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# “social networks: benchmark data”

June 18, 2009

# framing the discussion and data....

*“62% of under-30s believe that sharing personal information via the internet is a good thing, so it’s not surprising that Pew reports 70% of this generation uses online social networks.”*

Gen Next’ (Gen Y, born 1977 or after)  
Pew Research Center, 2009

*“Alongside the explosive growth of online video over the last six years, time spent on social networks surpassed that for e-mail for the first time in February, signaling a paradigm shift in consumer engagement with the Internet.”*

New York Times  
May 17, 2009

# some more context....

*“Facebook users with 500 friends actively follow the news on only 40 of them, communicate with 20, and keep in close touch with about 10. Those with smaller networks follow even fewer.”*

Cameron A. Marlow  
Research Scientist  
Facebook

# and a few more numbers...

- Only a small fraction of the 179,000 nonprofits that use Facebook Causes have brought in \$1,000
- Less than 1 percent of Facebook members who have joined a Cause have actually donated money through the Causes App
- The median donation is \$25 as compared to average online donations from email fundraising appeals, which is about \$71
- Less than 50 of the 179,000 groups on Causes have raised \$10,000, and just two - The Nature Conservancy and Students for a Free Tibet - have raised more than \$100,000

Allyson Kapin  
blogging on [www.frogloop.com](http://www.frogloop.com)



# benchmark data

# about the benchmark study

Between February 20 and April 15, 2009, 980 nonprofit professionals responded to a survey about their organization's use of online social networks. The survey is sponsored by NTEN ([www.nten.org](http://www.nten.org)), Common Knowledge ([www.commonknow.com](http://www.commonknow.com)) and ThePort ([www.theport.com](http://www.theport.com)). Three groups of questions were posed to survey participants:

- About their use of commercial social networks such as Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, and others.
- About the construction and use of social networks on their own web sites, called house social networks in this report.
- Demographic information about their organization.

# outcomes - general numbers

- 86% of groups maintain a presence on a commercial social network
- 30% of groups maintain a 'house' social network
- average community membership on commercial networks was just over 5,000
- 61% of groups do not use commercial social networks for fundraising
- Almost 40% of groups raised less than \$10,000 USD on their social networks over the last 12 months

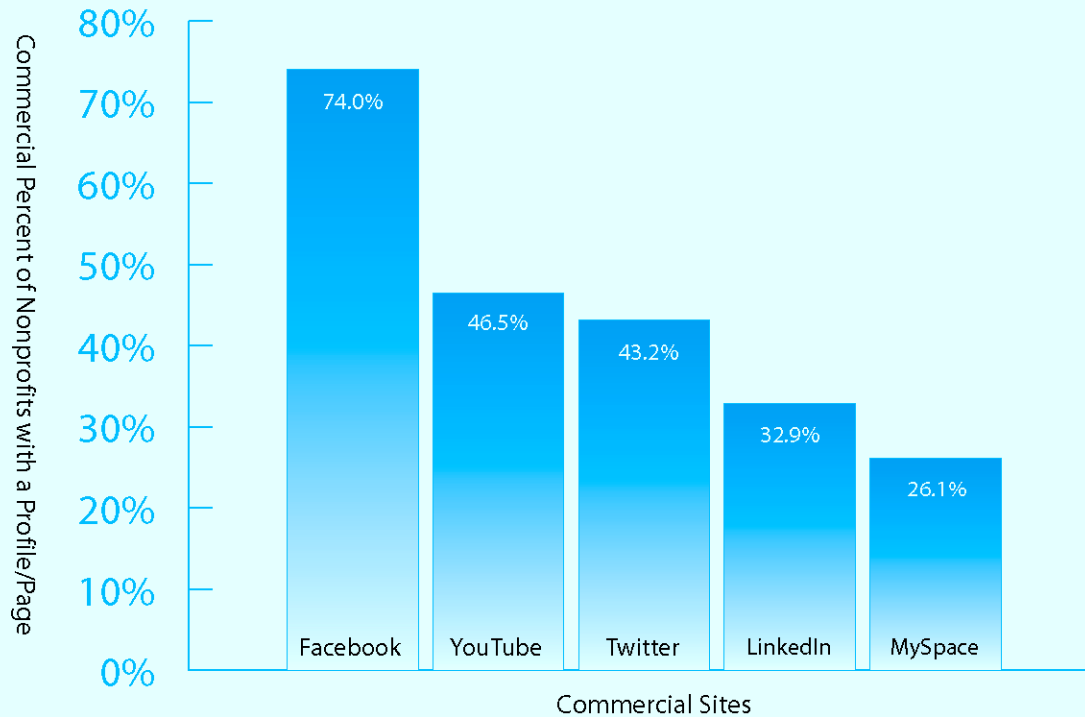
Table 1: Nonprofit activity on commercial and house social networks

