

Orchestras and New Media: A Complete Guide



Marc van Bree
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Author

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Acknowledgments

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Introduction

Smart companies will get out of the way and help the inevitable to happen sooner.¹

That's thesis number 57 from the Cluetrain Manifesto, a book that proclaimed the end of business as usual. Orchestras, just like thousands of commercial and nonprofit organizations around the country, have generally been slow or reluctant to adapt to the changing media landscape.

The changes we have seen are not simply hyped-up fads. Sure, Friendster is a goner, MySpace is losing its grip and even Facebook will likely disappear when something newer and flashier comes along. But as Amanda Maurer, the Chicago Tribune's social media producer, wrote on her blog, "it's not the sites we use—but the techniques, ideas and skills that allow us to be successful."²

So what's an orchestra to do? The following guide describes the current environment and outlines the strategies, tactics and tools you need to put together a new media communications plan for your organization.

About this e-book

In August 2008, I penned a special series for my blog Dutch Perspective on orchestras and new media ([archived here](#)). This series stemmed from an interest in online communication and months of reading, observing and experiencing orchestras in the new media environment. A presentation with the key findings soon followed ([available on SlideShare](#)). This e-book is a result of combining the blog series and presentation into a more definitive form.

The objective of this guide is to serve as a living document that is specifically designed for orchestras, but can be used by nonprofits and corporations alike. A living document that encourages reader feedback, and one that will serve as a starting point for a conversation about the role of new media within orchestras around the world.

About the author

I am a public relations practitioner with a broad experience communicating—on and offline—in the nonprofit environment. I am currently employed as public affairs associate at Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, an independent policy research center.

I joined Chapin Hall from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, one of the world's premier orchestras, where I served as public relations coordinator and later as publicist. At the Chicago Symphony, I took on an active role in the organization's online communications strategy. I developed the CSO's first online, multimedia press room; initiated the organization's Facebook and Twitter pages, reaching nearly 10,000 fans; built relationships with industry and local bloggers; and managed weekly dynamic Web content for the BP CSO Radio Broadcasts.

Let me be clear that I am by no means an expert on online communication and new media. In fact, you should probably be weary of anyone who makes such claims. I am simply passionate about the possibilities. What follows here are merely my own observations and any constructive disagreement and discussion is welcome and encouraged.

For any feedback, comments or suggestions, please do not hesitate to e-mail me at dutchperspective@mcmvanbree.com or leave a comment on my blog [Dutch Perspective](#).

The Changing Print Environment and the New Media Revolution

Arts proliferation and participation

We should begin this journey with the foundations. The past 30 years have seen a significant proliferation of arts organizations and activities throughout the country.³ A National Endowment for the Arts study tells us there are now more than 1,200 symphony orchestras, plus another 600 youth orchestras and roughly 120 opera companies. Moreover, in the last 20 years, the number of performing arts groups has risen to an all-time high.⁴

The study reports that these groups display enormous variety: some focus exclusively on modern and contemporary music, other cover the entire symphonic repertory. Others specialize in Baroque or Renaissance.⁵ This proliferation of the arts has significantly increased the number of options for patrons.

In Chicago, a culturally rich city, the standard-bearers are the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1891, and the Lyric Opera of Chicago, founded in 1954. But we can clearly see the more recent trend of specialized, niche organizations: Music of the Baroque (1972); Chicago Sinfonietta (1987); Chicago Opera Theater (1974); Light Opera Work (1980); and there are many more.

Although the number and variety of arts organizations has increased, the percentage of adults participating in the arts has remained flat. According to the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, from 1982 to 2002, the percentage of adults attending a classical music performance remained at about 12 to 13 percent of the adult population.⁶ Classical music does not seem to increase its base audience. However, the number of attendances per patron averaged 3.1 for classical music in 2002, higher than the 2.6 in 1992, which increased the total number of attendances by more than 20 percent from 60.3 million to 72.8 million.⁷

More worrying is the fact that the number of people tuning in to performances via various media has dropped significantly from 1992 to 2002. Perhaps this can be linked back to a decrease in performing arts programming in the media and disappearing classical music radio stations, but the drop in the total viewing/listening audience amounted to nearly 25 percent.⁸

Art in print, in proportion

In 2004, the National Arts Journalism Program at Columbia University published Reporting the Arts II. This expansive work takes a critical look at the news and features coverage of arts and culture in the United States, comparing data with an identical study from 1999.

First, let's put arts coverage in proportion. At the Chicago Tribune, the daily Tempo section, which contains arts, culture, media and technology, represented only 5 percent of the papers pagination. This is in stark contrast to the revenue the arts bring to newspapers. Cultural editor

Steve Erlanger of The New York Times, which admittedly has the most prominent arts coverage, states in the report: “The arts section brings in 35 percent of the paper’s revenue. We know there is a large, interested audience out there.”⁹ Clearly, something doesn’t quite add up.

Why this disparity? Douglas Clifton of the Cleveland Plain Dealer compares news and arts with the sports pages: “It’s an entire segment of readers who will either buy or not buy a newspaper based on their satisfaction with sports coverage. In other areas—including news and arts—there isn’t this on/off switch.”¹⁰

But wait, there’s more. Cultural participation is up, resource allocation is down. The study reports that “while more American are participating in cultural activities than at any time in our history, and although the arts have evolved to unprecedented size and complexity, the resources that metropolitan newsrooms allocate to arts are generally flat or in retreat.”¹¹

Art in print, in decline

The Columbia study tells us that from 1998 to 2003, space dedicated to arts articles and listings went from an average of 5,489 column inches to 4,994 column inches. The number of feature stories was down by more than 30 percent and articles have also gotten shorter; at nearly half of the researched newspapers, stories were at least 20 percent shorter.¹²

Over the past years, full-time classical music critic positions at many news organizations have been eliminated. These include, but are not limited to, the Los Angeles Times, Chicago Sun-Times, Kansas City Star, Miami Herald, Seattle Times and Minneapolis Star Tribune.

But as Justin Davidson wrote in a July 2008 article for Musical America, “it would be an error to attribute this dispiriting attrition to a philistine attack on the arts, or to focus too much on its meaning for cultural pursuits. The de-criticization of American journalism is a symptom of a much deeper tragedy in civic life: the lunatic suicide of the press.”¹³

It’s not just anecdotes. Statistics from the Newspaper Association of America show a decline in newspaper circulation numbers since the mid 1980s; from a daily circulation of over 63.3 million in 1984 to a daily circulation of 50.7 million in 2007.¹⁴

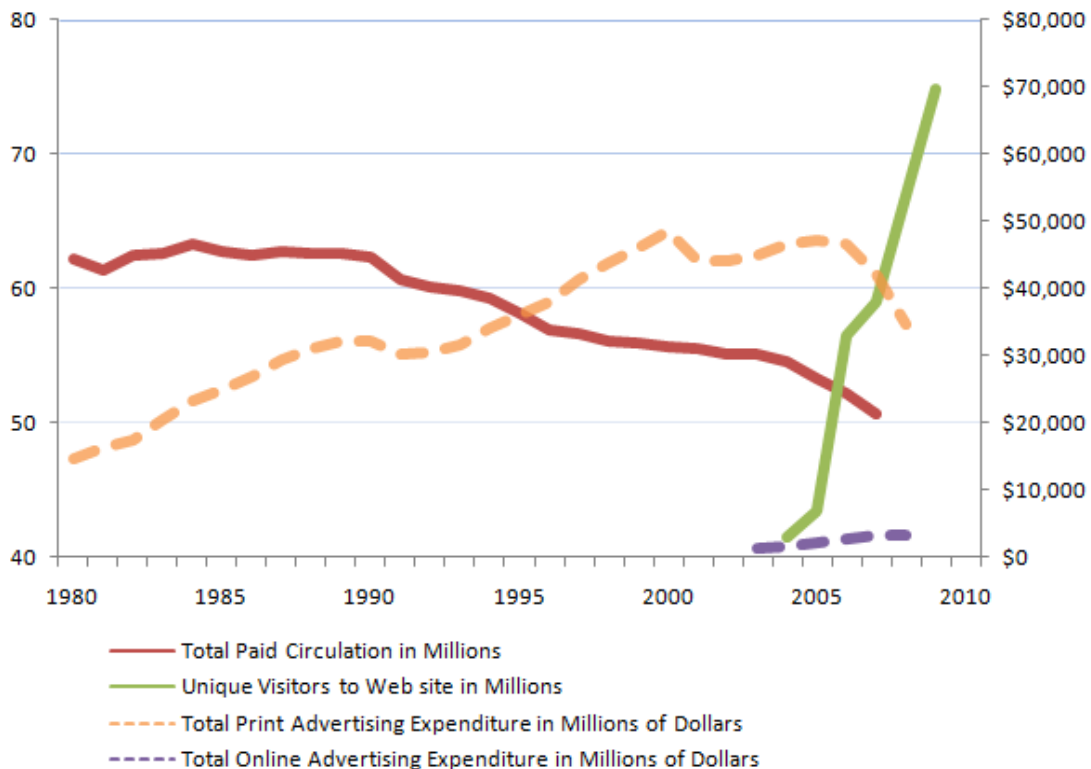
Another tell-tale sign of declining business for newspapers are dwindling advertising expenditures. Advertising expenditures in print decreased from \$47.4 billion in 2005 to \$ 34.7 billion in 2008. Although undoubtedly put on the fast track by an ailing economy in 2008, the past five quarters have each seen an average decrease of nearly 15 percent; by far the sharpest decline since the Newspaper Association started measuring in 1971.¹⁵

Shifting priorities

In that same period, from 2005 to 2008, online advertising expenditures increased from \$2 billion to \$3.1 billion. The past five years (2003-2008) have seen an average annual increase

of more than 20 percent¹⁶ (and this average even includes a decrease of 1.8 percent in 2008 due to the worldwide economic meltdown).

