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Durham's Partnership for Children & Social Media

A community-based research project

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Introduction

It is the era of the "Web 2.0": (Ogden, Starita) internet marketing is increasing in popularity, web sites are turning into blogs, businesses are publicizing on Facebook, and friends are keeping in contact via Twitter updates. Even President Obama had a "Twitter Press Conference." There is no doubt that there is revolution in the world of communication. Organizations, including non-profits like Durham's Partnership for Children, are shifting their media strategies in order to keep up with evolving standards.

But are these new methods actually helpful? Are there ways that the Partnership could improve their communications practices?

The Partnership is looking to further secure and develop relationships with supporters, and to increase awareness and support from the general Durham community. The long-term goal is to gain widespread support for the cause of early childhood especially among those that are not currently engaging with the Partnership.

Social media is one of the potential ways that the Partnership is looking to engage and communicate with these particular audiences. The purpose of my community-based research project is to investigate the effectiveness of social media as a potential communication tool.

The primary research question then, is:

How can Durham's Partnership for Children employ social media to inform and motivate early childhood stakeholders to become active advocates of early childhood?

To answer this question, I surveyed and interviewed individuals that were already involved with the Partnership in order to determine how we might best communicate with them and to identify characteristics of potential supporters. Based on the findings of my research, I was able to design a social media strategy that recognizes the strengths and constraints of social media, and targets pre-motivated supporters and likely supporters with focused messages on early childhood efforts. Although the title of my project is "Social Media and the Partnership," the primary focus of my research was on Facebook use and strategies. In this paper, most references to social media refer to Facebook unless otherwise specified.

Research Question

How is the type and level involvement in the Partnership's social media sites (such as Facebook, Youtube, and their website) related to an individual's knowledge of and participation in the Partnership's



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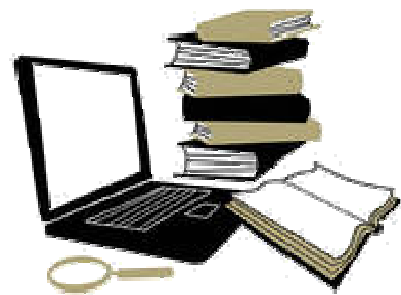
Research Methods & Limitations

I am not a social media expert and I don't have a formal background in communications or marketing. Other than the eight weeks that I spent conducting formal research, I have not had any formal training in this area. However, I do have experience leading a social media team for three years with Duke InterVarsity, a student organization that I am involved with. And, as a Public Policy major I have basic knowledge about advocacy and community awareness.

In the following section, I will explain the ways that I conducted my research as well as possible limitations that might limit the validity of my findings. I divided my research project into four stages: background research, surveys, interviews, and web site traffic analysis.

Part 1: Background Research

In the first stage, I conducted preliminary background research in order to discover best practices of social media usage. I looked at the way that comparable organizations, such as the Orange County Partnership for Young Children used Facebook. I read through the Partnership's communications strategy materials in order to familiarize myself with the Partnership's mission and approach. In addition, I researched published literature on communications in the non-profit world including social media tips and strategy guides. I also found printed reports, national survey findings, and webinars from non-profit media journals such as Convio and NTEN.



The limitations in this stage of research include the relatively scarcity of scholarly literature on the topic of social media and non-profits. Because social media only recently gained popularity as a communications/marketing tool for organizations, there are few scholarly and peer-reviewed publications on this topic. Thus I had to rely on non-peer reviewed publications such as web site blogs and marketing journals to gather information. The information from these sources may not be as reliable because they are grounded in personal experience and general marketing principles rather than rigorous or formal research. Still, these sources offered very practical and useful information that was very relevant to my project.

Part 2: Survey

After conducting a preliminary inquiry, I wrote and sent a survey to current Partnership supporters (funded partners, Board members, child care providers, and community members) through the iContact email marketing tool. The purpose of the survey was to determine basic trends about how people who are already involved in the early childhood field are using social media. I used SurveyMonkey, an online survey tool, to create the survey and collect responses. In the survey request, I introduced myself as the Partnership's Community Awareness Intern, briefly described my project and attached the link to the survey. The response rate was 10.9% (94 responses out of 866 submissions). The incentive for participation was a drawing for a \$25 Target Gift Card from my grant funding. All responses were anonymous.

To evaluate the survey data, I used SurveyMonkey and Microsoft Excel to create a summary sheet that included notable findings. In addition, I cross-referenced the survey responses (age, Facebook usage, etc.) with the rest of the survey responses in order to find correlations within the data set.

There are also potential limitations for my survey data. The survey respondents do not accurately represent all Partnership supporters because they were not chosen by random selection. Due to feasibility constraints, the population sample is biased because I was only able to collect data from the individuals that were willing to fill-out the survey. The people who filled out the survey are a biased subset of the general population because they probably are already highly invested in the Partnership, or are very interested in social media.

Part 3: Interviews

After receiving all of the survey responses, I scheduled and conducted follow-up interviews. The interview participants were diverse in age, gender, occupation, and level early childhood affiliation. I interviewed a total of twenty three individuals including: (5) funded partners, (5) Partnership staff, (3) Durham families, (6) board members, and (4) child care professionals.

Interview participants were chosen on the basis of availability and expressed interest. There were two primary objectives for the interviews. The first objective was to gain deeper insight on the survey questions, clarify missing or confusing responses, and obtain further explanation for trends from the surveys. The second objective of the survey was to get to know the individuals in the early childhood field on a personal level in order to more appropriately target communications materials to reach likely future supporters.

