldson, 2001; and Mone, McKinley, & Barker, 1998)

The participatory nature of social media may be frightening and exciting for nonprofit organizations that are unsure about how to navigate this new digital environment. Contingency theory provides a lens to understand how important the environment, technology, and strategy is for nonprofit human service organizations as they seek to fulfill their social purpose. The organic structure defined by contingency theory encourages nonprofit organizations to become social, thoughtful, and engage in the participatory culture of social media to help coordinate activities, obtain and divide resources, and attract participants (Shafritz, Ott, & Lang, 2005). The benefit of using social media to fulfill that mission includes opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, diversification of cultural expression, development of skills, and a more empowered conception of citizenship (Jenkins et al., 2009). Contingency theory ultimately provides the recognition that the best way to plan, structure, or lead an organization depends upon what is happening both within and outside of it (O'Connor & Netting, 2009). The challenge for small to mid-sized nonprofit human service organizations is that they may still lack the resources to achieve the fit or success an organization seeks as they align with their environmental demands and technological change.

35

Resource Dependency Theory

Resource dependency theory, like contingency theory, also rests upon the systems framework (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; O'Connor & Netting, 2009). This theory acknowledges the crucial role that the environment has for the success of an organization, much as contingency theory does. Resource dependency theory sees organizations as dependent upon their environment for scarce resources that ultimately help the organizations to survive and thrive (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). A resource is anything that is deemed valuable such as information, capital, or other materials (Tillquist, King, & Woo, 2002). The interaction with those other entities produces dependency, which gives those entities some control or power over the dependent organization (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The central premise of Resource dependency theory is that "the key to organizational survival is the ability to acquire and maintain resources" (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978, p. 2). Furthermore, organizations seek to obtain these resources to help avoid too much external control and maintain their own autonomy (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) see organizations being linked to their environment through associations, federations, customer-supplier relationships, and other legal relationships. In the nonprofit sector this may be conceived of through state or national associations such as the American Red Cross chapters throughout the country, relationships with federal agencies through grants and other sponsored programs, community or state foundations, and client or consumer-agency relationships where services are rendered. Organizations must interact with other elements in their environment to obtain resources (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). However, the interplay of such relationships creates a dilemma for the organization. The constraints of the relationship may inhibit future adjustments the organization

36

needs to make, which is why many organizations seek to avoid the dependence by restricting information about themselves and their activities (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). This creates an interesting paradox for nonprofit organizations, which are to be held accountable to various state and national organizations, foundations, or the community in general. They may find it difficult to engage in the use of social media, which seeks openness and transparency, and maintaining their autonomy to increase their own legitimacy.

Resource dependency theory helps provide a foundation for understanding why nonprofit organizations use social media. Recognizing the increasing competition of other organizations, social media presents an opportunity to engage new donors, volunteers, and other individuals in the work the organization is doing. Forming strategic alliances reduces the duplication of services, shares the cost of services, and maximizes the use of resources to ensure organizational viability (Campbell, Jacobus, & Yankey, 2006). Social media presents the option of using individuals and their networks for various strategies while still maintaining some semblance of organizational independence. Kanter & Fine (2010) explain how nonprofit organizations can use *Free Agents*, or individuals outside of the organization, to mobilize, organize, raise funds, and communicate with various stakeholders. They contend that free agents are not merely amateurs, but instead individuals with the knowledge and power of social media to help create positive change (Kanter & Fine, 2010). Importantly, from a resource dependency perspective, free agents are open to come and go or help how they wish with direction and guidance from the nonprofit organization, and the nonprofit organization is able to maintain more independence with the use of these individuals. The reason nonprofit organizations can benefit from the work of these individuals is due in part to the vast adoption of social media technologies. Diffusion of Innovations theory provides insight on why this adoption has happened.

37

Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Rogers (2003) describes diffusion as "the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system" (p. 5). The diffusion is a social change where an alteration occurs in the function and structure of a social system (Rogers, 2003). The use of Facebook, among other social media technologies, represents an innovation that has diffused across many aspects of society and has fundamentally altered the social system. Rogers (2003) also points out that such social change can also occur from political revolutions, natural disasters, and other events. The four main concepts of Rogers (2003) theory are: Innovation, communication channels, time, and a social system.

Innovation "is an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption" (Rogers, 2003, p. 12). The innovation is only new so much as it has just been discovered by the individual, not by how much time has passed since it was developed or discovered (Rogers, 2003). Social media technologies characterize an innovation and have existed for more than ten years, yet only in the past four or five have they been increasingly adopted by the nonprofit sector. Rogers (2003) highlights an important distinction about technology in that people often conceive of it simply as hardware or software. However, in some cases technology may be composed of information such as a political philosophy or policy, which he terms as "idea-only innovations" and explains that they have a slower adoption rate due to a lower degree of observability (Rogers, 2003, p. 13).

The relatively swift adoption of social media among nonprofit organizations, and people in general, may be attributed to several characteristics of the innovation. These include perception that this innovation presents a relative advantage, is compatible with individual needs, values and norms, the innovation can be experimented with or the degree of trialability, whether

38

the innovation is complex or difficult to understand, and the degree to which the others can see the results of the innovation (Rogers, 2003). Logically, the use of certain social media technologies fit within these attributes. Facebook for instance, has millions of users partly because it is relatively easy to use, people can try it for free, they see many of their friends using it and urging them to join, and it is compatible with the structure of the social system since it mirrors the presence and interactions of society but in an online format.

"Communication channels are the means by which messages get from one individual to another" (Rogers, 2003, p. 18). These channels are the essence of diffusion as information and ideas are communicated from one individual to many others (Rogers, 2003). This is similar to the image of the "grapevine" in communication where many individuals share knowledge and information about new ideas, and practices with family, friends, or colleagues. In the digital environment this sharing first happened with email, where individuals shared their interests by forwarding links or long emails of text to their friends or associates. In the social media realm, links can still be shared, but often people now share rich media such as images, audio, and video. Rogers (2003) illustrates that mass media had traditionally been the most effective method for informing potential adopters of an innovation by creating mass awareness through mediums such as radio, television, and newspapers. The use of social media has only amplified this diffusion.

The third element in the diffusion process involves the length of time. Individuals vary with respect to when they will fully adopt an innovation. Rogers (2003) classifies these individuals as "innovators, early adopters, early majority, later majority, and laggards" (p. 22). An addition to the time dimension of the diffusion process also involves the rate of adoption or speed with which people adopt the innovation (Rogers, 2003). The percentage of adopters of an innovation increases over time. Figure 2.5 illustrates this time dimension with respect to three

social media innovations of adoption among the social system. The figure is for illustrative

purposes only.
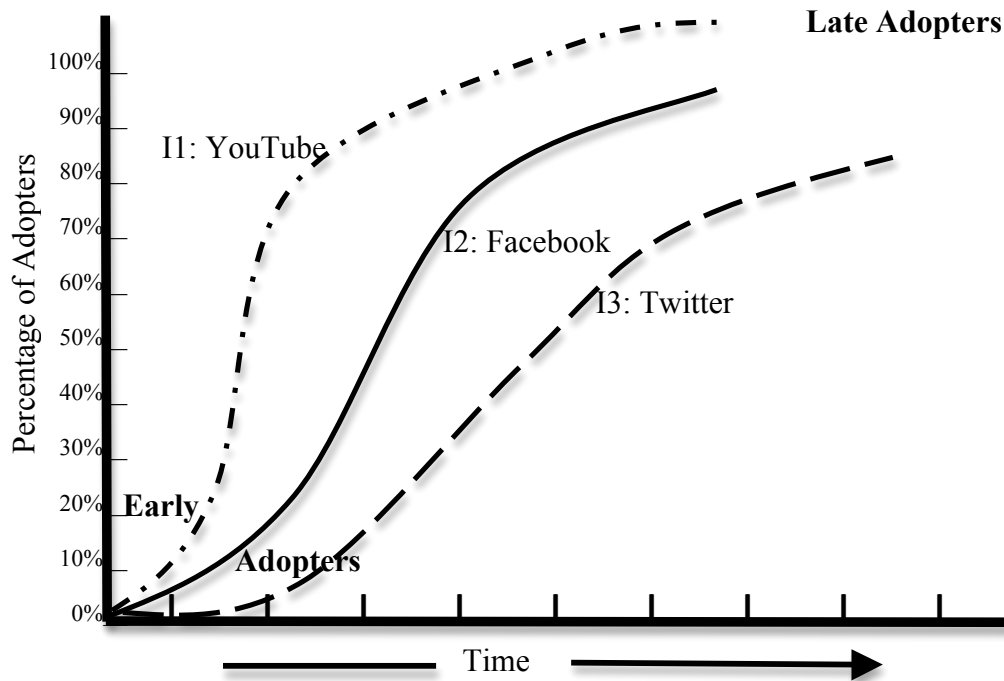
Figure 2.5
Diffusion of Social Media Innovations: Adapted from Rogers (2003)

The final concept in the diffusion process is the social system. Rogers (2003) defines the

social system as "a set of interrelated units that are engaged in joint problem solving to

accomplish a common goal" (p. 23). These units may be individuals, groups, and organizations

who are generally bound together by sharing a common objective (Rogers, 2003). For example,

individuals may work for, donate, or volunteer with a nonprofit organization that seeks to

provide clean water for children in developing countries. An important element of the social

system is that its social and communication structure can impede or facilitate the innovation's

diffusion (Rogers, 2003). The norms, or established behavior patterns of the social system,

opinion leaders, and change agents also influence the diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 2003).

Opinion leaders exert their influence within the social system informally in a desired way, and change agents are those who exert their influence in more professional way and often use opinion leaders to facilitate the diffusion (Rogers, 2003). Opinion leaders become innovators because of their technical competence and social accessibility and change agents become innovators because of their professional training, university degree, and the social status that goes along with it (Rogers, 2003).

In the social media realm, Gary Vaynerchuk, who used social media to create Wine Library TV, and revolutionized the wine world, is an opinion leader (Vaynerchuk, 2009). He has since moved onto providing guidance to Fortune 500 companies and given numerous interviews on the use of social media in business (Vaynerchuk, 2009). His enthusiasm for using social media to encourage individuals to follow their dreams and willingness to connect with people has yielded nearly 900,000 followers on Twitter. Likewise, Anthony Rotolo, who is an assistant professor at the Syracuse University School of Information Studies (iSchool) is a change agent. Rotolo teaches courses on social media as well as specializing in social media consulting and contributing to various news publications such as Mashable, an online technology publication resource (Rotolo, 2009). Rotolo has been featured in the New York Times and on ABC News in addition to other news outlets (Rotolo, 2009). Although Rotolo may not have nearly as many followers on Twitter, his approach to social media is much more technical that Vaynerchuk, given his academic background.

Rogers (2003) diffusion of innovations theory provides insight into the status of social media use among nonprofit human service organizations and how it has diffused across this sector. Well known nonprofit professionals and others have spurred the growth of social media through their own social networks. As other adopters were able to see the benefits of social

media, how it fit their needs, try it for free, and ease of use, the innovation is successful. Diffusion of Innovations theory also recognizes that a degree of uncertainty exists with innovation and change because of the newness of the idea and risks associated with it (Rogers, 2003). This adds to the theoretical fit with the concept of uncertainty that organizations try to manage as prescribed under contingency theory.

Media Richness Theory

Media Richness theory will help further clarify how social media has diffused across so many aspects of society. Richard Daft and Robert Lengel introduced Media Richness theory (MRT) in 1984 as a way to explain and measure the role of media characteristics in the information exchange process. These characteristics include text, images, audio, and video. Media characteristics facilitate this exchange process by offering a variety of communication cues (Lee, Kim, & Lee, 2001) and MRT characterizes these cues based on the richness of the media (Daft, Lengel, & Trevino, 1987). Communication channels offer several ways to engage in understanding and their richness can be characterized as either high or low in regards to their ability to facilitate shared understanding (Daft, Lengel, & Trevino, 1987; Daft & Lengel, 1984).

Figure 2.6 presents several communication channels, with the addition of social media, and how media richness resides on a continuum from high to low. The addition of social media on the hierarchy could be placed in varying degrees along the continuum based upon how one uses the medium and the tools selected to do so as certain elements of social media present opportunities for much richer interaction than others. The richness of the media is based upon four factors identified by Daft, Lengel, & Trevino (1987) and presented in Table 2.1. Face-to-Face communication is the richest form of media as it offers immediate feedback and the message can be adjusted, clarified, or reinterpreted instantly (Daft, Lengel, & Trevino, 1987).

The telephone is considered to be rich because it uses natural language, whereas written communications become less rich with the withdrawal of voice cues and lack of focus for any one individual (Daft, Lengel, & Trevino, 1987).
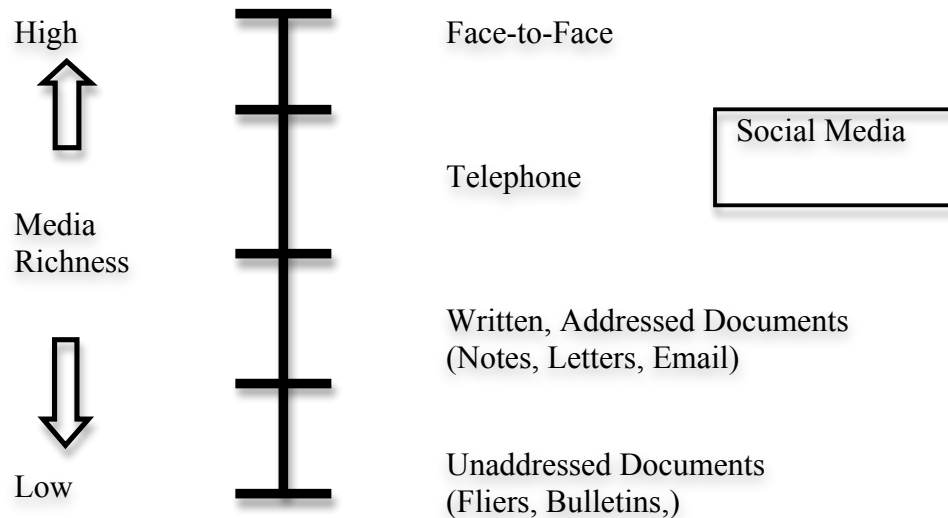
Figure 2.6
Hierarchy of Media Richness: Adapted from Daft, Lengel, & Trevino (1987)

Media Richness theory is generally concerned with effective communication by matching the richness of the communication medium to the level of message ambiguity (Daft, Lengel, & Trevino, 1987). The success of organizations is largely dependent upon accomplishing certain tasks, minimizing uncertainty, and maintaining balance during turbulent and challenging times (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Donaldson, 2001; Galbraith, 1973; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1976; Pfeffer, & Salancik, 1978; Rogers, 2003; Salamon, 2002; and Williams, 2009). Media Richness theory provides the perspective on how social media impacts nonprofit human service organizations.

43

Table 2.1
Media Richness Factors

Feedback	Instant feedback allows questions to be ask and corrections made. Synchronous media is generally richer than asynchronous.
Multiple Cues	A variety of cues, such as physical presence, voice inflection, body gestures, numbers, and symbols present the opportunity for a greater exchange of communication content.
Language Variety	Rich media offers a broader range of meaning that can be conveyed through numbers and other language symbols.
Personal Focus	Messages are conveyed more fully when communications are infused with emotion and personal feelings, which can help tailor the message to an individual frame of reference.

Uncertainty and equivocality are two concepts within Media Richness theory that fit conceptually with the other theories described previously. These concepts are functions of the communication task that are required when processing information (Daft, Lengel, & Trevino, 1987). Uncertainty has been identified as the absence of information (Daft, Lengel, & Trevino, 1987), and uncertainty exists when there is not enough information possessed by an organization to perform a certain task (Galbraith, 1973). For example, when an organization lacks specific resources to engage new donors or recruit new volunteers, they may partner with another organization, professional consultant, or seek information from the community in order to complete their task. Using social media to do so may help to reduce the uncertainty that exists in communication because of the various platforms that offer richer interactions as opposed to letters, fliers, or bulletins.

Equivocality is essentially ambiguity or the existence of multiple and conflicting interpretations about an organizations situation (Daft, Lengel, & Trevino, 1987). Confusion, disagreements, and general lack of understanding make up equivocal situations (Daft, Lengel, & Trevino, 1987). Organizations can use technology to help reduce equivocality. For example, the use of video conferencing, which allows users to see and hear one another, can mitigate

44

ambiguity because the medium offers more richness in the communication process (Daft, Lengel, & Trevino, 1987). Although face-to-face communications is always best to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity, social media offers organizations opportunities to further engage new individuals, collaborate and communicate with more efficiency. Social media uses both written text (low media richness) and video/audio (high media richness) to interact and increase access to individuals, groups, communities, and organizations in a unique way. The richness of interaction may be one reason that social media has diffused across the nonprofit sector.

Many organizations have discovered the benefits of using social media in this manner as well as the added benefits of leveraging their network to help them accomplish a variety of tasks. Social network theory provides insight on how networks have become increasingly important to the nonprofit sector.

Social Network Theory

The use of Social Network theory in this study is to help provide a logical link between the aforementioned theories. Utilizing a network approach provides the conceptualization for how organizations exchange economic, social and intellectual goods (Paarlberg & Varda, 2009). Social Network theory also provides insight into how social media has diffused across the nonprofit sector and establishes a conceptual bridge for managing the uncertainty and turbulence that exists within the nonprofit sector. Social Network theory stems from Network analysis and is mainly concerned with the pattern of ties linking members of a society (Burt, 1992). A distinctive element of Social Network theory is that it focuses on a range of micro and macro structures such as people, groups, organizations, and societies (Ritzer, 2008), which ultimately make up social networks. Social networks are the structures, strategies, and tools to organize new

45

forms of political expression, social action, and community building (Scearce, Kasper & Grant, 2009).

Social networks rely heavily on strong and weak ties within them. In the strong tie strategy, leaders create close, trusting relationships with a small number of highly central and influential others (Granovetter, 1973). Because of this smaller, intimate circle, information is often deemed more credible, though strong ties do not often stimulate innovation. The weak tie strategy, with a broader range of contacts, provides a greater source of new ideas, information and resources for leaders and proves more effective in rapidly changing environments (Granovetter, 1973). Kanter and Fine (2010) concur with this strategy by explaining that nonprofit organizations need to be cognizant of the opportunities their weak tie associations present. Engaging with these weak ties in their social networks can serve as a tool to restore connectedness and increase social capital. Utilizing networks to serve multiple purposes of strategic alliances helps organizations to be more effective and build capacity at a number of levels (Paarlberg & Varda, 2009). Information once held by a small number of individuals is now available as a collective database to the larger group (Scearce et al., 2009). This information may help stimulate growth, raise awareness, and help the organization with various strategies as it moves forward.

The diffusion of social media among nonprofit organizations is partly explained through a social network perspective as organizations influence and have been influenced through their ties to innovate (Rogers, 2003). The Internet has acted as a foundation for individuals and organizations to share information and resources with their social networks, and social media simplified this idea for its users. Blogs, email, and more recently Facebook and Twitter, have enabled a ubiquitous flow of information that many nonprofit organizations have seized for their

46

own benefit and that of their communities. Social network theory helps one understand how easy it is for organizations to collaborate and communicate to be more successful in the acquisition of scarce resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Ritzer, 2008).

Finally, some researches have argued that nonprofit organizations "play important roles in the reproduction of social capital" (Passey & Lyons, 2006, p. 482). Social networking theory provides a conceptualization of how nonprofit organizations engage in this process in the social media realm. Therefore, a review of social capital becomes relevant from an organizational and participatory perspective to understand how nonprofit organizations can use social media to produce social capital.

Social Capital

A key aspect of both Contingency theory and Resource dependency theory from the organizational perspective is that they acknowledge the involvement and participation of the organization in regards to its environment. The interactive and participatory culture of social media further encourages the participation of organizations among their social networks. This interaction ultimately becomes an extension of the social capital that is generated from the work of the nonprofit sector.

The concept of social capital was developed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and American sociologist James Coleman (Aguilar & Sen, 2009; and Portes, 2000). Social capital has numerous definitions (Aguilar & Sen, 2009; Paxton, 2002; and Portes, 2000). Putnam (1995) defines social capital as "the features of social life--networks, norms, and trust--that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (pp. 664-665). Shared objectives could mean just about anything, whether political, recreational, or institutional. Social capital theorists are generally concerned with focusing on the benefits

47

accruing to individuals or families based on their ties with others (Portes, 2000). Subsequent literature has focused on the benefits to individuals based on their ties with society (Portes, 2000), the generation of social capital within the nonprofit sector (Saxton & Benson, 2005), and on the use of social networking sites such as Facebook for creating social capital (Ellison, Steinfeld, & Lampe, 2007). Increased levels of social capital are what drive citizens to be more connected and involved in their community in a variety of ways (Putnam, 1995). Nonprofit organizations are often seen as partners and facilitators of social capital in the community.

It was the French political philosopher, Alexis de Tocqueville (1969), who claimed that the saving grace of the United States was found in its healthy associational life. However, some scholars have argued that this penchant for a healthy associational life has declined in recent decades due to isolation from one another as people become more engrossed with technology (Kraut et al. 1998; and Putnam, 2000). One resolution, in part, may be in creating increased levels of social capital as increased social capital has been linked to improved health, earnings, happiness, lower crime rates, and other positive social outcomes (Adler & Kwon, 2002; and Putnam, 2000).