Sure, the gains in online advertising are not nearly enough to cover the loss of advertising in print, but it is a good indicator of shifting priorities. This shift is perhaps best highlighted by the fact that monthly unique visitor numbers for newspaper Web sites rose from 41 million in January 2004 to 75 million in January 2009. In active reach percentages, average numbers increased from 27.5 percent to 44.3 percent during that same period. We have now arrived at the point where newspaper Web sites have a higher active reach percentage than their print counterparts.¹⁷



Some traditional print media companies have recently bowed down to this changing environment. Two major examples are the Seattle Post Intelligencer and the Christian Science Monitor. These two dailies stopped printing daily editions and shifted from print to Web-only strategies over the last couple of months (Christian Science Monitor now prints weekly).

New media revolution

In the last decade, the Internet has evolved from providing information—static content—toward a more social and dynamic medium. Mary Madden of the Pew Internet project observed in an April 2008 keynote address to the Chicago arts community that “the Internet has moved from slow and stationary to fast and mobile.”¹⁸

The Cluetrain Manifesto has already briefly been mentioned in the introduction as a book that proclaimed the end of business as usual. Written in 1999, the book examines the impact of the Internet on business. The fundamental idea is this:

A powerful global conversation has begun. Through the Internet, people are discovering and inventing new ways to share relevant knowledge with blinding speed. As a direct result, markets are getting smarter—and getting smarter faster than most companies.¹⁹

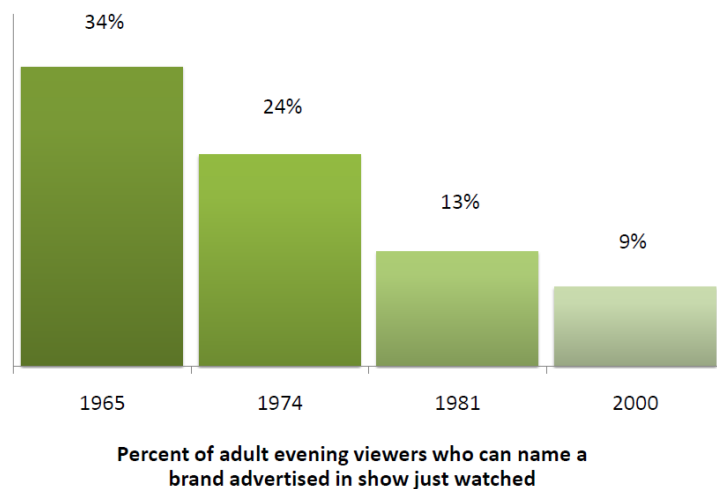
Digital marketing company iCrossing's e-book *What is Social Media?* describes how the Internet has moved to more **participation** (encouraging contributions), **openness** (no barriers to content and feedback), **conversation** (listening, not just broadcasting), **community** (gathering around a common interest), and **connectedness** (sharing content).²⁰

In his article for *Musical America*, Davidson concludes with some insightful pondering on what the Internet can mean for the arts:

...an invigorated conversation about the arts, a built-in audience of readers who have been betrayed by the local paper and the beginnings of a strategy for surviving the implosion of traditional news.²¹

Art and culture are not the only things that have evolved to unprecedented size and complexity. Everything has. In the 1990s, the number of brands on the grocery store shelves tripled from 15,000 to 45,000. There are currently 13,500 radio stations (4,400 in 1960), 17,300 magazines (8,400 in 1960) and more than 82 television channels per home (5.4 in 1960). And let's not forget the billions of Web pages.²²

Organizations and their messages are getting lost in this proliferation of culture, brands and media. In 1965, 34 percent of adults could name a brand advertised in a television show they had just watched. Only 35 years later, this number had shrunk to barely 9 percent.²³



Brian Reich and Dan Solomon offer sound advice in their book *Media Rules!*

More than just realizing that they have lost some of the control over their audience they once enjoyed, organizations must embrace the relationships they have with their customers and work twice as hard to make sure the information customers are using to form their opinions comes from the organization. Customers want help, they want to be led—and organizations can, and should, fill that need. You must be their steward.²⁴

Richard Bailey, a public relations educator who blogs at PR Studies, argues that we have returned to something more traditional, where mass media sits alongside new forms of Web-enabled social media:

With the exception of one brief era, all human communications can be characterised as social media. Epic poetry, fireside storytelling and conversations have dominated our collective history. The exceptional era has been the industrial age, which introduced mass media (large circulation newspapers and broadcasting).²⁵

Back to the Cluetrain Manifesto's thesis number 57: "smart companies will get out of the way and help the inevitable to happen sooner." Although it is extremely unlikely that professional journalism will disappear, seeing the decline in traditional arts coverage and the proliferation of culture, brands and media, the inevitable, it seems, is an increase in participation and conversation with your community. And new media is here to help.

The Starter Kit

Monitoring the scene

Sure, your task is daunting. You don't know where to start. The best advice: just explore! It doesn't take much to get a basic grasp of what social media entails. In fact, you probably have already browsed around YouTube or Flickr or created a profile in Facebook or LinkedIn.

You don't have to jump on every latest fad, but find out what's useful for you and learn what works best with your needs and what fits into your lifestyle. Then, when you're comfortable, try to participate and engage. You will later find that the same counts for an organization: survey the environment, determine what you are trying to accomplish and then find the right tools that work for you.

To make things easier, here is a preliminary list to help you monitor the scene:

- **Set up comprehensive Google Alerts**
Google Alerts are e-mail updates of the latest relevant Google results based on your choice of keywords. A “comprehensive” alert is an aggregate of the latest results from multiple sources (news, Web and blogs) into a single e-mail.²⁶ There is no easier, more basic way of keeping tabs on what's being said about your organization. Keywords can include your organization's name, a musician's name, your president's name or your competitor's name.
- **Set up a feed reader with relevant blogs and news feeds**
Web or RSS feeds are the standard method of distributing dynamic content to subscribers. Dynamic content can include blog posts, newspaper or magazine articles, news releases, audio files and videos. Whenever you see the icon on the right you know you can click to subscribe to the content.



Many people use a service to pull together a collection of RSS feeds, which is known as aggregation. There are Web-based services, such as Bloglines or Google Reader, and software-based services, including options for your desktop or in Microsoft Outlook and Internet Explorer. You should subscribe to:

- Newspapers and magazines (you can even specify the section)
- Industry blogs (classical music, public relations, technology etc.)
- Industry podcasts (syndicated audio or video on various topics)
- Search results (you can have your Google Alerts delivered in RSS)
- Institutional news feeds (press releases, event information etc.)
- Anything else that you find interesting (a cycling blog, a cooking blog etc.)²⁷

You can find blogs through specialized search engines like Technorati or Google Blog Search. Many of the results are blogs with little authority or influence—people's

personal online journals—but that is not to say you can't learn from blogs with little authority. They often describe concert experiences, from first-time classical music patrons to long-time subscribers. Pay attention to what's being said and you can learn—an unscientific focus group—about your customer service, artistic programming and general concert experiences.

To get you started, here's the [top 50 classical music blogs](#) according to blogger A.C. Douglas, but also check out the collection of blogs at [ArtsJournal.com](#) and [InsidetheArts.com](#).

- **Keep on monitoring**

There are many other places where you might find your brand or organization. Here are some of the places you must know about:

- **Facebook** and **MySpace** (the two giants of social networking; a great place to find people with common interests);
- **Twitter** (a micro-blogging platform with some of the most instantaneous content; a great place to find news or customer service issues before it hits the rest of the Web);
- **Flickr** and **YouTube** (two social content communities; a source of photos and videos);
- **Digg** and **Delicious** (two social bookmarking/recommendation sites; a great source to find what stories are boiling up);
- **Yelp** (an online city guide that allows users to rate and review your organization; a source for people making buying decisions);
- **Wikipedia** (a collaborative encyclopedia with nearly 2.8 million user-generated entries; a source for independent information about your organization);
- **Last.fm** (an Internet radio and music community Web site).

Feel a bit overwhelmed yet? Go ahead and explore the sites, but rest assured the abovementioned sites and tools will all be highlighted in further detail in just a short bit.

Blogs

Introduction

A blog, short for Weblog, is a Web site with regular entries on any topic imaginable, an online journal. Besides the fact that really nobody needed this explanation, it is not a very useful definition. How should we define a blog then? Let's look back at iCrossing's description of social media and take those key elements to illustrate a possible, more elaborate definition:

Blogs are a two-way street of **conversations** with feedback and discussions in which bloggers are thoroughly **connected** (via linking, tagging and sharing) with a **community** that gathers around a common interest. The **openness** of a blogging platform—there are no barriers to content and feedback—encourages **participation** and contributions.

Cameron Marlow at the MIT Media Laboratory explains “what distinguishes weblogging from previous web media is the extent to which it is *social*, and one can say that the medium came into existence when the set of web journal writers recognized themselves as a community.”²⁸

Marlow lists several linking and sharing features of blogging that are important in creating connectedness and communities, or in other words, features that enliven the blogosphere:

- **Blogrolls** (a list of other blogs that the author reads regularly);
- **Permalinks** (a link referring to a specific post instead of an entire weblog; allowing authors to have a concentrated conversation and respond to a specific post);
- **Comments** (a reader-contributed reply to a specific post within the site);
- **Trackback** (an automatic communication that occurs when one blog references another, bringing attention to who is discussing your content outside the comment area on your blog).²⁹



Now that you have the basics down, you can ask the important questions: “how does our organization connect with bloggers?” and “why should our organization blog?”

Why should our organization blog?