The interviews were semi-structured; I had a set list of questions for each interview, but I also asked questions based on the flow of the conversation. I also had several different versions of the questions based on the interviewee's level of involvement. All but two of the interviews were conducted in a one-on-one setting. About half of the interviews were conducted in the interview room at the Partnership office and the other half were conducted at an off-site location (at a funded partner location, child care center, or Durham County facility). The duration of the interviews varied from twenty minutes to seventy minutes. I recorded notes from the interviews by hand, and then immediately transferred the transcripts onto a computer within twenty four hours.

Data collected from the interviews is likely biased because, like survey participants, individuals that were willing to participate in the follow-up interview were already highly engaged with the Partnership in meaningful ways. However, it was still useful to gain insight from them because their insights could help identify other similar individuals who might be interested in helping out with early childhood.

Part 4: Web Statistics

After completing all of the interviews, I moved to the last stage in my research project: analyzing the raw data collected from web site tracking sights. I used the free online tools, Facebook Insights and Google Analytics in order to track page visits, key words, demographic information, and other data. I compared the relevant data from these sites and compared them with my findings from the surveys and interviews. The purpose of this stage of this part of the research project was to improve research validity by providing non-biased, quantitative data on social media usage. I compared the amount and type of site traffic with the comments from the survey and interviews to create better understand the type and level of participation in these social media sites.

Facebook Insights and Google Analytics offer basic demographic information and other useful statistics about people who visit the web site and the Facebook page. For example, the Insights shows the demographic for all the Facebook fans, how many people have liked the page, which links they click, etc. Google Insights is an even more powerful that helps track web site statistics. However, with the site traffic information, I could only be make inferences about the underlying mechanisms changing people's behavior.

Data Analysis

In the following section, I summarize and analyze all the evidence from the surveys, interviews, and background research. I categorized the information into sub-questions to answer the larger research question: How can Durham's Partnership for Children employ social media to inform and motivate early childhood stakeholders to become active advocates of early childhood?

What's Unique about Social Media?

Facebook is a Conversation



What is unique about social media is that it is primarily social. In other words, the engine that drives social media is interaction. One key metric to determining the vibrancy of an organization's Facebook page is the amount and level of interaction between fan and page owner. This is vastly different from the traditional methods of marketing and communications where it was all about spreading the word and getting the information out there. (Optimizing Your Site for Social Media Visitors) According to a research report by

Timothy Orgden and Laura Starita, "there's no more common mistake cited by social technology experts than organizations failing to appreciate the back-and-forth nature of social technology-based communication."

Facebook Statistics in July for Triangle Smart Start Programs			
	Durham County	Orange County	Wake County
Total # of fans	94	185	206
# of posts	16	21	42
# of interactions	17	60	98
# of interactions per post	1.06	2.86	2.33
Avg. growth rate (new friends/month)?	10.3	n/a	n/a
Average growth rate (percent increase)?	22.7%	n/a	n/a
Average removal rate (de-friend/month)	2.1%	n/a	n/a

Table 1: NC Smart Start Facebook Statistics for July 2011

One way to track Facebook exchanges is by checking the number of interactions per post, the average number of "likes" or "comments" for every post that an organization submits. This number can be calculated by dividing the number of interactions by the total number of posts over a set period of time.

In the table above, I compared the number of interactions for the three Smart Start Partnership pages in the Research Triangle area. At 1.06 interactions per organization post, Durham's Partnership for Children's Facebook Page still has room to grow compared with their sister sites in Orange and Wake County (2.86 and 2.33 respectively). The slower rate of interactions could be potentially attributed to many different factors—number of fans, number of posts, type of posts, amount of time spent on Facebook, etc. But, whatever the reason, "convincing users to generate content takes a lot of time." (Ogden, Starit)

Facebook is Free but Success is Not

Facebook or Twitter account reduce costs for organizations and businesses because: they are free to sign up, you can distribute information regardless of the news-cycle, you virtually eliminate printing/distribution costs, and you can reach a wider audience, etc. (Orgden, Starit) However, almost all successful social media experts will caution that having a successful Facebook site is not free at all.

A common misconception about Facebook and social media is that "going viral" is something that happens overnight and with minimal effort. It is easy to be deceived by a sudden spike of "followers" on a business' Facebook page. Working behind the scenes of most highly successful social media campaigns are: significant strategic planning, upfront and ongoing costs, and a lot of time and money. Most "viral" social media campaigns like this take several hours of work, and multiple employees. Some organizations literally pay thousands of dollars a month for fancy tracking devices to monitor social media progress. (Argyle)

Two other costs related to social media. The first is creativity. As with any successful marketing campaign, creativity is at the root of a successful social media strategy. "In one of the most important areas of cost, social technologies don't save anything: creativity. The cost of creativity comes in the form of time and talent. The time needed to use social technologies effectively is significant," says (Ordgen and Starit). This includes time to think of catchy status updates and thought-provoking questions that will engage users. Social media is really what you make of it.

The second cost to consider is that of good writing. As Laura Benson, Executive Director at the Partnership said, "Raising money and support, no matter what the context is about great work and great writing. We need a good quality project, and writing. The goal on Facebook/social media should be those two things. We shouldn't lose that. We need to have good writing on our blog." And, as we all know, writing good content does not come easy (or cheap).

