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COLLEGE OF INFORMATION SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY

FACEBOOK AND TWITTER AND INSTAGRAM, OH MY: THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract

Social media use has grown exponentially within my lifetime. One area in particular that has utilized its growth is humanitarian aid. I am interested in the effect social media can have on the awareness of small organizations with a humanitarian mission. In order to research the impact of social media as an information and communication technology for development, I will be traveling to Southeast Asia and volunteering in several local organizations. I will be asking four main questions to attempt and create a successful, overarching social media campaign for humanitarian organizations:

1. What are the overall functions social media can provide for the organization, and how can these functions be expanded to further the awareness and impact of humanitarian operations?
2. How successful is social media in accomplishing the mission of the local organizations? How could the organization use social media more effectively?
3. Who is the target audience of the social media and how is the audience affected by the social media presence? Are there any organizational connections, and how do these connections influence the use of social media?
4. What are the legal regulations surrounding the use of social media by an organization, and does this impact those the organization is trying to care for?

To answer these questions, I will be using other similarly sized organizations with a higher emphasis on social media technology as a benchmark, looking at their use of social media for recruiting, funding, and awareness of the overall mission. I will be using academic articles published as part of the Information and Communications Technologies for Development manifesto to become aware of different ways organizations use social media and the most recent and effective ways to ensure that their missions are met with the support of social media. Aside from academic research, I will be working closely with small-scale humanitarian organizations in Southeast Asia to compare their use of social media to other similar organizations, measure the success of their social media use, and ultimately critique the current social media strategies in order to improve methods to utilize social media to its full potential.
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Introduction

In March of 2012, a video took the Internet by storm; Kony 2012, a viral short film about the militant Central African leader, Joseph Kony, and his abduction of local African children into his ranks, has been viewed over 100 million times since its initial release (Sanders). It has been “liked” over 1.4 million on YouTube, the first platform to host the video. While the aftermath of Kony 2012 was less than satisfactory (the reputation of its director, Jason Russell, played into this failure), the popularity of the initial release still shocked media experts, and showcases the impact the appropriate use of social media coverage can have on garnering a receptive audience and spreading awareness about an international issue previously unknown.

There are an innumerable number of nongovernmental organizations across the globe, and this number grows every day according to need in a specific location. Every organization has a different mission statement, a different reason for helping those in the community, country, or region of location. These organizations are the most adaptable and impactful. However, they are often lacking the resources and support needed to complete their missions. This is where knowledge and utilization of social media can help. The world is devolving into an online network. Approximately 40% of the world’s population has Internet access, and 74% of online adults are utilizing social networking sites (“Social Networking Fact Sheet”). If NGOs and other humanitarian organizations can learn how to appropriately employ social media, they can expand their audience, awareness, and support for the mission they are trying to accomplish.
What is social media?

At its core, social media is an online tool that connects Internet users. Social media extends across several platforms, the most prominent currently being Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Social media is primarily used to share users’ personal lives; they share everything from pictures to statuses online. However, 41% of social media users claim they utilize platforms “to stay up to date with news and current events” (McGrath). It is important to note this percentage, as this is the primary audience that humanitarian organizations should be engaging. This study looks at how to establish cross-platform social media success for humanitarian organizations to spread awareness of their cause and how their efforts relate to the overall state of the world.

What is international development?

International development covers a plethora of areas, including efforts to reduce poverty and inequality and improve education, health, and job opportunities in a specific area (Rosenkranz). International development typically covers long-term projects that look at the core of an issue and attempt to remedy situations with sustainable practices. In the past, development has been driven by outside sources; developed countries like the United States have supplied funds and volunteers to improve conditions in a developing country. However, it is becoming more and more likely that the organizations leading change are grassroots organizations that begin in the country where problems exist. This gives organizations unique opportunities to create change, and organizations need to recognize the use of social media to improve their grassroots operations.
How can organizations use social media?

Social media can be used to improve several key issues with humanitarian organizations.

Broaden Audience

One of the biggest issues with small, local organizations is the access to a receptive audience. Garnering an audience is the key to gaining support, whether financial, physical, or online. By exercising appropriate social media methods, an organization can begin to broaden their audience and receiving the support they need to make a difference. The marketing manager at Samaritan’s Purse discusses the key to engaging an audience and to broadening the reach of an organization, stating “one of the most important things to remember as you’re engaging your audience on social media is to know who your audience is, and to know what they care about, what they’re talking about, what they want from you, and how you can add value to conversations that they’re already having” (Villarino). Social media activism is one of the key aspects of civil involvement in this digital age, and while it will be discussed in further detail later in this paper, non-profits must take advantage of this new form of individual activism to receive the appropriate resources to continue their mission.

Increase Awareness

Many of the issues that humanitarian organizations are trying to address go unnoticed by the general public. However, if the public knew about the issues, it would be more likely to aid organizations to improve conditions. Therefore, it is crucial for non-profits and NGOs to spread their missions in an appropriate medium to convey the importance of their issue in the overall world. The communications director for Samaritan’s Purse discusses the importance of different
types of communication depending on social media channel to appropriately engage an audience and spread awareness of an organization’s mission; he states “understanding your objectives for any communication is fundamental to evaluating the appropriate platforms to disseminate those messages and the manner in which to engage supporters and influencers as well as the types of content to disseminate” (Villarino). Because of the huge audience social media can reach, non-profits can easily spread relevant information about their plight, spreading awareness and pulling previously unreachable supporters into the know.

Request Aid

Finally, once an audience is reached and knowledge of the issue is spread, non-profits are in a unique position to request support, whether financial, physical, or online. *The Guardian* claims “55% of those who engage with organizations on social media eventually take further action for the cause – donating, volunteering, signing a petition or attending an event” (Miranda, Steiner). By creating a social media presence, non-profits and NGOs are creating a relationship of sorts with their audience. Connection is the driving force for a quid-pro-quo relationship. Social media can provide that connection, and the audience members will be more likely to support the organization when it is requested.

Overall Research Question: How can non-profits and NGOs utilize social media to improve these three issues?
**Context**

To complete the following thesis, I traveled to Southeast Asia to volunteer in local, grass-roots humanitarian organizations and observe how social media could benefit humanitarian operations at the lowest level. To fully understand the impact that technology and social media can have on humanitarian organizations, I worked in four different countries across the region, volunteering in four diverse humanitarian organizations that supported varied missions.

**Thailand**

While in Thailand, I volunteered at the Mirror Foundation, a non-governmental organization based in Chiang Rai, Thailand. This organization’s mission is to help the hill tribe people with issues such as citizenship, drug abuse, erosion of culture, and trafficking. While at the Mirror Foundation, I taught English to children and local monks ([http://www.thailandvolunteer.org](http://www.thailandvolunteer.org/)). Mirror Foundation has an established website and social media presence; however, the organization leveraged this technology mainly for contact with volunteers. The organization also maintained a website to sell handicrafts created by local hill tribe members to bring in revenue and empower the impoverished locals.

While at the Mirror Foundation, I interacted with college-aged interns who were working for the Foundation. They were working in a technological capacity, producing video to support Bannok TV, a video community archive the documents “traditional ceremonies, songs, customs, farming processes, waving methods, and hunting techniques… to allow views to take pride in their culture or discover a beautiful culture within their own borders” (interview with intern). Mirror Foundation was already taking advantage of technological capabilities. The organization simply
needed to make the user interfaces more compatible to really disseminate information to a broader audience and reach supporters other than volunteers.

Cambodia

While in Cambodia, I volunteered at the Coalition for Integrity and Social Accountability (CISA) in Phnom Penh, “a leading NGO committed to promoting accountability, transparency, integrity, equality and justice” (en.cisa.org). The organization’s mission is “to work together to fight, prevent and eliminate all forms of corruption in Cambodia through capacity building, education, communication and advocacy to bring about effective governance in Cambodia” (en.cisa.org). Cambodia was ranked as one of the most corrupt countries by Transparency International in 2015; it was provided a score of 21/100 on Transparency’s corruption scale. In order to combat corruption, organizations like CISA must encourage transparency and awareness. By reaching out to both the local and international community through social media, CISA could spread their mission and share the corruptive issues present throughout the country. However, CISA currently is using an outdated website that is difficult to navigate and is only taking advantage of Facebook as a social media outlet.

While in Cambodia, I took to my Instagram and Facebook to share some of the issues in Cambodia, specifically trying to capture images of corruption. I was merely one person, but my followers on social media responded positively, sharing the emotions brought about by the stories of Cambodian corruption. Organizations like CISA could take the highly emotive stories and images that come from the corrupt settings and share them on varied social media outlets to
spread the issues to potential supporters who may be ignorant of the stark conditions of Cambodia.

**Vietnam**

While in Vietnam, I volunteered with Green Lion in Ho Chi Minh City, an organization that pairs volunteers with very small, local humanitarian organizations. I learned about Green Lion through a larger, international volunteer abroad organization (International Volunteer HQ); however, Green Lion does not utilize social media at all. It is very difficult to find the organization on the Internet, whether through Google or Facebook search. When asking other volunteers how they had found the organization, they said they were either paired through IVHQ or they had had friends who had previously found Green Lion while they were already traveling in Ho Chi Minh City. Green Lion could take great advantage of social media; it is run by young Vietnamese students who are all very in-tune with social media and the Internet. If sanctioned, they could easily spread awareness about their different volunteer projects and bring in even more volunteers to help even more local initiatives. Green Lion could even encourage its volunteers to share their experiences on different Green Lion social media accounts during their time with the company. Green Lion could greatly improve their daily operations, increase the number of volunteers drawn to the organization, and spread awareness about the local initiative they support by implementing a social media strategy.

**Bali, Indonesia**

While in Bali, I volunteered with Green Lion once again, just in a different capacity. Much like Green Lion in Ho Chi Minh City, the Green Lion in Bali was not using social media
appropriately; however, because of its large volunteer base and the large number of young leaders working for the organization, they could easily implement a social media strategy to spread their mission and improve their operations.