The first question you have to ask yourself is “why should our organization have a blog?” Keeping up with the Joneses is not the right answer; there should be a strategic objective for starting a blog. If you’re not sure why and you can’t figure out a purpose or objective, perhaps you shouldn’t be starting a blog. It is okay to have a new media communications plan without an institutional blog, especially in the early stages of your strategy.

A Northeastern University and Backbone Media study revealed 5 factors that should be taken into consideration before making a decision to blog:

- **Culture** (does your organization have particular cultural traits worth revealing?);
- **Transparency** (transparency is crucial to establishing credibility and trust);
- **Time** (it takes a lot of time to set up, research and write a quality blog and engage the community effectively);
- **Dialogue** (ability and willingness to engage in a dialogue with the community);
- **Writing Style and Personalization** (bring a human side to the blog).³⁰

Blogging is not a quick fix for problems. If you are thinking about yet another way to get your marketing message out, another outlet to sell tickets, you shouldn’t blog. Sure, blogging *can* get the message out or boost ticket sales, but if you start out with marketing or promotions as a focus, you will never gain credibility or an audience.

Think about it. Does your audience really want to hear about the XYZ Orchestra performing yet another Mahler’s Ninth Symphony? No. You are already cluttering their lives with that information through too many other channels.

But do your patrons want to hear what your musicians have to say about the supposed decline of classical music, or maybe even the anecdote from the artistic administrator on how Mahler’s Ninth Symphony was unexpectedly scheduled this season? Perhaps. It depends on how you write and what kind of information you are willing to give.

The most important thing to keep in mind is to add value. Valuable industry news and insights or conversations with notable colleagues or artists from around the country are just two directions to take.

If you do decide to blog, here are some things to keep in mind:

- **Author** (pick an interesting, authoritative voice);
- **Audience** (remember for whom you are writing);
- **Topics** (think about what your audience wants to read);
- **Comments** (what is your policy on comments and how do you moderate).

Nina Simon, who authors the Museum 2.0 blog, writes: “you have to decide WHY your institution is starting a blog (and no, ‘all my friends are doing it’ is not enough) and then find the approach that works for you.” She lists four approaches to institutional blogging for arts organizations:³¹

- **Institutional Info Blog** (a straightforward blog that distributes news about the organization and perhaps answers to frequent questions)

Example: the now inactive blog of the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Written mostly by Philipp Brieler, who is a managing editor in the editorial and media content department, the blog followed current productions and shared background information with a personal touch, often in the style of a magazine article. Sometimes, guest bloggers were invited to write, including mezzo-soprano Susanne Mentzer.

- **Community Content Blog** (blogs that take the content and offerings of the organization and try to open it up to community input)

Example: the Chicago Classical Music blog can be classified as a community content blog. The main blog entries are written by staff members of participating organizations, but there are also opportunities for patrons and the public to offer their view and take on the scene.

- **Specialized Content Blog** (blogs that are typically linked to a special event, presenting news about that content)

Example: musicians from the London Symphony Orchestra authored a blog during their most recent tour through the United States. The temporary blog was set up specifically for the purpose of documenting the tour.

- **Personal Voice Blog** (blogs in which individuals or a small panel of staff offer personal commentary about their organization)

Example: Brian Dickie’s Life as General Director of Chicago Opera Theater is a very casual, personal journal that highlights the day-to-day activities and travels of Dickie.

These four examples are by no means the golden standard for each particular approach. They each have their own merits and faults. A quick indicator of whether you are taking the right approach for your organization is increasing readership and participation. In a later chapter, measuring results and what metrics to use will be discussed.

A short note about one option we haven’t discussed yet: the internal blog. Generally accessed through the organization’s intranet, an internal blog can serve several purposes and may encourage employee participation, free discussion of issues, collective intelligence and direct communication between various layers of an organization. Just keep in mind that anything internal might make its way to the exterior.

How does our organization connect with blogs and their authors?

Consider this: how did your organization connect with your hometown newspaper and local journalists? There are many similarities (do your homework: know who they are and what they write and offer content and ideas with value), but there are also some important, subtle differences. Orchestra consultant Drew McManus and Australian blogging expert Darren Rowse have both written about connecting with bloggers. They advise the following steps:

- **Read** (know who is writing and what they are writing);
- **Participate** (become a genuine and active member; comment first, pitch later);
- **Build relationships** (provide the same level of service you would provide a journalist);
- **Adapt materials** (blogging is even more personal than mainstream journalism; personalize your pitch and remember you are working with a multimedia outlet).^{32 33}

The best start in the blogosphere is simply reading. As mentioned earlier, subscribe to RSS feeds. Once you're familiar with relevant blogs in your industry, participate.

As an organization, make sure you have a solid blogging and commenting policy in place; do not limit an employee's freedom to participate in online discussions, but make sure they understand your rules and basic legal issues (defamation, trade secrets, privacy etc.).

As an employee, make sure you understand there are legal and ethical limitations to what you can or should say about your employer and understand your employer's policy. Know that, even though you do not speak for them, you are always connected to your employer, willingly or not, and do not hide your identity. Always participate in full transparency and under your real name.

Darren Rowse writes, as a general rule, "comment first, pitch later" and adds "be genuine in these interactions, add value to the conversation happening on the blog and show that you're not just there to 'take' but to 'give'." ³⁴

Participation will build relationships, but as Drew McManus notes "be careful to distinguish active participation from direct pitches." ³⁵ Once you have established a relationship and determined the blog's authority, reach and credibility, you are ready to pitch. Keep in mind that these direct pitches will only work if you provide the blogger the same level of service you would provide a journalist. And a well-read blog can garner more readers than a small circulation newspaper, so do not be afraid to offer a blogger an interview, or even an exclusive, if the fit is right.

A blogger's needs are different than the traditional journalist's needs. A later chapter attempts to explain how to adapt your press materials.

Podcasts

Lastly, a brief note about podcasting. Just as Web or RSS feeds distribute blog posts to subscribers, they can also distribute audio and video files. These files are delivered for download or streaming via Web syndication, mostly through special software including iTunes or Winamp, but also through posts on Web sites and blogs. Many users will download podcasts to their portable media players to be played at a time of their choice.³⁶

Podcasts can perhaps best be described as on demand Internet broadcasts. There are many amateur shows, but organizations, radio and television channels have made their audio and video files widely available as well. Jason Heath, a ferocious blogger and podcaster, has a weekly podcast called Contrabass Conversations. The London Symphony and Philadelphia orchestras offer several podcasts. Other orchestras offer their program notes as podcasts.

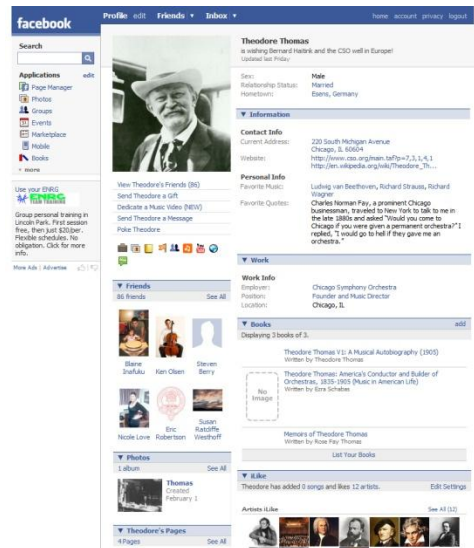
If blogs are an alternative to print media, podcasts are the alternative to radio and television.

Social Networking

Introduction

Social network sites are the embodiment of Web 2.0 and social media; more than any other service they encourage participation, openness, conversation, community, and connectedness on the Internet. Just as telephone, fax and e-mail changed the way we communicate; social networking has revolutionized our conversations and social interactions. Once again, let's refer back to iCrossing's five key elements and attempt to formulate a working definition:

Social networks are **communities** with a large degree of **openness** (public profiles) and **connectedness** (via linking, tagging and sharing in a network of publicly visible relationships) that spur **participation**, contributions and **conversations**.



Sites like Facebook, MySpace and LinkedIn let users build a profile with photos and personal data such as education, employment or favorite movies, music and books. This profile serves as a base from which the users build a network of friends and contacts.

How has social networking changed our communications?

In an April 2008 keynote address to the Chicago arts community, Mary Madden of the Pew Internet research project argued that while MySpace and Facebook are popular services now, the behavior of its users is permanent. She added that online relationships work best when they complement an offline relationship.³⁷ A study reported in the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication about social capital and social network sites confirms:

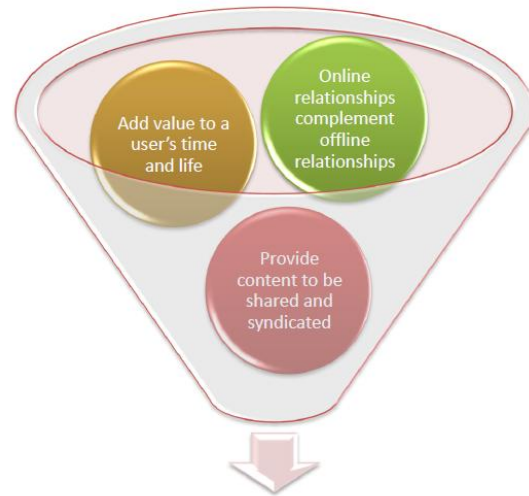
Online social network sites may play a role different from that described in early literature on virtual communities. Online interactions do not necessarily remove people from their offline world but may indeed be used to support relationships and keep people in contact, even when life changes move them away from each other. In addition to helping student populations, this use of technology could support a variety of populations, including professional researchers, neighborhood and community members, employees of companies, or others who benefit from maintained ties.³⁸

An MTV/Nickelodeon/Microsoft study found that “despite the remarkable advances in communication technology, kid and youth culture looks surprisingly familiar, with almost all young people using technology to enhance rather than replace face-to-face interaction.” The

study also reported that audiences want more control of what they watch and when they watch it, across all platforms; mobile, computer and television.³⁹

Caroline Vogt, Head of International Research, Microsoft Digital Advertising Solutions, adds that organizations need to provide people with “content that they want to share. Their reward will be the loyalty of brand-savvy groups.”⁴⁰

Social networks enhance a person’s life, accommodating constant connectivity, on-demand content and an expanding social capital. Keeping that in mind, your approach to social networking should be based on the following three rules: **add value**; **online relationships complement offline relationships**; and **provide content to be shared and syndicated**.