The lesson? Small and mid-size non-profits needn't be discouraged when they only have a 'meager' hundred followers to show for all of their work in social media. The key is to be realistic about what social media can (and can't) do given the goals and constraints within your organization and to measure against results against a more realistic cohort.

Facebook can help you reach new constituents



Facebook and social media have undoubtedly changed the way that people interact. Facebook has opened new doors and opportunities for small businesses and organizations to reach wider audiences nationally and even internationally while eliminating the need to pay for traditional mailing and postage. (Miller) But, these new avenues of communication do not guarantee success.

Although Facebook and social media may increase the chances of getting noticed by the public, national and international web recognition may not necessary or practical for the purposes of a non-profit organization, especially given the costs outlined above. In terms of time and money necessary to start and maintain the kinds of social media campaigns that generate national attention, it seems more viable to be realistic about Facebook expectations. (Ogden, Starit) However, the good news is that there seems to be little reason for the Partnership to target the national audiences at this time. In terms of reaching new constituents, it seems more practical to use Facebook in a highly targeted way to reach potential early childhood supporters locally as opposed to state-wide or nationally.

Facebook may (not) be effective as a fundraising tool

On almost every site, blog and article that I read about social media and non-profits, there was a section social media as a fundraising tool. The consensus among almost all of the sites? If fundraising is the goal, there are better ways to do it especially because "social media has not replaced traditional fundraising efforts." (Miller) Even in other studies with non-profits and social media, researchers agree that "social technologies are not delivering much in terms of fundraising or attracting volunteers." (Ogden, Starit) Partnership's Social Media Survey participants agreed—sixty percent of respondents

agreed that social media is average or below average at effectively requesting donations.

So why doesn't Facebook fan support translate to financial support? According to one Facebook on-profit study, "Facebook is more likely to succeed in attracting constituents that require a lower level of commitment?" (Using Facebook to Meet Your Mission: Results of a Survey) In other words, Facebook fans are much more likely to "like" or "comment" on a Facebook page, or even "re-post" a link to spread the word about early childhood than they willing to give a donation to a Facebook page. According to David Miller, "nonprofit organizations may be able to solicit \$5 and \$10 donations ... However, bequests, corporate giving, and endowments will require more than sending out an email ... Longer-term, larger donations always take more effort and relationship building." Most sources agree that Facebook and social media can be an effective way to spread seeds of awareness, but are less effective as a way to develop the type of relationships that turn into corporate donations. (Using Facebook to Meet Your Mission: Results of a Survey)

There are of course, exceptions to this rule, but they are few and far between and are usually reserved for the more widely recognized organizations, businesses that can afford to pay top dollar for social media consultants, or individuals that have the time to regularly keep up with users and promote content. For now, it seems best to leave fundraising out of the expectations of social media and focus on its other uses.

Facebook can help distribute information & maintain relationships

Even though social media may not be an effective fundraising tool, it can be a very effective tool to distribute information and maintain relationships with supporters. In fact, on the Partnership Social Media Survey, 73.7% of respondents said that social media was as either good or excellent for distributing information and 68.2% said that social media was good or excellent for maintaining relationships with supporters. However, the key questions here are what type of information should the Partnership be distributing on Facebook and, more importantly, how does 'more information' translate into active involvement in early childhood? From the Partnership Social Media Survey, is still unclear as to what impact that "more information" has had in terms of motivating constituents to action.

Other questions that are important to consider are: who does the Partnership wish to maintain relationships with—current supporters? new supporters? Saying yes to all of the above isn't necessarily helpful for narrowing down the scope of a Facebook campaign.

Facebook is all about the network



Networking in the real world takes work. In the same way, building a Facebook network requires a significant amount of intentionality. A representative from the American Cancer Society, one of the leading Facebook pages, explains it like this: “[Facebook is] building your select network of friends, acquaintances and family. Community building is really what we’ve done our entire existence at the ACS.” (Santicola) As the social media strategy guide from NTEN stated, “the truth is, people don’t connect with organizations, they connect with other people.”

The first note about Facebook and relationships is that existing friends and networks are often underutilized. Engaging current supporters of early childhood is an easy way to jumpstart an online networks. There are so many existing supporters of early childhood—literally hundreds of people who have already expressed interest in joining the Partnership as evidenced by the extensive mailing list. In addition, each of these existing supporters have extensive networks that they are connected to. According to my interviews, most people were able to think of at least three people in their lives that would have a vested interest in early childhood issues.

One way to harness all of these potential supporters is to become more proactive in engaging them. As Laura Benson stated, the problem with social media is that “in order for me to receive information about on Facebook, the burden is on me to find them first. But I feel like, if I am important to you, you need to come to me.” Just like in the real world, it is important to go and find people that you want to join your network instead of expecting that they will somehow find your page. One small way to jumpstart this at the Partnership is to look at a list of all of the contacts—including volunteers, funded partners, staff, and committee members and find them on Facebook!

How are Partnership Supporters using social media?

Personal vs. Professional

According to both the Partnership Social Media Survey and the follow-up interviews, I learned that most people are using Facebook for primarily “personal” reasons or did not have Facebook. Only a minority of people, 37%, said that they used Facebook for both personal and professional reasons. When I asked one of the interviewees to explain, he stated it like this, “I use my Facebook strictly for personal purposes. That’s where I draw the line.” Another respondent said, “I choose to keep my work and professional life separate. My own reason to keep them apart is that I work all the time. And it’s hard for me to put work down. It was a conscious decision for me not to use it.”