**Other**

I also based research on other work I had done with humanitarian organizations I am involved with at Penn State University. I was the Communications Director for the Malini Club, an on-campus organization that worked directly to spread awareness of the Malini Foundation, a non-profit based in Sri Lanka. I was also a Public Relations team member for Penn State Dance Marathon. By being involved in both of these extracurricular opportunities, I was able to recognize ways that humanitarian objectives can appropriately employ social media.
Literature Review

About Humanitarian Organizations

Before looking at the impact social media can have on international development, first it is necessary to understand international humanitarian organizations. International development organizations are as diverse as the citizens of the world. Organizations can choose to focus on any one out a million issues affecting its communities; from climate change to women’s rights, organizations are tackling problems at the source. Nongovernmental organizations, some of the most prominent humanitarian aid organizations, are defined by World Bank as “private organizations ‘characterized primarily by humanitarian or cooperative, rather than commercial, objectives… that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development’ in developing countries” (Ahmed, Werker 3). NGOs are one of the many different organizations dedicated to improving the livelihood of community citizens. However, because of the localized structure, NGOs are in a unique position to truly make a great impact on the community.

NGOs have become key actors for development for two major reasons (Clark).

1. **Scale:** NGOs raised an estimated $3.8 billion in 2012 and over $200 billion between 2008 and 2012 (Global Humanitarian Assistance Report). NGOs are effective at fundraising, and the funds go directly towards their projects.

2. **Style of work:** NGOs have a very specific, close relationship with the community. “NGOs have demonstrated an ability to reach poor people, work in inaccessible areas, innovate, or in other ways achieve things which are difficult for official agencies” (Clark). They are typically integrated with the issues; their employees or volunteers
are community members who are passionately driven to improve conditions, they can see the physical and emotional effect their work has on the community, and they can adapt in real-time when something is not working. Change is inherent in NGO work, and the ability to adapt is a critical component of NGO success.

Because of the unique position of NGO’s, they need to understand new media concepts and learn to harness the power of social media. Social media can lend to the ability to adapt necessary, and can increase the scale of operations by spreading awareness of a cause.

**ICT4D and Social Media**

Within the humanitarian development landscape, information technology has nestled its way into the playing field to encourage advancement and improve the functions of both day-to-day business and larger scale humanitarian operations. However, the uses of technology for development are not exclusively for large-scale organizations. Smaller organizations committed to development can benefit just as much as larger organizations by using information technology appropriately to achieve their goals. Social media is the key component to gaining exposure and spreading awareness regarding an international humanitarian organization. If small organizations can learn how to garner the power of information technology and social media, they can further their reach and can help even more people. In order to fully understand social media implementation, organizations must understand how information communications and technology can be used broadly in their operations.
Information communications and technology for development (ICT4D) became a global development priority in 2000. The initiative focuses on the use of information and communication technologies in the fields of socioeconomic development, international development, and human rights. There are several reasons for giving priority to providing ICT in developing countries (Heeks).

1. The moral argument: “the poor of the world are on the front-line of the mega-problems of the planet” (Heeks 2) such as climate change, terror, disease, and resource depletion. The citizens of developed countries are conscious of the suffering of the world’s poor, and are continually searching for a way to improve the lives of those affected most heavily by the world’s problems.

2. Enlightened self-interest: the globalized world works as a pyramid, where the issues of those of the bottom affect those on the top of pyramid (Heeks 2). Therefore, it is the world’s best interest for those on the top to help those on the bottom in any way possible.

3. Personal self-interest: providing to the development of a poor region in Africa or Asia is not only more rewarding for the human psyche, but also provides for unique and satisfying experiences (Heeks 2).

It is of utmost importance to provide digital solutions to developing countries. In a world becoming increasingly digital, “those without ICTs are being increasingly excluded” (Heeks 2). To avoid this exclusion and to vault those in developing countries, it is clear that technology must be invested.

ICT4D focuses on several keys areas within a humanitarian organization to improve the operations of the organization and the success of its mission.
1. Spreading awareness of the organization: “Informed stakeholders can help to ensure that
technologies are matched to needs in a meaningful and sustainable manner” (Driggs, 4).
When an organization is appropriately utilizing communication outlets, it can effectively
spread its work and mission to previously unreached and unaffected audiences. Spreading
awareness is key, and requires training and cultivation with both stakeholders and
employees of the organization.

2. Address the challenge of politics: “‘Access-for-all’ capabilities of the Internet mean that
ICTD initiatives can be very political… not all governments are keen to have their
citizens make unbridled use of the Internet, fearing its destabilizing potential” (Driggs, 6). In developing countries, the political landscape is often transitional and unreliable. It
is therefore of utmost importance to have a clear understanding of the political system
and be able to adapt to such challenges. ICT4D can provide a ground understanding of
the local political context and allow for creative solutions to problems set forth by a
changeable government.

3. Provide access, bridging the gaps between telecommunications infrastructure, computing
equipment, and economic, educational, and socio-cultural barriers: “Barriers to universal
access are not only about the national availability of telecommunications infrastructure…
but are also economic, educational, and socio-cultural (Driggs, 8). By embracing an
upstream focus, ICT4D is able to combine new technologies with old, empower
intermediaries that support humanitarian organizations, and incorporate key global issues,
such as gender inequality.

4. Develop relevancy and meaningful use: ICT4D intends to be demand-driven, and focus
on grass-roots initiatives to spread the information to the most affected audience.
“Development outcomes can be greatly enhanced by including the targeted end-users in the project planning stage, to establish what types of information and services are most appropriate” (Driggs, 13). Young people are an important target group for training; this provides social media activism to take hold and spread awareness of the humanitarian’s organization to those who will be affected most by the mission.

ICT4D also looks at three different practices to be successfully implemented.

![Figure 3: Good Practice for ICT4D 2.0 Implementation](image)

By understanding the different functions and implementation of ICT4D, organizations can begin to implement social media into their day-to-day functions to build an audience, spread awareness, and request support.
How Social Media Is Utilized In Humanitarian Organizations

Connection is a very basic need that humans crave. Social media provides connection between otherwise displaced entities, and if humanitarian organizations can harness the power of connectivity, they can truly improve their operations. Humanitarian organizations understand that social networking is a low-cost way to drive interest. “The top 200 in Forbes’ non-profit companies are utilizing social media campaigns faster than Fortune 500 companies” ("Actionable Strategy & Tactics"). Humanitarian organizations see the benefit of social media, and are seeking opportunities to incorporate social media into their day-to-day strategy.

Social media strengthens humanitarian organizations. It connects organizations with people who are interested in the message, ensuring organizations are not transparent. Social media can push an organization to become the focal point of an international issue if used correctly. Social media also encourages personal connections, showing the human face of an organization. Because of the “timeline” nature of social media, it enables interested parties to track the progress of organizations, seeing the direct impact the organization is having. This entices users to join the work; an audience is more likely to support a successful organization. Media allows for organizations to connect directly with supporters, and provide answers to questions and other learning opportunities in real-time. Ultimately, social media puts organizations in touch with new donors; “in 2007, total online giving in the United States reached over $10 billion, a 52% increase over 2006” ("Using Social Media to Enhance").

In order to create a significant, useful social media presence, humanitarian organizations must have a strategy. The most bare-bones way to approach social media is to first spread awareness
of the issue, then show influence of the NGO can exercise, then engage audience in action, whether fundraising or volunteering, then showcase the impact the audience and the NGO have when paired together (Trompeter).

Humanitarian organizations can utilize a plethora of different communication opportunities to spread their message.

![Online Communication Opportunities](image)

**Figure 2: Online Communication Mediums**

By incorporating all the appropriate mediums into their repertoire, organizations can spread their message affectively.
One can look at the success of the Haiti social media campaign and the coverage of the Nepalese earthquake disaster to see the impact that appropriate social media use can have. When Haiti was first struck by the devastating earthquake in 2010, an online fundraising campaign was created by the Red Cross to aid the victims, rebuild from the damage, and provide the government with a way to respond to the devastation going forward. The campaign allowed for donations solely through text messages; within 48 hours, the campaign raised $8 million (Gross). The success of this campaign was attributed to its “sharing” across social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. Had the campaign not been shared, people across the world would not have known about it, and therefore it would not have seen a fraction of the success.

In the aftermath of the 2015 Nepalese earthquake, similar social media services were utilized to react to the disaster. The “instant communication through Google, Twitter, and Facebook allowed people in Nepal to help survivors in ways government could not” (“Social Media’s Big Lift”). The government in the developing country was vastly unprepared to respond quickly to such a large-scale disaster, and survivors relied heavily on networking sites to “arrange rescues, deliver supplies, and provide shelter” (“Social Media’s Big Lift”). The disaster of Nepal was terrible, but it showcased a very positive outlook on disaster relief; Admiral Thad Allen claims that “with social media and the 24-hour news cycle, there will never again be a major disaster that won’t involve public participation” (“Social Media’s Big Lift”).

The two examples above provide ways social media can react to rare, natural disasters. However, humanitarian organizations can follow the example set by global disaster coverage and adapt it to
daily coverage of local issues; through social media, they can receive the same amount of success in receiving support as disaster relief campaigns.

Social Media Activism

Because of the prevalence of social media, and the increase in social media activism across the globe, individuals are more likely to come to the aid of those in need through the computer screen. Humanitarian organizations that utilize social media can play on this movement. The Christian Science Monitor claims that “social media helps break down a sense of separation. It amplifies each individual’s potential contribution”, therefore increasing the return on “liking” an organizations Facebook page or “retweeting” a tweet for a fundraising campaign. An individual’s contribution (even something as simple as a retweet) can greatly aid in the awareness of a humanitarian campaign.