Approach to social networks

Word-of-mouth

Providing valuable content to be shared and syndicated can result in a strong word-of-mouth campaign. According to the MTV study, “a clear majority of young people asked said the majority of website links (88 percent) they viewed and the viral video content they downloaded (55 percent) came from friends’ recommendations.”⁴¹

Word-of-mouth is one of the key strengths of social media. Statistics from the Chicago Symphony and London Symphony orchestras seem to confirm this statement. In March 2009, Facebook was the fifth largest third-party referral site to cso.org and lso.co.uk. In Chicago, Google had topped direct URL entry as the number one entry point to the site and even the mail.google.com domain entered the top ten of referrers.

What does this all mean? First of all, search engine optimization (SEO) is increasingly important: Google referred nearly 45 percent of the visitors. Other search engines such as Live, Yahoo and AOL were also in the top ten. Primarily, this means optimizing content to match relevant and specific keywords; knowing what people search for. Equally significant, it means getting Internet users to link to the content on cso.org, or in other words, encouraging word-of-mouth.

The high placement of mail.google.com is not surprising either. Of course, marketing efforts reach people’s e-mail inboxes. But another likely, and for us more important, factor is that people e-mail their friends and, for various reasons, direct them to the CSO page.

While the Chicago Symphony’s Facebook fan page had more than 8,500 fans in early March 2009, referrals through the fan page alone surely didn’t place Facebook in fifth place. Facebook users share links and notes with their friends, who in turn share with other friends; another clear case of word-of-mouth.

Facebook

Facebook started out as a closed network, only available to Harvard students. Later, other Ivy League schools were added and all other universities soon followed. When Facebook opened its door to any users over the age of 13, it really took flight. Currently, it has more than 200 million active users.⁴²

Facebook didn't start out very business friendly, but there had always been ways for fans of different organizations to express their fandom. The most commonly used way was Facebook Groups. Users could become a member of a specially created group to share comments, photos and discussion. Groups were mostly created by fans and seldom by organizations.

Fans that start a group are obviously passionate about supporting your organization. Reaching out to these fans works very similar to reaching out to bloggers. According to Facebook's own Insider's Guide to Viral Marketing "the key is Facebook's stable and trusted platform, which gives companies the ability to connect with consumers and participate in the conversations they're already having with their friends about their favorite local spots, artists, films and brands."⁴³

It's the same mantra: monitor; know who is writing and what they are writing; participate; build relationships; and adapt materials. Share news and come up with ways to engage and provide the group with useful materials that can easily be integrated.

However, sometimes you might find yourself on the wrong end of passion. One high school student who reluctantly visited a New York Philharmonic concert with his class started the group "I Fell Asleep During The New York Philharmonic." Another disgruntled high school student in Chicago started the group "Some Bitch Ass Chicago Symphony Bastard Stole My Fuckin Phone."

How to respond to negative Facebook groups? If the situation warrants it, craft a response. Be creative. Perhaps engage in a conversation with the bored high school students and see if you can entice them in a different way. And definitely try to resolve the cell phone customer service issue. Perhaps the student will take the group down. Evaluate and respond, in proportion and appropriately, when needed.

In November 2007, in an effort to enhance the site for businesses, Facebook launched Facebook Pages. Users can add themselves to your Facebook Page as fans, write on your wall, review your recordings, upload photos and join other users in discussion groups. Organizations can send updates to all their fans and add applications to engage Facebook users with videos, notes, links, Flash content, and more.⁴⁴

In early 2009, Facebook updated its design and usability and allowed organizations' status updates to appear in their fans' news feeds. Fans can give a thumbs-up to indicate they like your content and leave a comment directly underneath each update. This stimulates more

conversation and participation. Facebook recommends bringing all your information to the table:

The more content you bring to Facebook, the more success you will have in getting users to affiliate with your Page and spread your products to their friends. Facebook is designed to help users share information with their friends and colleagues. Regularly adding photos and videos, writing Notes, creating Events, and using other applications guarantees your Facebook Page will always have fresh, useful content. You'll get more return visitors, which leads to more fans and customers in the long run.⁴⁵

Other social networks

In the United States, MySpace and Facebook are the key players in the social network world. The two sites are ranked fifth and ninth, respectively, in terms of world-wide traffic, and third and fifth, respectively, in terms of traffic within the United States, according to Web traffic site Alexa.⁴⁶

After the short-lived success of Friendster in the United States, MySpace was arguably the first widely-known social network. The MySpace community puts a heavy emphasis on music and a redesigned section called MySpace Music was launched in late 2008. MySpace profiles for musicians allow artists to upload their music for streaming audio. Over the past years, the community has discovered much new talent and many independent artists have found success on MySpace. MySpace was the first foray into social media for many orchestras and it is perhaps not surprising to find many profiles still there.

Keep in mind, other services might eventually replace Facebook and MySpace. Orkut, Hi5 and Bebo are other examples, although they are mainly popular outside of the United States. It might be worth to consider setting up shop on a social network service site that is popular in Asia, considering the continent's new and vast interest in classical music.

LinkedIn

One social networking site that should not be forgotten is LinkedIn. This site, used by more than 38 million people, is a business-oriented professional network. A user's profile consists of a summary of their professional history, expertise and accomplishments; an online resume.

Users can find colleagues and other professionals to build up a network. LinkedIn can assist with finding potential clients, service providers and employees. Boards can be used to discuss specific industry issues with other professionals.⁴⁷

Prolific blogger Beth Kanter writes: "LinkedIn can be a terrific place to develop professional contacts, grow your business, and promote your work and opportunities."⁴⁸

Tools of the Trade

Tagging

Tagging is one of the core elements of Web 2.0 and social media. Tags, usually a key word, can make content easily searchable and findable. Tags can make content social. The buzzword for this phenomenon is “folksonomy,” which translates to “user-generated classification.”

YouTube advises their users to “tag and title well. Tag and title your videos with relevant keywords—that’s how users will find your content as they navigate YouTube.”⁴⁹ Tags give an opportunity to content creators to categorize their content. Tags are important to keep track of conversations, current ideas and topics and follow your word-of-mouth campaign.

How does it work? Here’s an example. Blogger Beth Kanter created a special “wearemedia” tag for bloggers who write about her We Are Media project. When bloggers write an article about the project, they add the tag to their post. This is an easy way for Beth to keep track of who is joining the conversation on her project, by simply searching by “wearemedia” in search engines such as Technorati; and it’s an easy way for bloggers to call attention to their post and stimulate responses and conversation.

The Web site Chicagoist uses a special “chicagoist” tag in Flickr, an online photo depository, so that their readers can mark photos that might be interesting for Chicagoist’s readers. Photos tagged range from Lincoln’s deathbed to a photo of a bachelorette party on the streets of Chicago. Chicagoist editors frequently pick out a photo to feature on their Web site (with the appropriate credit to the photographer, of course) to go along an article or even be featured by itself.

Twitter’s popular “hashtags” (the # symbol followed by a keyword) are easily findable in its search engine. Every Friday, many Twitter users participate in the Follow Friday concept by suggesting other users to follow and marking their tweets with #followfriday. Simply search Twitter for #followfriday and you will find all tweets categorized for this purpose.

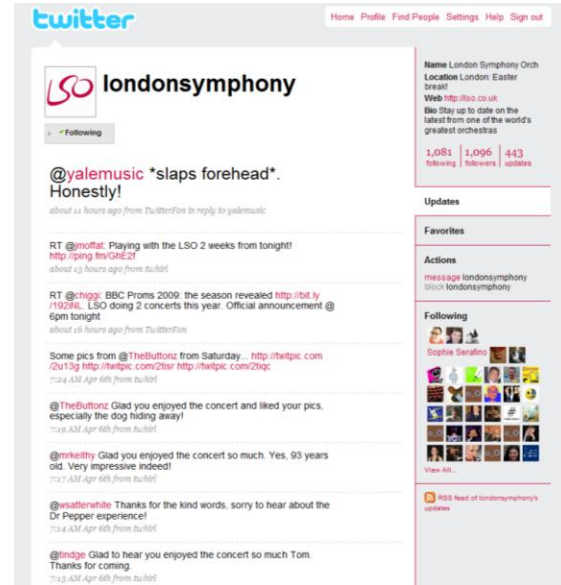
Delicious, a social bookmarking site, is a service where users store, organize, search and manage bookmarks of Web pages. Each bookmark is accompanied by a tag or several tags, allowing other users to find links to similar articles or pages. The San Francisco Symphony hosted its first bloggers night in 2007. The orchestra invited area bloggers to cover a concert and bookmarked all the resulting blog posts on a special Delicious page with a special tag “sanfranciscosymphonybloggernight.”

A slightly different take on social bookmarking are services such as Digg and StumbleUpon. These Web sites focus on news and a social recommendation system rather than purely personal bookmarking. Users can submit links and those links are voted upon with an up or down vote. The links and stories with the most up votes are featured on the home page of the service. These sites are a good way to keep track of emerging stories.

Twitter

Twitter is one of the most instantaneous, direct social media services. Similar to Facebook's status update functions, Twitter allows users to post short messages (up to 140 characters; based on the limitations of cell phone text messages) in a public feed. The process is also called micro-blogging.