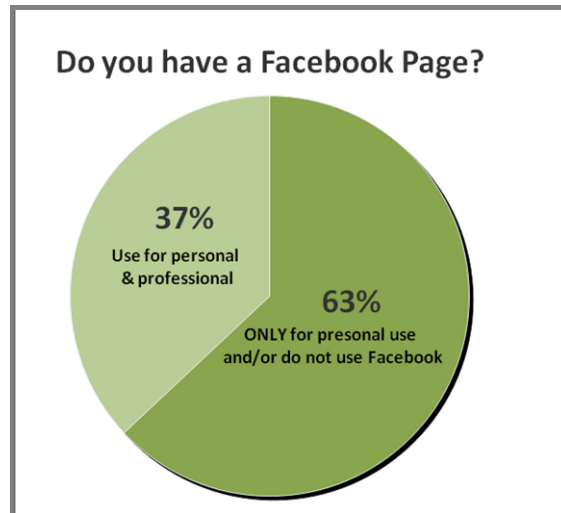


Figure 1: Partnership Social Media Survey

However, more than half of interview participants work in early childhood—either at the Partnership, funded partners, or at child care centers so participants might have a biased opinion on how they view early childhood as it pertains to their personal or professional life. One Partnership staff member said it like this, “If I wasn’t an employee, I might be more likely to sign up for early childhood information, tips, blogs for Facebook.” Another Partnership employee said, “I think it’s hard (on Facebook) to share things because I am afraid that people might think that I’m boasting about my job. I think it would be easier if it wasn’t my job, because I really care [about early childhood].”

This raises several important questions. How can we bridge the gap and reach those in the early childhood profession to make the cause more personally relevant? How does the general public make the personal and professional Facebook like distinction?

Would people not working in the early childhood field consider early childhood to be relevant to their personal lives?

Culture Change

Part of the reason that people aren't using Facebook yet to support causes yet is that Facebook only recently started to promote businesses and organizations heavily in the past few years. Many newer users still haven't made the shift from seeing Facebook as a way to keep up with family and friends to using Facebook as a way to promote causes. Still, "the vast amount of people on Facebook are not on there looking for new things to clutter their page." According to the survey of the people on Facebook, a great majority of people use Facebook to keep up with friends 74% and only a small percentage 26% use it to promote businesses or causes. In my follow-up interviews, several participants mentioned that they used Facebook primarily to catch up with long distance friends and to keep up with family—but not really to engage with local friends. Very few said that they saw it as a place to promote businesses, causes or organizations.

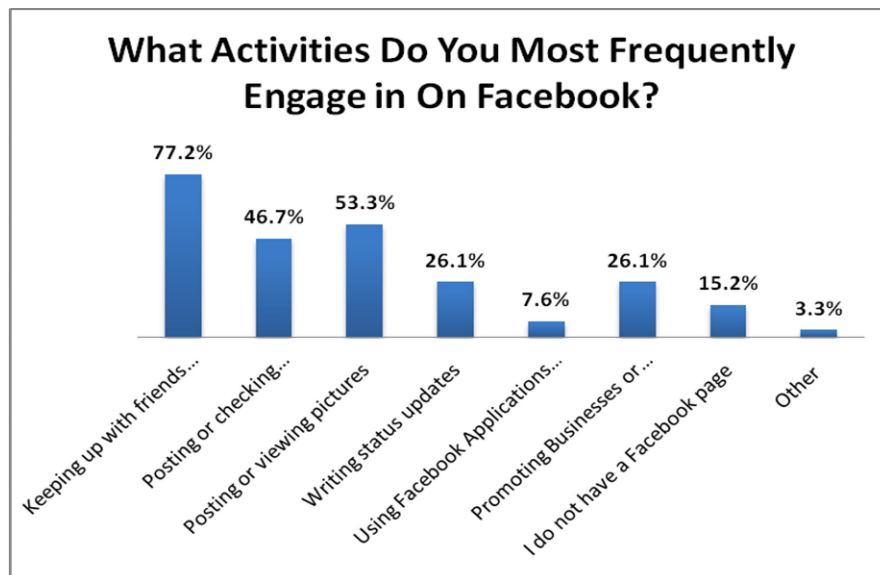


Figure 2: Partnership Social Media Survey

Part of the reality of Facebook is that the ways that people are using it are so diverse—depending on their age, their preferences, the location of their friends, their profession, etc. The challenge is to make the Partnership's Facebook page relevant to all of these groups, or a select subgroup.

For example, an individual may "like" an organization for any number of reasons. Maybe they "like" the page because they are directly involved with early childhood

work. Others may “like” the page because their friends are involved, as Angelica Oberleithner suggested. Still others may “like” causes because they want their friends to know what kinds of things they are interested in although they are not interested in receiving updates from the group page, as one interview participant suggested.