The theory of social capital states the more connected people are, the more trust exists between them and vice versa (Putnam, 1995). As previously mentioned, trust and shared values foster a positive atmosphere where participants can work together in the pursuit of shared objectives. Social media represents a natural extension of this atmosphere in a digital format. The participatory nature stimulates opportunities for user-generated activity such as peer-to-peer learning, diversification of cultural expression, and the development of skills (Jenkins et al., 2009). Research is beginning to demonstrate the potential to generate social capital among various networks with the use of social media and the Internet (Ellison, Steinfeld, & Lampe,

2007; Goodsell & Williamson, 2008; and Huysman & Wulf, 2004). The concept trust building in social capital mirrors what happens in the participatory culture of social media. This may be one more reason that social media has diffused across the nonprofit sector so rapidly.

The theoretical paradigm and conceptual model establishes the foundation that guides this study. This foundation is important to understand the participatory nature of social media and how it is changing organizations and organizational practice. Contingency theory and Resource Dependency theory acknowledge the critical role of the external environment with which organizations must operate in order to be successful. The digital environment is swiftly becoming an arena where many people interact and organizations conduct business. Nonprofit human service organizations have been able to adapt for years to their communities and contingencies to obtain the needed resources that enable them to survive (Netting, O'Connor, & Fauri, 2011). Contingency theory and Resource Dependency theory help one to understand the use of social media from an organizational perspective.

Diffusion of Innovations theory and Media Richness theory offer insight on the use of social media and possible explanation of why this medium is being increasingly adopted. The richness of the medium (i.e. video, images, audio), ease of use, and power for collaboration/communication makes social media an extremely attractive tool for many organizations. Social Network theory also offers explanation as to why social media has spread so quickly because of the idea of networks. Historically, before social media and even television, information about organizations and programs was spread mouth-to-mouth through families and friends at home or located in civic hubs such as parks and bowling alleys. Now social media has taken the idea of mouth-to-mouth advertising and expanded upon it in a way that makes sharing information incredibly easy. Nonprofit organizations seem a natural fit to using social media for

these and other purposes, as they have been engaged with the community for years. Building social capital at the community level through various programs and services is now happening online as well. In general, the chosen theories help to recognize that nonprofit human service organizations exist in a contextual setting that involves the actual and digital communities they serve. Using social media means they have to be able to manage in both environments in order to meet their goals and accomplish their mission.

Conclusion

Information technology has produced many benefits for the nonprofit sector. Social media use may characterize the next step in helping nonprofit organizations fulfill their social missions. This new technology and various strategies are not meant to supplant many of the successful efforts organizations have used in the past, rather this technology can help build upon those plans and create a more open and transparent organization that can more engage with the community in a much more dynamic way. The theoretical paradigm for this study is just one of many that could be use to help make sense of social media use in nonprofit organizations. The main objective of the theoretical model is to illustrate those theories that inform organizational practice and match the ideological foundations of Web 2.0. Chapter three will further draw upon the theoretical model to articulate the methodology, hypotheses, and operationalize the variables for this study.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Chapter three outlines the methods of this study including the objectives, description of the variables, the sample and sampling frame used, development of the survey instrument, and the data collection and analysis plan. Additionally, a brief statement on human subjects' research protections relevant to the methodology of this study is provided.

Human Subjects Research Protection

This study was conducted as part of a university dissertation research project, which falls under the auspices of the Virginia Commonwealth University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB is mandated by the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations title 45 to ensure the protection of human subjects during the research process. This code defines research as a systematic investigation designed to contribute to generalizable knowledge, and includes research development, evaluation, and testing (HHS.gov, 2010). Human subjects involved in this process are living individuals about whom an investigator obtains data through an intervention or interaction, or personal identifiable information (HHS.gov, 2010). The unit of analysis for this study is centered on nonprofit human service organizations (HSO's). However, data gathered for this study stems from individuals within those organizations, which led this study to be submitted to the IRB for review.

There are three different types of IRB review including a full review, an expedited review, and an exempt review. It was determined that this study was exempt from federal human subjects' research regulations because it presented no more than minimal risk to the respondents and private personal data was not collected. The Federal Code clarifies minimal risk as "the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in

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and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests" ([45 CFR 46.102(i)] and [21 CFR Part 56.102(i)]). Respondents in this study were at no more than minimal risk for discomfort as the survey questions were basic and unlikely to stir up negative emotions, and respondents were not interviewed, as the survey was self-administered via the Internet. Additional safeguards included the de-identification of data and a separate survey to collect email addresses for the incentive, which allowed for the anonymity of responses and ensured the highest level of confidentiality of those participating in the study. The protocol and survey related materials of the study were reviewed to further ensure that the provisions of Virginia Common Law and the policies and guidelines of the VCU IRB were adhered to.

Research Objective

The research questions guiding the overall study include why and how are nonprofit human service organizations (HSO) using social media? The general aim was to understand the current status of social media use among these unique organizations. This was done using a cross-sectional research design with two objectives: namely, exploring and describing social media use among human service organizations. The descriptive objective provides data on the adoption and use of social media among HSO's, and the exploratory objective aids in understanding why these organizations are using social media. The five questions listed in table 3.1 characterize the dimensions of social media use examined by this study.

Table 3.1
Dimensions of Social Media use

1. What are the reasons HSO's are using social media (Reasons for Use)?
2. What are they doing/using (Social Media Practices)?
3. How often do they use social media (Frequency)?
4. What are the expected outcomes (General Satisfaction)?
5. Plans for the future (Future Plans)?

Each of the five dimensions listed in Table 3.1 and the conceptual framework outlined in chapter two provide the foundation for understanding the current status of social media use among nonprofit human service organizations. The additional question surrounding the digital divide hypothesis mentioned in chapter one was explored to determine whether small HSO's, as determined by annual budget, lag behind their larger counterparts in relation to the use of social media. This hypothesis was used to further address the exploratory objective of this study. Hypothesis testing is generally involved in more explanatory research, although studies have often utilized multiple purposes to explore and understand new phenomena (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). This study is mainly concerned with describing and exploring the current status of social media use in nonprofit human service organizations.

Research Design

The research design chosen for this study was a cross-sectional survey design. Cross-sectional research design "examines a phenomenon by taking a cross section of it at one point in time" (Rubin & Babbie, 2005, p. 358). This type of design is beneficial for studies seeking larger more representative samples. Cross sectional designs are also more feasible, have a history within organizational research (Simsek & Veiga, 2001), and are more common within descriptive and exploratory research (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). Rubin and Babbie further explain that cross-sectional studies have improved internal validity with the advances of multivariate statistical analysis.

Study Sample

The target populations for this study included private and public nonprofit human service organizations in the Richmond, Virginia metropolitan area that currently use social media. The nonprofit sector in general has been utilizing social media for over ten years and increasing the

use thereof over the past five (Barnes, 2011; Barnes & Mattson, 2009; and Waters et al., 2009).

However, the scholarly and normative literature on social media use has neglected to focus specifically on human service organizations. Consistent with the study's definition of human service organizations, the sample consisted of those nonprofit organizations or agencies that seek to deliver human services and address human concerns through advocacy, funding, planning or education (O'Connor & Netting, 2009). In the greater Richmond area, examples may have included entities such as the Red Cross, United Way, Virginia Supportive Housing, and Prevent Child Abuse Virginia. These examples were derived from the sampling frame for this study; however, it is not known whether or not these organizations responded to the survey.

A sampling frame provides a list of elements from which a sample can be selected (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). The sampling frame for this study included nonprofit human service organizations that use social media in the Richmond, Virginia area. The participating organizations will were selected from two online databases and two lists of human service providers in the Richmond metropolitan statistical area as defined by the U. S. Department of Commerce (2007) (see Appendix A). The first database was the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (2011). This database consists of over 1,250 participating organizations and can be searched by name, location, and category of service. The second database consisted of nonprofit organizational profiles on the local ConnectRichmond.org website. This website can be searched according to service category and includes relevant contact information.

The first list of human service providers was the Planning District 15 Resource Guide from the United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg (2011). This list consisted of agencies separated by service category and represents many of the organizations in the Richmond area. The final list was a Twitter list maintained by Richmond Good Life (2011), which consisted of

54

over 100 organizations. Although not a comprehensive list, it provided the most feasible option of selecting organizations for the sample as they likely were already using social media, hence the reason for being included on that list. The databases and lists provided organizations that match the human services aspect of the sampling criteria. The survey also contained a sentence in the introduction requesting the respondent not to complete the survey unless he or she were answering on behalf of a nonprofit 501c(3) organization. Additionally, question six asked whether the organization does or does not use social media to further ensure respondents matched the sampling criteria. The benefit of using the databases was that many provided a point of contact with which to send the survey, specifically an email address.

Sample Selection

The sample was selected by searching the online databases and two lists of human service providers, identified previously, that fall within the U.S. Census Bureau's Richmond Metropolitan Statistical Area (see Appendix A). The databases and lists were searched for HSO's that fell within the identified sampling frame and met the definition for a 501c(3) nonprofit human service organization. Nonprofit human service organizations included should have generally been in the business of providing human services, whether through advocacy, education, or more direct services such as counseling. Organizations that operate for-profit or do not provide human services were asked not to complete the survey and were excluded. Because survey research on organizations typically has smaller response rates and a lack of small organizations (Hager, Wilson, Pollak, & Rooney, 2003), the broad definition of human service organizations was employed to maximize the number of organizations that could participant in this study with the idea to help increase the overall response rate.

Sampling Procedures

The sampling frame invariably provided some overlap in the selection of the sample, and was one of the reasons for using purposive sampling methods. The use of purposive sampling or nonprobability sampling presents challenges for generalization but is often chosen for reasons of practicality (Drake & Jonson-Reid, 2008). Given the sampling frame for this study and the fact that social media is relatively new and requires some knowledge of its use as well as hardware such as a computer, selecting those human service organizations that use social media was critical for the purpose of this study. The use of nonprobability sampling is a limitation of this study that will be further addressed in chapter five. Despite this challenge, the sampling frame and use of purposive sampling assisted with obtaining a large enough sample to provide adequate power for statistical measures to produce significant findings in a feasible manner (Dattalo, 2008; Drake & Jonson-Reid, 2008; Rubin & Babbie, 2005).

The databases were searched first to identify nonprofit human service organizations that met the sampling criteria. Following the initial search, the lists were reviewed to discover any organizations that may not have been included in the databases. However, the databases provided sufficient information to meet the sampling criteria for this study. Ultimately, the number of participating organizations is dependent upon the sample size needed to satisfy the assumptions of the chosen statistical procedures, which will be discussed in the data analysis plan. The projected sample size of 115 organizations helped to identify the number of HSO's from the sampling frame and construct the necessary sample for recruitment. The procedure for determining adequate sample size is discussed next.

Sample Size

The size of the sample is an important factor in the validity of a research study. The benefit of a large sample is that the findings will be more likely to validly represent the population (Dattalo, 2008). One strategy for determining appropriate sample size is statistical power analysis. Jacob Cohen defines statistical power as "the ability of a statistical test to detect an effect if the effect exists" (Dattalo, 2008, p. 15). Another way to state this would be the ability

Figure 3.1
Power Analysis and Total Sample Size
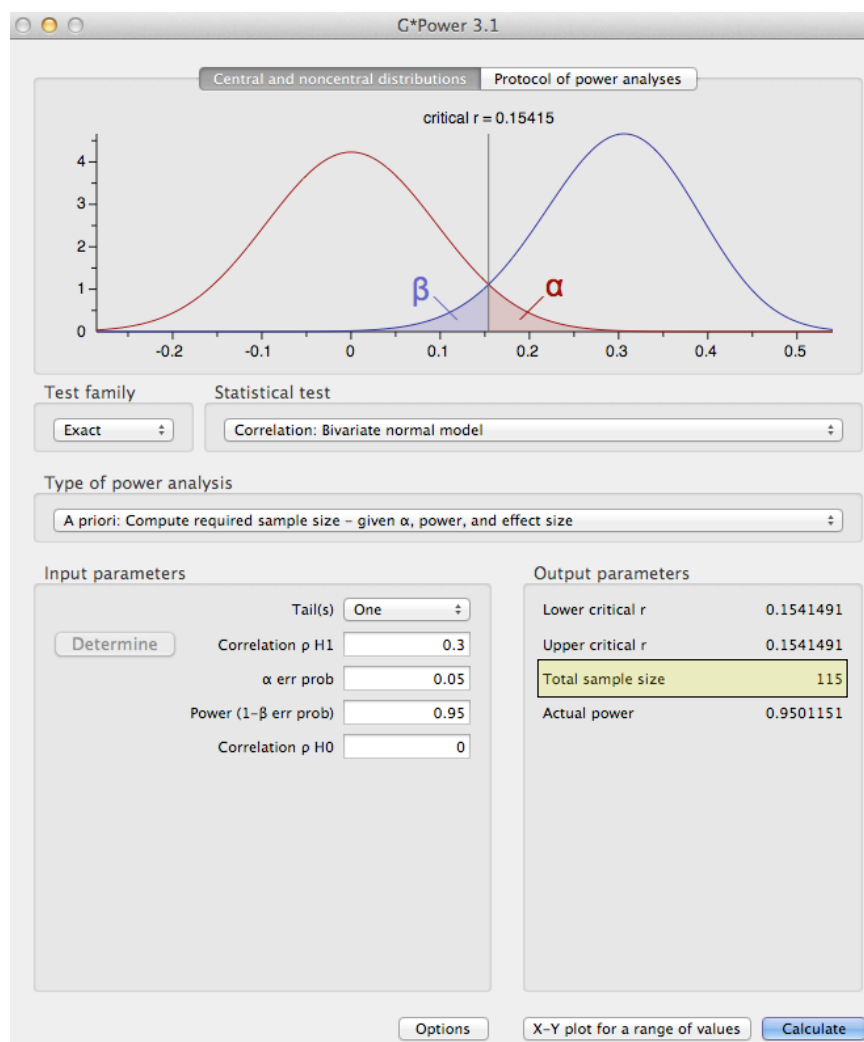
to detect a difference between groups if the groups were in fact different. Statistical power analysis was conducted prior to data collection (prospective power analysis) to select the sample size in a rational way that promotes confidence in the study findings and informs the data collection process (Dattalo, 2008; and Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

The prospective power analysis was completed using GPower software. This free power analysis program provides the target sample size based on the number of variables, chosen statistical methods, and alpha coefficients. The statistical methods chosen for this study consists of descriptives and a bivariate correlation test to examine the relationship among variables. In order to obtain a minimally sufficient sample size for this study, the power analysis was completed as shown in Figure 3.1 and resulted in the target sample size of 115.

Originally a multi-method data collection plan was chosen based on prior evidence that reported the advantages of both electronic web-based surveys and paper-based surveys for contributing to an increased response rate (Dillman, 2000; Groves, et al., 2004; Hager, Wilson, Pollak, & Rooney, 2003; Kaplowitz, Hadlock, & Levine, 2004; and Weiwei & Van Ryzin, 2011). Although it has been argued that paper-based surveys provide a higher response rate and better data than web-based surveys (Weiwei & Van Ryzin, 2011), the research neglects to include the use of social media in soliciting respondents. Upon reviewing the cost of mailing paper based surveys versus sending the survey through social media sites and email list serves, the latter was chosen as the more economical and practical option. Additionally, the survey was sent to 120 respondents via email as selected from the sampling frame for this study.

The data collection protocol involved the pre-notification of database administrators to request assistance in contacting the selected organizations, which meant sending out an email via the databases listserv. The Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (2011) database never

materialized as a way to send out the survey. However, a sample of 120 respondent's email addresses were kept in a secure spreadsheet and used to recruit individual respondents. Additionally, the ConnectRichmond.org administrator suggested sending the email via the South Side Community Partners listserv as well as posting the link to the survey on their Facebook profile pages and Twitter, which helped with the multi-method data collection described previously.

The survey instrument was administered using Qualtrics electronic survey tools and sent to the selected organizations in three phases over four weeks. Each phase included, at the minimum, an email sent to the sample of 120 respondents identified from the sampling frame. The first phase included a survey link sent through the listserv email system in addition to being posted to ConnectRichmond.org's Facebook page and sent out on Twitter. The second phase included an email to serve as a reminder and was sent two weeks later. The second phase also used social media sites to increase awareness of the survey. Three weeks after the initial email, a final reminder email with the survey link was sent to the entire sample as well as the listserv and social media sites. After reviewing the number of responses in the first week, it was determined that an incentive would yield a better response rate. An IRB change form was submitted to request the addition of an incentive, namely a Kindle Fire computing tablet, and was subsequently approved. This change extended the data collection period one week and was successful in generating a higher response rate. The incentive in addition to the multi-method data collection yielded 162 surveys, with 136 of them being complete, surpassing the target of 115. Pre-screening and cleaning the data set reduced the overall N to 125 respondents.

Contact information and emails for the participating organizations were stored on a secure password-protected computer with current up to date virus protection. Private personal

data was not being collected for this study, and research data was stored securely in a data management file. Consent forms detailing the nature of this study were not necessary as the VCU Institutional Review Board (IRB) deemed this study as exempt. The opening page of the electronic survey consisted of an introductory paragraph detailing the nature of this study and pertinent contact information. The dissertation committee and other individuals knowledgeable about nonprofit organizations and social media reviewed the self-administered survey instrument before it was fully implemented to increase content validity.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument was created for this study based on previous research in this area and relevant theoretical approaches identified in chapter two (Andrei, Quinn, Bernard, 2011; Daft & Lengel, 1984; Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009; Kang & Norton, 2004; LaCasse, Quinn, & Bernard, 2010; Meeks, 2009; Ogden & Starita, 2009; Quinn, & Berry, 2010; Rogers, 2003; Saxton & Guo, 2011; and Smith, 2010). The survey provided information on the nature of the study as well as criteria for the sample, i.e. nonprofit human service organizations with the 501c(3) distinction, and requested the participant to complete the survey if their organization met the criteria. A copy of the survey instrument can be viewed in Appendix D.

The survey consists of 24 questions containing 18 close-ended questions with opportunities to input text responses for those questions asking for "Other" or "Please specify." The remaining questions are open-ended asking for continuous data regarding annual operating budget, year the organization was founded, number of years the individual has been with the organization, and number of hours devoted to social media in a week. The first six questions are related to organizational demographics. The remainder of the questions seek descriptive and explanatory information, which will be used to measure the five dimensions of social media use

60

identified in Table 3.1. The end of the survey provides a thank you statement along with an explanation of where to obtain the results of the study. The next section discusses the studies variables (See Appendix B).

Variables

The chosen variables for this study stem from the application of the theoretical model and the relevant literature on social media in the nonprofit sector. Demographic variables aid in the description and interpretation of the results and include: size of annual budget, respondents' position within the organization, the organization's primary issue area (i.e. advocacy or health services), year the organization was founded, and number of years the participant has been with the organization. These demographics help fulfill the first objective of this study.

Examining the conceptual model (Figure 2.6) and the five dimensions of social media use (Table 3.1) reveal the concepts within this study. The dimensions are broad categories that contain the variables for this study, which include: social media, community engagement, marketing, rich content, frequency, fundraising, resources, transparency, policies, and goals. Each variable contains several attributes that make up those variables and help to describe them (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). Examples include Facebook and Twitter for social media, recruiting volunteers and enhancing relationships or communication/ collaboration for community engagement, newsletters and pictures for rich content, amount of use and time for frequency, increases in community awareness of the organization or funding for satisfaction, and future plans include the goals, policies, and actual plans for the future use of social media in the organization. The future use of social media is predicated upon whether or not the HSO has any policies on the use of social media. Therefore the variable "*policies*" is included with goals in the future plans dimension. Table 3.2 explains the variable labels identified under each of the

61

five dimensions of social media use along with a brief example of the variable label. Appendix B further clarifies the concepts and labels by linking them to the literature and survey questions.

The variables are measured using a combination of categorical and continuous scales. Categorical scales are those that measure nominal or ordinal levels of data and continuous scales measure ratio or interval levels of data (Drake & Johnson-Reid, 2008; and Rubin & Babbie, 2005). The survey instrument consists of multiple Likert-scales that measure community engagement, resources, and fundraising. A grounded scale, which provides a more detailed description (Drake & Johnson-Reid, 2008), is also used to measure the policies of social media. Questions that solicit continuous data seek to measure time, number of posts, and date of implementation. The levels of measurement identified in the variables for this study correspond with the selected statistical procedures, which will be discussed in the data analysis plan section.

Question ten measures the variable social media by examining the social media platforms in use among HSO's. The platforms included in the survey represent those that are most recognizable and have high rates of usage. Facebook is a social networking service and website launched in February 2004, which boasts more than 845 million active users (Facebook, 2012). The social network is used by individuals and organizations to connect and share information through status updates of text, video, or images with fans or friends (Wikipedia, n.d.a). Twitter is also a social networking service but is more focused on micro blogging, which enables its users to send and read text-based posts of up to 140 characters, known as "tweets" (Wikipedia, n.d.b). The website was created in March 2006 and has over 140 million users (Wikipedia, n.d.b). YouTube is a video sharing website created in 2005, on which users can upload, view, share, and comment on videos (Wikipedia, n.d.c). The website is viewed billions of times a day and claims 24 hours of video are uploaded to the site every minute (YouTube, 2012).