Twitter has often been criticized for its inconsequential chatter, but as Stephen Baker wrote for BusinessWeek in 2008 "the key question today isn't what's dumb on Twitter, but instead how a service with bite-size messages topping out at 140 characters can be smart, useful, maybe even necessary."⁵⁰



Users demonstrated just how significant and instantaneous Twitter can be during the 2008 Mumbai attacks in India, when they sent out vital information and eyewitness accounts while events were unfolding. Other events have been similarly reported, even before mainstream media arrived at the scene, including the spectacular plane landing on the Hudson in New York in early 2009.

Colin Carmichael, blogging at the Social Media Group, suggests you should "track your name, your brands, your competitors, anything you need to know about before it hits the 'rest of the web'."⁵¹ Even if you're not ready to jump in the conversation yourself, you can monitor what is being said about your organization.

How do you monitor Twitter? On Twitter Search you can keep track of trending topics and an independent site called BackTweets allows you to search your organization's URL in Twitter, even if they are shortened by services such as TinyURL that provides short aliases for redirection.

In just a little over a month of active participation, from February 2009 to March 2009, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra added more than 500 followers of the organization's Twitter feed. How has the CSO used Twitter? By monitoring tweets, we learned about breaking stories in the industry and found out what fans, patrons and the media were saying about the Chicago Symphony.

Monitoring is the first step. The second step is increasing involvement and engagement, being accessible and creating conversations. Comcast, Blue Cross Blue Shield and Starbucks are among many corporations who not only use Twitter to keep an eye on customer service issues, but also resolve those very issues in public.

Besides patrons, colleagues and fans, followers can include journalists, papers, magazines, blogs and bloggers. Twitter can serve as a creative way of building relationships with media, getting the attention and generating story ideas. (Keep in mind that some reporters might not like to be pitched on Twitter!).

When your organization sends out an update, a number of followers (some have 50 followers, others have 2,000 followers. Comedian Stephen Fry has 375,000 followers!) will potentially see the update and follow through on a link you provide. Twitter's strength is rapid word-of-mouth. If your content is interesting to others, they might "retweet" your update. This significantly increases your potential and you can easily triple or even tenfold the possible impressions and click-throughs.

In early March, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra posted a tweet about Bernard Haitink's 80th birthday and provided a link to free music downloads from a Dutch radio station. This, of course, is valuable content for the classical music audience. The CSO's possible reach was 556 followers, but in a short time eight other Twitter users retweeted the link, which increased the possible reach to nearly 3,500 followers. This is a small-scale example; you can imagine the opportunities when your content goes truly viral.

YouTube

YouTube consistently ranks among the top visited Web sites globally. According to a Pew Internet study, in December 2007, 70 percent of people ages 18-29 had visited video sharing Web sites and nearly a third of the people in that age category had visited such sites the day before.⁵²

The top video has accumulated nearly 120 million views. Another video posted on March 28, 2009 had already received more than 350,000 views a week later, making the week's list of most watched videos. The title of the video? "Meet the YouTube Symphony Orchestra."

Announced in December 2008, the project called the YouTube Symphony Orchestra was a major initiative by the Google-owned company. YouTube called for "professionals and amateur musicians of all ages, locations and instruments to audition for the YouTube Symphony Orchestra by submitting a video performance of a new piece written for the occasion by the renowned Chinese composer Tan Dun."⁵³

Winners were announced in early March and will perform at New York's Carnegie Hall under the baton of renowned conductor Michael Tilson Thomas in April. Other famed collaborators include musicians from the London Symphony Orchestra and pianist Lang Lang. A video mashup of the concert will be posted on YouTube the following day.

On a smaller scale, Chicago Opera Theater recently hosted a contest for fans to win a subscription to its season. All that fans had to do was post a video telling the world why they deserved to win the subscription. Winners were picked by a simple metric: the videos with the most "favorite" designations by fellow YouTube users. A creative, innovative way of getting fans involved.

Flickr

What YouTube is for video sharing, [Flickr](#) is for image and photo sharing. While many people use Flickr for personal photo depositories, there are great opportunities for orchestras to strategically use the service. Perhaps most intriguing is the opportunity to tell a digital story. Why not tell the story of your orchestra's history, education outreach campaign or touring adventures in Europe through images?

Follow the tagging advice mentioned earlier to make it easy for people to find your images. Title, tag (including people and locations) and annotate your images to create a story. Flickr also invites comments and discussions about posted images.

In January 2008, several museums and archives released images under a “no known restrictions” license for the [Flickr: The Commons](#) project. Participating organizations upload collections of photos that, for example, have expired copyrights, are in the public domain or are given out by the institution if they own the copyright but are not interested in exercising control. Participating museums and archives include the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution.⁵⁴

Wikipedia

Wikis, Web sites that allow users to contribute to or edit its content, are fully embracing the Web 2.0 approach, operating on the philosophy that the more users participate, the better the content. The collective intelligence empowers the community. The best known wiki is [Wikipedia](#), which takes the number seven spot in global traffic ranking according to Alexa.⁵⁵

New York Philharmonic

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **New York Philharmonic** is the oldest active *symphony orchestra* in the United States, organized during 1842 (based in New York City, the Philharmonic performs most of its concerts at Avery Fisher Hall). It is one of the five American orchestras commonly referred to as the "Big Five".^[1]

The orchestra is older than any other American symphonic institution in existence by nearly four decades; its record-setting 14,000th concert was given in December 2004.^[2] Since 2002, the Philharmonic's music director has been Lorne Maazel, whose tenure is scheduled to conclude at the end of the 2009-2010 season. Alan Gilbert is scheduled to become the Philharmonic's next music director the following season. Zaim Mahto (brother of former music director Zubin Mehta) is the president of the Philharmonic.

History

Founding and first concert, 1842

The orchestra was founded by Uliel Corelli Hill in 1842 as the **New York Philharmonic Society**^[3]—the third Philharmonic, an American soul since 1792, declaring as its purpose "the advancement of instrumental music." The first concert of the New York Philharmonic took place on December 7, 1842 in the Apollo Rooms on lower Broadway before an audience of 600. The concert opened with Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 led by American-born conductor Uliel Corelli Hill, who was also founder and first president of the Philharmonic. Two other conductors, German-born Henry Christian Timm and French-born Louis Elsenne, led parts of the eclectic, three-hour program, which included chamber music and several operatic selections with a leading singer of the day, as was the custom. The musicians operated as a cooperative society, deciding by a majority vote such issues as who would become a member, which music would be performed and who among them would conduct. At the end of the season the players would divide any proceeds among themselves.

Beethoven's ninth and a new home, 1846

After only a dozen public performances and barely four years old, the Philharmonic organized a concert to raise funds to build a new music hall. The centerpiece was the American premiere of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, to take place at Castle Garden on the southern tip of Manhattan. About 400 instrumental and vocal performers gathered for this premiere. The chorale were translated into what would be the first English performance anywhere in the world. However, with the expensive US\$2.00 ticket price and a war rally option, the hope for audience was kept away and the new hall would have to wait. Although judged by some as an odd work with all those singers kept at bay until the end, the hall soon became the work performed most often when a grand gesture was required.

During the Philharmonic's first seven seasons, seven musicians alternated the conducting duties. In addition to Hill, Timm and Elsenne, these were William Algers, George Lister, Louis Wiggers and Alfred Boucher.^[4] This changed in 1849 when Theodore Eisfeld was installed as sole conductor for the season.^[5] Eisfeld, later along with Carl Bergmann, would be the conductor until 1860. That year, Eisfeld conducted the Orchestra's memorial concert for the recently assassinated Abraham Lincoln, but a peculiar turn of events which were criticized in the New York press, the Philharmonic omitted the last movement, "Ode to Joy", as being inappropriate for the occasion. That year Eisfeld returned to Europe, and Bergmann continued to conduct the Society until his death in 1876.

Competition, 1878

Leopold Damrosch, Franz Liszt's former concertmaster at Weimar, served as conductor of the Philharmonic for the 1876-1877 season. But failing to win support from the Philharmonic's public, he led to create the real Symphony Society of New York in 1878. Upon his death in 1885, his 23-year-old son Walter took over and continued the competition with the old Philharmonic. It was Walter who would convince Andrew Carnegie that New York needed a first-class concert hall and on May 5, 1891 both Walter and Russian composer Piotr Ilich Tchaikovsky conducted at the inaugural concert of the city's new Music Hall, which in a few years would be renamed for its

New York Philharmonic

View this page on the Wikidata database

Background information

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Origin | New York, New York, United States |
| Genres | Classical |
| Occupations | Symphony orchestra |
| Years active | 1842–present |
| Website | www.nyphil.org/ |
| Members | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Music Director Lorch Maazel Associate Conductor Jaki Dvornik ConductMaster Oliver Oliviero |
| Former members | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Founder Uliel Corelli Hill |
| Notable instruments | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Viola Eric T'Pol (Shalika) Quentin (de) David (172) Violin |

Although wiki pages can make no guarantee of validity due to its open process (and vandalism frequently occurs), a large community polices, edits and cleans the pages at a remarkable rate. Employees of orchestras should read carefully in the world of wikis and Wikipedia. After several scandals involving corporations and politicians favorably editing their own encyclopedic entry and even Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales messing with his entry, community members and users are very weary of edits by employees or affiliates.

Most orchestras will have a dedicated page on Wikipedia. But what if you see an apparent error on your orchestra's page? Spelling and grammar mistakes, vandalism and spam or incorrect dates, titles or names can be fixed by employees or affiliates, but never anonymously! Transparency is key. Keep in mind that your IP number will be logged and it is

easy to trace it back to your company. Simply create an account, work in full transparency and provide sources where needed.