Gender Demographics

According to the Facebook Insights (web statistics tracking device), 84% of Partnership Facebook fans are female. The Partnership’s Social Media Survey participants revealed very similar results—82% of participants were female. When I asked interviewees what they thought about this statistic, no one seemed to be very surprised. Angelica Oberleithner said, “Women in general tend to dominate social services in general. There are more women in non-profits, and the early childhood workforce is almost exclusively female.” Other interview respondents mentioned that women tend to be more nurturing, or tend to be the primary caregivers so it seems natural that they would be interested in an early childhood organization. What does this mean for our Facebook fan pages? Knowing the characteristics of likely Partnership supporters could definitely help narrow down the target audience. Maybe part of the social media strategy should include a focus on mothers, since this seems to be a very likely group of supporters.

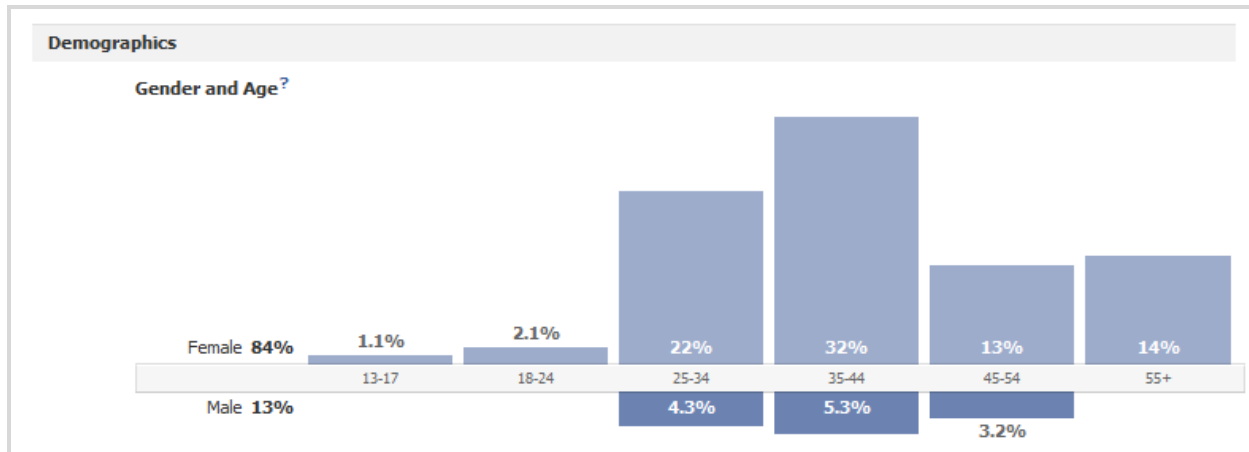


Figure 3: Facebook Insights, July 2011

Age Demographics

On the other hand, according to the survey statistics, Partnership supporters vary greatly in age; no single age range is over or underrepresented, except for the under 25 category. Twenty two percent of survey respondents were between 25-34 years old, 29% of respondents were between 35-44 years old, 20% of respondents were 45-54 years old, and 27% of respondents were over 55 years old.

When I cross referenced the data increasing age seems to suggest less participation in Facebook. There are more people not using Facebook in the 55+ category than the age 26-34 category. Intuitively, this makes sense.

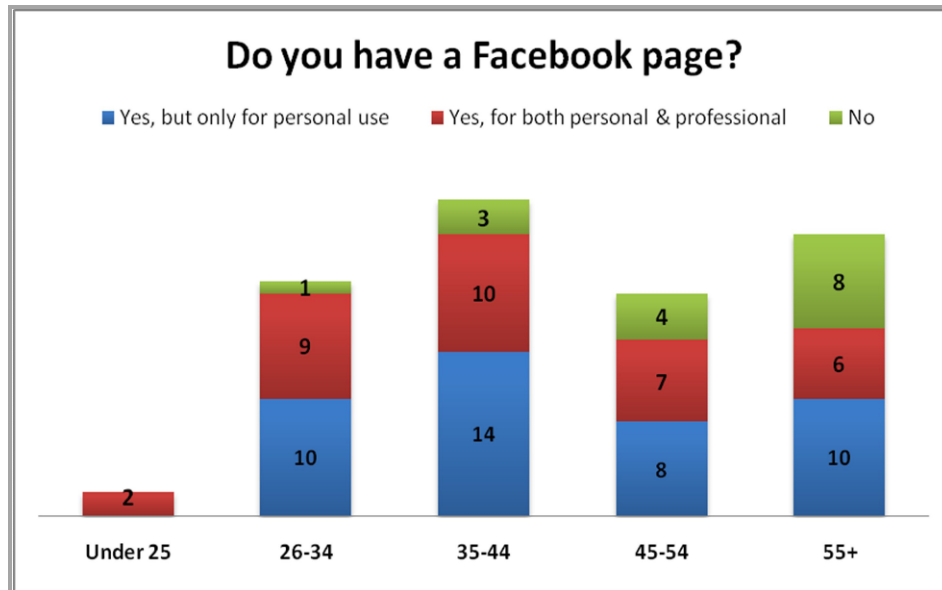


Figure 4: Partnership Social Media Survey

During my follow-up interviews, I noticed similar trends. Three individuals who would probably fit between the 45+ category, shared concerns about not using Facebook or not using the full capabilities of Facebook simply because lack of knowledge or familiarity. For example, one interview participant mentioned that she did not know how to “like” an organization’s Facebook page.

Another interview participant mentioned that the idea of using Facebook as a way for non-profits or businesses to spread awareness was still very new to her. As I mentioned above, I think this is part of the cultural shift in terms of how people are using and engaging with social media. According to InsideFacebook.com, the women over 55 are the fastest growing Facebook user population. But for many people, Facebook is still just a way to keep up with friends.