62

Table 3.2
Variable Labels

Dimension of Social Media Use	Variable Label	Example
Reasons for Social media Use	Community Engagement	Reaching new supporters
		Enhancing relationships
		Communicate/Collaborate
		Responsiveness
	Marketing	Promoting the organization
		Advertising programs/services
	Fundraising	Amount of money raised
	Transparency	Accountability/ Openness to community or funders
Social Media Practices	Social Media	Facebook, Twitter, YouTube
	Rich Content	Links, Newsletters, Images, Video
	Policies	Staff use of Social Media is encouraged or prohibited
	Goals	Increase funds, volunteers, or community engagement
Frequency	Time	Number of Hours
	Number of Posts	1, 2, 3, etc. Tweets or Updates of content
	Date of Implementation	Month/ Year
General Satisfaction	Resources	Knowledge, Money, Hardware
	Community Engagement	See above
	Fundraising	See above
Future Plans	Policies	Staff use of Social Media is encouraged or prohibited
	Goals	Increase funds, volunteers, or community engagement

MySpace is a social networking service, which was launched in 2003 and has over 33 million

users (Wikipedia, n.d.d). Myspace is very similar to Facebook and was initially the social

destination of many social media users but saw rapid decline with the popularity of Facebook

(Wikipedia, n.d.d).

LinkedIn is another social networking service similar to Facebook, but with the focus on

professional networking (LinkedIn, 2012). The site currently has over 120 million users and

63

allows individuals to post their resume or vita and maintain profession relationships with friends, colleagues, and employers. Flickr is an image hosting website created in 2004 where users are able to share personal pictures by embedding photographs on blogs and other social media platforms (Wikipedia, n.d.e). Foursquare is a location-based social networking website for mobile devices, such as smart phones where users "check in" at venues using a mobile website, text messaging or a device-specific application by selecting from a list of venues the application locates nearby using global positioning system (GPS) software (Wikipedia, n.d.f). The service was created in 2009 and currently has over 15 million users worldwide (Foursquare, 2012).

Google + (plus) is a social networking service similar to Facebook. This service was launched in 2011 and incorporates many aspects of the social web by allowing users to create virtual hangouts, connect through status updates, photos, and videos, as well as integrating a video conferencing service into the platform (Wikipedia, n.d.g). Finally, blogs are essentially like personal journals published on the Internet consisting of discrete entries ("posts") and typically displayed in reverse chronological order so the most recent post appears first (Smith, 2010; and Wikipedia, n.d.h). There are numerous blogging platforms to choose from, but many essentially serve as a digital space to organize or publish content on the Internet. Nearly every social media platform contains similar functions and each platform allows users to share content with others through the use of application programming interfaces or API's. The sharing of content and connecting with others characterizes the foundation of social media.

Instrument Reliability/Validity

The reliability and validity of the measurement instrument is what determines the quality of research (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). Reliability generally refers to the repeatability of the measure to obtain the same result (Drake & Johnson-Reid, 2008). Validity refers to the ability of

the instrument to accurately measure what it is intended to measure (Groves, et al., 2004; Rubin & Babbie, 2005). Measurement validity requires reliability, however a measure can be reliable but not valid. The bulls-eye target conjures the image of the classic example that demonstrates how an instrument may be reliable and valid (hits in the center or bulls-eye), reliable but not valid (hits concentrated together but not in the bulls-eye), and neither reliable nor valid (sporadic hits throughout the target) (Drake & Johnson-Reid, 2008; and Rubin & Babbie, 2005).

The survey instrument developed for this study was adapted from several other surveys found in the literature on social media use among nonprofit organizations (Andrei, Quinn, Bernard, 2011; Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009; Kang & Norton, 2004; LaCasse, Quinn, & Bernard, 2010; Ogden & Starita, 2009; Quinn, & Berry, 2010; Saxton & Guo, 2011; Smith, 2010; and Young, 2010). Because the survey is new and untested, it presents various threats to the reliability and validity of the study. To increase both reliability and validity, the survey instrument was pre-tested and reviewed by individuals with knowledge pertaining to social media and survey research. Simplifying the readability of the survey to increase general understanding of the wording and relevance of questions further minimized the threats.

The instrument maintains face validity, as the questions seem to measure the dimensions listed in Table 3.2. The concept of face validity is that the reason the question is being asked follows logic (Drake and Johnson-Reid, 2008), although some would argue that face validity is insufficient for determining the worth of a measurement (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). To address this challenge, the survey instrument also has a high degree of content validity or the degree to which the key factors are included in the instrument (Drake & Johnson-Reid, 2008). For example, multiple questions use many social media titles to demonstrate the range of possibilities that are available in using this new medium. The instrument fulfills criterion validity by utilizing

65

multiple surveys that seek to measure similar dimensions of social media use (Drake & Johnson-Reid, 2008).

The reliability of the survey instrument was examined through testing internal consistency of Likert-scale questions with Cronbach's alpha of .70 or higher as suggested in the literature (Carmines & Zeller, 1979; and Vogt, 1999). Question 23, in particular, was adapted from the Marguerite Casey Foundation Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (Guthrie, Preston, & Sbarbaro, 2004), which was used to measure organizational capacity. This tool was designed as a self-assessment tool rather than a scientific measure and did not provide information about testing of reliability or validity (Guthrie et al., 2004; and Meeks, 2009). Question 23 was tested for reliability with the finding that the scale has good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .93). The other questions consisting of Likert-scales where also tested with the findings reported in table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3
Reliability tests for Likert Scale Questions

Question	Cronbach's Alpha
18) Experimenting with social media has enhanced the relationship between the agency/organization and stakeholders, constituents, board members, or the general community?	.80
19) Social media offers the opportunity to interact with people/organizations of various backgrounds/missions?	.83
20) Using social media has helped the agency/organization (check all that apply)?	.90
22) How do you feel about your organization's use of social media (check all that apply)?	.80
23) Please check the box that best indicates the current status of your organization's resources/capacity/ability to engage in the use of social media.	.93

Data Analysis Plan

The statistical analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The data was exported from the Qualtrics electronic survey software into SPSS and pre-screened. Pre-screening data involves examining the data set for input errors, missing data, extreme values or outliers, linearity, and making certain that the data fit the assumptions of the statistical procedures (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Missing data presents major challenges for the validity of this study and pre-screening for missing data addresses this limitation to ensure a higher quality analysis. Pre-screening data begins with several assumptions. Assuming data is missing at random (MAR) means that there is no pattern to the missing data. Testing for missing data was done using bivariate correlation (Pearson's r) to determine whether there was a pattern to the missing data.

This was done by coding all the data as missing value = 1 or non-missing value = 0. No patterns suggest that data is missing at random and depending upon the number of cases, deletion may be considered (Dattalo, 2009). Correlations suggest that data is MNAR (missing not at random) and the analysis should be conducted and reported with and without the missing data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Assessing for extreme values or outliers was examined through a box plot and linearity by examining a scatter plot. Once pre-screening was completed, data analysis was conducted using univariate descriptives and bivariate correlation analyses. These methods included basic descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, averages, and cross tabulation. For example, frequency distributions assisted in describing the number of organizations, primary issue area, social media platforms most widely used among the sample, and other demographic variables. The bivariate correlation addressed relationships among

67

variables as well as the digital divide that may exist in regards to social media use. The univariate and bivariate methods help to fulfill the objectives of the study.

The bivariate correlation test was chosen to explore the digital divide hypothesis. Previous studies have identified that the size of an organization is related to whether it has a website or not (Kang & Norton 2004; McNutt & Boland, 1999; Saxton & Guo, 2011; and Schneider, 2003) and the bivariate correlation test sought to examine this relationship in regards to social media. The size of an organization has been positively correlated with its innovativeness; however, size has been measured in numerous ways throughout the literature (Rogers, 2003; and Saxton & Guo, 2011). In this study, size is defined by the annual budget of the organization as reported by the respondents.

The bivariate correlation test reports the correlation coefficient or Pearson's r and shows the degree of a linear relationship between two continuous variables with no distinction necessary between independent variable and dependent variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007; and Vogt, 1999). The term correlation and Pearson's r are used together so often that they have become analogous and many simply use the term correlation (Vogt, 1999). Correlation is used to examine relationships between variables for explanatory purposes (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). The resulting coefficient will demonstrate the strength of relationship based on the criteria set forth in the literature where $r = .20$ indicates a weak relationship and $r = .70$ indicates a strong relationship (Drake, Johnson-Reid, 2008). The test will assume the input parameters used in the prospective power analysis where alpha = .05.

Exploring and explaining the relationship between annual budget and the number of hours devoted to social media is not an attempt to say that one causes the other. However, the likelihood that organizations with larger budgets devote more time to social media seems logical

given what the literature says and because using social media requires time, hardware, and or staff power. Correlating these variables will provide some evidence for the digital divide hypothesis and whether or not the two are variables are related (for brief discussion on correlation vs. causation see Vogt, 1999, p. 58).

The correlation test was run by splitting the data set based on annual budget and correlated with the number of staff hours devoted to social media. The variety of methods for determining organizational size required this study to select a cut-off point for small and large nonprofit HSO's. Dividing the number of respondents in half on the variable annual budget as determined by the cumulative percentage (50.4%) established the cut-off point for this study. That point established small organizations as having an approximate annual budget of less than $700,000 and large organizations as having an approximate annual budget of greater than $700,001. The results are presented in chapter four.

The final question of the survey attempted to explore additional reasons HSO's use social media that might not have been captured in any of the questions on the instrument. The open-ended question asked respondents to share any other reasons their organization uses social media. The responses were collected and a thematic analysis performed to identify any themes. The results of the thematic analysis are also included in chapter four.

Conclusion

The general aim of this study is to understand the current status of social media use among nonprofit human service organizations. This chapter provided the overall research design, methodology, and data analysis plan with which to answer the question: Why are nonprofit human service organizations using social media? Utilizing a cross-sectional survey design to gather data with the objective of exploring and describing social media use among nonprofit

human service organizations is one of the first attempts at gathering this type of information within the identified sample. Explaining the sampling and statistical procedures as well as the data management/collection and analysis plans ensure that this study was conducted with as much rigor as possible.

Chapter four presents the study results of the data collection and analysis along with a description of the response rate, pre-screening for missing data, and results from the open-ended questions of the survey.

70

Chapter 4

Results

The focus of this study is to better understand the current status of social media use among nonprofit human service organizations (HSO's). Following the methodology outlined in chapter three, the study utilized a cross-sectional survey design to gather information from HSO's in the Richmond, Virginia Metropolitan Statistical Area. The objectives of this study sought to describe and explain the current status by identifying five different dimensions of social media use among HSO's (see Figure 2.3 in chapter 2). This chapter presents the results of the data collection and analysis.

Response Rate

The survey was emailed to a sample of 120 HSO's, emailed through two different listserv's, posted to ConnectRichmond.org's Facebook page, and sent out on Twitter using #RVA and #ConnectRVA. The hash tag method allows users to mark keywords in a tweet posted on Twitter as a way to categorize messages (Twitter, 2012). These messages can be searched more easily and appear in other spaces on the Internet as they are developed by individual users. For example, ConnectRichmond.org has a widget or technological device, which displays tweets containing #ConnectRVA on the homepage of the organization's website. This way, people who are not using Twitter, but frequent the organization's website, have an opportunity to view tweets and interact with the content. This hash tag method is one way of increasing the presence of a message or promoting the message to a larger audience than just an individual's followers.

This study utilized Qualtrics electronic survey software, which contains several capabilities for tracking survey statistics. One of the main statistics reported is a completion percentage, or the number of surveys that respondents finished by clicking the submit button at

71

the end of the survey. This survey was started 162 times with 136 surveys being completed for a completion rate of 84%. However, several surveys were blank and pre-screening the data set reduced the overall number to 125 for a completion rate of 77%. The study's data collection was successful as the target for the number of survey responses was set at 115.

The original multi-method data collection plan included the use of sending the survey to respondents via traditional mail, as prior evidence dictated the advantage of using such a method to increase response rates (Dillman, 2000; Groves, et al., 2004; Hager, Wilson, Pollak, & Rooney, 2003; Kaplowitz, Hadlock, & Levine, 2004; and Weiwei & Van Ryzin, 2011). However, the decision was made to focus only on email solicitations and posting the survey to various social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, for practical and economic reasons. Currently, there is no research on using social media to solicit survey responses. One limitation of this study is that a true response rate could not be calculated because the survey utilized a single link for both the email sample as well as for posting to Facebook and Twitter. Tracking whom the survey was sent to was not done because the researcher has little control over what happens with the link once it is distributed via social media. This and other limitations will be further discussed in chapter five.

Missing Data Analysis and Pre-screening

All survey data were downloaded from Qualtrics and exported into the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The Qualtrics survey software separated the data into multiple variables, which required the researcher to aggregate all of the Likert-scale questions into a single variable for the respective question in a way that could be analyzed in SPSS. This was done by creating a new variable and inputting the respondents' response from each case into the new variable. For example, question 18 asked respondents whether they

agreed that experimenting with social media has enhanced the relationship between the HSO and stakeholders, constituents, board members, or the general community. The question contains sub-categories defining the type of social media, and respondents where asked to answer for each sub-category. Qualtrics treated each sub-category and level of agreement as an individual variable where respondents were allowed to select yes or no to each level and category. This likely happened because of the researchers lack of experience with this particular software.

Creation of the new variable for analysis allowed SPSS to analyze responses by each sub-category as well as simplifying the bivariate analysis procedure. Inputting the data in this way was fairly time consuming, however, it did allow for each case to be checked individually for any errors or missing data. Additional cleaning of the dataset was conducted through analysis of frequencies of minimum/maximum values for categorical variables, and descriptive analysis of minimum/maximum/mean values for continuous variables. Box plots revealed any outliers, or extreme values (Rubin & Babbie, 2005) on interval-ratio level data such as annual budget. A methods journal was also used to track the changes or corrections made to the dataset.

Missing data can be a major dilemma in data analysis as some respondents miss or choose not answer questions (Rubin & Babbie, 2005; and Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). There is little consensus within the literature on missing data analysis about what constitutes excessive missingness (Dattalo, 2009). The importance of the pattern of missing data should be of concern because it may impact the generalizability of results if the data are not missing at random (Dattalo, 2009). One technique to assess the pattern of missing data was to code the data as either missing (1) or not missing (0). Bivariate correlation coefficients were calculated to explore whether the missing data were missing at random. The evidence from the test suggested that

73

missing data were missing at random as the coefficient yielded a weak correlation ($r \leq .75$) (Drake & Johnson-Reid, 2008), or the test was not significant ($p \leq .05$).

This study had four cases of completely missing or blank data and seven other cases where data where missing on a number of variables, which represents only 8% of the cases. In a review of the literature, Dattalo (2009) highlighted several studies that used greater than 10% (Cohen & Cohen, 1983), 15% or more (Hertel, 1976), and 40% or more (Raymond & Roberts, 1987) as criteria for what constitutes excessive missingness. Since the missing data in this study were missing at random and because the number was minimal, the cases were deleted since the substitution of missing values would result in the addition of an unknown error (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Considering the deleted cases, the sample size still surpassed the target of 115 with a total sample size of N=125.

Sample Characteristics

The respondents ranged from founders and executive directors to volunteers and social media managers; table 4.1 illustrates the breakdown of respondents. Those that identified as other included volunteer, board members, community outreach coordinators, case managers, public relations, and membership managers. Out of the 44 responses to "other" a total of 6 individuals provided a text response and subsequently reported their job duties as being related to development or fundraising. The range of years served at an HSO stemmed from 1 to 29 years. Respondents reported being with their respective organizations for an average of six years (N=118) (see table 4.1), although the mean is likely higher due to several respondents being employed for ten years or more. Most respondents indicated being with the HSO for five years or less (57.6%, N=67).

Table 4.1

Primary Position within the Organization and Years of Service

Characteristic	N (%)
Primary Position	
Founder	6 (4.8)
Executive Director/ President/ CEO	36 (28.8)
Assistant Director	2 (1.6)
Program Director	14 (11.2)
Marketing/ Development Director	18 (14.4)
Communications Director	5 (4.0)
Other	44 (35.2)
Total N responding	125
Years of Service*	6.26

Note: *Average number of years with the organization (N=118)

Year the Organization was Founded- The year the HSO was founded ranged from 1823 to 2010 with the majority of organizations being founded after 1951 (N=97, 79.5%). The Richmond, Virginia area contains many centenarian human service agencies as it was an early port city and saw an influx of Northern charitable groups after the Civil War responding to the cities social concerns (Netting, O'Connor, & Fauri, 2011). The years 1998 and 2000 were identified as the most frequently reported year in which the HSO was founded (N=6). Figure 4.1 indicates the range of years the HSO's were founded.

Figure 4.1
Year the Human Service Organization was Founded
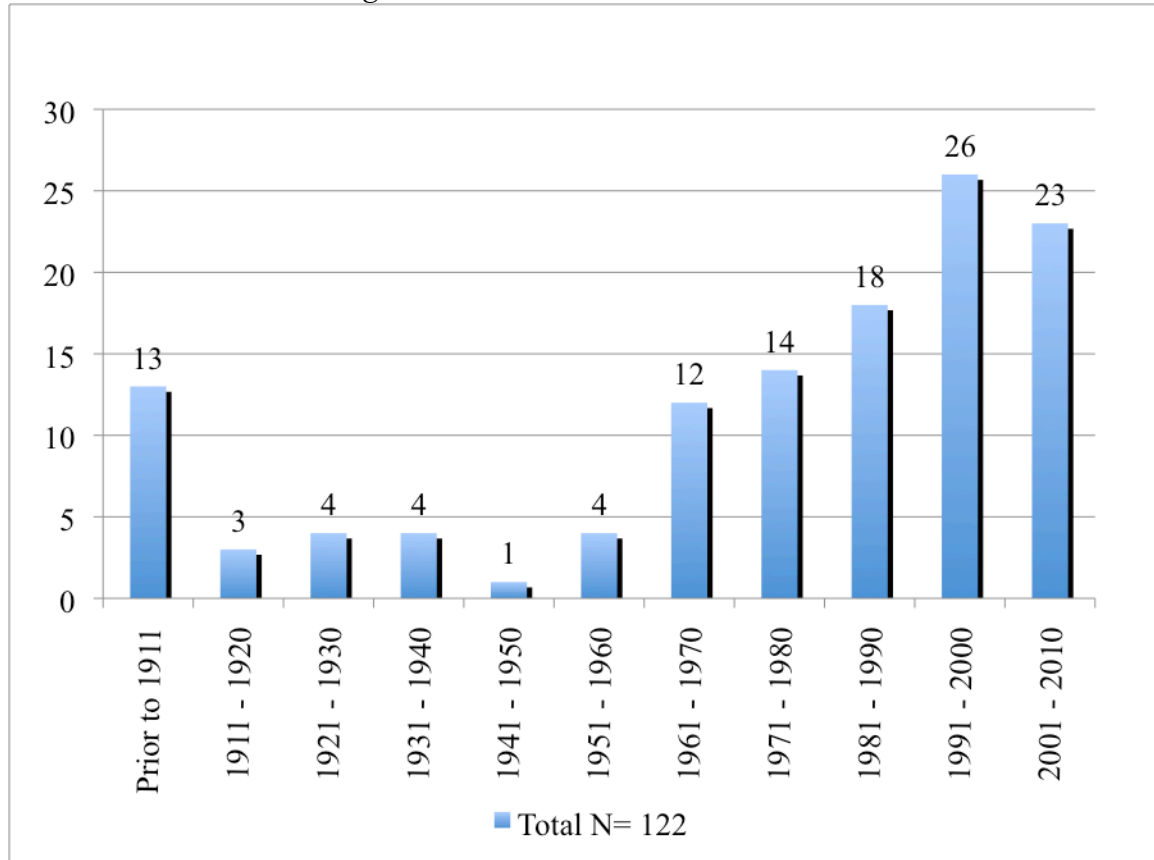
Primary issue area- Question four asked respondents to identify their HSO's primary focus or mission area. This question was adapted from a previous instrument, which was used with nonprofit human service organizations (Meeks, 2009). Due to the limited capability of the Qualtrics survey software, respondents were asked to rank their mission focus if they identified more than one. The researcher subsequently aggregated the responses into the top three areas to help describe the mission of the HSO. Twenty-six of 125 respondents identified their primary mission focus as "other" but neglected to specify what their focus was by providing a text response. The next highest primary mission focus was identified as Education (N=16, 12.8%).

The third highest primary mission focus identified was related to Mental Health/Crisis Intervention/Health (N=13, 10.4%), and was also tied with the primary mission focus of Youth Programs (N=13, 10.4%). Figure 4.2 illustrates the primary, secondary, and tertiary mission focuses as ranked by the respondents.