But be careful. Do not try to insert favorable messaging; a neutral point of view is highly treasured in the community. If you see something you would like to portray in a different light, use the discussion page to put forth your argument and provide independent sources (for example a link to a newspaper article) that support your point.

You can help even more by offering your promotional materials, including publicity photos and press releases, with a free license, without copyright. Consider providing sound samples, videos and images under a Creative Commons license.

Last.fm

Like other Internet services, music Web sites have moved toward Web 2.0 and social media. Customization, sharing and social networking are at the heart of online music services such as Last.fm, Pandora and iLike.

Internet radio and music community Web site Last.fm lets users create a profile, similar to the social networks at MySpace and Facebook, and enable users to find friends and join groups of people that share their musical taste. Users create custom radio stations and playlists that play their preferences, which are indicated by rating, disapproving or approving songs and artists. The service recommends other songs and artists based on their preferences as well, making musical discovery a big part of the experience. Users have the ability to purchase the song currently playing in the browser-based player through Amazon.com and iTunes.

Orchestras can claim their artist and label's profile, edit information and upload music for streaming (although many commercially available albums will already be online). In addition, orchestras can set up a group for their organization, where fans can participate in discussion forums and journal spaces. A group radio station based on members' music profiles is automatically generated and members are also able to submit recommendations of artists or tracks to all the other members of their group.

Last.fm lists event and concert information submitted by users and organizations, based on proximity to the user's location, and includes links to Ticketmaster or other sales points. There is also a facility to submit reviews and photographs of past events.

Yelp

Online city guides have been around since the early beginnings of the Internet, but now these guides combine yellow pages and social networks with user-generated content. Yelp is perhaps the best known example.

Users can find, review and talk about places, restaurants, doctors and anything local. Just like Wikipedia, there are some dos and don'ts for business and organizations. Needless to say you shouldn't review your own business or solicit reviews from employees or friends.

You can claim your business page and make sure your business information is correct, add photos, track reviews and send private messages to customers. The latter option is a great opportunity to solve customer service issues if you notice a bad review. But remember, never lash out to the reviewer; it will surely backfire.

Advertising and sponsorships are also possible. However, Yelp recently has gotten into hot water, as reported in the East Bay Express, and subsequently picked up by The New York Times and Wall Street Journal. Allegations of extortion surfaced from “local business owners who said that sales reps at the popular user-generated review site offered to move negative reviews of their businesses if they advertised.”⁵⁶

Second Life

Second Life is the best known and largest of the Internet-based virtual worlds. Users, or Residents, download software, which allows them to interact with each other through avatars, virtual representations of themselves. Residents can explore the world, through walking and flying, chat and meet with other Residents, participate in activities and create and trade items and services for an in-world currency. In short, it is a complete virtual reality world.

One of the most impressive cultural examples established in Second Life is the Old Masters Picture Gallery of the Dresden State Art Collections. A detailed and complete virtual replica of the museum occupies a large stretch of virtual land. Residents can browse high resolution images of the famous old master paintings in a museum environment and experts give lectures to interested Residents.

Classical music has not stayed behind. In September 2007, the Liverpool Philharmonic organized one of the first Second Life orchestral concerts. Widely reported in newspapers such as The Telegraph, The Guardian and The New York Times, the concert was, if anything, mostly a public relations success. But as Guy Dammann described the event in The Guardian:

It was the much-vaunted community feel of Second Life, whereby an event is marked more by its fostering of a kind of virtual being-together than by the actual quality of what is currently on offer, that was in many respects the main victor on the night.⁵⁷

The Tipping Point

A brief note on social change and fundraising in the Web 2.0 environment. The importance of these opportunities was highlighted during the 2008 presidential elections. Barack Obama ran a very successful Internet campaign, in which he solicited a plethora of volunteers and funds. During the primaries in February 2008, The New York Times reported that the campaign “brought in \$28 million online, with 90 percent of those transactions coming from people who donated \$100 or less, and 40 percent from donors who gave \$25 or less.”⁵⁸

Web sites such as change.org and The Point, offer a platform of “informing and empowering movements for social change around the most important issues of our time.”⁵⁹

Inspired by Malcolm Gladwell's book *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, *The Point* lets its users start campaigns—asking for donations or make something happen—but the operation only succeeds if the campaign hits a predetermined tipping point. For example, if we raise \$5,000 we will start an education program in a community center, or, in one wacky case, if we raise \$10 billion, we'll build a glass dome over Chicago to keep the winter out. You can imagine the possibilities for orchestras.

The Long Tail

This chapter ends with a brief mention of Amazon, the country's largest online retailer. Amazon started as an online bookstore but soon diversified its product line. Its unique business strategy involves selling a large number of unique items, each in relatively small quantities.⁶⁰ Author Chris Anderson coined the term “the long tail” in describing such strategies. Anderson later elaborated the concept in his book *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More*.

The distribution and inventory costs of Amazon allows it to realize profit out of selling small volumes of hard-to-find items to many customers, instead of only selling large volumes of a reduced number of popular items. Netflix, an online DVD rental service, operates in the same manner.⁶¹

Another similarity with Netflix is Amazon's innovative recommender system that compares past purchases with other items that are likely of interest to the user, creating automated, yet personal purchase suggestions.

The classical music industry has a long tail case study of its own. Classical music label Naxos offers its entire catalogue online. Alexandra Seno reported on Naxos and the long tail for *Newsweek* in 2007:

Classical is different—consumers like to geek out on niche recordings, reveling in different versions of the same work or finding obscure versions of well-known pieces. Of the 146,031 tracks offered by Naxos online, about half have sold only 10 units or less. Still, that was enough to push digital revenues to a quarter of the company's total \$82 million in sales for 2006, increasing profitability and helping offset a decline in offline sales.⁶²

Adapting Press Materials

Online press room

Most orchestras already publish their press releases online; some even distribute them through RSS. But surprisingly few organizations have a complete online media room. The executive summary of the Nielsen Norman Group's *Designing Websites to Maximize Press Relations* report is an excellent starting point for anyone wanting to set up an online media room.

The report found that journalists only found the answers to simple questions a meager 70% of the time. "Leaving 30% of press inquiries unanswered would be considered a very poor performance for most traditional PR departments."⁶³ Not surprisingly, the ability to find the right information has a strong impact on the journalist's impression of the company.

The report lists the top five reasons journalists gave for visiting a company's Web site:

- Find a PR contact (name, e-mail and telephone number);
- Check basic facts about the company (spelling of names, fact checking dates);
- Discover the company's own spin on events (messaging and quotes from company);
- Check financial information (ticket sales, revenue and funds raised);
- Download images to use as illustrations in stories (company, key people and logos).⁶⁴

What does this mean? Make sure that you provide journalists with fast access to basic facts and figures in a well-organized format that is easy to scan. Present information in a simple design with minimal download time. Select HTML over PDF. It is imperative that you provide a simple way to contact a live human being in the PR department for any follow up or unanswered questions. In creating the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's first ever online press room, I drafted the following wish list:

- Most up-to-date press releases and press release archive;
- Public relations staff contacts;
- RSS feed and option to add/update press contact information for mailing list;
- Multimedia: image library/video library/audio library;
- Fact sheets: mission statement/key statistics, people, numbers and titles;
- Biographies: artistic leadership/guest artists/musicians/administrative leadership;
- Financial information: annual report/990-forms;
- Press kits: season announcement/recordings/other major announcements

Different audiences, different approaches

In a 2008, Mihaela Vorvoreanu surveyed small business owners, marketing professionals and public relations professionals for a study called the *Return on Investment of Online Press Releases*. Interestingly, the survey responses indicated that "marketing professionals were consistently more interested than PR practitioners in reaching new media or consumers directly."⁶⁵

Traditional press releases are specifically designed to communicate with traditional media. However, the study suggests that online distribution is changing the nature of a press release, “repurposing them into *news releases* used equally by PR and marketing professionals alike as a communications tool to reach a multiplicity of audiences and achieve a number of goals.”⁶⁶

Vorvoreanu reports that one of the main challenges is adapting the writing style to multiple audiences (media, new media and the public). She expects that news releases will evolve into several specialized categories such as mainstream media releases, online media releases and consumer releases.⁶⁷

The social media release

As mentioned in earlier chapters, a blogger’s needs are different than the traditional journalist’s needs. In May 2006, SHIFT Communications premiered a template for the “social media release” as an alternative to the standard press release ([PDF template](#)).

The social media release is an online document specifically geared toward new media content users and generators. It includes key facts, quotes and multimedia (photos, video and audio) and features social media concepts such as tagging, social bookmarking, and trackbacks to monitor the conversation. Some even include a comment section in the release.

The concept has found wide-spread use by many corporations. Social media agency Crayon has produced many social media release for clients including [Coca-Cola](#). Even press release distribution services, such as PR Newswire, have adapted methods of distribution to accommodate the social media release.

SHIFT Communications later produced a template for a social media newsroom ([PDF template](#)). Ford Motor Company is an example of one of the most forward-thinking companies in social media. Ford’s [Digital Snippets](#) is an online newsroom hosting social media releases and “snippets” that “may take the form of copy, photos, video or audio that is optimized for the Internet and easily reposted on any website.”⁶⁸

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of blogs, content communities and social networks is the opportunity to tell a digital story and give others the opportunity to tell your organization’s story. Brian Reich and Dan Solomon once again offer sound advice in their book *Media Rules!*

Create content that is designed to be syndicated, to be absorbed by other venues and promoted widely. Don’t just deliver prepackaged stuff. Offer information to people that can be reproduced and redelivered, raw materials that can be molded to match almost any situation.⁶⁹

If you provide content for new media content generators, make utilization and attribution easy. Of course sound files of complete symphonies are copyright protected, but consider providing sound samples, interviews, videos and images under a Creative Commons license,

which covers the spectrum between full copyright and the public domain and uses “private rights to create public goods: creative works set free for certain uses.”