As demonstrated in Figure 4, about half of Facebook users still view it primarily as a way to keep up with friends and family. Even among younger individuals, interview participants mentioned using Facebook entirely for personal reasons.

		National Facebook Users	DPFC Survey Participants	DPFC Facebook Fans
Age	Under 25	44%	2%	3.2%
	25-34	20%	22%	26.2%
	35-44	16%	29%	37.3%
	45-54	12%	20%	16.2%
	55+	7%	27%	14%
Gender	Male	44%	16%	13%
	Female	54%	84%	83%

Table 2: socialmediatoday.com, Partnership Social Media Survey, Facebook Insights

Facebook Fan Status & Partnership Involvement?

There is a very strong correlation between level of involvement and Partnership involvement; the r^2 value is .99. So, what does that mean? Intuitively, it would make sense that people that are fans of the Facebook page have a higher level of involvement in the early childhood field. However, there are many people that are highly involved and are not fans of the Facebook page. Given the many reasons that people have chosen to opt out of Facebook, this seems to be accurate.

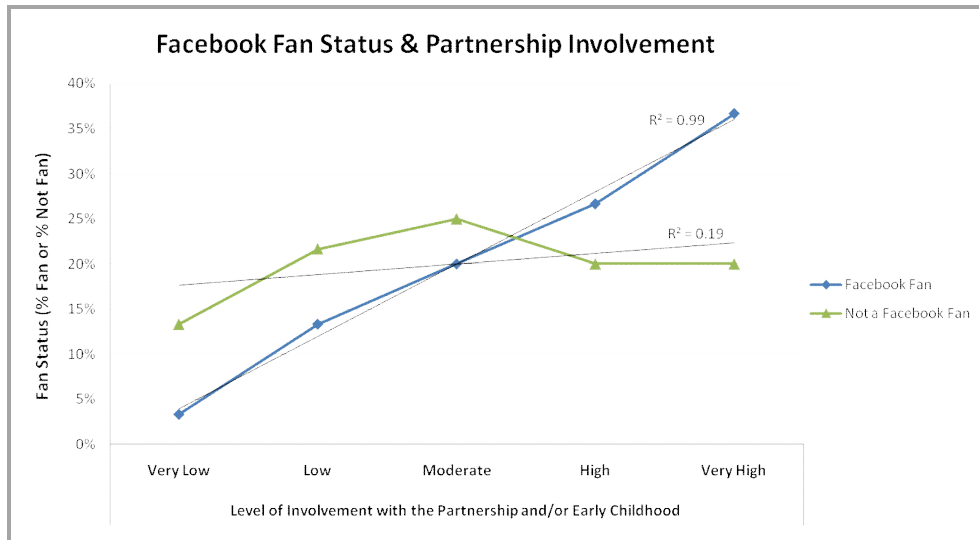


Figure 5: Partnership Social Media Survey

But, according to the Partnership Social Media Survey, 51% of people said that their involvement in social media pages had no impact on their level of commitment to early childhood. Therefore, it seems that social media involvement has not had an

impact on involvement in early childhood efforts. Another national survey found that "while social media had raised ... awareness of many casues, it didn't motivate them to do anything." (Orgden)

Instead, it seems more likely to say that social media involvement is merely a reflection of, rather than a cause of early childhood engagement. What Figure 5 seems to suggest is that people who are already highly invested in early childhood are more likely to join the Partnership page, given that they even use Facebook to promote causes. So, the key here would be to find other individuals that are already invested in early childhood and are active Facebook users.

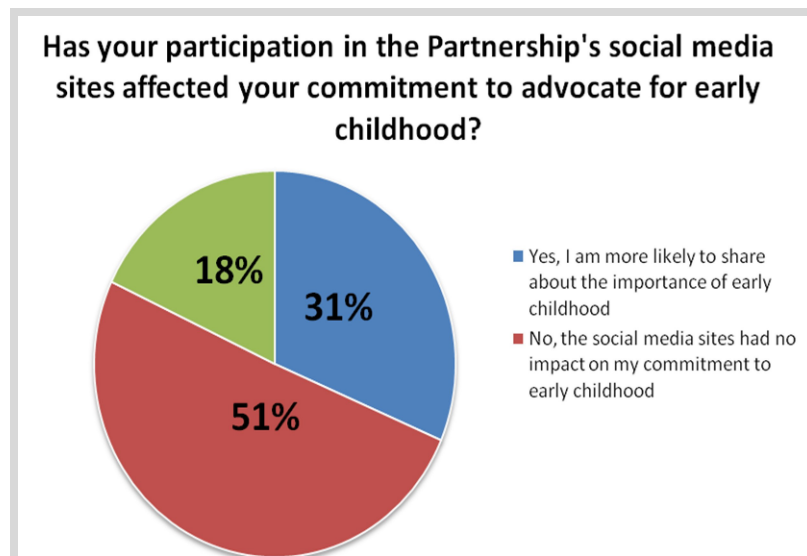


Figure 6: Partnership Social Media Survey

Reasons for Joining Early Childhood

Why did people join the Partnership or early childhood? Knowing how current supporters joined the early childhood mission could be very helpful when deciding how to engage new supporters.