Social media is easy to join (it typically only requires a name and an email address), and creates a “cybercommunity”. Physical communities are places where individuals become one unit; neighbors help neighbors when disaster strikes, small towns come together to help out one individual citizen who is going through a hard time, families give other family members a place of refuge. The Internet community is no different. Social media users are drawn into an online community, and they are encouraged by the connections they find. When they feel connected to a greater community, they are more likely to take action to help those within their “community”. It also does not ask much of the user; liking a humanitarian organization’s Facebook page means nothing more than seeing a few posts a day on the user’s timeline. It is simple and non-time-consuming for both the user and the organization. Once a “bond” of sorts is created between the
organization and the user (if the users reads the posts and feels compelled about the organization’s mission), the user could be indispensable as a supporter of the organization.

These aspects of social media have created a new type of activist, a “cyber activist”. It is these individuals who humanitarian organizations should initially reach out to, as they are the most likely to give support and spread awareness on their individual level.

Social media has created a participatory culture, and has reinvented social activism. In the current digital climate, it is easier for the “powerless to collaborate, coordinate, and give voice to their concerns” (Gladwell). “As an organizing tool, social media provides individuals with a feeling of empowerment and a degree of mastery over their circumstances” (“Social Media’s Bif Lift”). Social media sites have provided platforms for hundreds of different revolutions and humanitarian efforts to take place. Mark Pfeifle, former national-security adviser, claims that “without Twitter, the people of Iran would not have felt empowered and confident to stand up for freedom and democracy” (Gladwell). Social media allows for users to make a change at the fundamental level, and it provides for users to feel connected to others who are striving to make similar changes.

Similarly, “nongovernmental organizations have driven a desire for information and participation in civic life” (“Social Media’s Bif Lift”) at the grassroots level. If humanitarian organizations, who already act at the grassroots level, can garner the power of social media to take the issue global, think of how powerful these organizations could be in generating substantial and sustainable change.
Issues with Utilizing Social Media for Humanitarian Development

Problems do exist with utilizing social media to improve humanitarian efforts. These problems stem primarily from fundamental issues of social media.

1. Information overload: Social media is easy and showcases a simple user interface; therefore, it sees millions of new posts a day from all across the globe. A humanitarian organization could be utilizing social media effectively, but it could still get lost in the mire of all the other posts being generated.

2. Social activism: While social activism can be positive in spreading awareness, it can also be extremely negative. By shifting focus from a physical campaign to an online campaign, change can be stunted because of lack of actual “social change” (Mazie). Instead of actually helping, social issues turn political. For example, look at the France terror attacks. Across the world, Facebook users overlaid their profile pictures with the colors of the French flag to show solidarity. While this was a moving act, people across the world were following suit not in support of the cause, but rather as move for “trendiness”. People did it to fit in with peers, to not seem heartless, or for a myriad of other motives. While social activism can be extremely effective, it also can be corrupted with wrong intentions, thus affecting the use of social media by humanitarian organizations. Activism also typically only focuses on one aspect of need, awareness. While awareness is extremely important, especially for small, isolated organizations, it often can distract from real need or knowledge. In 2014, 270 school girls were abducted by Boko Haram from a school in Nigeria. People immediately turned to social media to discuss the issue, tweeting with the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls. However, the majority of people utilizing the hashtag were unaware of the background of the issue. While they
did spread awareness about the horrific event, they forgot the most important aspect of activism, to understand the context, and did not have the appropriate means to aid in an effective manner. Social media activism often breeds laziness, typically referred to as “slacktivism” (Mazie). It is commonly believed that social media users today believe that simply by “liking” a page or “retweeting” a tweet, they are helping, when in reality humanitarian organizations need much, much more.

3. Apathy: Social media can encourage apathy in many ways. Because of the information overload, users are often so bogged down by cries for help that they simply ignore the posts, becoming apathetic to the need of humanitarian organizations. It works like the homeless of major cities; when there is a homeless person on every corner of the city asking for change, the average citizen will walk by them all, choosing to ignore the issue instead of feeling compelled to help every single homeless person. Apathy is bred from helplessness. Also, social media lends to scams. There are thousands of Facebook pages dedicated to fraud, trying to get money by using pictures of the poor or orphaned to play on people’s emotions. Because of the pervasiveness of scams, social media users are wary of sending support to humanitarian organizations, which can be extremely devastating to legitimate organizations.

4. New sites: Social media is constantly evolving. New sites are popping up all the times, and users are perceptive to these changes. It is hard to predict which sites will take off and which will phase out; humanitarian organizations need to be perceptive of where to engage their resources. It can be exhausting to try to stay on the forefront of all the new social media sites and applications, often times leading to wasted money and time.
Formation of Hypothesis

After reviewing literature about humanitarian organizations and the use of ICT4D, social media, and activism, it is obvious that humanitarian organizations can benefit immensely from a comprehensive social media campaign that creates a base audience, spreads awareness to potential supporters, and raises support (financial, physical, or online) while reacting to several of the key problems inherent to social media. Based on previous literature and personal research, it is vital that a pragmatic plan is created to aid humanitarian organizations, both established and new, in utilizing social media platforms effectively.
Methods

In order to gain first-hand knowledge of how small-scale humanitarian organizations utilize social media and what improvements could be implemented, I chose to volunteer at four different humanitarian organizations in four different countries within Southeast Asia during the spring of 2015. Each humanitarian organization had a different mission, and could potentially use social media for a different reason. I observed and asked questions about the different technologies the organizations utilized both to reach out to volunteers like myself and to improve conditions in the communities where they were working. Each organization I was paired with had a partnership with International Volunteer HQ, a global volunteer abroad organization that pairs potential volunteers with grassroots organizations in over 30 international destinations. Because of this unique partnership, I also observed the social media tactics of IVHQ to solicit volunteers across the world.

I based additional research on time spent volunteering with two on-campus organizations at Penn State. I was the communications director of the Malini Club, an on-campus organization that supported the mission of the Malini Foundation, a non-profit based in Sri Lanka. As director, I ran the social media sites. I also was a member of the public relations committee for Penn State’s THON. The public relations team propagated THON’s social media posts, sharing, retweeting, and liking all the posts published on THON’s main accounts. I used observational study to gather the data related to these case studies.

I based my methodology on both action-based, design-based research, and observational study.
1. Action-based research: action-based research is a methodology that focuses on the pursuit of action and research outcomes at the same time (Dick). Action research tends to be “cyclic, participative, qualitative, and reflective” (Dick). Essentially, action-research is “learning by doing” (O’Brien). The action-based research focuses on a simple model; it diagnoses a problem, plans an action, takes action, evaluates the consequences of an action, identifies general findings, and then repeats the cycle as needed.

   a. Diagnosing: when initializing my research, I began by diagnosing a simple problem that I saw throughout my life as a volunteer. I noticed that humanitarian organizations often were lacking in potential impact because of an ignorance toward social media techniques. I wanted to address why organizations struggled with social media, and see if there was a way to improve overall social media use in humanitarian organizations.

   b. Action planning: originally, I wanted to observe social media use by different, varied humanitarian organizations. However, as I began my action planning, I realized that it would be more beneficial and actionable if I as an individual both observed and created. I decided that by creating and evolving my own small-scale social media campaign, I could identify common problems that organizations have and create a strategy that is both thorough and adaptable for organizations of any size.

   c. Taking action: while volunteering, I observed humanitarian organization’s social media campaigns and I ran my own social media campaign. I established a personal social media campaign to understand the struggles humanitarian operations have with utilizing social media effectively.
d. Evaluating: as I moved forward through my campaign, I evaluated posts to see which were the most effective. I adapted the content of my posts to try and maximize audience engagement. I was constantly adapting my campaign to try and realize the most effective ways to leverage social media for humanitarian organizations.

e. Specifying learning: I analyzed my results, and in my analysis, I often needed to look at more specific problems.

2. Design-based research: design-based research is “a systematic but flexible methodology aimed to improve educational practices through iterative analysis, design, development, and implementation, based on collaboration among researchers and practitioners in real-world settings” (“Explanation – What is Design Based Research?”)

   a. I designed a social media campaign based on my previous experience with social media and volunteering for humanitarian organizations. As I moved forward through my time volunteering with humanitarian organizations, I adapted my social media campaign to be as effective and comprehensive as possible.

3. Observational research: observation is defined as “systematic data collection” (Cohen).

   a. I participated in non-participant observation, where I simply analyzed the ways different humanitarian organizations were utilizing social media.

Based on the above research methodologies, I designed a personal social media campaign to experience what the most effective forms of media expression to raise awareness and funds for my trip. I took advantage of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, GoFundMe, and WordPress to create one, cohesive campaign. I created a new Facebook page (Savannah’s Southeast Asian
Adventure) for interested parties to “like” to receive updates. I created new Twitter and Instagram accounts (both @Savs_inSEAsia) to reflect new humanitarian organizations struggles with gaining “followers” and thus a receptive audience; while posting on these sites, I also looked specifically into the types of posts that receive the most “likes” or “retweets”, as these are indicators that the audience is both receptive and responsive to the posts. GoFundMe was used as a reliable source to raise money for the trip. WordPress (savannahgoestosoutheastasia.wordpress.com) was used as a personal website that not only outlined my trip’s locations, volunteer work, and research, but was updated once a week with a blog post and pictures about the trip. Once the trip was over, I analyzed the posts across platforms to see which were the most effective (the most read, liked, retweeted, shared, etc.) to truly understand not just the social media aspect, but the type of content humanitarian organizations should be employing.

I ran this social media campaign for approximately five months; I created the sites and accounts and began to gather an audience a month before I left for Southeast Asia, and I managed the sites until I returned home. As I moved forward in my campaign, the heaviest evaluating was on audience engagement. One of the most substantial ways of measuring social media success is through the number of “likes” or “favorites” one gets on a post. I spent a significant amount of time deciding what types of posts could engage the audience the most, all while explaining my volunteer and international experience in a succinct way.