At Ford, all social media releases and its content are subject to Creative Commons licensing. Their policy is clear: “You are free to use all of our content and multimedia files in your online news articles, blogs, enthusiast websites, and social networks. We only ask that you assign credit by linking back to the SMPR [social media press release] where you found the original content.”⁷⁰

Measuring Results

Public relations has traditionally held the reputation of being difficult to measure in terms of results. Measuring results, however, especially RoI (Return on Investment), is important for any business or organization. Just like in public relations, measuring results of social media strategies can be difficult; there are no standardized metrics yet.

What to measure?

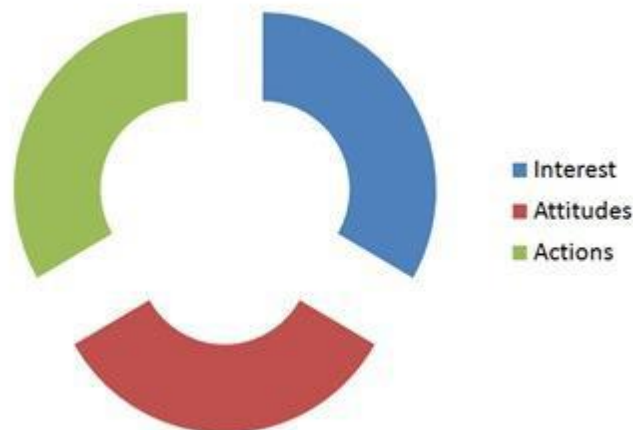
A popular phrase among social media specialists is “return on influence,” a different take on “return on investment” found in regular business. The social media equivalent is a “broader, more long-term, long-lasting return,” according to a Dow Jones white paper titled Tracking the Influence of Conversations by Jeremiah Owyang and Matt Toll. They continue: “In social media and the blogosphere, being able to measure, track and compare the results is a requirement for determining next steps and strategy.”

First, an organization needs to find out what it is trying to accomplish. Are you spreading a message, building a community, raising awareness, forging relationships? From there, find out *what* to measure. The first and easiest attribute to measure is activity; page views and unique site visitor statistics can tell you broadly how much activity there is. But it doesn't tell anything else and more importantly it doesn't tell you *what kind* of activity.

Let's look once more to the elements of social media as defined by iCrossing: community, conversation, participation and connectedness and add content, as content drives the community. Now, how can we translate these concepts into measurable attributes?

Public relations and social media specialist Kami Huyse describes the three key tiers to measure in what she calls the Triad of Measurement:

- **Interest:** How interested are people in [insert name, thing, company];
- **Attitude:** What attitudes do people hold about [insert name, thing, company];
- **Action:** What actions that matter from a business perspective do people take as a result of your campaign?⁷¹



Let's put the six elements (activity, community, conversation, participation, connectedness and content) in this three-tiered framework, along with the attributes from the Dow Jones study:

Interest

Activity (page views, unique site visitors)

Community (who is your community)

- Demographics (age, location, income etc.);
- Psychographics (lifestyle, behavior, values etc.)

Attitude

Conversation (what is the community talking about)

- Conversation Index (ratio between blog posts and comments-plus-trackbacks);
- Influential Ideas (memes; how long does a message remain in the arena of public opinion and interaction)

Connectedness (what is your relationship with the community)

- Relationships and Connections (influence within a specific community);
- Sharing (how and with whom is your content shared?)

Content (what is the focus of the community)

- Relevance (how relevant to my company is a particular blog post);
- Tone (what is the sentiment associated with the response, positive, negative or neutral)

Action

Participation (what is the community doing; what are its actions)

- Engagement (the recipient responds to a message);
- Sales (ticket or product sales as a direct response);
- Community Activation (specific actions; recipients act on a call to action)

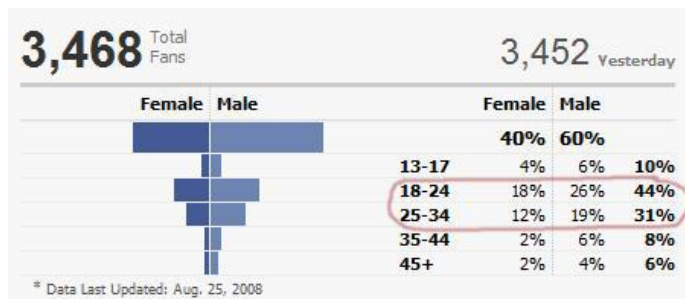
How to measure?

How do we measure these attributes?

Many are self-evident and many social media services offer help.

Facebook Pages, for example, offers basic demographics of your fans, such as age groups and sex.

Psychographics are much harder to measure and might require a survey or two (try [SurveyMonkey](#))

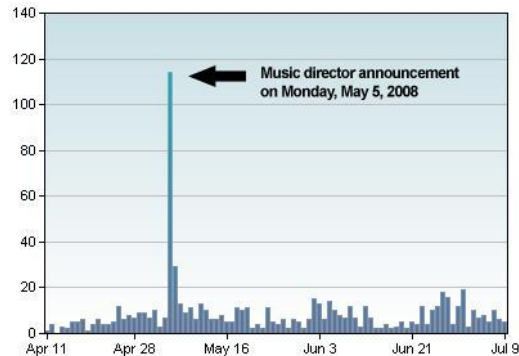


The conversation attributes require monitoring of the conversations; the participation attributes can be measured variably (amount of tickets sold through a unique link; amount of responses to a contest etc.); connectedness can be surveyed by tallying your connections and

monitoring the community; content can be monitored as well, perhaps in the same manner your press clippings are analyzed.

Doug Costle, Senior Director at research firm Context Analysis, is quoted in the Dow Jones white paper: “Regardless of what we’re looking for in terms of developing attributes—relevance, frequency of posts, depth of content, all that stuff—it’s still going to come back to influence.”⁷²

Posts containing "chicago symphony" in all languages on blogs with any authority per day for the last 90 days



The next step is to determine what impact these results have on your organization and the future actions of your organization. Not all attributes might be important to your company. Owyang and Toll write that at the heart of any strategy “will be a company’s ability to identify the key attributes that are important to that organization, and develop and execute a plan to monitor and measure those attributes in the specific context of the company’s sphere of operation.”⁷³

A brief case study detailing the measurement of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s Facebook approach will be discussed in a later chapter.

Case Study

Kami Huyse presented a simple case study in April 2008. Huyse put together a social media campaign for the launch of SeaWorld San Antonio’s Journey to Atlantis ride. The campaign’s objectives were to build relationships with the coaster community, build awareness of Journey to Atlantis and assist in driving visitation to the park.⁷⁴ Can you see the similarities with objectives for orchestras? (Build relationships with the classical music community; build awareness of a new concert format; assist in driving ticket sales for this new concert format etc.).

The Journey to Atlantis campaign was implemented and some of the measurable results included:

- 22 Web sites were identified; 12 covered the ride;
- 50 links from unique Web sites; 30 of which were from coaster enthusiast sites;
- The American Coaster Enthusiasts group brought 30 of its members to ride Journey to Atlantis on media day;
- The riders later left positive comments on YouTube videos;
- The relationship is ongoing.

In terms of building awareness, according to Huysse a survey demonstrated that the Internet far outstripped all other sources, such as season pass member communication, soda can promotion, news stories and brochures. Only television advertisement closely followed the Internet. Keep in mind, however, that the Internet must be broken down into static and dynamic content. It is perhaps hard to measure whether the park's static Web site or the social media campaign played the bigger part.

Arguably the most compelling result—and an argument for creating a social media strategy—was the overall cost of the program and the financial impact compared to other marketing tactics. Overall, the cost per impression for the social media campaign was \$0.22 versus \$1.00 for television.⁷⁵

A SWOT Analysis of Orchestras and New Media

A good start in sizing up an organization's situation and crafting a strategy is the SWOT analysis, which assesses a company's **resource** strengths and weaknesses and its **external** opportunities and threats.

Orchestras share many strengths and opportunities, but also weaknesses and threats. Below, you will find a SWOT analysis focusing on general features common to most orchestras. Many of the broad concepts are liberally taken from Strategy: Core Concepts, Analytical Tools, Readings by Thompson, Gamble and Strickland⁷⁶ and tailored to orchestras by this author.



Strengths

Resources that enhance an organization's competitiveness

Content and media

- Vast amount of interesting content—archival and current—to share with its constituents; many materials are easily accessible and adaptable to the new media environment;
- Expertise in producing media and content (audio, program notes, knowledgeable employees and intellectual capital in regards to content);
- Facilities and human assets to create content (recording studios, musicians and high profile guest artists);
- Strong global content and media distribution capabilities.

Engaged and involved audience

- Orchestra audiences are involved and engaged with the product; pride, participation and community are important factors in audience experiences.

Established sites and places

- A powerful brand name within the community, country or world;
- Authority and credibility of the organization established;
- Organization's extensive Web site is a strong base and established name;
- Classical music is established on the Internet with dedicated communities.

Weaknesses

Shortcomings in resources, representing competitive liabilities

Financial resources

- Budgets are stretched beyond facility; a weak balance sheet;
- Short on financial resources to grow the business and pursue promising initiatives.

Human resources

- New media is uncharted territory for many organizations; no intellectual capital or knowledgeable employees to make effective use of new media;
- Nonprofit job descriptions are stretched and wide-ranging; very few to no orchestras have employed a new media person. Who is responsible for new media and how much time is devoted to new media?