According to the interviewees, most people joined for one of the following reasons:

- 1) Interest in early childhood
- 2) Involvement in education/social causes (lead to early childhood)
- 3) Work-related (economic reasons, county regulations)
- 4) Had young children at the time
- 5) Friend recruited them

Early Childhood: Some interview participants joined the early childhood field simply because they understood the need and importance of prioritizing young children.

Interest in Education: Other people joined the cause because they worked in related fields, such as early elementary education, and saw the direct need for starting earlier. There are at least three individuals that I spoke with that had made the transition from early elementary education or other social service organizations to early childhood precisely because they saw the need to start prevention efforts earlier in a child's life.

Work-Related: According to the interviews, individuals that started in the early childhood field for work-related reasons (they were looking for employment, or they were required to participate given county mandates) stayed involved because they saw the value. For example, Michael Palmer, a longtime Partnership board member, started becoming involved with Partnership because a county requirement. However, he later stayed involved because he was committed to "developing human capital" and "making an investment" for the long term.

Young Children: Young mothers are naturally interested in early childhood issues, and it seems natural to make the transition to becoming an active Partnership supporter. In fact, many female interview participants that I spoke with said that when they first started to get involved, they had young children at the time. Seeking out other new parents could be a great way to reach out to individuals in the community.

Friend Recruited: One board member said that she started getting involved with the Partnership because a friend recruited her to the team. Chances are, if someone lives in Durham is very involved with early childhood efforts, they have friends and family in Durham that also have an interest in early childhood. In fact, 42% of survey respondents said that they spoke with friends and family members about early childhood. As Diane Ruppercht, one of the Partnership's Board Members said, "The best way to meet and form new relationships [...] is to start with an introduction with a friend." Learning to tap into these existing networks will be important to increase the Partnership's social media presence.

What do people want to see on the Partnership Facebook Page?

Thirty eight percent of survey respondents would like to see frequent status updates on the Partnership Facebook page. Thirty seven percent of respondents said that they would be more likely to visit the Partnership Facebook page if it had relevant resources (such as parenting techniques.)

Which of the following would make you more likely to join/visit the Partnership Facebook Page? Top 5 Responses		
		# of Responses
1	Frequent status updates about new and upcoming projects	32
2	Relevant resources (ex: articles on parenting techniques)	31
3	None of the Above	27
4	Success Stories from childcare centers	26
5	Family and early childhood education incentives	24

Table 3: Partnership Social Media Survey

Conclusion: Social media strategy?

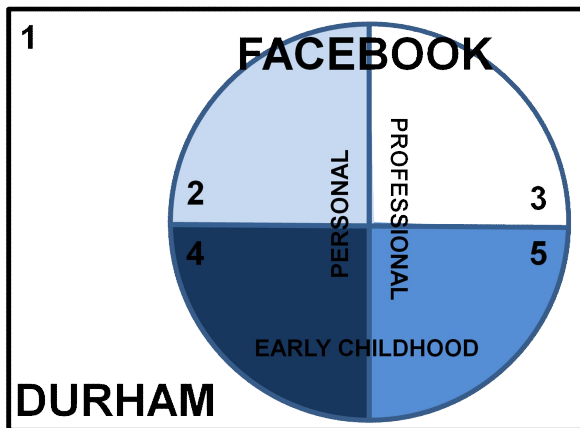
Targeted

As will almost all marketing techniques, the way to get most out of Facebook is to have a very focused target audience. (NTEN Social Media Strategy Worksheet) Who do you need to reach as an organization (moving forward) and why? Given all of the findings listed above, I have a few suggestions in terms of finding a target audience.

The first is that Facebook should be used to target people that are likely to be interested in early childhood efforts, but that are not currently directly involved with the Partnership. Some potential avenues to consider include:

1. Parenting groups in the triangle area
2. Education/school pages
3. Restaurants with child-friendly menus
4. Child friendly businesses (museums, parks/playgrounds, libraries, etc.)

The second piece to this is that once these target groups are identified, the Facebook content should be modified so that they know that the Partnership page is immediately relevant to them as soon as they get to the page. In a study of 275 nonprofit organizations' Facebook pages, Waters, Burnett, Lamm, and Lucas (2009) argue that "non-profit organizations are underutilizing their Facebook profiles because they do not provide many methods for their supporters to become more involved in the organization." One way to conceptualize potential Facebook supporters is to segment the Durham population by early childhood involvement and Facebook participation, as I outlined in the image and table below.



Group	Sample Target Population
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Friends of Partnership supporters
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Businesses <input type="checkbox"/> Media/Newspapers <input type="checkbox"/> Churches/Religious Groups
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Mothers w/ young children <input type="checkbox"/> Early childhood advocates
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Early childhood professionals <input type="checkbox"/> Students in early childhood

Figure 7: Early Childhood Facebook Population, Hyejin Sul

Realistic

As described in the sections above, there are many benefits and cautions related to using Facebook as a communication tool. It seems almost inevitable that Facebook is going to become one of the ways to stay current and “use the tools of the time,” as Michael Palmer stated, but at the same time “most users of social networking have had to scale back their expectations.” (David Miller)

Based on the Partnership's needs and resources constraints, it is possible to still use social media effectively.