I also was constantly evaluating how to continue growing my audience. Having a diverse, expansive audience is the key to gaining the support needed to keep a humanitarian organization
afloat, and by constantly growing an audience, an organization can consistently spread their
mission to new potential supporters. Moving forward, I was very apt to explain my research to
other volunteers, and they all supportively followed my accounts. I also explained my research in
a blog posted on Mirror Foundation’s web site (the organization I volunteered for in Thailand) in
hopes that previous or future volunteers who read the site would be compelled to follow my
accounts. Before I traveled to Southeast Asia, I shared my new accounts in my church newsletter
and through my personal social media accounts. Halfway through my trip, I reached out to
Schreyer Honors College to explain my research, and my research was shared in a monthly
Schreyer newsletter to give my accounts even more exposure.

Once the trip was completed, I issued a survey to followers through Facebook (both my personal
Facebook profile and the Facebook page I created specifically for the trip), Twitter, and
Instagram to receive feedback on what platforms and posts were the most effective and why. I
asked five main questions of my participants throughout the survey.

1. Which social media account engaged you the most and why?
   a. I asked this more to understand where an audience pays the most attention and if
      there is a split among demographics. I found that younger members of my
      audience (high school and college aged) were more engaged by the brevity of
      Instagram and Twitter, while older members enjoyed the more detailed updates on
      Facebook and my blog. It is important for humanitarian organizations to
      understand this divide among demographics when trying to reach certain users for
      support.

2. Which posts were the most effective and why? Which stood out to you?
a. I wanted to understand why some posts are liked, retweeted, or shared more than others. Are people more sensitive to personal trial, volunteer success, or just fun stories? I tried to vary my posts to show all facets of my time abroad, and after analyzing the likes/retweets/shares in real-time, I wanted to know what posts resonated the longest. How can humanitarian organizations create a lasting effect with simple social media posts?

3. Do you feel you had a solid understanding of the volunteer work Savannah was doing while abroad based on her social media usage?

   a. Volunteering was my primary goal for my trip abroad, and I wanted to make sure that carried over into my social media campaign. It is vital for humanitarian organizations to showcase the important work they are doing for their local communities, and I tried to mirror this to fully understand humanitarian organizations’ social media struggle.

4. What other social media outlets could have been used for Savannah’s social media campaign?

   a. As discussed above, it is often very difficult for humanitarian organizations to stay up-to-date on all of the new social media sites and applications; therefore, I asked at the source. Current social media users are the best to understand the up-and-coming sites, so I reached out to know if I had missed any major sites that humanitarian organizations could utilize in the future.

5. Do you think the campaign was effective?

   a. Obviously, a social media campaign is created to be effective. I created my social media campaign to meet several goals. First, I wanted it to reflect the process that
typical humanitarian organizations go through when beginning to implement social media. Second, I wanted to share with my friends and family my volunteer work and my time abroad. Third, I wanted to use social media to fundraise for my trip. Fourth and finally, I wanted to discover how to create the most effective posts. I believe my campaign was very effective, and this was confirmed by the participants I surveyed.

I also looked at my extracurricular involvement to bring in another layer of research. I am a Public Relations team member in several different clubs, and I was the Communications Director for the Malini Club, an on-campus organization that worked directly to spread awareness of the Malini Foundation, a non-profit based in Sri Lanka.

When observing the use of social media by the Malini Club and Penn State’s THON community, I created a checklist of common practices by nonprofit organizations to observe how effective the organizations were in leveraging social media.

The data displayed before comes from several places. I had several discussions with my audience members before and during my time in Southeast Asia, and when I returned home I sent out a survey to garner feedback about the campaign. The quotes are taken from these discussions and survey. I utilized Twitter, Facebook, and WordPress’s analytical tools to look at audience engagement over

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the five months I was volunteering. Instagram does not host its own analytical tool for general users, however, my observations showed the Instagram has similar trends to Twitter.

Data

The following data is divided into three case studies:
1. Managing a social media campaign while volunteering at humanitarian organizations in Southeast Asia
2. Being Communications Director for the Malini Club
3. Being a committee member for Penn State’s THON Public Relations team

Each case study is then broken down into three themes:

1. Account creation
2. Audience management
3. Message crafting/audience engagement

Southeast Asia Social Media Campaign

Theme A: Account Creation

Design: The first step to initializing my social media campaign was creating accounts through the most accepted and widespread accounts. It was pointless to create accounts on platforms that have low user numbers (i.e. Google Plus).

During my account creation, I discussed which social media outlets were the most prominent. I engaged in discussions with my family, friends, and colleagues.

My younger sister, Willa Boothe (high school student, age 17), an avid social media user, claimed that Instagram was a must, especially for people her age. She claimed that her generation enjoys using Instagram over any other site because “you can keep track of other people’s lives, but not get annoyed about it because people don’t post too much”. According to
her and her friends, Instagram was the best social media account because it gave a visual of other user’s lives, but it was not overwhelming to look through the feed.

I debated using Facebook, because many social media users, specifically those in the younger generation (13-19), discussed that Facebook is becoming obsolete. During discussions with members of this younger social media generation (Willa Boothe, 17 & Olivia Esterkamp, 18), they discussed that Facebook does not pertain to them, as there are too many people whose information they need to sift through. However, while discussing my social media campaign with Alison Leverage (EY recruiter, age 41), she reiterated the pull of Facebook for her generation. She claimed that Facebook was “a prompt to see if other social media sites had been updated. I check Facebook every day, multiple times a day”, and this sheer amount of continually checking encouraged me to incorporate Facebook into my social media campaign, for the dissemination.

Wordpress and Twitter were chosen more because of my own personal utilization of the platforms. I had previously used Wordpress to run multiple blogs, and Twitter was a favorite social media account of mine.

Therefore, I designed more campaign around Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WordPress. The majority of Internet users, and members of the audience I was trying to engage (family and friends, Penn State University students and faculty, and other international volunteers) typically have an account with at least one of these social media platforms.
Development/Implementation: Although I already had existing personal accounts under these platforms, I decided to create completely new accounts to mimic the issues that could potentially come from establishing social media accounts for the first time. Once the accounts were created, nothing else really needed to be done besides audience gathering, which is discussed in the next section.

Reception: As soon as I created the accounts, family members and friends who I had previously explained my research to began to follow the new accounts with my prompting. However, I did receive some confusion from people who did not understand my research. I was asked why I was creating new accounts, particularly by my older family members, when I had already had established accounts for several years. However, once I explained the situation, they complied and followed my accounts.
Evaluation: Several people suggested different social media accounts that they believed could be useful. Snapchat (or some type of video-based application) was the application suggested the most.

![Count of Other Social Media Outlets](image)

GoFundMe was another heavily suggested platform at the beginning of my volunteering. I fundraised to pay for my trip, and GoFundMe was the most efficient and effective way to solicit funds from those within my social media network. I did not join GoFundMe initially, but based on suggestions from followers and a request to provide an online mechanism for remote donations, I created a GoFundMe account. 66.7% of the people I surveyed responded in the affirmative that they had donated to my GoFundMe account.
When evaluating the platforms I used, I believe that the four I initially created (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WordPress) are the most effective. They are the most popular platforms, and the majority of people with regular Internet access have an account on at least one of the platforms.

I received an interesting response when discussing expanding my campaign to new social media platforms. When asked what other social media accounts I could use, Carly Pritchard (Wilmington University student, age 19) responded: “I don't know, because I'm not sure if more is better in this case. Sometimes overkill can be an ineffective means to campaign something.”

Willa Boothe (high school student, age 17), reiterated this point, claiming that she has avoided using Facebook and instead just uses Twitter and Instagram. She states that she likes Twitter and
Instagram more than Facebook: “You can keep track of others people’s lives but not get annoyed about it because people don’t post that much (on Twitter and Instagram)”. She even went as far to say that she uses Instagram even more than Twitter these days: “Like face book, people tweet too much, and they tweet about things literally no one cares about. People know on Instagram not to post too much, but on Twitter, people go crazy, tweeting about their days, their meals, their dreams etc.”

This was very telling, as during my research I found that saturation can often turn people off of a cause. Pew Research shows that the majority of successful arts organizations that utilize social media platforms use four platforms. Therefore, I limited my campaign to the four most popular/effective social media platforms in order to avoid overwhelming my audience.

![Chart showing the number of social media platforms arts organizations use.](chart.png)

Personal Response: Although Snapchat and Tumblr were very highly recommended, I chose not to incorporate these platforms into my campaign. I already was utilizing a blog platform (WordPress) and believed that having a Tumblr would just be redundant; also, Tumblr’s reputation is far less professional than WordPress. Snapchat would have been very effective, and I think humanitarian organizations could benefit greatly from using Snapchat as a real-time way to show the issues they are facing, spread awareness about their mission, and showcase the positive work the organization is completing on a normal day. However, I chose not to use Snapchat based mainly on connectivity issues. I did not get an international SIM card, and the only time I could use Snapchat when in Southeast Asia was when I had Wi-Fi, which was very unreliable and inconsistent.

Creating the accounts was the easiest, most intuitive phase for me, and I appreciated and utilized the feedback I received from my followers in expanding my campaign.

Theme B: Audience Management

Design/Development: Garnering a large, diverse, and supportive audience is a very challenging process. Initially, I merely shared my new accounts on my existing accounts in a hope that I would not have to follow back. When looking at other successful humanitarian campaigns, it is clear that most do not follow a lot of other accounts. I believe this is for the sake of reputation, and I tried my hardest to mirror this characteristic of other humanitarian organizations. I tried to mimic this social media campaign design to understand the audience gathering stage of humanitarian organizations.
Implementation/Reception: However, when developing this idea and trying to gather an audience, I found it very difficult to gain the amount of followers needed to create a solid audience base. I found that the majority of social media users are driven by reciprocity; if they follow an account, they appreciate a follow-back. I found that if I followed other accounts, I had a much higher success rate of receiving a follow-back.

At the beginning of implementation, I simply posted on my Facebook page that I had created the new accounts and requested followers.

Initial Facebook likes:

![Facebook page likes before invitations were sent](Figure 6: Facebook page likes before invitations were sent)
When I simply requested followers on my personal Facebook page, I received only 7 likes.

However, when I began to individually invite people to “like” my Facebook “fan page”, I saw an immediate jump in likes. By the end of the first day of inviting people to like, I had received 108 likes.