Figure 4.2

Primary, Secondary, & Tertiary Mission Focus of Human Service Organizations
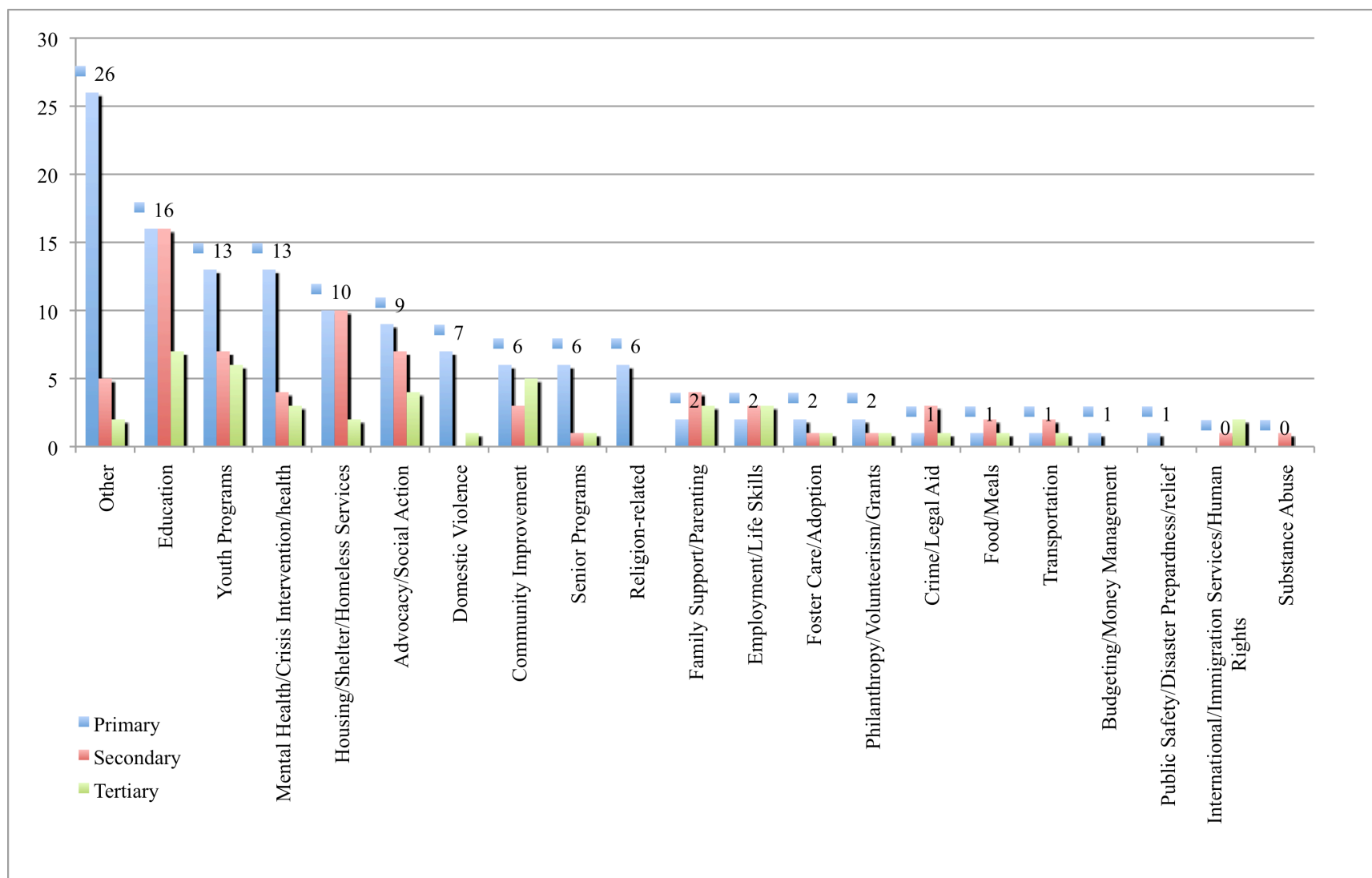
Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is the process of summarizing, organizing, and describing quantitative information (Vogt, 1999). The remaining questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics beginning with question five, annual budget.

Annual Budget- The average annual budget was 2,814,951 dollars (S.D.= $6,517,725) with 123 of the 125 reporting. The large standard deviation further demonstrates the variance of annual budget among respondents. The range of annual budget stems from $2,500 to $42,000,000 (range = $41,997,500) and the interquartile range was $2,250,000. Although the approximate annual budget of HSO's was rather spread out, over half of the HSO's clustered in the range from $0 to $700,000 (55.3%, N=68). Annual budget was used as an indicator of organizational size to further explore the digital divide. The results of that analysis will be presented later in the bivariate section of this chapter. However, the variable *annual budget* was used to split the data set in half with budgets under $700,000 representing small HSO's and budgets greater than $700,001 representing large HSO's. Table 4.2 shows the approximate annual budget stratified into three clusters to increase readability.

Table 4.2

Approximate Annual Budget

Cluster	Frequency (%)
0 - $700,000	68 (55.3)
$700,001 - $2.5 million	28 (23)
> $2.5 million	27 (22)
Total N responding	123

Organization Website & Social Media Profile Links- The digital divide also relates to question six, "does the HSO have a website," and question seven, "does the HSO's website include links to the social media profiles?" Question six utilized logic in the Qualtrics survey software so that if a respondent answered yes, then question seven would be displayed for them to answer as well. Out of 125 respondents, only one stated their HSO did not have a website. The remaining respondents indicated that 82.4% (N=103) have a website that contains links to their social media profiles and 16.8% (N=21) have no such links.

Social Media Staff Position- The rise of social media has led many organizations to create a position solely dedicated to managing social media (Flandez, 2010). Question 8 revealed that 81% (N=101) of HSO's do not have a dedicated position and that 19% (N=24) do have a dedicated position with the top three identified as Community Outreach Coordinator (N=6), Marketing Coordinator (N=4), and Public Information Manager (N=2). Table 4.3 provides a list of all the responses to question 9 detailing the title of the position responsible for social media. Two respondents stated that social media was the responsibility of the interns or students.

Table 4.3

Staff Position Titles with Responsibility of Managing Social Media

Title	Frequency
Communications Director	2
Community Manager	1
Community Outreach Coordinator	6
E-communications Coordinator	1
External Affairs Coordinator	1
I.T. Contractor	1
Manager of Online Services	1
Manager of Strategic Communication	1
Marketing Coordinator	4
Public Information Manager	2
Public Relations Manager	1
Social media Coordinator	1
VP of Marketing & Communication	1
Interns or Students	2
Total	25

Social Media Platforms & Year of Adoption- The majority of social media platforms identified for respondents in question ten included those that are the most popular and have been in use for the past six or seven years. This study found that the most popular social media platforms in use among HSO's include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. A frequency table (4.4) presents the social media platforms respondents identified using, along with the date the particular site was founded. Respondents identified other social media platforms as Pinterest, Tumblr, Instagram, Diigo, and Ning. Pinterest is a relatively new social media platform that was

created in 2010 as a way to collect or curate web content by virtually pinning it to pin boards. It is a form of social bookmarking, which is similar in concept to Diigo. Tumblr was created in 2007 and is essentially a micro-blogging service similar to Twitter but can also be used as a regular blog. Instagram was created in 2010 and is a camera application for the smart phones, which allows users to share pictures with their social networks similarly to Flickr. Ning was created in 2005 and allows users to create a custom social network with capabilities to integrate Facebook and many other social media platforms.

Table 4.4

Social Media platforms used among Human Service Organizations

Social Media Platform	Frequency (%)	
Facebook [2005*]	122	(97.6)
Twitter [2006*]	90	(72.0)
YouTube [2005*]	87	(69.6)
LinkedIn [2003*]	76	(60.8)
Blogs [1997*]	63	(50.4)
Flickr [2004*]	51	(40.8)
Google + [2011*]	47	(37.6)
Foursquare [2009*]	36	(28.8)
MySpace [2003*]	33	(26.4)
Other	7	(5.6)

Note: * Indicates the year the social media platform was founded.

    * For a description of each of these platforms, refer to chapter three.

The survey instrument identified the year 2000 as the start for social media adoption although previous studies indicated blogging did not become popular until around 2004 (Smith, 2010). The years were collated during the pre-screening phase to assist with usability in analysis since the majority of the identified social media platforms did not exist until after the year 2005. Figure 4.3 demonstrates the trend of social media adoption among HSO's. It should be noted that HSO's often use more than one social media platform and the lines do not indicate that HSO's are withdrawing from social media, rather the rate of adoption of a particular social media platform has leveled out.

One HSO reported using social media since 2003 in the form of blogging. Blogging is a form of online journaling and has been around since the late 1990's (Smith, 2010). Several more HSO's started blogging in 2005 and 2006, but it did not really become popular until 2009. One HSO claimed to have adopted Facebook in 2005 but the social network began to see more HSO adopters in 2007/2008. Likewise for many HSO's the years 2008/2009 are when many began to adopt other forms of social media.

Figure 4.3
Trend of Social Media adoption in Human Service Organizations
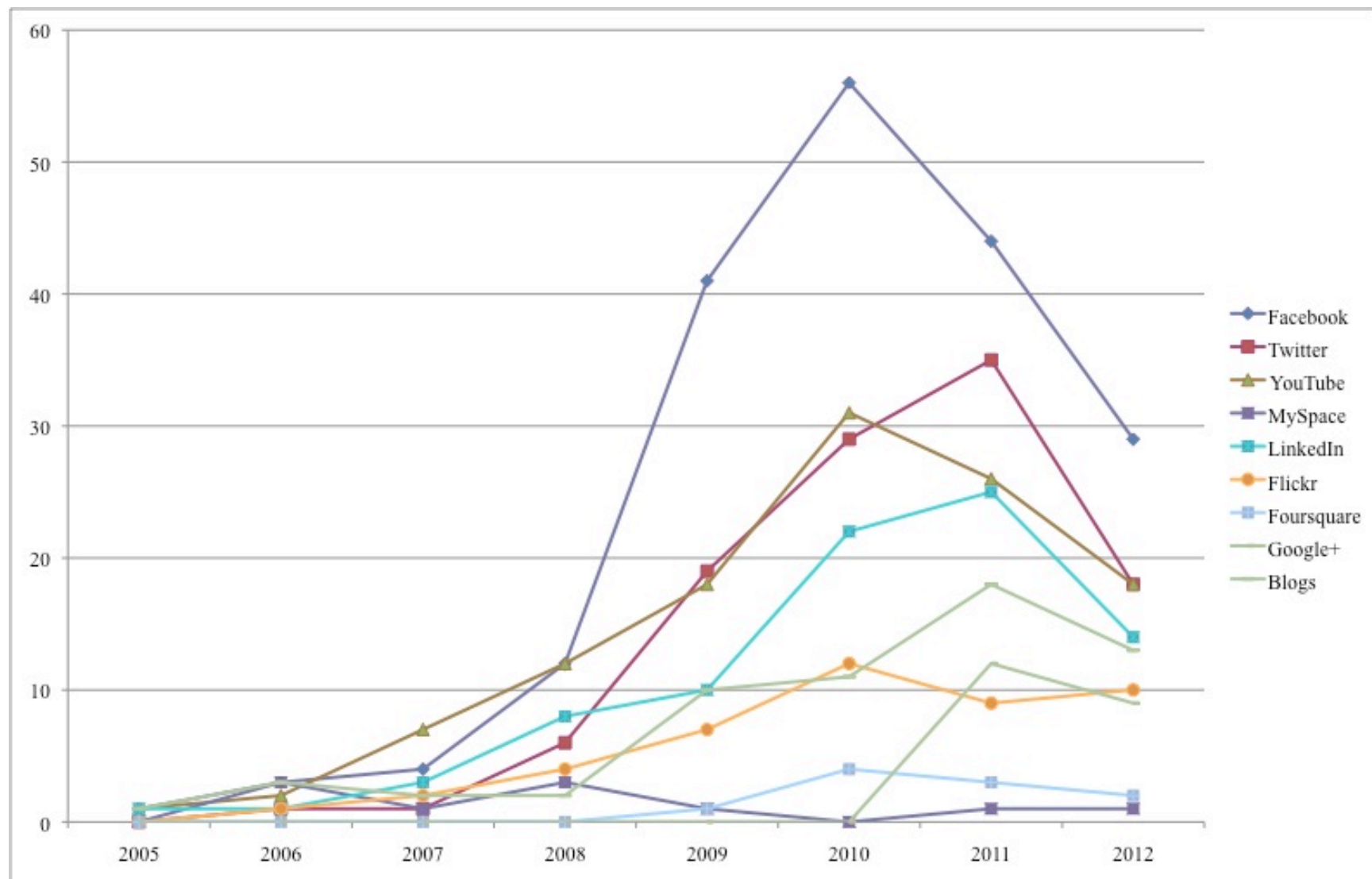
Organizational Policies Regarding Social Media & Year of Adoption- The variable "policies" relates to the dimensions of social media practices and future plans in the conceptual model. The future plans of using social media includes goals but also depends upon the policies of the HSO in regards to social media and Internet access. Question 11 sought to understand if HSO's have policies around social media and when those policies were implemented by examining six different criteria in a matrix question along with time (see Appendix D). The nature of the question is such that respondents marked the corresponding year the policy was implemented and if they did not have a policy they would select not applicable (N/A). Almost 85% (N=106) of respondents reported no policy existed prohibiting the staff use of social media. When asked if there was a policy with guidelines allowing staff to participate in social media, 56.8% (N=71) reported no. Additionally, 64% (N=80) reported there was no policy encouraging the use of social media, 80% (N=100) reported that social media websites were blocked from access on their work computers, and 65.6% (N=82) reported no policy encouraging social media access through the use of an HSO's computers. The final criterion in question 11 asked whether HSO's had a policy on how to handle comments posted to the HSO's blog, Facebook page, or other social media platforms with 54.4% (N=68) reporting no and 45.6% (N=57) reported yes.

Figure 4.4 illustrates the trend for when policies where implemented by respondents who indicated the existence of a social media policy. The trend appears similar to when HSO's began to adopt social media. However, an examination of the policy frequencies indicates a general lack of policies regarding social media, other than restricting access on organizational computers. This will be further discussed in chapter five. One respondent reported a policy blocking social media access on HSO's computers in the year 2005. The trend to implement policies with this sample became more prevalent in the year 2009.

Figure 4.4
Trend of Social Media Policy Adoption in Human Service Organizations
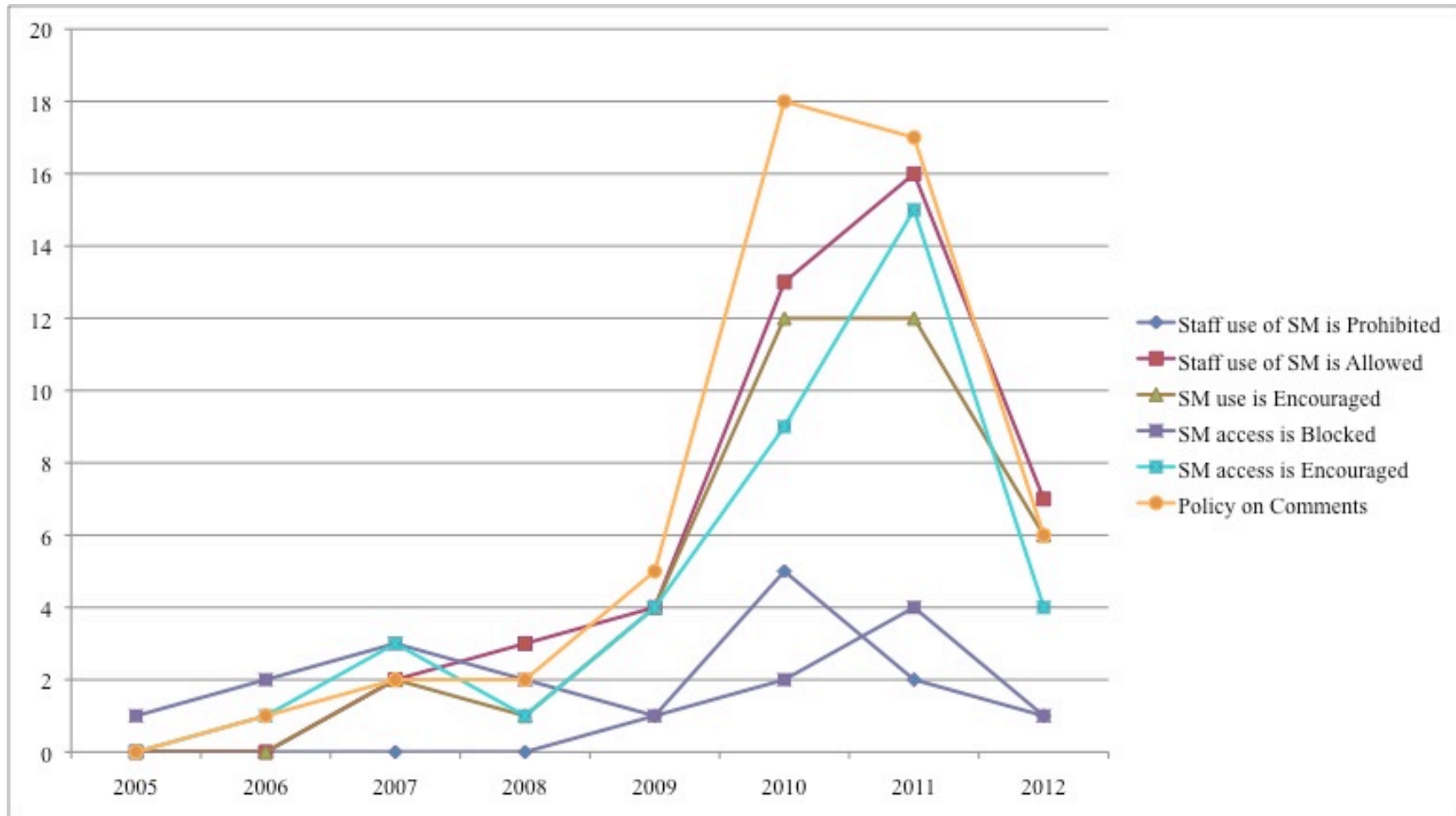
Type of Content Shared- Social media allows individuals to share a variety of information and resources through links to rich content. Content involves videos, images, articles of text, or audio such as blogs and podcasts. Question 12 allowed respondents to select multiple answers as social media allows multiple types of content to be shared. The content an HSO shares with followers varied with 88% of respondents identifying the top three as newsletters/information, links to our organization, and photos (N=110). Nearly 74% of respondents identified sharing links to specific information (N=92), and 64.8% reported sharing links to other organizations (N=81). A total of 14 respondents identified "Other" content that their HSO shares. The text responses included: Pins on Pinterest and Tumblr, training information, legislative information, fundraisers, press coverage, program information, class schedules, studio recordings of youth projects, and general announcements of events (N=5). The remaining categories and their frequencies are reported in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5

Type of Content shared via Social Media

Content	Frequency (%)	
Newsletters/information	110	(88)
Links to our organization	110	(88)
Photos from community/organization projects	110	(88)
Links to specific information	92	(73.6)
Links to other organizations	81	(64.8)
Video from community/organization projects	73	(58.4)
Blogs	45	(36)
Other	14	(11.2)
Podcasts	10	(8)

Social Media Goals- Question 13 asked respondents whether their HSO has defined specific goals for using social media. Of the 125 respondents, 62.4% (N=78) stated no and 37.6% (N=47) replied yes. The respondents who replied yes were then asked to answer a sub question defining those goals. Of those who responded, 36% (N=45) reported the top goal for using social media was to "engage the community" followed closely by "promoting the organization or services" (34.4%, N=43). Respondents were allowed to select any of the six options that applied to their organization. Table 4.6 shows the goals respondents could select from along with their frequencies and percentages.

Table 4.6

Social Media Goals Defined

Goal	Frequency	(%)
Use social media to engage the community	45	(36)
Use social media to promote the organization/services	43	(34.4)
Increase use of social media	38	(30.4)
Use social media for fundraising	35	(28)
Use social media to recruit new volunteers	34	(27.2)
Adopt other social media tools	25	(20)

Reasons for using Social Media- Seven options were available for respondents to identify the reason(s) why their HSO uses social media. Respondents were asked to select all the applicable reasons for adopting and using social media. The number one reason for using social media was to promote/advertise services or events (96%, N=120) followed by engaging with the community (92%, N=115). The least identified reason for using social media was to demonstrate transparency/accountability (48.8%, N=61). Figure 4.5 illustrates the total number of respondents selecting the particular reason(s) why the HSO uses social media.

88

Figure 4.5
Reasons for Adopting Social Media
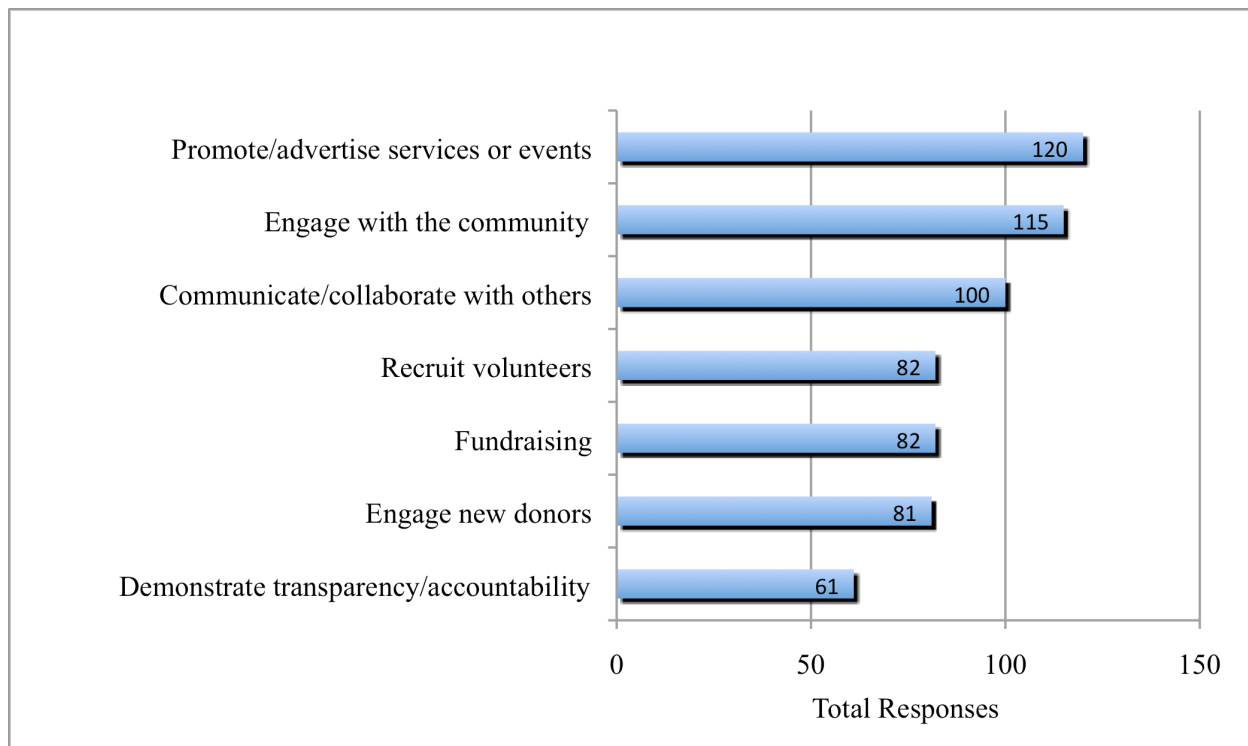
Prompts for adopting Social Media- Question 15 asked respondents to identify any and all of the 9 categories that prompted their HSO to begin using social media. Respondents selected enhancing relations with existing audiences as the top choice (72.8%, N=91) followed by rounding out their communications mix as number two (64.8%, N=81). The least identified prompt was to replace another communications channel used previously (11.2%, N=14). Figure 4.6 illustrates the total number of respondents identifying what prompted the HSO to begin to use social media.