| Question   | Commercial Social Networks  | House Social Networks  |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Does your organization have one?  | 86.2% replied YES   | 30.6% replied yes (1 or more communities)                                |
| 2. What is the primary purpose of the community?   | Marketing (80.5%)   | Marketing (55.9%)  |
| 3. How much staff time did you allocate to the community over the preceding year?  | 1/4 to 1/2 of a full time employee (64.5%)                                | 1/4 to 1/2 of a full time employee (51.5%)                               |
| 4. How much budget for external resources did you allocate over the preceding year?  | None (59.3%) \$1-\$10,000 (32.2%)   | None (34.0%) \$1 - \$10,000 (40.7%)                                      |
| 5. Number of community members?  | Average: 5,3912*  | 10,000 or less (86.6%)   |
| 6. How long have you had your community? (Among those with a community of this type)   | 1-24 months (93.8%)*  | 1-24 months (72.6%)  |
| 7. How much fundraising revenue have you raised from your community over the preceding year? (Among those with a community of this type) | Not Fundraising (61.1%)<br>Fundraising and raised \$0 - \$10,000 (37.8%)* | Not Fundraising (74.7%)<br>Fundraising and raised \$0 - \$10,000 (16.5%) |
| 8. How much revenue from sponsorship, underwriting and advertising have you received from your community over the preceding year?        | Not Advertising (94.8%)*<br>Advertising and received \$0-\$10,000 (4.7%)  | Not Advertising (85.3%)<br>Advertising and received \$0-\$10,000 (8.9%)  |
| 9. For those nonprofits without a community of this type, what is the primary reason?  | Do not have the expertise in-house (44.3%)                                | Do not have sufficient budget (47.0%)                                    |

\* Facebook

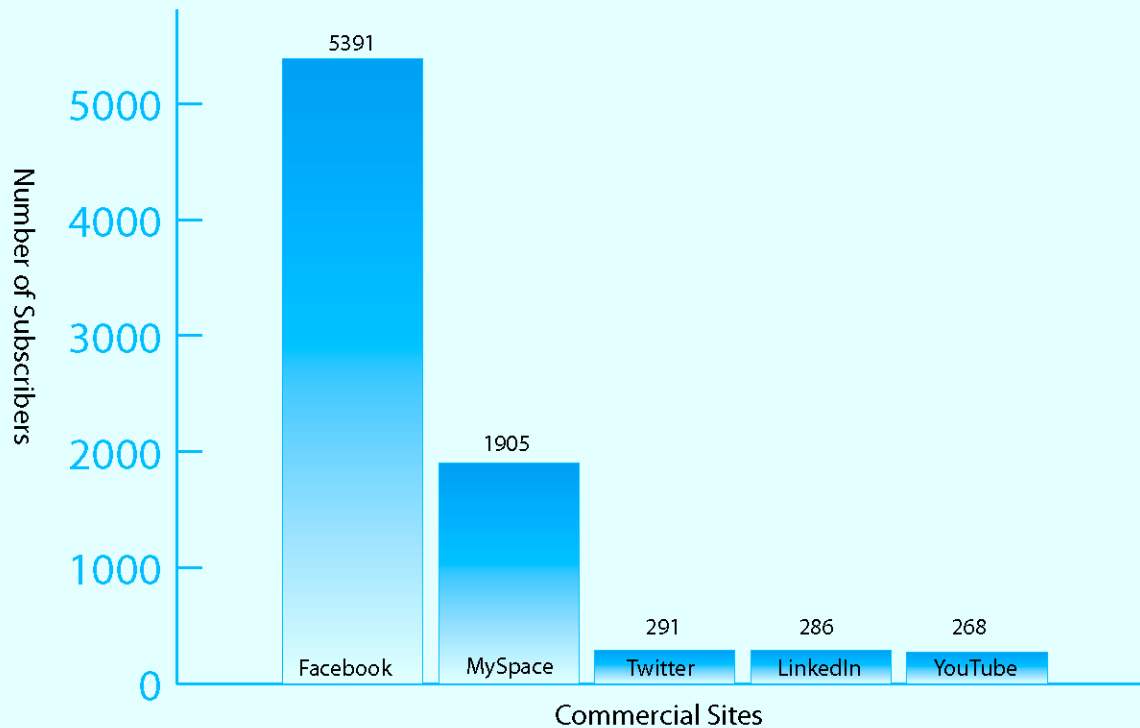
# commercial networks - which ones?

Graph 1: Popularity of Commercial Social Networks



# commercial networks - size?

Graph 2: Average size of respondent communities on commercial social networks



# house networks - general outcomes

- 74.4% of survey respondents specify 2,500 or less registered members in house networks, 12.2% have 2,501 to 10,000 members, and another 13.5% have more than 10,000
- very few nonprofit survey respondents are generating substantive revenue from their house social networks. 74.7% are not fundraising at all. Of the remaining quarter that are fundraising on their community sites, 35.0% raised \$10,000 or more over the last 12 months.
- the primary reasons for not having built a house social are: no budget (47.0% of respondents), no expertise (42.6%), not valuable to build a house community site (32.8%) and we didn't know it was possible (17.7%).

# learnings

*“we learned that commercial social networks, especially Facebook, are popular, but average community sizes remain small, and presence is relatively short. Nonprofits are allocating limited resources, staff and budget to their social networks. Traditional marketing channels to promote social networks are preferred, but new social media channels are being used as well. There is very little real revenue generated on these communities via fundraising and advertising.”*

*“A minority of nonprofit survey respondents, about one third, have built and manage their own house social networks, using software from a wide variety of social network software vendors. The size of house social networks are as yet, with just a few exceptions, still relatively small.”*