![Net Likes Graph]

This graph shows the net likes over my entire time volunteering in Asia: it can be seen that I received the most likes immediately after I invited the friends on my personal Facebook profile. The flux follow the rest of the time was when one or two people would like my page after I posted about my trip on my personal Facebook page. However, I never participated in another mass “invite” to my Facebook page, showing that inviting is the best way to gain followers on the Facebook platform.
Twitter and Instagram had similar trends.

When my account @Savs_inSEAsia was first initialized on Twitter, it had 18 followers.
By the end of January 2015 (after I had specifically followed other Twitter users), I had 131 new followers, showing the benefit following other accounts can have.
When @Savs_inSEAsia was initialized on Instagram, it received 52 followers after I posted the account name on my Facebook page and Twitter account requesting fellow social media users to follow the new account. However, when I began to follow other users, Instagram followed the same trends as Twitter, but on a more exponential scale. Instagram users are typically more active, even when they have an account on both Twitter and Instagram.
Adelina Richards (Penn State University student, age 22) explained why she was more active on Instagram, even though she has both a Twitter and an Instagram account: “I don't really like the Twitter layout. I feel like I can post something on Instagram and get at least 30 likes even if its a bad post, but I've had some great posts on Twitter that get no recognition. I also like that Instagram is a photo editor so after I take a picture I usually edit it in Instagram anyway because I love the filters. I also use the different platforms for different things. I use Instagram as a form of social media and Twitter as more of a place to see jokes and political tweets.” Adelina’s statement shows the general consensus of social media users when it comes to increased activity on Instagram versus Twitter.

Evaluation: Once I began to follow others, the number of followers I had increased immensely. I began to implement this solution across platforms. On both Twitter and Instagram, I began to follow those I followed on my personal accounts, and received positive feedback. By doing this, I was also able to spread awareness of my research, mimicking the way that humanitarian organizations spread awareness of their missions.

In a discussion with Skylar Slotter (Penn State University student, age 22), she discussed why social media users engage in the system of reciprocity: “I guess it'd be out of solidarity and courtesy. It's like sending a thank you note and saying, ‘because you believe my life is valuable or worthwhile enough to follow, I want to let you know that I value yours too by reciprocating.’” By following the rule of retribution, a follow typically generates a follow-back. Social media is a system of loyalty, as shown by my experience with Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram follower trends.
Personal Response: Throughout my five months running the campaign, I maintained this strategy. Whenever I came into contact with other volunteers, I explained my research and ultimate goals, and asked if I could follow them on social media platforms. When I followed them on their personal accounts, they almost always responded positively and followed me back, increasing my audience range.

This solution also expanded to my Facebook page. Although I could not “follow” people because of the nature of a Facebook page, I had my Instagram and Twitter accounts link back to my Facebook page. When I followed more people on Twitter and Instagram, the users were more inclined to support me on Facebook as well and “like” the page. The same trend occurred with my WordPress account.
My audience was very widespread as well. By volunteering in an international capacity, I was able to follow people from all over the world, particularly users from Europe and Australia. They added a new perspective on my social media campaign, enhancing the spread of my audience. They were able to follow along on my trip, even after we parted ways, and therefore were shown issues from other places in Southeast Asia even if they did not get to visit that area.
Global Spread of Audience on WordPress Site

Stats for 2015

Figure 12: Global Spread of Audience on WordPress Site

Figure 13: visual global spread of WordPress audience
One of the women I met while traveling (Jackie Parodi, university graduate, 22) claimed: “I loved your posts; besides the fact that I was there with you, I loved the photos that you captured and posted because they not only reminded me of our time together in Asia, they made me want to explore more of Southeast Asia.”

Spread is important when it comes to humanitarian organizations. A broad audience offers diverse support, and is a way to continually expand the mission to previously untapped audiences. If a humanitarian organization has a Twitter follower in Australia who retweets one of the tweets about the organization’s current project, that tweet can be seen by a whole new group of Australians who may be sympathetic to the cause. The spread of an organization can greatly improve humanitarian organizations.

I made the decision to keep my social media accounts public rather than change my settings to make them private. I decided that to truly engage the most number of people, I should leave my account open to strangers to even further spread the awareness of issues. I also utilized hashtags to pull in other social media users. I received support from other IVHQ volunteers by hashtagging “#IVHQ” in the majority of my Instagram and Twitter posts; many past, current, and future IVHQ volunteers search social media sites by these hashtags to understand the work they will be doing. While working with the homeless in Ho Chí Minh City, Vietnam, I posted a
photo of myself with a homeless woman I was working with with a caption about the project.

By adding the hashtag “#IVHQ” at the end of the caption, others across the world who were considering volunteering with IVHQ in Vietnam were able to gain insight into this project. The last comment on this photo asks: “Hi I would like to do this; you are the first person who has reported helping the homeless, can you give me any details?” It is a simple question, but proves the power Instagram and other social media accounts can have on spreading new humanitarian projects to new audiences.

The public account also allowed other potential volunteers to direct message me within Instagram to ask their questions.
I even was contacted by IVHQ, the overall organization I volunteered through; they were able to direct message me to request I share my experiences volunteering on their main social media pages. This allowed me to showcase the individual nonprofits I had worked at and share their missions to a very broad audience. IVHQ has 17.4K followers, and they all saw posts that I shared.
The IVHQ hashtag was just one example of the hashtags I used to spread my campaign to strangers who were interested in the humanitarian work I was doing, and hashtags are an easy way for humanitarian organizations to receive more support.

**Theme C: Message Crafting/Audience Engagement**

Design: Creating messages that encourage audience engagement is of utmost importance to a social media campaign. I based engagement on the number of likes, comments, link clicks, or private feedback (messages or questions about a particular post sent to me through email or private message) I received on a post.
Twitter engagement (from January 3 until March 29, 2015):

Twitter’s “impressions” are the total engagements, link clicks, retweets, and likes/favorites that the tweets receive over a specific amount of time.

Figure 17: total Twitter impressions

Figure 18: total Twitter engagements
Figure 19: total Twitter links clicked within Tweets

On average, you earned 1 link clicks per day.

Figure 20: total Twitter retweets

On average, you earned 0 Retweets per day.
Facebook engagement (January 3 until May 10, 2015):

Facebook looks at the total number of likes, comments, and shares to get a holistic view of the engagement a page has received.
WordPress engagement (for all of 2015):

WordPress looks at views, page visitors, likes, and comments on blog posts to evaluate the engagement of the created website. While this graph shows the total engagement for 2015, it is specific to the time I spent volunteering in Southeast Asia; I stopped updating my blog as soon as I returned to the United States in order to maintain the integrity of my engagement data.

![Figure 23: WordPress total engagement](image)
Development: I tried to focus all my posts on different modes of persuasion to elicit engagement. I used highly emotive stories or images that I created to convey my experiences volunteering. As I moved forward with my campaign, I found that personal stories and photos received more engagement than simply posting just an image with a description. I tried to include an overarching, deeper insight into every observation I was posting. The post with the most likes above (Tacos and Tattoosday) was one of my last posts discussing the changes I had personally gone through on the trip. It was extremely personal, and because of the uniqueness and intimate detail, it received the most engagement.

Originally, I did not plan on posting as much as I did on WordPress. However, during discussions that occurred within the first month of my trip, I discovered that it was necessary to update the WordPress more in order to provide the details of my volunteering.
Charles Boothe (US Air Force National Guard, 47) followed the trip solely on Facebook and WordPress; he stated: “Facebook gave me the highlights of the trip, but the WordPress blog had much more detail for her posts.” This quote made me provide even more detail on the website. I began to post at least once a week on the WordPress blog to provide my audience with an in-depth view of my trip, to provide them with an even deeper personal connection.

Photos were a huge part of my social media campaign. In a discussion with Ali Leverage (EY recruiter, 41) during my volunteering in Southeast Asia, it was stated “I look for pictures. Any post that had pictures tended to grab my attention. I am a visual person and I enjoy seeing Savannah's adventures through her lens. I also appreciate seeing photos that she is in. Not necessarily selfies but photos others took of her in the environment, with the people she met.” Using this, I started treating social media campaigns as a “photo journal”, where I included a picture with a concise caption that explained the context without being too time-consuming or wordy.

In the survey I completed after my trip, Rachel Cranmer (University of Cincinnati student, age 22) reiterated: “It is interesting and easier to look at pictures and short descriptions of the trip or experience. Pictures are more personal and make more of a connection with the audience.”

Implementation: I varied my posts depending of the social media site. I found that on Instagram, images with me included did better than just images of scenery or volunteer sites. Followers need to be able to form some kind of connection with an image for the most active engagement, and by placing me in the shot, they were able to have an immediate connection with the situation,
despite never having been to Asia or not being accustomed to the Asian lifestyle. However, often humanitarian organizations are followed by social media users who have no personal connection with the mission. This just means that humanitarian organizations need to be aware of how to emotionally charge their posts.

Reception: Facebook was mainly a platform used to prompt users to check my other sites. I linked my Instagram and Twitter accounts to my Facebook page, so if users did not have an Instagram or Twitter account, they were still connected and could see the “full picture” of my social media campaign. I also used Facebook to redirect followers to my WordPress account; every blog I posted, I shared the link on Facebook. GoFundMe was also prompted on Facebook, reminding followers that donations were appreciated. The main “new” content on Facebook was photos that were not shared on Instagram and weekly updates, almost a “too long, didn’t read” aspect of the weekly blog post I wrote.

Twitter was mainly used for short observations about the humanitarian efforts I was joined. Twitter was the least interactive social media platform. I did not receive nearly as many followers as I did on my Instagram account, and on average, I received only three-four “likes” or “retweets” on a Twitter post, while I received an average of 65 “likes” per picture posted on Instagram. Twitter is being used less and less by social media users; it is being replaced by other platforms. I believe that had my campaign continued past my trip, I would have replaced Twitter with another social media platform (most likely Snapchat) to continue engaging an audience.