Figure 4.6
Prompts for Adopting Social Media
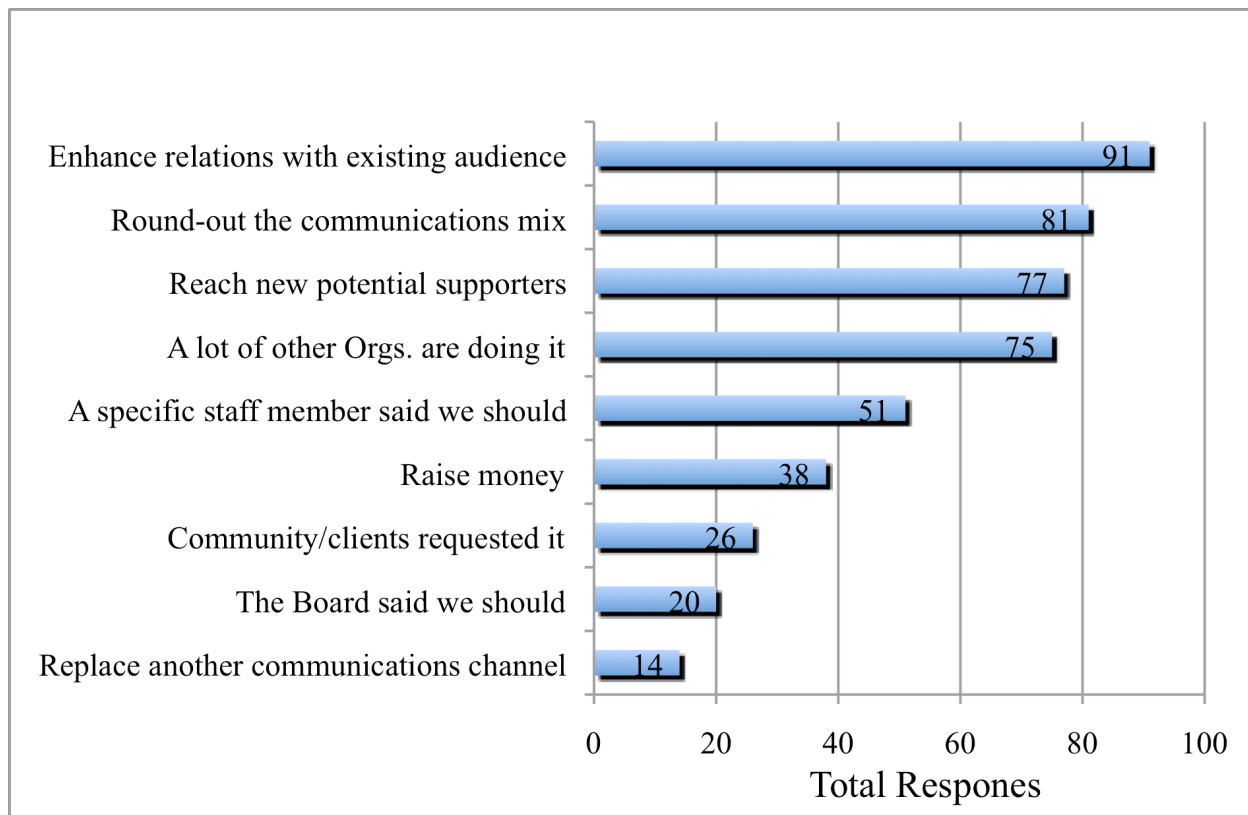
Number of Updates Posted to Social Media- Respondents were asked to identify the number of updates posted to social media profiles in a given day. An update meant Facebook status updates, tweets, blog postings, or content that was generally shared via social media. Ninety-three respondents selected the range of 0-2 for the number of social media updates posted in a given day accounting for 74.4%. The second range of 3-5 accounted for 21.6% (N=27) of the respondents and 3.2% (N=4) selected the range 6-8. There was only one HSO that reported posting more than nine updates in a given day.

*Time Devoted -*The time dimension asked for the number of staff hours distributed across the organization that are devoted to social media in a week. This was meant to include tweeting,

updating, blogging, and the general posting or sharing of content. The average number of hours was 5.78 (S.D. 7.57) and the range of hours included 1 to 40. Only 19% (N=24) of respondents devoted 10 hours or more to social media in a given week. Table 4.7 provides the rest of the frequencies for the number of hours identified by respondents.

Table 4.7

Number of Hours Devoted to Social Media in a Week

Hours	Frequency	(%)
1	30	(24)
2	27	(21.6)
3	13	(10.4)
4	7	(5.6)
5	16	(12.8)
6	4	(3.2)
8	3	(2.4)
9	1	(0.8)
10	9	(7.2)
13	1	(0.8)
15	5	(4)
16	1	(0.8)
20	2	(1.6)
25	1	(0.8)
30	2	(1.6)
35	1	(0.8)
40	2	(1.6)
Total N responding	125	

Questions 18 and 19 asked respondents to think about the acts (commenting, sharing, or posting of information) involved in social media and the type of social media platform used by classifying the number of platforms into general categories. The categories included Social Networking sites, Video-Sharing sites, Image-Sharing sites, Blogs, and Location-Based social media sites. Questions 20 through 22 include two Likert-scale questions and one question asking about revenue generated via social media. These three questions attempted to measure to the general satisfaction outcome identified in the conceptual model.

Social Media Enhances Relationships- The majority of respondents strongly agreed (32.8%. N=41) or agreed (52%, N=65) that experimenting with social network sites has enhanced the relationship between the agency/organization and stakeholders, constituents, board members, or the general community. Respondents were progressively less sure about the remaining categories as 37.6% (N=47) reported not knowing if video-sharing sites, image-sharing sites (40.8%, N=51), blogs (43.2%, N=54), and location-based social media sites (52.8%, N=66) enhance the organizations' relationship with stakeholders, board members, or the community. Table 4.8 provides a complete list of frequencies for each category in question 18. Composite scores were also calculated for questions 18 and 19, and will be presented in the supplemental analysis section.

Table 4.8

Experimenting with Social Media Enhances Relationships

	Social Network sites		Video-sharing sites		Image-sharing sites		Blogs		Location-Based sites	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Strongly Agree	41	32.8	15	12	15	12	16	12.8	10	8
Agree	65	52	30	24	24	19.2	29	23.2	14	11.2
Neither Agree or Disagree	12	9.6	24	19.2	25	20	19	15.2	28	22.4
Disagree	1	0.8	7	5.6	7	5.6	4	3.2	2	1.6
Strongly Disagree	2	1.6	2	1.6	3	2.4	3	2.4	5	4
Don't Know	4	3.2	47	37.6	51	40.8	54	43.2	66	52.8
Total N responding	125		125		125		125		125	

Social Media offers Opportunity to Interact with Others- The majority of respondents (89.6%, N=112) affirmed that social networking sites do offer the opportunity to interact with a variety of people and organizations (41.6%, N=52 Strongly Agree and 48%, N=60 Agree). Responses were generally more agreeable towards the type of social media when asked about interaction (see table 4.9). However, respondents remained uncertain about location-based social media and whether it offers opportunity for interaction (46.4%, N=58). It may be possible that respondents are unsure what location-based social media are, accounting for the large percentage of "Don't Know" responses.

93

Table 4.9

Social Media Offers the Opportunity to Interact with Others

	Social Network sites		Video-Sharing sites		Image-sharing sites		Blogs		Location-Based sites	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Strongly Agree	52	41.6	24	19.2	19	15.2	24	19.2	15	12
Agree	60	48	44	35.2	36	28.8	44	35.2	28	22.4
Neither Agree or Disagree	5	4	17	13.6	19	15.2	10	8	17	13.6
Disagree	2	1.6	1	0.8	4	3.2	5	4	6	4.8
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8	2	1.6	1	0.8	1	0.8	1	0.8
Don't Know	5	4	37	29.6	46	36.8	41	32.8	58	46.4
Total N responding	125		125		125		125		125	

Social Media helps the Human Service Organization- Question 20 used a Likert-scale similar to questions 18 and 19 but used different categories to determine respondents consensus as to whether social media helps the HSO with outcomes. Table 4.10 displays the categories along with their frequencies and percentages. Results are generally positive with most respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing that social media helps the HSO raise money (47%, N=59), increase donors (39.2%, N=49), increase membership (36%, N=45), increase new clients (42.4%, N=53), increase community awareness of programs and services (92.8%, N=116), increase trust and connections with the community (67.2%, N=84), share information (96%, N=120), collaborate with others (66.4%, N=83), and recruit volunteers (56%, N=70). The final

94

category "Be more successful" was excluded as this category is also included in question 22. However, on this question 62.4% (N=78) of respondents generally agreed that using social media helped the HSO.

Social Media Fundraising- A total of 41 out of 125 respondents answered question 21, which asked how much revenue social media fundraising has added to the HSO. The amount ranged from $0 (N=7) to $40,000 (N=1) with an average of $6,219.02 (S.D.= $10,058.05) and a median value of $2,500. Splitting the responses into two categories based on the median value indicates that 56.1% (N=23) of those that responded yielded less $2,500 fundraising with social media. However, the way this question was constructed in the Qualtrics software, it allowed respondents to write in their answer using text or numbers. Seventeen respondents indicated they were not sure how much money social media fundraising has generated because it is either not evaluated or they are unsure how to track these funds.

Table 4.10

Social Media Helps the Human Service Organization

	Raise Money		Increase Donors		Increase Membership		Increase in New Clients		Increase Community Awareness		Increase Trust & Connections		Share Information		Collaborate		Recruit Volunteers	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Strongly Agree	13	10.4	11	8.8	14	11.2	16	12.8	46	36.8	29	23.2	61	48.8	30	24	16	12.8
Agree	46	36.8	38	30.4	31	24.8	37	29.6	70	56	55	44	59	47.2	53	42.4	54	43.2
Neither Agree or Disagree	31	24.8	34	27.2	36	28.8	33	26.4	3	2.4	21	16.8	-	-	26	20.8	28	22.4
Disagree	18	14.4	21	16.8	19	15.2	15	12	1	0.8	2	1.6	1	0.8	9	7.2	11	8.8
Strongly Disagree	3	2.4	2	1.6	2	1.6	2	1.6	1	0.8	1	0.8	1	0.8	1	0.8	2	1.6
Don't Know	14	11.2	19	15.2	23	18.4	22	17.6	4	3.2	17	13.6	3	2.4	6	4.8	14	11.2
Total N responding	125		125		125		125		125		125		125		125		125	

96

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Satisfaction with Social Media- Question 22 sought to identify respondents general satisfaction with their HSO's use of social media by using the same Likert-scale identified in questions 18 through 20 but with different categories. The categories respondents replied to are provided in table 4.11. Responses generally indicate positive attitudes towards HSO's use of social media. Twenty percent (N=22) strongly agree and 52% (N=65) agree that social media has been useful in achieving the mission of the organization. In addition, 19.2% (N=24) strongly agree and 58.4% (N=73) agree that information obtained from social media sites is useful to their HSO. Social media was evaluated as being important to the HSO with 20.8% (N=26) strongly agreeing and 56% (N=70) agreeing. Only 12% (N=15) strongly agree and 35.2% (N=44) agree that social media helps the HSO to empower their clientele, while 27.2% (N=34) neither agreed or disagreed.

In regards to the amount of time, 25.6% (N=32) strongly agree and 46.4% (N=58) agree that the HSO should devote more time to social media than they currently do. No respondents disagreed with increasing their social media use in the future, which indicates they are likely going to increase use in the future, and 26.4% (N=33) strongly agree and 56% (N=70) agree that they plan to do so. Just over 31% (N=39) of respondents agreed that social media has been difficult to use effectively. However, 23.2% (N=29) disagreed with that statement and 20% (N=25) neither agreed nor disagreed. Finally, when asked whether HSO's are using social media only because the community believes they should, 45.6% (N=57) disagreed and 18.4% (N=23) strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 4.11

General Satisfaction with Social Media

	Mission [a]		S.M. Sites [b]		Important [c]		Successful [d]		Empower [e]		Spend Time [f]		Future Plans [g]		Difficult [h]		Response to Community [i]	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Strongly Agree	22	20	24	19.2	26	20.8	26	20.8	15	12	32	25.6	33	26.4	21	16.8	3	2.4
Agree	65	52	73	58.4	70	56	57	45.6	44	35.2	58	46.4	70	56	39	31.2	4	3.2
Neither Agree or Disagree	21	16.8	16	12.8	16	12.8	24	19.2	34	27.2	23	18.4	13	10.4	25	20	31	24.8
Disagree	9	7.2	3	2.4	6	4.8	9	7.2	14	11.2	8	6.4	4	3.2	29	23.2	57	45.6
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8	1	0.8	1	0.8	1	0.8	3	2.4	1	0.8	0	0	6	4.8	23	18.4
Don't Know	4	3.2	8	6.4	6	4.8	8	6.4	15	12	3	2.4	5	4	5	4	7	5.6
Total N responding	125		125		125		125		125		125		125		125		125	

a. It has been useful in achieving our mission

b. Information obtained from social media sites is useful to our organization

c. Social media is important to the organization

d. Social media is making our organization more successful

e. Social media has helped us empower those whom we serve

f. We should spend more time on social media than we do

g. We plan to use social media more in the future

h. It has been difficult to use effectively

i. We only use social media because the community believes we should

Note: S.M. stands for social media

98

Resource & Capacity Elements- Question 23 was adapted from the Marguerite Casey Foundation Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool, which was originally developed as a self-assessment measure of organizational capacity (Guthrie et al., 2004; and Meeks, 2009). This tool was adapted for this study using a Likert-scale to measure an HSO's resources and capacities to engage in the use of social media across ten different categories. The categories along with the frequency of the respondents' self-assessments are included in table 4.12.

The self-assessment generally scored well in the moderate to high range in all but three of the categories. Respondents indicated low (32.8%, N=41) to moderate (35.2%, N=44) support from board members, low (30.4%, N=38) to moderate (38.4%, N=48) access to outside assistance for social media pursuits from either individuals or their social networks, and low (23.2%, N=29) to moderate (48.8, N=61) knowledge of how to use social media to meet strategic goals. The existence of a website and broadband Internet were assessed the highest at 69.6% (N=87) and 68.8% (N=86) respectively. The existence of electronic hardware such as a computer, smart phone, or tablet was also rated high at 56.8% (N=71). Approximately 54% (N=67) of respondents identified high capacity for social media use because the HSO has a written mission statement with clear expression or reason for existence, values and purpose, followed closely by 24% (N=30) who rated this criterion as moderate. Knowledge of how to use various social media platforms was rated moderate at 42.4% (N=53) and high at 40.8% (N=51). Support from the community was rated by 42.4% (N=53) as moderate, and no HSO rated none on this specific criterion. Generally, HSO's responded with moderate (48%, N=60) to high (20.8%, N=26) capacity and resources to dedicate to the future use of social media.

Table 4.12

Resources and Capacity to Engage in Social Media

	High		Moderate		Low		None		N/A	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Written Mission [a]	67	53.6	30	24	9	7.2	6	4.8	13	10.4
Website [b]	87	69.6	24	19.2	5	4	1	0.8	8	6.4
Electronic Hardware [c]	71	56.8	31	24.8	15	12	1	0.8	7	5.6
Broadband Internet [d]	86	68.8	27	21.6	4	3.2	1	0.8	7	5.6
Knowledge of S.M. Platforms [e]	51	40.8	53	42.4	13	10.4	1	0.8	7	5.6
Strategic Goals [f]	25	20	61	48.8	29	23.2	2	1.6	8	6.4
Support from Board [g]	28	22.4	44	35.2	41	32.8	2	1.6	10	8
Support from the Community [h]	37	29.6	53	42.4	25	20	0	0	10	8
Outside Assistance [i]	24	19.2	48	38.4	38	30.4	4	3.2	11	8.8
Generally have Resources [j]	26	20.8	60	48	31	24.8	3	2.4	5	4
Total N responding	125		125		125		125		125	

a. Written mission statement with clear expression of reason for existence, values and purpose

b. Existence of a website

c. Existence of electronic hardware: Computer, smart phone, tablet

d. Existence of broadband Internet

e. Knowledge of how to use various social media platforms

f. Knowledge of how to use social media to meet strategic goals

g. Support from board members

h. Support from the community

i. Access to outside assistance for social media pursuits (either from individuals or your social network)

j. Generally have the resources/ability to dedicate to the future use of social media

Note: S.M. stands for Social Media

Bivariate Analysis

The main objective of this analysis was to explore the relationship between an HSO's annual budget and the amount of time devoted to social media in an attempt to explore the digital divide hypothesis discussed previously. Essentially, this hypothesis asserts that organizations with more resources are more innovative (Rogers, 2003). A bivariate correlation test was selected to analyze the variables *annual budget* and *number of staff hours* devoted to social media. A Pearson's r correlation assumes the variables must be interval ratio level data, normally distributed, no outliers, and also assumes a linear relationship (Drake & Johnson-Reid, 2008; and Rubin & Babbie, 2005). Screening the variables for violations of these assumptions indicated they had poor linearity according to a simple scatter plot and examining box plots as well as an evaluation of skewness difference between the mean and the trim mean indicated the presence of outliers. The amount of time variable was also positively skewed. The researcher decided to move forward despite these violations, as there is no consensus in the literature on how to measure organizational size. An alternative to the Pearson's correlation is to use a non-parametric test such as Spearman's rho (Drake & Johnson-Reid, 2008), which was conducted and is included following the Pearson correlation.

The bivariate correlation for organizational size revealed only one notable finding. The correlation for organizations with budgets greater than $700,001 and the amount of time devoted to social media produced a Pearson correlation value of r = .369 with significance of .002, indicating a moderate positive relationship that accounts for 13.62% of the variance between the two variables (see Table 4.13). However, when accounting for Spearman's correlation value, the relationship is very weak (r_s=.033) and not significant (p=.403) (see Table 4.14). No other Pearson correlations were significant at the .05 level, and the only significant Spearman

correlation was between the variables dedicated staff position to manage social media and HSO's with an annual budget of less than \$700,000. However, this correlation produced a negative weak relationship (r_s= -.204) and accounted for 4.16% of the variance between the variables. Bivariate analysis results should be considered carefully to minimize Type I error, or the risk of finding relationships that do not exist because of the influence of other variables not included in the model (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995; and Vogt, 1999).

Table 4.13

Pearson's correlation between HSO's Annual Budget and other Variables

Variable	Pearson correlation	Strength of correlation	Shared variance (%)	Significance level
	Budget ≤ \$700,000			
Amount of Time devoted to S.M.	-.161	Weak	2.6	.094
Plan to increase the use of S.M.	.097	Very weak	.94	.217
Dedicated Staff position for S.M.	-.191	Weak	3.65	.060
Revenue from S.M. fundraising	-.211	Weak	4.45	.173
Generally have the resources to devote to S.M.	-.026	Very weak	.07	.416
	Budget ≥ \$700,001			
Amount of Time devoted to S.M.	.369	Moderate	13.62	.002
Plan to increase the use of S.M.	-.098	Very weak	.96	.235
Dedicated Staff position for S.M.	-.174	Weak	3.03	.097
Revenue from S.M. fundraising	-.040	Very weak	.16	.436
Generally have the resources to devote to S.M.	-.092	Very weak	.85	.247

note: S.M. stands for Social Media

Table 4.14

Spearman's correlation between HSO's Annual Budget and other variables

Variable	Spearman correlation	Strength of correlation	Shared variance (%)	Significance level
Budget ≤ $700,000				
Amount of Time devoted to S.M.	-.187	Weak	3.50	.064
Plan to increase the use of S.M.	.178	Weak	3.17	.073
Dedicated Staff position for S.M.	-.204	Weak	4.16	.048
Revenue from S.M. fundraising	-.081	Very weak	.66	.361
Generally have the resources to devote to S.M.	-.004	Very weak	.002	.487
Budget ≥ $700,001				
Amount of Time devoted to S.M.	.033	Very weak	.11	.403
Plan to increase the use of S.M.	-.125	Weak	1.56	.176
Dedicated Staff position for S.M.	.052	Very weak	.27	.350
Revenue from S.M. fundraising	.218	Weak	4.75	.185
Generally have the resources to devote to S.M.	-.023	Very weak	.053	.433

note: S.M. stands for Social Media

Additional correlations were analyzed using the variables *amount of time devoted to social media*, *number of social media updates*, *defined goals for using social media*, whether the HSO's *website has social media links* or not, and the existence of a *dedicated staff position* to manage the HSO's social media activities. Following the criteria established for the previous correlations, Pearson's r and Spearman's rho were calculated to explore the relationship among these variables. None of the correlations produced a strong relationship, but they were all significant.