“Social media is undoubtedly changing the way that NPOs communicate with members and followers. However, it is important to note that social media and new technologies are simply the means to achieving the ends that nonprofit organizations have been working towards for decades. One should not get the two confused—creating a Facebook page is not a goal, but a means to reach other goals. Finally, one should not get too excited about the opportunities offered by social media. It will never be an acceptable substitute for face-to-face interaction, and only so much can be done (in terms of fundraising, relationship building, and building a sense of community for the NPO) through online communication.” (David Miller)

Final Considerations

There is nothing inherent in social technologies that make them “effective”—it's all in what you expect them to accomplish and coming up with the best ways to accomplish it (Orgden, Starit)

Given the Partnerships' current level of resources, is it feasible and/or reasonable to try to put a lot of effort into a social campaign? Would the amount of resources and effort be worth the potential response? What would you lose if you were not on Facebook? Ultimately, these are decisions that the Partnership's leadership team will have to answer.

Appendix: Resources

As requested by the Partnership, I also compiled a list of practical and immediately applicable resources to be used by the Partnership specifically regarding engaging university students and Facebook friends. The recommendations in the following sections are based on my own previous experiences with social media, and/or background research on the subject area. They did not originate from data from the survey, interview, or web tracking tool.

Recommendations for Engaging University Students

1. Focus your audience
Students that are already invested in the education, social issues, policy, psychology, or non-profit groups would be more likely than the "general student body" to become active in the early childhood system because they have prior interest in related issues. In addition, they are more likely to have friends who have similar interests
2. Don't assume that they know anything about early childhood or policy issues.
A surprising number of college students do not keep up with current events, especially related to early childhood—simply because it is not relevant to them.
3. Make it as easy as possible for them to get involved
4. Timing
The beginning of the semester (Fall and Spring) are when students are most likely to get involved in clubs, and/or volunteering opportunities. Mid-spring is when students are looking for summer internship. Planning publicity efforts around those times will probably be the most successful. The Duke Career Center and individual departments (such as the Public Policy department and the Psychology Department) often send job and internship opportunities throughout the year.
5. Quantity is not quality
Having twenty half-heartedly committed students may not be as effective as having two or three very dedicated volunteers
6. Partnering with existing channels
Finding professors, departments, clubs that have a prior connection with the Partnership—for example, using connections with the Center for Child and Family Policy to find students to volunteer.

Facebook Measurement Tools



FEATURES

- Update multiple accounts at one time
- Track results
- Monitor mentions
- Schedule automatic updates
- Free or low cost (\$5.99/month)
- Assign tasks & collaborate with multiple managers
- Popular (Facebook, Papa Johns, LA Times)

WEB SITE

<http://hootsuite.com/>

facebook

Two Key Metrics

- Monitoring number of interactions (how does this number change/fluctuate with the types of posts)?
- Fan growth rate (is this consistently increasing?)

Click link below for a helpful tutorial on how to use Facebook Insights

<http://www.socialbrite.org/2010/04/26/how-to-use-facebook-insights/>

Facebook Myths Debunked!

	Myth	Reality
1	It's free	It's only 'free' to join; actually using the tools takes a lot of time and resources: \$11k +/-annum for a "good" blog
2	Everyone is doing it	Yes, but the more people use social technologies, the harder and more expensive it is to rise above them
3	It's another channel to reach people	It is another channel, but none of the other channels are truly going away. So you have to keep using all the old channels and the new channels too
4	It's the way to reach the next generation	Yes, but the benefits of reaching the next generation in this way and at this time is decidedly unclear
5	You can build relationships with donors and volunteers	Only if they find you amidst the noise and you generate high enough quality to keep them coming back. Plus there's no evidence yet that social networking creates lasting relationships
6	You can't get left behind	In the majority of technology revolution, there's little downside for waiting for best practices to emerge
7	It's the new way to secure donations	Average donations from Facebook are \$5-10. Facebook is more effective for requesting smaller commitment asks

Source: Ogden, Timothy N., and Laura Starit. "Social Networking and Mid-Size Non-Profits: What's the use?" Philanthropy Action (2009)

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- Miller, David. "Nonprofit Organizations and the Emerging Potential of Social Media and Internet Resources." SPNHA Review 6.1 (2011) <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu>
- Ogden, Timothy N., and Laura Starit. "Social Networking and Mid-Size Non-Profits: What's the use?" Philanthropy Action (2009) <http://www.philanthropyaction.com/>
- Using Facebook to Meet Your Mission: Results of a Survey., Idealware (2011) http://www.idealware.org/facebook_survey

Helpful Links

Various articles on Social Marketing
<http://online-social-networking.com/>

Social Media Consultant (commonly asked questions on social media)
<http://www.blogher.com/frame.php?url=http://www.socialmediamarketingexpert.net/>

Building your Business with Facebook Pages
http://ads.ak.facebook.com/ads/FacebookAds/FB_PagesGuide_MediaKit_051611.pdf

Optimizing Your Site for Social Media Visitors
<http://www.nten.org/blog/2010/07/28/optimizing-your-site-social-media-visitors>

A beginner's guide to Facebook Insights
<http://mashable.com/2010/09/03/facebook-insights-guide/>

Distinction of Facebook "pages" vs. "groups" especially for non-profits
<http://blog.socialsourcecommons.org/2011/04/facebook-page-vs-group/>

General information on pages & groups
<http://www.allfacebook.com/facebook-groups-pages-2010-02>

Facebook Infographics & Statistics
<http://socialmediatoday.com/kenburbary/276356/facebook-demographics-revisited-2011-statistics>