As the trip continued, I became more invested in Instagram, Facebook, and WordPress than
Twitter. I had less engagement and followers on Twitter than any other site. In my follow-up survey, participant selected which social media platform they engaged the most with out of the four platforms. None of the participants selected Twitter as an engaging platform.

Figure 25: Which social media account engaged followers the most
One of the biggest recurring questions throughout the trip was the appropriate amount to post. Users typically are turned off when accounts post too much. Therefore, I did some research through the Pew Research Center. Pew shows a breakdown of the number of times organizations post on social media.

![Figure 26: How often organizations post content on social media](image)

Based on this figure, I decided to try to post one thing on at least one social media platform per day.
Communications Director of the Malini Club

Malini Club is an on-campus organization at Penn State University that supports the Malini Foundation, “a nonprofit social enterprise that advances the interests of girls and women in Sri Lanka through quality education, empowerment and by bringing their voices to the international community”. The Foundation is based in Washington, DC, and is paired with the United Nations Millenium Development Goals for reducing poverty, improving access to education, and promoting gender equality and environmental sustainability.

I worked as the Communications Director for the Malini Club, an on-campus organizations that worked directly to support the Malini Foundation, a non-profit based in Sri Lanka. The club was new, and its social media accounts were just beginning to be utilized appropriately. My team and I controlled the social media accounts to introduce the club and foundation, to promote fundraisers, and to spread awareness about the trafficking of girls within Sri Lanka and all across the developing world. While I was director, I saw several issues that I believe humanitarian organizations should be aware of when preparing to take on a social media campaign.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Techniques</th>
<th>Malini Club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme A: Account Creation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media platforms used</td>
<td>Facebook, Twitter, Instagram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing new platforms</td>
<td>No discussion about creating new accounts on new platforms; not enough manpower to man other accounts (four, including website) considered to be enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Yes; hosted on Weebly; website is not intuitive and has not been updated in some time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Social media accounts linked to website** | Yes; Facebook and Twitter feeds embedded on homepage; link to Instagram included in top right corner  
Link from Facebook does not connect to website  
Instagram does not share the website link  
Twitter has the link to the website, but like Facebook, the link is broken |
| **Fundraising capabilities** | On the Malini Foundation website, there is a tab titled “Donate” to donate directly through the website; an audience member can also donate indirectly through the “Sponsor-a-Girl” program; however, on the website, these links are dead, and lead nowhere |

**Theme B: Audience Gathering**

| **Audience gathering** | Gathers audience through club member’s personal networks |
| **New audience members** | As new members join the club, audience expands, reach expands |
| **Publicity** | Malini Club reached out to several on- and off-campus news sources to spread the word of the club’s inception; worked with Onward State and the Daily Collegian to create articles, shared social media accounts in these articles |
| **Partnerships** | Malini Foundation shared Malini Club’s social media account information on the Foundation’s social media platforms; no other partnerships |
| **Audience spread** | Malini Club supports the Foundation, and therefore the audience is spread across networks of people in State College (student involvement), Washington DC (founder and supporters at the home office), and Sri Lanka (area of mission) |

**Theme C: Message Crafting/Audience Engagement**

| **Post timing** | Facebook: a post is published every day on the Facebook fan page; most posts are not organic, |
they are often just sharing posts from other similar humanitarian organizations that promote women’s rights and other similar missions

Instagram: the last post on the club’s Instagram was three weeks ago; image was original and supporting International Women’s Day

Twitter: the last tweet was on February 24; like the Facebook page, the Twitter typically just retweets tweets that come from either the original Malini Foundation twitter or other accounts that have similar missions; the organic posts are usually about upcoming events information sessions about the Summer Fellows Program (a program where Schreyer students interested in international development and women’s rights can volunteer with the Malini Foundation in Sri Lanka)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience engagement</th>
<th>It does not appear that the organization has a significant amount of audience engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>posts average about one like per post; those liking the posts are typically club members; 880 likes on Facebook page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>engagement similar to Facebook; even fewer likes/retweets per post; 169 followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>very low engagement; makes sense as there is only one post on the account; 18 followers</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Propagation</th>
<th>Club members are encouraged to take place in promotion of the organization’s social media accounts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encouraged to retweet tweets and share Facebook posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When big events hosted by the club are coming up, club members change profile pictures and cover photos on Facebook to spread the word to their personal social media networks</td>
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</table>
Penn State THON Public Relations Committee Member

Penn State THON is a yearlong effort to raise funds and awareness for the fight against pediatric cancer. It’s entirely student-run, and there are sixteen committees that spend the year leading up to THON planning for the weekend.

I am a member of Penn State Dance Marathon’s Public Relations team. I have been observing how the social media captains post through THON’s official social media accounts and the reaction of the general Penn State public to these posts. One of the main roles of the public relations team is to manage the social media accounts and use the manpower of committee members to spread the message of THON throughout the cyber landscape. THON 2016’s main focus is spreading awareness for pediatric cancer. In doing this, THON has had a heavier social media focus then normal, particularly by trying to encourage graduated Penn Staters to take part in the several alumni based challenges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Techniques</th>
<th>Penn State THON</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme A: Account Creation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media platforms used</td>
<td>Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, FourSquare, Google Plus, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Blog, Buzzfeed Community Articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing new platforms</td>
<td>Every year THON evaluates new social media platforms and the benefit they could bring to the philanthropy’s reach and network. This year while I was on the public relations committee, the captains discussed the impact Snapchat could have. The captains decided it was extremely beneficial to add Snapchat, the</td>
</tr>
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fastest growing social media app on the market. Snapchat has taken over the college campus; maintaining a Snapchat story is one of the most popular forms of communication amongst college students. One of the newest capabilities of Snapchat is to add stories specific to events; users can submit their own videos when they attend an event to the overall “story”. THON decided to host these stories at the biggest events throughout the year to engage more students in the and to increase the excitement of the events.

Buzzfeed has also been a new addition to the THON social media repertoire this year. Buzzfeed has an option for independent writers to create articles to share personal articles. THON has begun writing articles on the community forum to share humorous and informative articles about THON, spreading the THON cause to the very widespread Buzzfeed community.

THON is inclined to utilize new methods of social media for many reasons. New methods of social media bring in new audience members, and engages members within the Penn State community who many not be physically involved in the THON effort.

Website
THON has a very intuitive, modern website (thon.org). The website links to all social media platforms with a social media list embedded neatly in the bottom right corner of the website.

Social media accounts linked to website
Each website has a link to the website so social media followers can gain more information about the THON initiative.

Fundraising capabilities
Because THON is a philanthropy, it’s main goal is fundraising to benefit pediatric cancer. The website has donations embedded, and every post published on a social media platform is directed to this page for interested parties to donate.
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Theme B: Audience Gathering</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience gathering</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>New audience members</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Publicity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Partnerships</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Audience spread</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme C: Message Crafting/Audience Engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post timing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audience engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facebook:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Twitter:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propagation</td>
</tr>
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</table>
volunteers to share and retweet major posts to spread awareness to personal social networks.

THON’s main mission is to raise money to combat pediatric cancer, and the way to raise the most money is to network. By sharing on social media, the cause is sent to an exponential number of people.
Data Analysis

The following section analyzes the data gathered while volunteering in Southeast Asia, serving as the Communications Director for the Malini Club, and working as a Penn State THON Public Relations committee members. This section is organized by the themes discussed above, with each theme broken down into the case studies to better organize the following analysis.

Theme A: Account Creation

Case Study 1: Southeast Asia Social Media Campaign

Running a social media campaign while volunteering in Southeast Asia was the most eye-opening research to the needs of a successful campaign for a humanitarian organization. I began my campaign by choosing the most prominent social media platforms. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram were the obvious choices based on my personal experience with social media. The majority of young adults (myself included) are constantly switching between these mobile applications in their free time, and the number of users of these applications are increasing every day. Therefore, I hypothesized that these three social media platforms were the backbone of every social media campaign initiated by humanitarian organizations.

I also created a website hosted on WordPress. A strong social media campaign should always have a strong foundation, a website where interested parties can go for more information about the organization. Social media acts as a hook, drawing in potential supporters or updating established supporters. My WordPress site was my foundation, providing a space to provide
more in-depth updates through a blog. It also presented a static page that described my trip, my research, and the humanitarian organizations I was volunteering for. New or confused followers could always reference my website from my social media accounts to learn more. I also had a page within the website where interested parties could sign up to receive monthly updates about my trip. While I did not ultimately complete these monthly updates, I believe it is very important for humanitarian organizations to have a “sign-up” feature on their website for interested supporters to get more information about what they can do to help. Whether potential supporters simply want more information about the organization’s mission or they want details on how to volunteer or donate, it is crucial to provide somewhere for this to happen.

The set-up of a website is critical. Messy websites often deter potential supporters because they seem unprofessional and illegitimate. I took this into account when planning the set-up of my website. I wanted it to reflect my personal style, but also to be neat and logical. For humanitarian organizations first creating a website, I recommend using a website hosting service such as WordPress or Weebly. These types of sites can help mitigate issues typically seen in new sites, like overcrowding or broken links. The sites are also free, a benefit for organizations with limited budgets. If a humanitarian organization would like their own domain name, they can still utilize sites like these to purchase a unique domain name.

Fundraising is a critical objective of humanitarian organizations; they often rely on private donations to continue their humanitarian work. Humanitarian organizations can appropriately leverage social media to fundraise effectively. I ran a fundraising campaign for my trip to understand the difficulty organizations have with soliciting funds. I directly linked to my
GoFundMe page for donations, and I shared the site through my Facebook page (personal profile and fanpage), Twitter, and Instagram accounts. However, for established humanitarian organizations, I found that GoFundMe and other fundraising sites, such as Kickstarter, can actually limit funds. GoFundMe deducts a 5% fee from each donation received. While this may not seem like a large percentage, it can severely limit large donations, affecting the organization’s operations. When it comes to fundraising, I recommend creating a private account for donations that supporters can directly transfer funds from. Instead of linking to a separate site to donate funds through a third party, it is far more legitimate to create a secure online donation hosted on the organization’s website. The easier it is to donate, the more likely people are to donate. Options to donate are also vital. Sites should allow people to donate online, in cash, or through checks. By catering to supporters through a simple user interface that guarantees security, organizations are more likely to receive the monetary support they need.