103

The correlation with the number of social media updates and the amount of time devoted to social media produced a Pearson correlation value of r = .505 (p= .000), indicating a moderate positive relationship that accounts for 25.5% of the variance between the two variables. The Spearman correlation value also indicated a moderate positive relationship (r_s= .542, p= .000) accounting for 29.38% of the variance. The correlation with the variable of defined goals and website links to social media produced positive moderate relationship accounting for 12.46% of the variance with both correlation tests (r_p & r_s= .353, p= .000). Finally, the Pearson correlation with the amount of time devoted to social media and the existence of a dedicated social media staff person produced a negative moderate relation accounting for 11.83% of the variance (r_p= -.344, p= .000). The Spearman correlation for the same variables produced a negative moderate relationship as well and accounted for 15.52% of the variance (r_s= -.394, p= .000).

Supplemental Analysis

Four different composite scores were calculated to answer the Likert-scale questions (18-20, & 23) in a more practical manner. The scores are presented here along with a correlation matrix to show the variables that were used to form the composite score. A composite score is calculated using the arithmetic mean or by combining the scores of two or more variables together and dividing by the number of variables (Vogt, 1999).

The composite scores indicate that 50.4% (N=63) of respondents generally agree that experimenting with social media has enhanced the relationship between the HSO and stakeholders, constituents, board members, or the general community (question 18, see Table 4.15). Sixty percent of respondents (N=75) generally agree that social media offers the opportunity to with interact people or organizations of various backgrounds and missions

(question 19, see Table 4.16), and an overwhelming majority of respondents (84.8%, N=106) generally agree that using social media has helped the HSO (question 20, see Table 4.17).

A dichotomous composite score could not be calculated for question 23 as it used a different Likert-scale than the previous questions. This question was meant for respondents to assess the status of their HSO's resources, capacity, or abilities to engage in the use of social media. An account of the composite score, the Likert-scale, and a correlation matrix demonstrating the variables that were used to develop the composite score is provided in table 4.18. Overall, respondents rated the status of their HSO's ability to engage in social media as high (52.8%, N=66), moderate (40%, N=50), and low (2.4%, N=3). A total of two respondents (1.6%) indicated no ability, and four other respondents indicated N/A or not applicable (3.2%).

Table 4.15
Composite Score & Correlation Matrix for Question 18

Composite Score		
Generally Agree N (%)	Generally Disagree N (%)	Don't Know N (%)

Experimenting with social media has enhanced the relationship between the HSO & the stakeholders, constituents, board members, or the general community*		
63 (50.4)	58 (46.4)	4 (3.2)

Correlation Matrix							
		Q18 composite	Social Network sites	Video-sharing sites	Image-sharing sites	Blogs	Location-Based sites
Q18 composite	Pearson Correlation	1	.512**	.826**	.817**	.758**	.808**
	Sig.		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125
Social Network sites	Pearson Correlation	.512**	1	.351**	.330**	.310**	.244**
	Sig.	.000		.000	.000	.000	.003
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125
Video-sharing sites	Pearson Correlation	.826**	.351**	1	.650**	.467**	.577**
	Sig.	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125
Image-sharing sites	Pearson Correlation	.817**	.330**	.650**	1	.442**	.581**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125
Blogs	Pearson Correlation	.758**	.310**	.467**	.442**	1	.548**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125
Location-Based sites	Pearson Correlation	.808**	.244**	.577**	.581**	.548**	1
	Sig.	.000	.003	.000	.000	.000	
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125

* Total N responding = 125

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Table 4.16
Composite Score & Correlation Matrix for Question 19

	Composite Score		
	Generally Agree N (%)	Generally Disagree N (%)	Don't Know N (%)
Social media offers the opportunity to interact with people or organizations of various backgrounds & missions*	75 (60%)	47 (37.6%)	3 (2.4%

Correlation Matrix							
		Q19 composite	Social Network sites	Video-sharing sites	Image-sharing sites	Blogs	Location-Based sites
Q19 composite	Pearson Correlation	1	.452**	.874**	.867**	.818**	.830**
	Sig.		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125
Social Network sites	Pearson Correlation	.452**	1	.290**	.257**	.333**	.211**
	Sig.	.000		.001	.002	.000	.009
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125
Video-sharing sites	Pearson Correlation	.874**	.290**	1	.781**	.605**	.641**
	Sig.	.000	.001		.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125
Image-sharing sites	Pearson Correlation	.867**	.257**	.781**	1	.577**	.657**
	Sig.	.000	.002	.000		.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125
Blogs	Pearson Correlation	.818**	.333**	.605**	.577**	1	.607**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125
Location-Based sites	Pearson Correlation	.830**	.211**	.641**	.657**	.607**	1
	Sig.	.000	.009	.000	.000	.000	
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125

* Total N responding = 125
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

107

Table 4.17

Composite Score & Correlation Matrix for Question 20

Composite Score			
	Generally Agree N (%)	Generally Disagree N (%)	Don't Know N (%)
Using social media has helped the HSO*	106 (84.8%)	17 (13.6%)	2 (1.6%)

Correlation Matrix												
		Q20 composite	Raise Money	Increase Donors	Increase Membership	Increase New Clients	Recruit Volunteers	Increase Community Awareness	Increase Trust	Share Info.	Collaborate	Be more Successful
Q20 composite	Pearson Correlation	1	.771**	.810**	.730**	.702**	.659**	.705**	.775**	.652**	.732**	.765**
	Sig.		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Raise Money	Pearson Correlation	.771**	1	.817**	.503**	.420**	.524**	.454**	.495**	.285**	.482**	.554**
	Sig.	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Increase Donors	Pearson Correlation	.810**	.817**	1	.506**	.470**	.476**	.444**	.603**	.388**	.517**	.597**
	Sig.	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Increase Membership	Pearson Correlation	.730**	.503**	.506**	1	.556**	.529**	.424**	.450**	.360**	.393**	.473**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Increase New Clients	Pearson Correlation	.702**	.420**	.470**	.556**	1	.250**	.434**	.528**	.377**	.494**	.485**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000		.002	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Recruit Volunteers	Pearson Correlation	.659**	.524**	.476**	.529**	.250**	1	.446**	.415**	.435**	.330**	.411**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125

 * Total N responding = 125
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

108

Table 4.17 (continued)

		Q20 composite	Raise Money	Increase Donors	Increase Membership	Increase New Clients	Recruit Volunteers	Increase Community Awareness	Increase Trust	Share Info.	Collaborate	Be more Successful
		Correlation Matrix										
Increase Community Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.705**	.454**	.444**	.424**	.434**	.446**	1	.571**	.634**	.549**	.428**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Increase Trust	Pearson Correlation	.775**	.495**	.603**	.450**	.528**	.415**	.571**	1	.493**	.526**	.552**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Share Info.	Pearson Correlation	.652**	.285**	.388**	.360**	.377**	.435**	.634**	.493**	1	.604**	.492**
	Sig.	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Collaborate	Pearson Correlation	.732**	.482**	.517**	.393**	.494**	.330**	.549**	.526**	.604**	1	.597**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Be More Successful	Pearson Correlation	.765**	.554**	.597**	.473**	.485**	.411**	.428**	.552**	.492**	.597**	1
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Table 4.18

Composite Score & Correlation Matrix for Question 23

	Composite Score				
	High N (%)	Moderate N (%)	Low N (%)	None N (%)	N/A N (%)
Current status of the HSO's resources, capacity, or ability to engage in the use of social media*	66 (52.8)	50 (40)	3 (2.4)	2 (1.6)	4 (3.2)

	Correlation Matrix										
		Q23 composite	Written Mission	Website	Electronic Hardware	Broadband Internet	Knowledge of S.M. Platforms	Strategic Goals	Support from Board	Support from the Community	Outside Assistance	Generally have Resources
Q23 composite	Pearson Correlation	1	.677**	.833**	.831**	.863**	.855**	.786**	.701**	.848**	.669**	.777**
	Sig.		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Written Mission	Pearson Correlation	.677**	1	.641**	.465**	.506**	.491**	.586**	.359**	.445**	.325**	.349**
	Sig.	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Website	Pearson Correlation	.833**	.641**	1	.768**	.814**	.657**	.607**	.466**	.616**	.410**	.527**
	Sig.	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Electronic Hardware	Pearson Correlation	.831**	.465**	.768**	1	.853**	.703**	.582**	.439**	.693**	.461**	.574**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Broadband Internet	Pearson Correlation	.863**	.506**	.814**	.853**	1	.727**	.581**	.491**	.752**	.470**	.593**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Knowledge of S.M. Platforms	Pearson Correlation	.855**	.491**	.657**	.703**	.727**	1	.720**	.552**	.742**	.488**	.660**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125

* Total N responding = 125
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

110

Table 4.18 (continued)

Correlation Matrix

		Q23 composite	Written Mission	Website	Electronic Hardware	Broadband Internet	Knowledge of S.M. Platforms	Strategic Goals	Support from Board	Support from the Community	Outside Assistance	Generally have Resources
Strategic goals	Pearson Correlation	.786**	.586**	.607**	.582**	.581**	.720**	1	.518**	.601**	.396**	.585**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Support from Board	Pearson Correlation	.701**	.359**	.466**	.439**	.491**	.552**	.518**	1	.611**	.492**	.575**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Support from the Community	Pearson Correlation	.848**	.445**	.616**	.693**	.752**	.742**	.601**	.611**	1	.556**	.654**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Outside Assistance	Pearson Correlation	.669**	.325**	.410**	.461**	.470**	.488**	.396**	.492**	.556**	1	.656**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Generally have Resources	Pearson Correlation	.777**	.349**	.527**	.574**	.593**	.660**	.585**	.575**	.654**	.656**	1
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Thematic Analysis- The final analysis included a thematic or content analysis of question 24. Content analysis involves the process of coding and tabulating the occurrences of certain forms of content (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). Answering this question was optional as the nature of the question was to provide an opportunity for the respondent to share anything that he or she felt was not asked during the course of the survey as to why their HSO uses social media. The researcher downloaded the responses and began line-by-line coding to identify themes, concepts, or linkages among the responses (Padgett, 1998). A second and third examination of the responses helped to confirm the presence of a theme and to quantify it (Creswell, 2007)

A total of 37 respondents answered question 24 (29.6%) with responses varying from information pertaining to the HSO and use of social media to individuals stating they were not sure what the last question on the survey instrument was asking (N=5). The results of the thematic analysis mirror results from previous qualitative research on nonprofit organizations and social media (Young, 2010). The most notable theme that emerged was that respondents need assistance with social media. Over 43% (N=16) of respondents who answered question 24 indicated they do not have the resources, primarily indicated as a staff person (N=4), to devote to social media and six respondents indicated the HSO should spend more time using social media. Four respondents actually requested help and provided an email address for follow up, and two other respondents had questions about how to get their board more involved in social media.

The second theme that emerged was related to using social media to help the HSO build capacity. Nearly 22% (N=8) indicated they use social media to help promote the HSO and the programs or services they offer to the community. One respondent indicated they use social media for brand building and another respondent indicated that social media is useful for recruiting volunteers. Two respondents claimed they use social media to engage a younger

112

audience as well as potential donors or supporters of their HSO. This theme is closely related to the final theme, value. A total of four respondents directly mentioned that social media was valuable to their HSO. One respondent mention their HSO was initially hesitant to use social media but has since fully adopted it and "loves it." Another respondent indicated that using social media has helped drive online traffic to the HSO's website, which is "beneficial for raising awareness of programs and educating the public."

Finally, a total of five respondents indicated that the last question was unclear and two of those respondents directly highlighted the last two questions of the survey. Question 23, which was meant to assess the HSO's resources and ability to engage in the use of social media, and question 24, which was meant to provide an opportunity for the respondent to share more information. No theme was developed from these responses, rather they are useful information for the researcher to continue to evaluate and revise the survey instrument for future research.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to provide a description and explanation of the current status of social media use among nonprofit human service organizations. Utilizing descriptive analysis and bivariate correlations aided in exploring why and how human service organizations are using social media. The data suggests that HSO's use social media to promote their organization and or services and programs, and to engage with the community to enhance relationships. Additionally, the evidence suggests that HSO's are generally satisfied with using social media. Chapter five further examines these results through the conceptual model identified in chapter two. A discussion of the limitations and implications of the study is also provided.

<center>**Chapter 5**</center>

<center>**Discussion**</center>

This study begins to fill a gap in the literature and form a foundation for future research in the area of social media and nonprofit human service organizations. Chapter five starts with a study synopsis followed by a discussion of the findings in relation to the conceptual model outlined in chapter two. A discussion about the limitations of this study and the implications and suggestions for future research is also included.

<center>**Study Synopsis**</center>

The aim of this study was to understand the current status of social media use among nonprofit human service organizations. The recent proliferation of social media among the nonprofit sector in general has been well documented (Barnes, 2011; and Barnes & Matteson, 2009). The normative literature is replete with information and guidance in response to the many questions that still exist around adopting this new medium. This study fills a gap in the literature by focusing solely on human service organizations and their use of social media.

This was done using a cross-sectional research design with the objectives of exploring and describing social media use among HSO's. The descriptive objective provides data on the adoption and use of social media among HSO's, and the exploratory objective aids in understanding why these organizations are using social media. The study was guided by five questions, which also form the basis for the conceptual model outlined in chapter two (questions can be viewed in Table 3.1). The conceptual model consists of five dimensions that ultimately make up the current status of social media use among nonprofit human service organizations. The five dimensions include: Reasons for use, social media practices, frequency, general

<center>114</center>

satisfaction, and future plans. These dimensions were constructed with the use of several theories that also guided the direction of this study and influenced the creation of the survey instrument.

Theory aids in framing descriptive studies, often at the level of approach or paradigm (Drake and Johnson-Reid, 2008). The theoretical model presented in chapter two helped to guide the research design and aid in understanding the population as well as describing the characteristics of social media and HSO's. The intention of this study was never to claim or infer causal relationships in the use of social media and the dimensions identified. Rather, this study offers a description to construct a foundation upon which further research can be conducted. It is for this purpose that descriptive and exploratory research designs are well suited (Drake and Johnson-Reid, 2008; and Rubin and Babbie, 2005). Significant findings will be discussed in relation to the theoretical model at a general level and compared with the available literature to offer additional insight.

The study's sample consisted of nonprofit human service organizations in the Richmond, VA metropolitan area, and was identified by constructing a sampling frame from two online databases and two lists of HSO's. The sample of respondents consisted of 120 organizations that were sent emails during a 3-phase data collection process. Data was also collected electronically using direct email, email list serves, and social media to solicit responses by posting a survey link on Facebook and Twitter. The first phase was primarily to notify HSO's of the survey and ask them to respond via the link provided. Subsequent phases helped to remind HSO's of the survey and increase in the number of responses. Over a 160 surveys were started with 135 being completed and a final N of 125 after pre-screening and cleaning the data set.

The survey instrument for this study was created from several other studies found in the literature to help increase its validity. The survey was self-administered and consisted of 24

questions, generally taking respondents about 10 to 12 minutes to complete. Reliability of the survey was addressed by using responses from the survey to test the internal consistency of the Likert-scale questions using Cronbach's alpha of .70 or higher. Results indicated the instrument had good internal consistency with the lowest rating of .80 on questions 18 and 22 (see Table 3.3 in chapter 3). Additional data analysis was completed using SPSS version 20 and consisted primarily of descriptive statistics to aid in summarizing, organizing, and describing the quantitative data. Bivariate correlations were used to explore the relationship between variables and a supplemental analysis was conducted to provide ease in understanding the data through composite scores. Thematic analysis was used to examine the responses provided in question 24. Discussion of significant findings follows in the next section.

Discussion of Significant Findings

The current status of social media use among nonprofit human service organizations is divided amongst the five dimensions highlighted in the conceptual model. General questions were identified from those dimensions and listed in Table 3.1. The following discussion is organized around those questions and the conceptual model. A discussion of the supplemental analysis and the thematic analysis of question 24 is also included.

A total of 125 respondents completed the survey surpassing the target of 115. A majority of the respondents identified themselves as the executive director, president, or chief executive officer (CEO). Respondents average length of time with the HSO was just over six years and all of the HSO's have been in existence for two years or longer. The majority of respondents identified their HSO's main focus or mission as being related to (1) education, (2) mental health/crisis intervention/ health, and (3) youth programs. The average annual budget was reported at over 2.8 million dollars. Only one organization did not have a website and of those

116

that did have a website, 82% indicated the website contained links to their social media profiles. This is interesting since many organizations reported using social media to promote their organization or advertise their programs and services.

Reasons for using Social Media

Human service organization's use of social media was broken down into four constructs that stem from the literature and include: Community engagement, transparency, fundraising, and marketing/promoting. The finding that 82% of HSO websites have links to their social media profiles is promising as some have indicated the potential for social media to create opportunities for engagement (Bortree & Selter, 2009; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010; Waters & Jamal, 2011). The remaining 16% that have no such links appear to align with other suggestions that nonprofit organizations are not using the full potential of their websites (Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009; Kang and Norton, 2004). Both of these findings are notable as 96% of respondents stated the number one reason for using social media was to promote their HSO or advertise their programs and services, followed closely by community engagement at 92%. Certainly one of the simplest ways to use social media is to draw people to the website and to use the website to foster community engagement through social media. A website link to an organization's social media platforms would also encourage more interaction and help to promote the HSO.

Social media creates a dialogic capacity with an otherwise static website by offering the opportunity to comment, share, or interact with the HSO. Many have argued the paramount strategy in using social media should be to engage with and build a relationship with the public (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011; Bortree & Selter, 2009; Kent, 2008; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010; Waters & Jamal, 2011: and Young, 2010). In fact, 73% of respondents indicated that engaging the public was the primary reason their HSO's was initially prompted to use social media. It

117

appears that many HSO's understand the value of community engagement but that the reality of supporting the organization through various marketing activities supercedes it as 62% reported the prompt to use social media stemmed from wanting to reach new potential supporters of the organization.

The link between community engagement and promoting the HSO warrants further exploration. Many claim that enhancing the relational components of organizational websites will increase opportunities to engage new donors, increase fundraising potential, recruit volunteers, and build community (Hackler & Saxton, 2007; Sargeant et al., 2007; Kang & Norton, 2004; Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009; Waters, 2007). Nonprofit organizations are constantly thinking about how to sustain the organization and build trust in the community, which is validated by the data in this study. However, it is interesting to note that fundraising was rated fifth among respondents (66%) as to the reason for adopting social media behind recruiting volunteers. It seems that community engagement may be slightly more important to HSO's, although what community engagement ultimately means also needs further investigation.

Examining the primary reasons for using social media through the lens of Resource Dependency Theory offers further insight on promoting the organization and community engagement. The central premise of Resource Dependency Theory is that "the key to organizational survival is the ability to acquire and maintain resources" (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978, p. 2). A resource is anything that is deemed valuable such as information, capital, or other materials (Tillquist, King, & Woo, 2002). The fact that HSO's do not primarily use social media to generate funds is interesting, but more importantly it demonstrates that HSO's understand fundraising should not be the primarily reason to use social media as it will likely prove to be futile if implemented the wrong way.

118

Social media allows others to engage with entities in ways like never before. This also creates a paradox, according to Resource Dependency Theory, as the interaction with other entities produces dependency, which causes the organization to give up some control (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). This can be challenging for HSO's that do not know how to navigate the digital environment in ways that can balance the relationship between the organization and the online community. Some organizations have learned how to do this well, and they understand the opportunity to demonstrate accountability and transparency with the aid of social media (Kanter & Fine, 2010). Yet, transparency was the least identified reason for adopting social media in this study. It is possible that HSO's are not as inclined to think about promoting transparency because often their organizations offer services to the community such as counseling, parenting classes, or afterschool programs. For example, demonstrating openness and accountability with counseling services or programs requires creativity and a vision to communicate transparency in a way that is beneficial to the HSO while maintaining confidentiality of participants in those programs.

The primary reason of promoting the organization is understandable given the theoretical view of Contingency Theory. This theory acknowledges the external environment similarly to Resource Dependency Theory; however, in the Contingency Theory of organizations, organizational effectiveness stems from fitting characteristics to contingencies that reflect the situation of the organization (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). Furthermore, evidence suggests that successful organizations align themselves in a manner compatible with their technology (Woodward, 1958). Human service organizations appear to be aligning themselves with social media technologies through the use and adoption of social media as demonstrated by this study.

Finally, it appears that responding to the external environment is not a primary reason for adopting social media, as it was thought to be based on the premise of both Resource Dependency Theory and Contingency Theory. These theories acknowledge that the external environment, or the general community, is vital in the overall success of an organization (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Donaldson, 2001; and Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Only 21% of respondents directly indicated their HSO adopted social media because the community or their clients requested them to use it. Although it appears that HSO's acknowledge the crucial role of their community by indicating how important community engagement is, it does not appear that HSO's are responding to the external environment through the adoption of social media. However, the ease of interaction with the community that social media allows may be a form of responding to the external environment. This validates why nonprofit organizations have outpaced other sectors, such as business or government, in social media adoption (Barnes, 2011; and Barnes & Matteson, 2009).

Social Media Practices

Organizations across all different sectors utilize social media in a variety of ways and have led many organizations to create a position solely dedicated to managing social media. This new position is often referred to as an online community manager or social media manager (Flandez, 2010). This study found that 81% of HSO's have no such position. Often the duties of social media are assumed under another role such as the communications or marketing directors. A total of 25 respondents indicated their HSO did have a position for managing social media, and the majority of those respondents indicated the title of that position as Community Outreach Coordinator, even though the title varies. Whether or not an HSO has a social media manager, this study sought to understand the social media practices of these organizations by examining

120

what tools they use, the content they share, organizational policies and goals surrounding social media.

The top three most widely used social media platforms include Facebook (98%), Twitter (72%), and YouTube (70%). Blogs were being used among 50% of the respondents; however, a few respondents indicated using the blogging service Tumblr in the "other" category, which could increase that percentage. It is not surprising that these three social media platforms were identified as the most popular as anecdotal evidence confirms that these platforms are the mostly widely used across sectors and are most visible to society with their logos being seen in commercials and media programs. Facebook and Twitter were also rated number one and number two by comScore, which is an Internet company measuring the digital world (Radwanick & Lipsman, 2012). Others have also suggested nonprofit organizations would adopt social media more as it became ingrained in daily life (Waters, 2007), and research has begun to confirm this adoption (Barnes, 2011; Barnes & Matteson, 2009; LaCasse, Quinn, & Bernard, 2010).

The type of content being shared via social media includes newsletters or information about the HSO, links to the HSO's website, and photos from community or organizational projects. Each of these three types was identified by 88% of the respondents. The next two highest were links to specific information (74%) and links to other organizations (65%). This study did not ask respondents to clarify what links to specific information encompassed, which is an area for further research. The assumption of the specific information response is that an HSO is sharing links and other information, which may be generally useful to their audience but not directly benefiting the HSO in any way. This is one of the ideological foundations of social media described in chapter one. The act of sharing information and engaging in the participatory culture of social media is valuable to organizations because it helps with increasing awareness

121

about the HSO and the programs or services it offers. Sharing information and links that are not directly related to the HSO also makes the organization seem more genuine, help to increase trust, and strengthen bonds with the online community. This will be further discussed in the general satisfaction section.

Social media allows individuals to network and share information (Hopkins, 2008; and Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Individuals can create and shape their own stories, engage in peer learning, and increase trust (Jenkins et al., 2009; and Kanter & Fine, 2010). Media Richness Theory (MRT) explains how social media contributes to these outcomes. Media characteristics such as images, video, and text impact the information exchange process based on the richness of the content (Daft & Lengel, 1984). Social media allows for multiple communication channels to engage in understanding, which may also contribute to the reasons why HSO's use social media. It is not surprising that 88% of HSO's use social media to share photos of their events. It is common practice to share images among various social media platforms, and the act of doing so helps increase the richness of what is being communicated. Determining what content to share may also be impacted by the organizational policies.

Generally HSO's do not have policies regarding social media. Nearly 85% indicated no policy existed prohibiting the staff use of social media. However, 80% reported that social media websites were blocked from access on their work computers, which effectively may stop them from using social media. This finding is notable because it has been argued that successful social media use is dependent upon using a networked mindset, characterized by principles of openness, transparency, decentralized decision-making, distributed action, and engaging individuals in shaping the work of the organization (Kanter & Fine, 2010; and Scearce, Kasper & Grant, 2009). It is also interesting to note that many respondents stated they need more

assistance with using social media. Overcoming this challenge may begin at the administrative level with a discussion regarding general social media use on behalf of the HSO. Many respondents (54%) did identify a policy in regards to handling comments posted to their Facebook page, Twitter, or Blogs. This is important because of the multiple audiences the HSO may interact with, and while commenting allows increased interaction, it may also have negative consequences if comments are inappropriate or reflect negatively on the image of the HSO. However, some state that commenting in general is important as it offers the opportunity to engage individuals in a discussion to raise awareness or overcome challenges (Kanter & Fine, 2010; and Young, 2010).

Discussing organizational policies around social media may also impact the organizational goals of using social media. Of the 125 respondents, 62% stated the HSO had no goals for using social media. The question for them may still remain, why do they use it? On the other hand, 38% indicated they do have social media goals with the top priority being community engagement followed by promoting the organization. Again it is interesting to note that fundraising was rated poorly, perhaps further indicating that the generation of revenue is not as important to HSO's compared to engaging the community. The fact that 62% of HSO have no goals for using social media is concerning as this new medium offers tremendous potential to assist with a variety of organizational activities. It also may be difficult to communicate the importance of social media to board members or other administrators if the HSO has not developed goals for using this new medium. In order to be successful these HSO's should begin to think strategically about social media, be cognizant of the available tools and how they align with the organizational goals or activities, and to plan for their integration, implementation, and

evaluation (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; and Kietzman, Hermkens, McCarthy, and Silvestre, 2011).

Social Network Theory may offer guidance in thinking strategically about social media. Social Network Theory stems from Network analysis and is mainly concerned with the pattern of ties linking members of a society (Burt, 1992). Facebook exemplifies a society for many HSO's and offers a glimpse of who their constituents may be, potential new supporters, or even possible volunteers. Leveraging their social network begins by identifying the ties between members, reaching out to strengthen weak ties, and further cultivating relationships with other individuals. Doing so can help build strategic alliances, increase collaboration, and become more effective by building capacity at a number of levels (Kanter & Fine, 2010; and Paarlberg & Varda, 2009). Similar to other strategic goals organizations enact, they should also begin to think about strategic planning in regards to social media.

Frequency

The frequency dimension relates to the number of hours an HSO devotes to social media in a given week, the number of posts generated in a day, and the year the HSO implemented the use of social media. Distributed across the organization, HSO's devoted less than six hours on average to social media activities in a given week. Overall, 81% of HSO's spend less than 10 hours a week using social media. This finding may be high as several respondents indicated spending 35 to 40 hours a week using social media. These respondents represent the social media managers discussed previously. Currently there is no known baseline for the number of hours that should be devoted to social media activities. An average of six hours a week may seem rather small, but it demonstrates how many HSO's lack the resources to devote to social media, with a primary resource being a dedicated staff position to manage social media activities.

The social media activities consist of updating the HSO's Facebook status, tweeting information, or posting videos to YouTube. All of these status updates, as they were defined in this study, correspond to the number of updates in a day. Seventy-four percent of respondents' post 0-2 updates, while 22% post 3-5, and 3% post 6-8 updates a day. There was only one HSO that reported posting more than nine updates in a given day. This seems logical given the amount of time devoted to social media activities in a week. The posting of content may not necessarily require much time, yet the generation of content can prove to be relatively labor intensive. As one may expect, organizations that employ a dedicated social media manager would be more likely to post an increasing number of updates to their social media platforms and have higher levels of engagement with the online community.

The top three social media platforms were identified previously. The year social media tools were adopted varies from one HSO adopting blogs in 2003 to many adopting numerous platforms from that date forward. For this study, the most common time to adopt social media included the years 2008 to 2009, and the adoption trend only increased from there. The number of adopters and the speed of adoption are best understood through Diffusion Theory (Rogers, 2003). One element of the diffusion process is the length of time and rate of speed that individuals adopt an innovation. Rogers (2003) classifies these individuals as either innovators, early adopters, early majority, later majority, or laggards (p. 22). This continuum represents individuals who actively seek out new ideas (innovators), and on to those who are last in the social system to adopt or laggards (Rogers, 2003). Comparing the trend of adoption (Table 4.3) to Rogers (2003) diffusion process illustrates how HSO's fall along the continuum of innovation adopters. Facebook saw the most dramatic growth followed by Twitter and YouTube. The speed of adoption from 2008 to 2010 is also shown in Table 4.3 and shows how the social media

125

phenomenon has diffused across the subset of HSO's in the nonprofit sector. Rogers (2003) explains that innovations are more likely to spread within a system when individuals see others using the innovation as well as how it might benefit them. Additionally, people are more likely to use an innovation if it is simple to use, free to try, and fulfills a particular need (Rogers, 2003). The other dimensions identified in this study also demonstrate how social media has become so popular with HSO's.

The evidence in this study confirms what happens with the diffusion of innovations. A few organizations adopt social media early and demonstrate its usefulness with a variety of organizational strategies. One respondent in this study may represent the early adopter as they indicated their HSO began using Facebook in 2005. However, this may not be completely accurate as Facebook was initially restricted to college students. It was in 2006 that the social network was opened to everyone above the age of 13 (Abram, 2006). Regardless of when an HSO adopted the use of social media, the evidence from this study indicates HSO's range from innovators to late adopters. The time one adopts an innovation is not necessarily good or bad. It merely represents the point of interaction with the innovation.

The last notable finding in regards to the time dimension has to do with the organization's social media policies. Most of the HSO's in this study generally do not have social media policies. However, examining the trends tables in chapter four demonstrates how the implementation of policies mirrors that of the adoption of social media. The increase in the use of social media should accompany a discussion of social media policies at the very minimum. As was reported, HSO's do not necessarily prohibit social media use but they also do not necessarily grant access to social media using organizational computers. It is promising to see that HSO's do have a policy regarding how to handle comments posted on their social media

126

platforms, as this was adopted the most frequently along with the increased adoption of social media. However, further research warrants an exploration of what the policy means. A discussion of general social media policies will further help HSO's to think strategically about how social media aligns with their organizational goals and assist with avoiding the pitfalls of adopting a new strategy.

General Satisfaction

The general satisfaction dimension examines attitudes towards social media based on the ability to engage in using social media and related outcomes. Four components of this dimension include resources, community engagement, general feelings about social media, and fundraising. Community engagement and fundraising were also components of the dimension on reasons for use; however, they are included here for an exploration related to outcomes associated with using social media.

Respondents indicated their HSO generally has a high to moderate resources to engage in the use of social media (69%). The results of the thematic analysis seem to contradict this finding as 13% of respondents reported they do not have the resources, which were primarily defined as a staff person to manage the social media activities. The quantitative data did reveal that HSO's have low to moderate support from board members, low to moderate access to outside assistance for social media pursuits from either individuals or their social networks, and low to moderate knowledge of how to use social media to meet strategic goals. The last finding is similar to the result that 62% of HSO's have not defined any goals in the social media practices dimension. These results corroborate evidence that nonprofit organizations are unsure about how to move forward with social media in a strategic and meaningful way (Ogden and Starita, 2009; Saxton & Guo, 2011; Waters et al., 2009; and Young, 2010).

Despite the lack of board involvement, knowledge to meet strategic goals, and access to outside assistance, HSO's appear poised to do very well with social media. Many respondents indicated some basic necessities to use social media such as the existence of broadband Internet, technological hardware, and a written mission statement. The mission statement is important as it can be used to help guide the strategic thinking, planning, and use of social media (Kanter & Fine, 2010; and Mansfield, 2011). One last interesting finding in regards to the resources is that none of the respondents indicated a lack of support from their community. This is promising as it may show that respondents feel the community is accepting of the HSO's move into the online environment. If an organization had indicated their community did not support the use of social media, they should re-examine their online efforts.

The evidence that HSO's feel community acceptance could also be related to their feelings about the ability to engage the community through social media. Nearly half of all the respondents felt that (50.4%) that experimenting with social media has enhanced the relationship between the HSO and stakeholders, constituents, board members, or the general community. Furthermore, 60% of respondents generally agree that social media offers the opportunity to interact with people and other organizations. Less than 50% of respondents indicated this interaction might help increase donors, membership, the number of clients, and raise money. However, an overwhelming majority of respondents (84.8%) generally agree that using social media has helped the HSO in several ways. More specifically, respondents agreed that social media helps with sharing information, increasing community awareness of programs and services, collaborating, and recruiting volunteers.

Notwithstanding the positive feelings towards social media, one result of this study further indicates respondents' attitudes in regards to the outcome of fundraising. The average

128

amount of money generated through social media fundraising was $6,219. However, 56% of respondents indicated that social media fundraising generated less than $2,500. Online fundraising offers tremendous potential, yet many nonprofits have been slow to capitalize on this opportunity (Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009; Kang and Norton, 2004). It appears that HSO's need help defining strategic goals as well as how to use social media to help with their fundraising efforts. However, some nonprofits do not use social media to raise money. As evidenced above, many HSO's use social media to engage the community in other ways.

The idea of community engagement aligns with the concept of social capital, or the creation of trust and strengthening of community. Many nonprofits work to create trust and establish bonds within the community and otherwise increase social capital (Saxton & Benson, 2005). This enables HSO's and other participants to work together more effectively to pursue shared objectives. The incorporation of social media as a strategy for HSO's naturally aligns with the basic element of the organization, their social purpose. It appears that HSO's understand the value of using social media to encourage their community to participate, collaborate, and ultimately connect for some greater good because 60% of respondents agreed that social media enhances the relationship between the HSO and the community.

Examining the general satisfaction dimension through Contingency Theory clarifies the uncertainty that HSO's face with social media. The digital environment has changed and some do not completely understand how to react, while other HSO's have remained flexible and accepted the increased interaction and openness that social media allows. Human service organizations should continue to remain as organic as possible so as to identify the best possible strategy, and continue to encourage participation and engage with their community in a way that

produces successful outcomes. Identifying and fitting organizational characteristics to the contingencies it is faced with is the first step in making this process happen.

Future Plans

Technology is constantly changing and new social media platforms are developed nearly everyday. For example, several respondents identified the relatively new social media platform, Pinterest, which has seen a recent increase in popularity. This platform was identified in the "other" categories of several questions and illustrates how technology quickly changes because Pinterest was not included in the question asking respondents about which platforms the HSO is currently using.

The future plans dimensions sought to explore what goals and or policies HSO's may adopt in the future. There was no indication of adopting future policies in regards to social media. This is another area where HSO's may begin to think strategically about their use of social media as a mechanism to engage the community and further enhance relationships or sustain their organization. The policy discussion becomes increasingly relevant given that 36% of respondents indicated their top goal is to increase community engagement. This goal was followed closely by promoting the organization (34%) and increasing the use of social media (30%). The data indicates that HSO's have begun to use other social media platforms that have come online in more recent years, such as Pinterest and Google +. However, HSO's will need to think more strategically about social media policies if they plan to achieve their goals.

Increasing community engagement, promoting the organization, and increasing the use of social media reveal that HSO's are headed in the right direction as these goals reflect the basis found in several theories from the theoretical model. Contingency Theory and Resource Dependency Theory provide insight on how HSO's plan to manage the inherent uncertainty of

130

social media by increasing their use of this new medium, which should add to their experience and knowledge. This further demonstrates innovative thinking and maintaining an organic structure as required under Contingency Theory to match organizational characteristics to the contingencies of social media. The hope is that HSO's will begin to use social media in meaningful ways that help to sustain the organization and increase community engagement to further build social capital. If the diffusion of social media across the nonprofit sector is an indication of innovation adoption, then the hope is that the diffusion of ideas and strategies associated with this new medium are not that far behind.

Bivariate Results

The main objective of this analysis was to explore the relationship between an HSO's annual budget and the amount of time devoted to social media in an attempt to explore the digital divide hypothesis discussed in the literature, which essentially posits that organizations with more resources have a greater ability to innovate (Fryer & Granger, 2008; McNutt & Menon, 2008; and Rogers, 2003). The researcher assumed, based on the literature, that HSO's with a small budget would not be as inclined to use or benefit from social media. This was primarily looked at from the ability of the organization to devote more time to social media. A bivariate correlation test analyzed the variables *annual budget* and *number of staff hours* devoted to social media. The results are best viewed with caution because of the limitations of the data, which are discussed in the study limitations section.

Despite the limitations, it appears there is a moderate relationship between HSO's with annual budgets greater than $700,001 and time devoted to social media activities, which appears to support the notion of the digital divide in regards to social media. However, this data cannot confirm or support the digital divide hypothesis in regards to social media use among HSO's and

further research is needed to assess whether small HSO's fall behind their larger counterparts. All the other correlations produced weak to very weak relationships or the statistical tests were not significant. It is interesting to note that the data in this study confirm that small HSO's continue to adopt social media and plan to increase the use of social media in the future despite a lack of resources. This is further evidence that social media is valuable to these organizations.

Study Limitations

Study Design

Although this study provides important information on the use of social media in human service organizations and establishes a foundation for future research, several limitations emerged during this process. The first limitation of this study is that it utilized a cross-sectional design to capture information on the use of social media at one point in time. This design minimizes threats to internal validity such as maturation, history, and instrumentation (Drake & Johnson-Reid, 2008). However, the subject of social media, and technology in general, is prone to rapid change and development. A point in time study fails to capture this. For example, the survey instrument listed many popular social media platforms to assess what HSO's are using. However, one platform (Pinterest) was not included, but subsequently identified by some respondents in the their text responses. This platform has been in existence since 2010, but only recently saw a popularity boom among users in the last year.

The sampling frame used for this study is another limitation as it may restrict the generalizability to the broader population of nonprofit organizations. The study employed two online databases and two lists of nonprofit human service organizations in the Richmond, VA – metropolitan area. The databases and lists in this sampling frame may not be fully up to date, or for a variety of reasons some organizations may not have elected to be included in a particular

132

database. The identification of the lists and databases in this sampling frame was selected on the basis of feasibility, as they were easily accessible, matched the focus of this study, and were comprehensive enough to obtain an appropriate sample size for statistical analysis. Additionally, the use of nonprobability sampling procedures to obtain this sample further weakens the generalizability of the study findings.

The web-based survey and collection method is another limitation of this study. Although web-based surveys are more feasible and economical to administer in a wide geographical area, this study was not able to calculate a true response rate because the number of surveys was not tracked through the various social media platforms the survey link was provided on. Additionally, there is no truly accurate way to measure if an individual saw the survey or not. Electronic surveys can be tracked once they are clicked, and the Qualtrics electronic software was able to track the number of surveys started and completed, which is further discussed in the next section. Another issue was the self-administration of the survey as the researcher was not able to answer or clarify respondents' questions during the completion of the survey.

Measurement Instrument

The survey instrument used for this study maintains good internal validity as it was developed from several other studies found in the literature and it was tested for reliability. However, one limitation to the survey is that it was constructed for this study. This creates issues in regards to the reliability and validity of the survey. The survey was reviewed for errors, logic and flow, but the final survey instrument was never thoroughly pilot tested. This may have added to the reason why several respondents reported that they did not understand what the last two questions were asking. The final question (an open-ended text box) was included to provide the opportunity for respondents to add anything else they deemed valuable, as well as to help the

133

researcher fine tune the survey for future use, which will aid in overcoming some of the issues regarding validity and reliability.

Despite exceeding the desired sample size for this study, there were a number of responses missing, or surveys started and not completed. A total of 162 surveys were started and only 135 were completed. The missing data and incompletion of the surveys seems to substantiate the notion that web-based surveys may be conceived as less personal than traditional paper-based surveys (Dillman, 2000). Dillman (2000) implies that web-based surveys fail to establish a relationship between the respondent and the researcher because there is no obvious expense on the part of the researcher, wherein there is a cost for traditional paper-based surveys (Meeks, 2009). The number of surveys completed for this study did increase once the incentive was added. Further research is warranted in comparing the use of social media and traditional paper-based surveys to solicit data and will be discussed later in this chapter.

Data Analysis and Findings

The main limitations regarding data analysis were the violations of the statistical assumptions of the bivariate statistical procedures. Pearson's correlation assumptions include; linearity, the presence of outliers, and a normal distribution. Despite using an alternative nonparametric test to compensate for these violations (Spearman's rho), caution in interpreting the findings is warranted due to the risk of committing a Type I error (the risk of finding relationships that do not exist because of the influence of other variables not included in the model (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995; and Vogt, 1999).

Composite scores were calculated to further demonstrate the overall feelings and general satisfaction respondents have in regards to using social media. The arithmetic mean was used to generate the scores from the corresponding questions. One issue emerged during data analysis

that requires further refinement of the construct community engagement. The data suggested that respondents' felt social media helped them engage the community. However, what does engagement actually mean and how could it be more accurately measured?

A final limitation of this study is the thematic analysis conducted on question 24. The qualitative data is valuable, however, without a critical view of the analysis one could misinterpret the findings as more important than they are due to the small number of respondents (N=37). Several themes corroborate previous research findings; however, caution is warranted in making any conclusions. For example, a number of respondents indicated they needed more assistance with social media. This finding is contradicts the findings of question 23 that shows nearly 53% of respondents rate their HSO's ability to engage in social media as high. In light of the limitations and the notable findings, implications for nonprofits, human service organizations, and social work specifically are discussed in the next section.

Implications

The current status of social media use among nonprofit human service organizations is that HSO's initially adopted social media to engage with the community. Although many HSO's continue to do this, promoting the HSO's programs and services has also become a top priority. This is primarily done using Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to share organizational newsletters, photos from projects, links to the HSO, and other information with their online community at least twice a day. Human service organizations have been using social media for more than five years and most plan to continue using social media in the future. Although HSO's reported using social media less than ten hours a week, they were generally satisfied with the outcomes but admitted more assistance is needed.

Although the current status of social media use among HSO's appears promising, many aspects of using this new medium require more attention. The evidence in this study may not confirm whether the digital divide of social media among HSO's is decreasing or increasing; however, the study does suggest that HSO's could benefit from additional assistance. McNutt & Menon (2008) argue the digital divide is particularly problematic where "situations of e-government activity has increased technological hurdles for participating in rule making and lobbying the legislature" as organizations may be left behind (p. 37). Expanding knowledge and technological capacity may be the first steps to closing the gap.

The digital divide is an important implication to consider when thinking about the participatory culture of social media. Henry Jenkins (2006) explains that focusing on expanding access to new technologies only takes one so far if there is not also a contemporaneous fostering of the skills and cultural knowledge necessary to deploy these tools towards certain ends. Access is important, but the development of a new skill set and knowledge is equally significant. This development stems from interaction via individuals using social media to work with a networked mindset, acting on the principles of openness, transparency, decentralized decision-making, and distributed action (Scearce, Kasper, & Grant, 2009). This is the social media ecology concept discussed in chapter one, which involves the platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, but also involves the user-generated activity of participatory culture to share information, connect with others for peer-to-peer learning opportunities, and a more empowered conception of citizenship. Closing the digital divide will be a multifaceted effort, but the use of social media and the participatory culture that it engenders will undoubtedly help to shrink the gap.