While I focused mainly on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WordPress, I was aware that I was missing other effective social media platforms. Several participants I surveyed suggested the use of Snapchat. Snapchat is an extremely popular video and photo messaging mobile application, particularly among the younger generations. If humanitarian organizations can harness the power of Snapchat effectively, they could have immense success. Snapchat can provide for real-time snapshots and videos of the work the humanitarian organization is doing in an area. Several participants confirmed that video was a medium that could be explored. Periscope is an application sponsored by Twitter that live streams video. This application is contingent on constant Wi-Fi or network connection. However, if the organization has a consistent and reliable network connection, they could utilize Periscope to give supporters a live-stream, real-time
perspective into the change they are providing by using supporters’ aid. Vine was also suggested. Vine could be limiting; the short-form video sharing application only allows users to share six-second looping video clips. However, I believe that depending on the audience an organization is trying to reach and the type of work they are completing, Vine could be extremely beneficial. Video of some sort seemed to be the overwhelming missing component of my social media campaign, but I believe that humanitarian organizations can use video effectively to showcase their work.

Case Study 2: Communications Director of Malini Club

Malini Club took the appropriate approach to social media account creation. As college students, our team looked at the most prominent social media platforms used by our peers (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and created an account on each platform. We also knew the importance of having a website to redirect audience members to. Therefore, we initiated a Weebly hosted website. We chose Weebly because of its free nature, and because several members of our team had previously used Weebly to host a website for a Penn State course.

The Malini Club’s thought process behind account creation made sense and was in line with appropriate social media practices. However, it was in further steps when the club struggled; account creation mirrored the appropriate number of social media platforms. Malini Club had the right beginnings, it was just in execution that it failed to appropriately leverage social media for success.
Case Study 3: THON Public Relations Team

THON has eleven different social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, FourSquare, Google Plus, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Blog, Buzzfeed Community Articles). At first analysis, this seems like too many accounts. Oversaturation is a severe problem with social media. Users reiterate again and again that limit their own social media presence because they do not like seeing the same thing over and over, especially if they do not have a connection to that post. My research reiterates that four to five platforms is the appropriate number of accounts to use effectively. However, THON has a very large audience spread, and by engaging on a wide range of platforms, the philanthropy is able to reach all audience members on any platform.

THON’s main mission is to spread awareness and collect donations to combat the effects of pediatric cancer. Because of the nature of its mission, it makes sense that THON will use every social media platform available. Each social media platform has a different audience, and creating an account reaches that unique audience. For organizations that are focused on awareness, this tactic works wonders. However, for organizations that are focused more on physical engagement (volunteer work, supply donation, etc.), it is more beneficial if fewer accounts are used with deeper, more engaging posts.

Theme B: Audience Gathering

Case Study 1: Southeast Asia Social Media Campaign

Reciprocity was the greatest takeaway from audience gathering research. Loyalty is a large factor in social media users. There’s a feeling of obligation when someone “flatters” you with a follow,
retweet, or like. It compels a user to return the favor and follow back or engage with a fellow user’s posts. In order to truly amass an audience, humanitarian organizations must be willing to start at the fundamental level and follow fellow social media users first. Once a general audience base is established, it enhances the credibility of the organization, and it allows for new audience members to join more consistently.

Humanitarian organizations must also share the new social media accounts on existing ones. I shared my Southeast Asia specific social media platforms on my own personal accounts. By sharing them with my already well-established social media, I received a conservative number of followers before I even began my following spree. Sharing and following are the keys to gaining a large and receptive audience.

Spread is also a very important aspect of social media effectiveness. Humanitarian organizations are often holding operations in countries and communities away from their home base; for example, the audience on my campaign was mainly in the United States, even though I was volunteering in Southeast Asia. However, throughout my campaign my audience spread in an international context. I soon had followers from thirty countries because of the nature of my volunteering. By addressing an international audience, spread is increased and new perspectives are added to an audience.

Case Study 2: Communications Director of Malini Club

The Malini Club struggled with amassing an audience base. As a new organization on Penn State’s campus, the social media accounts were all starting from zero followers. The initial
followers of the club’s Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook pages were social media users who were either in the club or had some type of history with the Malini Foundation. It was difficult to promote the club when we members of our audience already knew all the inter-workings of the club and foundation. It was vital to somehow engage with members of the Penn State community who were unaware of the club to fully promote the club productively. To solve this problem, it was necessary to begin an aggressive campaign and become more visible to the general community. In order to do this, the Malini Club social media accounts needed to be shared by other social media platforms, like Onward State. We needed partnerships to truly be accessible by potential supporters. Also, we had to be comfortable with “following” other users on social media. Social media often works as a “tit-for-tat” platform; users will follow back if followed. Therefore, in order to gain followers, we had to follow people. This was an area of contention within the communications team, as many members believed this sullied the reputation of our social media presence. However, from personal experience, I knew this worked, and we gained more followers overall by taking this action.

Humanitarian organizations could benefit from pairing with other organizations. A similar organization could sponsor them, requesting followers to follow them. Having publicity is also a huge way for organizations to gain followers. By reaching out to local news sources, the organization could gain new followers drawn from the audience of that news source. Gaining public contacts is huge, and in any interview with a news source, the organization should include all social media accounts.
Case Study 3: THON Public Relations Team

THON already has a very large, very widespread audience because of the nature of the philanthropy’s mission. In order to continually add new audience members to the audience, THON addresses new social media platforms and discusses new types of media to better engage audience members. THON pairs with local businesses to enhance not only their social media presence, but the local businesses social media presence (ex: THON paired with Lion’s Pride, a downtown store. Lion’s Pride posted on their social media accounts about THON, and THON posted a photo of Lion’s Pride on their Instagram, requesting that THON supporters go follow Lion’s Pride on Instagram in exchange for $1 donated to THON). Pairing is a huge benefit that humanitarian organizations can take advantage of. It is beneficial for a new humanitarian organization to create contacts with well-established organizations or businesses.

A humanitarian organization can use posts on their accounts to gain new followers. Once a humanitarian organization is well-established and legitimized by a large audience base, it does not need to follow individuals. Instead, the content will be the main way it brings in new audience members and spreads awareness of its mission. The ways to engage an audience and therefore broaden an audience are discussed below.

Theme C: Message Crafting/Audience Engagement

Having an interactive audience is the most important part of a social media campaign. It is futile to post on social media or a website if an audience disregards or ignores the posts. In order to engage an audience, posts must be planned carefully. They must vary; if the same type of picture or status is always posted, potential supporters will begin to simply overlook what is posted by
the humanitarian organization. To truly engage an audience, organizations must provide a way for supporters to connect with the organization.

**Case Study 1: Southeast Asia Social Media Campaign**

When posting while abroad, I found that photos of myself, no matter the context, received significantly more likes than pictures where I was not present. When I was in the picture, followers could immediately form a connection with the unfamiliar location or situation. However, when I was not present, it was more difficult for followers to understand the circumstance. This is where ethos, pathos, and logos must be employed to truly elicit engagement.

Ethos, pathos, and logos are modes of persuasion to convince audiences; in the case of humanitarian organizations, they can be applied to engage audience members and compel them to lend support to the organization.

Ethos is the ethical appeal that convinces the audience of the author’s credibility. Humanitarian organizations can utilize ethos to convey dependability and reliability. In my social media campaign, I tried to fully convince my audience of my abilities and my methods for volunteering to garner both emotional and monetary support. I included my relationship with my university and Schreyer Honors College to further exhibit the legitimacy of my mission. It is extremely important for humanitarian organizations to utilize ethos, particularly at the beginning of the social media campaign, to convey validity and effectiveness. Supporters want to know that they
are supporting a worthy cause, and by applying ethos to different posts, organizations can verify their ethical worth.

Pathos exists when author’s play on the emotions of an audience. This is the most effective form of persuasion. Pathos draws on sympathy; an author is typically trying to make the audience feel what they are feeling in the moment. One of the most famous social media campaign, Humans of New York, uses pathos extremely well. Brandon Stanton, the photographer behind the effective photo journalism campaign, takes pictures of normal New York citizens and tells their stories on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to incite followers to understand and accept humanity at a greater level. Just recently, Stanton traveled to Iran to take his photojournalism campaign global. The images he took played on the emotions of Americans towards citizens of the Middle East, and by using true stories and emotional appeals, he was able to garner support for several different Iranian citizens who had fallen upon hard times.
Even President Obama was invested in the emotions Stanton demonstrated, commenting on one particularly moving photo of a father and son “What an inspirational story. One of the most fulfilling things that can happen to you as a parent is to see the values you’ve worked to instill in your kids start to manifest themselves in their actions – and this one really resonated with me” (Wagner).

I personally found pathos to be the most used persuasive technique for my social media campaign. One of the most moving experiences I had was in Cambodia. Cambodia is a very
unique country that has a devastating history; however, this history is very often forgotten or ignored. I tried to convey these stories with my followers, hoping to spread awareness about the history that has led to extreme poverty and corruption in the small country.

Figure 28: @Savs_inSEAsia Cambodian corruption
I received several messages after posting these images to explain the history of the Khmer Rouge and to see if there was any way to help the Cambodian people without getting used by corrupt, national organizations. Pathos is the Greek word for both “suffering” and “experience”. Social media campaigns can encourage support by providing real experiences of the people they are helping, playing on the emotions of their audience and leading them to support the organization.

The final persuasive technique, logos, is an appeal to logic. Personally, I did not focus too much on the logos technique. I tried more to use ethos or pathos, as I believed these were more effective for my campaign. However, logos can be effective when used effectively. One of the non-profits I worked for in Cambodia, the Coalition for Integrity and Social Accountability (CISA) uses logos to continue their support. They provide press releases and success stories to
their supporters to convey the reasons their organization is needed and to request continuing support. As an established coalition, they focus on professionalism in receiving support, and therefore focus on how to incorporate logos into their social media posts.