A second implication of this study is the need to think strategically about how to use social media. Many social media experts (Kanter & Fine, 2009; and Mansfield, 2011) assert the

variety of benefits of using social media in the nonprofit sector. However, little empirical evidence exists that examines human service organizations directly. This study represents one of the first attempts to fill this gap in the literature and provide a foundation for future inquiry. Increased understanding of the current status of social media use among HSO's will aid in assisting organizations with defining goals and thinking strategically about fundraising, promoting the organization, increasing transparency and accountability, as well as how to engage the community and support the organization in a way that is mutually beneficial.

The evidence from this study indicates a strategic social media plan should begin with a discussion around how to use social media and who should be involved. This means identifying who or how many individuals are responsible for the social media activities of the HSO and determining the best way to balance promoting the organization with community engagement so as to foster trust and maintain a genuine connection with the community. Respondents within this study seem to understand that social media users do not simply want advertisements, but rather real interaction with the organization. This can be done through transparency and accountability in addition to thinking creatively about community engagement. Finally, a discussion about how or whether to engage in fundraising via social media should also accompany a strategic social media plan so that precious resources are not wasted on efforts that result in diminutive dividends. Online fundraising is becoming increasingly fruitful and important (Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009; and Rosenburg, Rooney, Steuerle, & Toran, 2011)), but respondents in this study seem to understand that cultivating a genuine relationship with their online community will have greater dividends for the HSO in the long term.

The current status of social media use among HSO's validates how technology is changing the way people interact. This has a profound impact on HSO's as well as social work

137

practice. McNutt & Menon (2008) argued, "social work advocates cannot ignore the promise that cyberspace and technology offers" (p. 38). This study demonstrates that social media cannot be ignored and that it encompasses more than just advocacy. One of the main tenets in social work is about creating connections and empowering vulnerable and oppressed populations. Social media offers these opportunities for those who care about social justice issues to empower others, share meaningful stories, raise awareness about particular issues, and to connect with others in more powerful ways. This connection is not meant to supplant the traditional face-to-face interaction, rather it is meant to support and enhance it. This is happening right now with the flow of content across multiple media platforms, which encourages people to seek out connections, new information, and to move towards a participatory culture. This is the cultural shift of convergence described by Henry Jenkins (2006). This study illustrates the profound motivation for adopting social media as respondents recognize the incredible potential for connecting with individuals and increasing community engagement for the greater good.

The power of social media and participatory culture resides within the people who are passionate enough to mobilize and respond to an issue. The ideological underpinnings of social media combined with the social purpose of HSO's explain why this combination is a natural fit. The social media ecology and participatory culture described in chapter one encourage sharing, learning, openness, and impact individuals in deep and meaningful ways through the creation of trust and empowerment. Human service organizations also work to create trust and empower those whom they serve. Obviously this can only be done when the tools are used in an appropriate manner. However, this is one of the greatest and most exciting aspects of this new medium.

This study provides a foundation to explore best practices and offer suggestions for future research. The fact that a number of human service organizations are using social media and believe it to be valuable is an indication that this area of inquiry is important to social work practice, administration, and advocacy. The path of social media in social work holds incredible potential and should not be diminished or simply relegated to other professions. Others use this new medium and social work cannot afford to be left behind. The ecology of social media represents a new paradigm of building community, empowering others, developing a new skill set, and connecting for the greater good. Suggestions for future research are discussed in the next section.

Suggestions for future research

Several ideas for future research suggested from this study include:

1. Defining community engagement and how to measure it is the first suggestion for future research. The data results suggest the importance of community engagement with social media yet there is no clear indication of what community engagement actually includes. It may be the act of increasing awareness of HSO programs or issues, or it could be the act of discussing relevant topics to increase civic engagement and move citizens towards some type of action. Whatever definition of community engagement the individual HSO choose to use, further exploration might include follow up interviews with HSO's asking questions about their conception of this term and then how to measure it. Metrics could include the number of responses to one of the HSO's status updates or blogs, or perhaps the number of mentions and re-tweets via Twitter. This information would be valuable to HSO administrators investing resources into social media.

139

2. Additional research may seek to establish cause and effect relationships to assist with organizational strategies. For example, assessing the relationship between inputs and outputs to determine the return on investment with social media. This could help organizations determine whether or not social media, or a particular aspect, is appropriate for the organization. Implementing and evaluating successful strategies may help build capacity and social media may be part of an overall plan to make the organization become sustainable for long-term community benefit. The addition of rigorous multivariate statistics should help with this suggestion. The survey instrument would need to be refined to obtain adequate data for multivariate analysis.

3. The survey instrument could also be used with other 501c(3) nonprofit organizations, such as religious organizations, to assess the current status of their use of social media. Many religious organizations have begun to adopt social media to assist with communications and other activities, but the research in this area is less than what is available with human service organizations. The question of why religious organizations use social media and what benefits they ascertain from this new medium are particularly relevant to the nonprofit sector.

4. Future research related to survey methodology and social media is warranted as this study used both email and social media to solicit responses. Research comparing paper-based surveys to web-based surveys indicates that the traditional mailing and paper surveys offer a higher response rate and increased quality of responses (Dillman, 2000). However, no research exists comparing these methods with the addition of social media. A study comparing response rates between

traditional mail, email, and social media as well as the quality of responses would surely fill a gap in the literature as this new medium offers increased practicability to solicit survey respondents.

5.   A final suggestion for future research is related to community perceptions of the HSO that uses social media. The evidence suggests that community engagement is important to the HSO; however, what does the community actually think of the HSO using social media to engage them? This study was conducted primarily from an organizational perspective. Stepping outside of the organization and examining it from the perspective of the community may illuminate new ideas or provide suggestions for the future use of social media.

Conclusion

The objective of this study was to describe the current status of social media use among nonprofit human service organizations and to further understand why and how HSO's use this new medium. Interest in this topic emerged from prior research with several nonprofit organizations and their use of social media as well as the general lack of evidence suited specifically for human service organizations. Social media represents a new and innovative opportunity for nonprofit organizations to further the critical work they do in the areas they seek to serve. A vast majority of organizations in business, government, and nonprofit sectors have adopted social media, and many questions about this new medium still remain.

The current status of social media use among nonprofit human service organizations establishes a strong foundation for other HSO's to discuss the uncertainty of the future, identify goals and strategies to help the HSO move forward. Increased understanding of why and how to use social media will also help HSO's to determine strategies for using social media that can add

to the sustainability of the organization. The hope is that by using social media both the organization and the community it interacts with will both benefit. Evaluating the mutually beneficial relationship could be the most difficult challenge yet. This study is one of the first of its kind to focus solely on human service organizations. The study results may or may not be generalizable to the entire nonprofit population, but the promise of this research lies in creating a foundation of understanding from which future studies may be replicated and further enhanced to ascertain the benefit of using social media, identify best practices or strategies for social media use, and to determine the appropriateness of this medium for a variety nonprofit organizations.

142

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144

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Appendix A

Richmond, VA Metropolitan Statistical Area
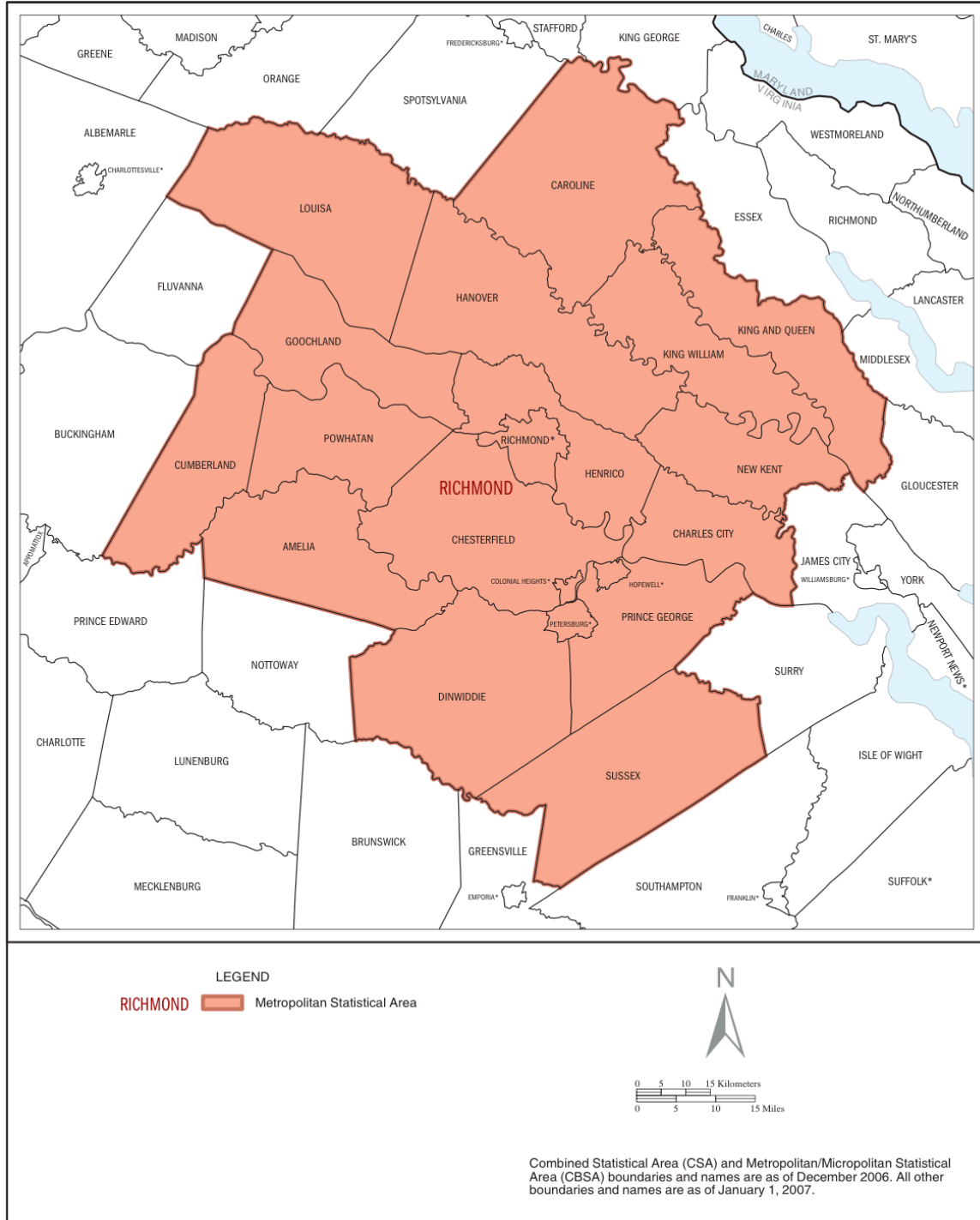
Appendix B

Study Variables Details

Dimension of Social Media Use	Variable Label	Survey Questions	Literature Source
Reasons for Social media Use	Community Engagement	14, 15	LaCasse, Quinn, & Bernard, 2010; Ogden & Starita, 2009; and Young, 2010
	Transparency	14	Ogden & Starita, 2009
	Fundraising	15, 20	LaCasse, Quinn, & Bernard, 2010; and Ogden & Starita, 2009
	Marketing	14	Ogden & Starita, 2009; and Young, 2010
Social Media Practices	Social Media	7, 8, 10, 11	Ingelhoff & Koelling, 2009; Kang & Norton, 2004; and Smith, 2010
	Rich Content	12	Daft & Lengel, 1984
	Policies	11	Smith, 2010
	Goals	13	Quinn & Berry, 2010
Frequency	Time	17	Andrei, Quinn, & Bernard, 2011
	Number of Posts	16	Andrei, Quinn, & Bernard, 2011
	Date of Implementation	10	Smith, 2010
General Satisfaction	Resources	23	McKinsey & Company 2001; and Meeks, 2009
	Community Engagement	18, 19	LaCasse, Quinn, & Bernard, 2010
	Fundraising	20, 21, 23	Andrei, Quinn, & Bernard, 2011; LaCasse, Quinn, & Bernard, 2010; and Ogden & Starita, 2009
	Feelings about Social Media	22	Andrei, Quinn, & Bernard, 2010; Barnes & Mattson, 2009
Future Plans	Policies	11	Smith, 2010
	Goals	13, 22	Andrei, Quinn, & Bernard, 2010; Barnes & Mattson, 2009; and Quinn & Bernard, 2010

162

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Appendix C

Recruitment Narrative

I would like to let you know about a research study being conducted as part of a dissertation and in conjunction with Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School of Social Work. Broadly speaking, the study deals with how nonprofit human service organizations are using social media technology. The purpose of this research project is to understand how and why these organizations use social media technology, how often they use it, expected outcomes, and future plans concerning social media. Participation in the study consists of completing an electronic survey on a secure website and should not take more than 10 minutes of your time.

Your decision about whether to be in the study or not is completely voluntary, and confidential. You will also have the opportunity to win a Kindle Fire tablet once you complete the survey and provide your email address in a separate form if you choose to do so. If you are interested in participating in the study please click on the link provided to be sent to the secure website and follow the prompts.

------*Survey Link*--------

Thank you,

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Survey Instrument

Nonprofit Human Service Organizations and the use of Social Media Survey

This survey is designed to gather information on how Nonprofit Human Service Organizations use social media; the reasons for use, frequency of use, general satisfaction, and plans for future use. Human service organizations are organizations that fund, plan, advocate, educate, and/or provide services to individuals, groups, and communities. If your organization is not a 501c(3) nonprofit, please do not complete this survey.

The survey consists of 24 questions and should only take about 10 minutes to complete.

Your decision about whether to be in the study or not is completely voluntary and confidential. Once you complete the survey, you will have the opportunity to provide your email address to enter a drawing for a Kindle Fire tablet.

If you have any questions, complaints, or concerns about the research you can contact my dissertation advisor, or myself

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1) What is your primary position within your organization? (*Check only one*)

Founder ☐

Executive Director/President/CEO ☐

Assistant Director ☐

Program Director ☐

Marketing/Development Director ☐

Communications Director ☐

Other (Please specify)_____

2) How many years have you been with the organization? _____

3) What year was your organization founded? _____

4) Which of the following best describes your organization's primary issue area?

Advocacy/Civil Rights/Social Action ☐

Budgeting/Money Management ☐

Community Improvement ☐

Crime and Legal-related ☐

Domestic Violence ☐

Education ☐

Employment/Life skills ☐

Family Support/Parenting ☐

Food/Meals ☐

Foster Care or Adoption ☐

Health Care/Mental Health/ Crisis Intervention ☐

Housing/Shelter/Homeless Services Housing and Shelter ☐

International/Immigration Services/Human Rights ☐

Philanthropy/Volunteerism/Grantmaking ☐

Public Safety/Disaster Preparedness/Relief ☐

Religion-related ☐

Senior Programs (ex. adult day care) ☐

Substance Abuse ☐

Transportation ☐

Youth programs (afterschool, mentoring) ☐

Other services_____

5) What is the approximate annual budget of your organization? $_____

6) Does your Organization have a website?   Yes ____   No_____

7) Does the website include links to the organization's social media profiles?
                                                              Yes_____   No_____

8) Does your organization have a dedicated paid staff position to manage social media (i.e. majority of job duties relate to managing social media)?   Yes ____   No_____

9) What is the title of that position (i.e. marketing director)? _____

10) My agency/organization has used these social media since the year (*Check all that apply*):

	N/A	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Facebook														
Twitter														
YouTube														
MySpace														
LinkedIn														
Flickr														
Foursquare														
Google+														
Blogs														
Other														

Please specify other_____

166

11) Please indicate if your organization has policies about the use of social media and the year those policies were implemented?

	N/A	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Staff use of Social Media Websites is prohibited														
Policy with guidelines allowing staff participation in social media														
Policies encouraging social media use														
Social Media Website access on organizational computers is blocked														
Social Media website access using organizational computers is encouraged														
Policy on how to handle comments posted to the organization's Blog or Facebook page														
Other														

Please specify other_____

167

12) What kind of content does your organization share via social media (*Select all that apply*)?

Blogs ☐
Newsletters/information ☐
Links to our organization ☐
Links to other Organizations ☐
Links to specific information ☐
Photos from community/organization projects ☐
Video from community/organization projects ☐
Podcasts ☐
Other _____ ☐

13) Has your organization defined specific goals for using social media? Yes_____ No_____

If Yes, select all that apply:
Adopt other social media tools ☐
Increase use of social media ☐
Use social media for fundraising ☐
Use social media to promote the organization/services ☐
Use social media to recruit new volunteers ☐
Use social media to engage the community ☐

14) Please select all the reasons why your organization uses social media.
Promote/advertise services or events ☐
Engage new donors ☐
Engage with the community ☐
Recruit volunteers ☐
Communicate/collaborate with others ☐
Demonstrate transparency/accountability ☐
Fundraising ☐

168

15) What prompted your organization to begin to use social media (*check all that apply*)?

A specific staff member said we should ☐

Our Board said we should ☐

A lot of other organizations are doing it ☐

Community/clients said we should ☐

To raise money ☐

To reach new potential supporters ☐

To enhance relations with our existing audience ☐

To round-out our communications mix ☐

To replace another communications channel used previously ☐

16) How many updates (facebook posts, tweets, or blog postings etc.) does your organization post to its social media profiles in a given day?

0 - 2 ☐

3 - 5 ☐

6 - 8 ☐

more than 9 ☐

17) Distributed across the organization, about how many staff hours does your organization devote to social media in a week (tweeting, updating, posting content, etc.)? _____

The next section of questions asks you to think about acts (commenting, sharing, etc.) involved in social media use. Please indicate the type of social media being used by your agency/organization as it applies to the question.

18) Experimenting with social media has enhanced the relationship between the agency/organization and stakeholders, constituents, board members, or the general community (*check all that apply)*?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Social Network sites						
Video-Sharing sites						
Image-Sharing sites						
Blogs						
Location-Based social media sites						

19) Social media offers the opportunity to interact with people/organizations of various backgrounds/missions (*check all that apply*)?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Social Network sites						
Video-Sharing sites						
Image-Sharing sites						
Blogs						
Location-Based social media sites						

20) Using social media has helped the agency/organization (*check all that apply*)?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Raise Money						
Increase Donors						
Increase Membership						
Increase in new clients						
Recruit Volunteers						
Increase community awareness of programs & services						
Increase trust and connections within the community						
Share information						
Collaborate with others						
Be more successful						

21) How much revenue has social media added to your organization's fundraising efforts for the last fiscal year? $_____

N/A – we don't use social media for fundraising   ☐

22) How do you feel about your organization's use of social media (*check all that apply*)?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree or Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
It has been useful in achieving our mission						
Information obtained from social media sites is useful to our organization						
Social Media is important to the organization						
Social Media is making our organization more successful						
Social media has helped us empower those whom we serve						
We should spend more time on social media than we do						
We plan to use social media more in the future						
It has been difficult to use effectively						
We only use social media because the community believes we should						

171

23) Please check the box that best indicates the current status of your organization's resources/capacity/ability to engage in social media use:

Resource/Capacity Elements	High	Moderate	Low	None	N/A
Written mission statement with clear expression of reason for existence, values and purpose					
Existence of a website					
Existence of electronic hardware: Computer, smartphone, tablet					
Existence of broadband Internet					
Knowledge of how to use various social media platforms					
Knowledge of how to use social media to meet strategic goals					
Support from board members					
Support from the community					
Access to outside assistance for social media pursuits (either from individuals or your social network)					
Generally have the resources/ability to dedicate to the future use of social media					

Adapted from The Marguerite Casey Foundation Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (Marguerite Casey Foundation, n.d.) a derivative of the McKinsey Capacity Grid (McKinsey & Company, 2001)

24) Is there anything else you would add to this survey about why your organization uses social media that was not asked and should be included?

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your time and effort are invaluable. The results of the study will be available at the VCU Cabell library and a summary will be included on the ConnectRichmond website.

If you wish to enter the drawing for the Kindle Fire tablet, please click the RIGHT arrow icon at the bottom of the page. This will redirect you to a new page where you can provide your email address for the drawing. Responses and email addresses are kept separate to ensure full confidentiality and anonymity of your response.

Thank you,

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Vita

James A. Young was born on February 1, 1980, in Idaho Falls, Idaho, and is a United States citizen. He attended Brigham Young University-Idaho and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Work in 2005. Following several months working in the mental health field, Dr. Young returned to graduate school at Eastern Washington University where he graduated with a Master of Social Work degree in 2007 and a Master of Public Administration degree in 2008. During his tenure at EWU he worked for the Idaho Child Welfare Research and Training Center as well as serving as the President of the Associated Students of Social Work. Upon graduation he worked as a mental health counselor for a nonprofit organization in Spokane, Washington.

Dr. Young discovered a new interest in management and administration, which led him to further his education at Virginia Commonwealth University where he earned his doctoral degree in 2012. While enrolled as a doctoral student at VCU, Dr. Young worked as a research assistant with the School of Social Work at VCU in addition to teaching in the undergraduate social work program for two years. Dr. Young stayed active in the community conducting an annual program evaluation for a joint partnership between Theater IV and Prevent Child Abuse Virginia. He has disseminated his research on social work education, nonprofit organizations and social media, and technology at several national and state conferences such as the Council on Social Work Education and the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action. Dr. Young will continue to teach social work and engage in scholarly activities as an assistant professor with the University of Nebraska-Kearney.