Case Study 2: Communications Director of Malini Club

A large issue we at the Malini Club faced was a general confusion with what our club was doing. To gain support, potential supporters need to completely understand what the organization is doing. The type of content can be as inspirational as possible, but if supporters do not know the context of that content, they will not provide the appropriate resourcse. Supporters need to know where their support is going. The Malini Club needed to be clearer about what their mission was; in hindsight, I believe the Malini Club should have created a transparent and concise mission statement that they posted upon inception of the club and always had visible to users. Also, it would have been beneficial for the club to create an independent website that could be referenced by new potential supporters that showcased why the club was created and what they were doing to continue the cause of the Malini Foundation.

Humanitarian organizations need to ensure that all of their content backs up their mission. If confusion about why an organization posted content exists, this is going to discredit the organization and could potentially cause a loss in followers. I suggest humanitarian organizations create their own content in order to avoid misperception. When an organization creates content, it is a direct representation of the organization’s values and practices.

Case Study 3: THON Public Relations Team
In order to be effective, THON has successfully utilized its Public Relations team members to also share THON’s images, statuses, tweets, and Instagram pictures on their own personal accounts, further spreading the awareness. Having sixty extra members sharing the same image repeatedly is an extremely effective tool that spreads the mission of THON. Also, when those sixty-plus members share the images or posts across social media platforms, other members of the Penn State community are encouraged to do the same, reaching even more connections across the social media world. By propagating a simple image through the PR team, such as an image compelling students to run in the THON 5K, that image is spread thousands of times across Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, showing up repeatedly on every single Penn Stater’s social media sites. Repetition is key to gaining support. THON also posts about its successes throughout the year; it reminds followers of the final total raised from the previous year, of the total THON has raised since its inception, and of the families who have been positively impacted by those totals.

When an organization engages in propagation, its mission is spread to brand new social networks. Its reach is expanded. Sharing success stories is also a reliable way to engage users. Supporters want to know that their support is making a difference, and by sharing those successes with their audience base, their supporters will be reminded of the effect they have on the cause (whether direct or indirect) and will be more likely to continue to engage.
## Final Summary

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study 1: Southeast Asia Social Media Campaign</th>
<th>Case Study 2: Malini Club Communications Director</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme A: Account Creation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Theme C: Message Crafting/Audience Engagement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four accounts used; for small organizations with little manpower, it is vital to utilize four or five social media accounts. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, a website, and a donation capability are the current most popular and the easiest-to-use. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and the website can be linked, making it easy to share content on all platforms. New platforms should be investigated on a regular basis to see if they could add benefit to the campaign.</td>
<td>Reciprocity: new social media accounts should follow users (look at personal social networks and users who may be interested; users who may follow a similar organization, volunteers who have worked with the organization in a physical capacity, previous donors, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme B: Audience Gathering</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ethos and pathos</strong> most useful of the persuasive techniques to connect with audience. Personal and emotive stories the best way to engage audience as it forms a connection between the user and the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicity is huge for gaining new audience members; still concerned with reciprocity, but if news sources can share the organization’s mission and provide social media account information, audience will spread. It is highly recommended that new humanitarian</td>
<td>Clarity is key; organizations must ensure their mission is always supported and reiterated by their content. Confusion hurts the legitimacy and effectiveness of a campaign. Organic content will help aid in the maintenance of the mission and will provide more personal connections between the audience</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Clarity is key; organizations must ensure their mission is always supported and reiterated by their content. Confusion hurts the legitimacy and effectiveness of a campaign. Organic content will help aid in the maintenance of the mission and will provide more personal connections between the audience</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 3: THON Public Relations Committee Member</td>
<td>For an organization based on spreading awareness and eliciting donations, having as many accounts as possible is the most beneficial. For this management, a large team is required. Manpower is a must. The organization must also ensure that every account is updated regularly and appropriately, as having an inactive account could cause negative impact on other platforms.</td>
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Applicable Social Media Campaign

Based on the data analysis above, I believe I had discovered the key components that must be applied in an effective social media campaign to be hosted by a humanitarian organization in order to further their mission.

1. Modes of Social Media

   I have devised that the following modes of social media are currently the most popular outlets currently. However, these are mostly the ones most popular among my social network. Humanitarian organizations should be aware of their audience and take into account the popularity of other social media sites in the target countries. The most popular social media sites shift according to governmental regulation and pop culture trends within that country. Humanitarian organizations should choose to join social media sites that are prevalent not only in their home country, but the countries where their audience is based. A successful humanitarian organization should also have a website, and each social media account should redirect to the website. The website should provide more in-depth, holistic information about the organization, while the social media accounts should provide snapshots and quick updates of the organization’s projects.
a. Facebook: more detailed

b. Twitter: short, relevant updates about the organization

c. Instagram: photos (any post that has pictures tend to grab attention; visuals attract)

d. Some type of video application
   i. Snapchat: can send pictures or videos that last for ten seconds maximum and then expire
   ii. Periscope (sponsored by Twitter): real-time, live stream
   iii. Vine: very limited, 6-second videos played on a loop

2. Audience

Gathering and engaging with an audience is the most crucial part of a social media active humanitarian organization.
a. Assembly: focus on reaching out to potential supporters and people who support other similar organizations
b. Engagement: it is vital to continue engagement with these supporters, and the content needs to be relevant, updated, and captivating

3. Content

Content is vital, as this is the primary mode of engagement between the humanitarian organizations and the audience. It is crucial to play on persuasive techniques to entice the audience to provide their support.

a. Ethos: establish legitimacy
b. Pathos: play on audience’s emotions
c. Logos: play on audience’s logic

4. Popular opinion

Follow where the trends are going: if new applications are coming and others are going, be willing to adapt to the new social networking landscape

5. Propagation

The spread of the social media campaign is a key to the success of the campaign. Pertinent information should be shared in some capacity across all the accounts to fully convey the message. The humanitarian organization should also encourage employees and supporters to share the information on their own accounts in order to broaden the audience and engage even more.
Conclusion

Humanitarian organizations are institutions focused on providing aid to a specific group within a community. They are people banded together to help, in any way possible. They are driven, passionate, and concentrated on change. However, often they cannot elicit change because of a lack of resources. By properly utilizing technology channels, these organizations can appropriate support in the form of funds, resources, or volunteers to continue the mission they support. Social media is a novel tool in obtaining the necessary assets needed to complete their goals. By understanding the intricacies of social media and the correct way to leverage the different outlets, humanitarian organizations can truly spread their mission to new frontiers and reap the benefits.
References


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"Using Social Media to Enhance Your Professional Effectiveness." The Social Workout Book:
Strength-Building Exercises for the Pre-Professional (n.d.): 53-57. NGO Tips. US Agency

Villarino, Eliza. "Top Humanitarian Agencies on Social Media." Top Humanitarian Agencies on

Wagner, Laura. "Obama Posts Comment On 'Humans Of New York' Photo Of Iranian Father And

Academic Vita

Savannah Boothe

OBJECTIVE:
To obtain a social media marketing position that develops technical and professional skills.

SKILLS:
- Team Leadership/Team Development
- Risk Management and Analysis
- Strong Interpersonal Skills
- Microsoft Office
- Digital Forensic Equipment and Analysis
- Data Recovery and Evidence Handling
- Programming Languages: JAVA, HTML, PHP, SQL, SPSS
- Digital Forensic Software: EnCase Forensic Solution, Forensic Toolkit Product
- Project Management
- Social Media Analytics: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- Graphic Design: Wordpress, Weebly,

EDUCATION:
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA
Schreyer Honors College
Thesis: Impact of Social Media on Humanitarian Aid
B.S. in Security and Risk Analysis
Minor in Information Science and Technology
Currently in Senior Year

EMPLOYMENT:
Verizon Enterprise Solutions RISK Team Intern
- Assisted in the management of the forensic lab infrastructure.
- Managed digital evidence vital to forensic investigation.
- Managed risk team assets, including field equipment, software, and hardware systems.
  Harrisburg, PA  Summer of 2014

IST Learning Assistant
- Serving as a learning coach and mentor for students enrolled in an IST course while supporting the instructor with teaching-related tasks such as instruction, ensuring a positive learning environment, and grading.
  Penn State 2013-2014

Ernst & Young National Advisory Intern
- Provided administrative and technical support to several client-serving teams
- Assisted in the completion of vital tasks based on client needs
- Focused on learning critical technical and project management skills while working closely with internal and external teams
  McLean, VA  Summer of 2015

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:
Volunteer Abroad in Southeast Asia
- Managing a social media campaign across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Wordpress to present the details of my trip and encourage involvement.
- Focusing on the impact social media could have on humanitarian aid.
- Creating an online video campaign for the Coalition for Integrity and Social Accountability.

Silver Wings THON Chair
- Participating in a variety of weekly community service opportunities.
- Networking with other Arnold Air Society members and active duty Air Force officer through biannual conferences.
- Encouraging members to become involved in THON by hosting events with organization’s THON family, fundraising efforts, and other activities to raise money and awareness for pediatric cancer.

Kalliope Webmaster
- Developing, writing, managing, and monitoring website content and activity of Penn State’s literary journal to spread creative content and encourage Penn State students to submit personal writing.

Malini Club Communications Director
- Promoting girls’ education and women empowerment on the Penn State campus while interacting with the global non-profit organization, the Malini Foundation.
- Running a social media campaign for several events pertinent to the operation of the club.

State of State Public Relations Committee Member
- Creating new and unique online and guerilla marketing campaigns to spread awareness about State of State, a conference hosted at Penn State that perpetuates dialogue about on-campus issues.

THON 2016 Public Relations Committee Member
- Developing key marketing techniques to spread awareness about THON’s (Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon) mission on a local, state, and national level and to inspire the public to join Penn State students in their fight against pediatric cancer.