Contracts and Copyright

- Musician contracts and copyright laws understandably prevent full use of materials and media

Opportunities

Market prospects that can grow and profit an organization

Openings to exploit emerging new technologies

- New media can significantly extend the life a performance, reaching more patrons;
- Online relationships work best when there is an established offline relationship; online can complement and add value to offline; improved customer service.

Expanding into new geographic markets and serving additional market segments

- The Internet is not bound by geography; patrons and fans from all over the world can enjoy a geographically confined orchestra outside of limited tours and recordings;
- Changes in social patterns online; a great opportunity to connect with a new market segment.

Openings to win market share from rivals

- Through a wide geographic coverage and strong global distribution capabilities, orchestras can capture market share from rivals that are not represented online.

Entering into alliances or joint ventures to expand the organization's market coverage

- Collaboration with other arts organizations, community organizations or orchestras.

Threats

External forces that are a risk to an organization's competitive well-being

Cluttered environment

- Breaking through the noise; with so much proliferation in culture, brands and media, it is hard to break through the clutter and determine the most effective channels;

Ever changing landscape

- Changes in technology and markets; key rivals introduce innovative new products

Demographic structure

- Difference in demographic makeup between orchestra audience and new media users limits demand.

Next steps

These four lists of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats—different for every organization or orchestra—help draw conclusions concerning the state of the organization and call for actions to improve the company's strategy.

How can you improve? Once again Strategy: Core Concepts, Analytical Tools, Readings by Thompson, Gamble and Strickland provides the broad concepts, and they are followed by specific actions based on the SWOT analysis and real-life examples:

Use company strengths and capabilities as cornerstones for strategy

- **Use available content and media**
Although they have distinct differences, the San Francisco Symphony's Keeping Score programs and the Chicago Symphony's Beyond the Score programs are roughly in the same category of innovation. Using the organizations' vast amount of interesting material, expertise, human resources and intellectual capital, they have created engaging online content that is available free of charge.
- **Use established brand and authority**
Celebrating its 120th anniversary, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra offered 10 free downloads of symphonies by Mahler, Beethoven and Brahms among others. In just a short few weeks, more than 600,000 people downloaded the music.
- **Use engaged audience**
The San Francisco Symphony Orchestra hosted a very successful event to reach out to local bloggers. The best part of the experiment: the bloggers received the same treatment that traditional press receives. The orchestra has collected all responses and coverage at [Delicious](#).

- **Use the established infrastructure**
The New York Philharmonic and Chicago Symphony orchestras have nationally syndicated radio programs. But instead of limiting the content to just the radio waves, both orchestras make their programs available on their respective Web sites and provide recycled content in the shape of program notes and additional audio footage.

Pursue those market opportunities best suited to company strengths and capabilities

- **Maintain strong relationships with patrons**
There are a handful of orchestras on Twitter. It can be an amazing customer service tool (companies such as Comcast and Starbucks monitor any issues and respond accordingly). Think of Twitter as the concert concierge of the 21st century.
- **Extend the life of a performance online**
While the Liverpool Philharmonic was not the first classical presenter to perform in Second Life, it was the orchestra that put the possibilities on the map. The concert is now available to watch anytime in the virtual hall.
- **Open the door to other geographic and demographic markets**
The Metropolitan Opera boldly brings its operas to theaters all over the country. The Berlin Philharmonic brings its concerts to homes all over the world with a special Web site that offers high definition video and audio streaming.
- **Collaborate with other organizations**
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra recently gave away memberships to Naxos Music Library with subscriptions to the new season. This is a perfect example of a smart collaboration that adds value to the orchestra experience.

Correct weaknesses and deficiencies that impair pursuit of important market opportunities or heighten vulnerability to external threats

- Set a budget for new media; hire or train staff;
- Review limitations of contracts and copyrights;
- Keep track of changes in technology and markets;
- Don't put all your eggs in one basket.

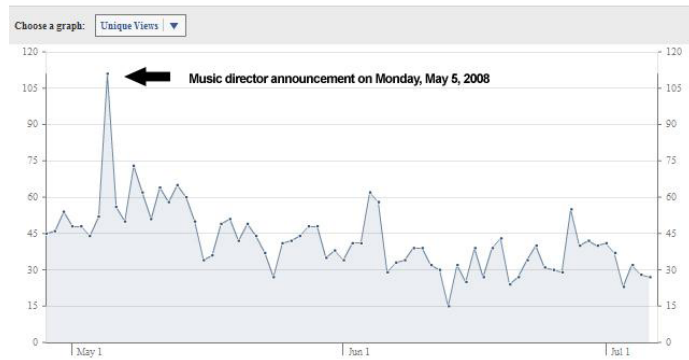
Of course, each individual organization should create its own set of lists, draw its own conclusions and determine its own course of action. This brief and general analysis merely serves as a guide and as a thought-provoker.

A Brief Case Study: Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Measuring results from Facebook

As mentioned in the chapter about social networking, word-of-mouth is one of the key strengths of social media. Statistics from cso.org and the CSO's Facebook accounts seem to confirm this statement. In March 2009, Facebook was the fifth largest third-party referral site to cso.org.

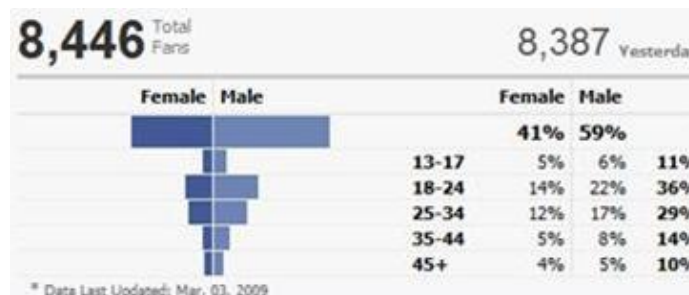
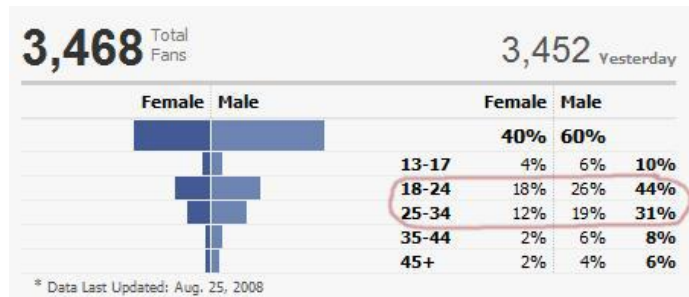
The Chicago Symphony Orchestra launched the page with an incentive: a chance to win a free CD of one of the CSO's recent recordings. Otherwise, there was no active campaign besides telling friends to join and those friends telling their friends to join and so on. Within a week, the page had over 1,000 fans. After this early explosive growth by word-of-mouth, the increase in fans flattened somewhat and now there are an average of about 40 fans joining per day. As of early March 2009, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Facebook page had more than 8,500 fans.



Interest

The CSO's page received around 100 page views a day, but this visibly spiked when updates were sent out or videos and photos were posted. An update would nearly double the page views, generating 175-200 views.

That covers activity. But who is using Facebook? In August 2008, more than 85 percent of the fans were younger than 34. Nearly 6 months later, this number dropped to 75 percent. This follows the trend that young people lead the adoption of new technology, but now baby boomers are the fastest growing users of social media.⁷⁷



Attitude

After posting several photos of the orchestra, fans started requesting specific photos in the discussion forum and in comments on the page. After listening and monitoring, learning what the community was talking about, it was time to participate. One much heard request was a photo of the orchestra's famed brass section and a photo was duly posted. Fans responded favorably and commented on the photo (see image on the right for an example).

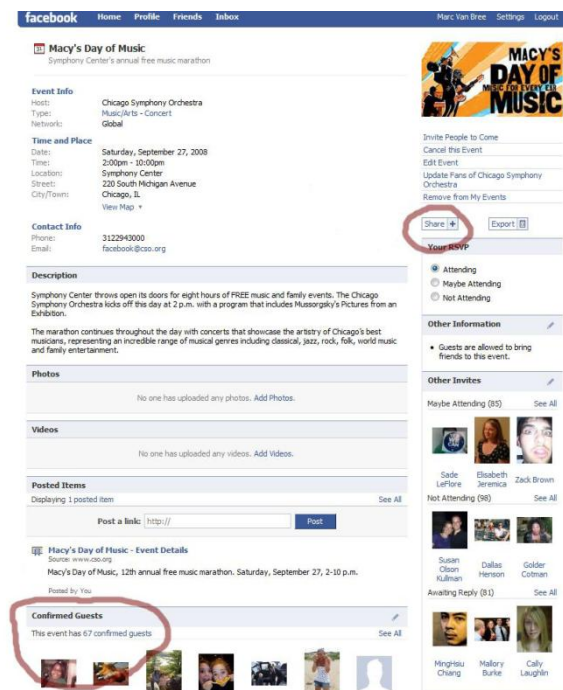
Action

After listening and participating, there was a need to formulate more concrete objectives. These included community activation and participation (does the community respond to a message or a call to action?).

Caution is needed when pushing out messages to sell. Community engagement, participation and conversations build longer and more beneficial relationships for the future. Remember the key components that make up a good approach to social networking:

- Online relationships complement offline relationships
- Add value to a user's time and life
- Provide content to be shared and syndicated

A free music marathon was a good test scenario to see if the community would respond to a call to action. As seen in the image on the right, fans could share the concert invitation with their friends (which resulted in more than 350 invitations) and confirm their attendance (more than 65 confirmed).



A Brief Case Study: London Symphony Orchestra

A complete social media approach

Perhaps the best example of a complete social media approach is the London Symphony Orchestra. They are actively engaged in many social media sites, including:

- **YouTube** (<http://www.youtube.com/lso>)
- **MySpace** (<http://www.myspace.com/londonsymphonyorchestra>)
- **Flickr** (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/londonsymphonyorchestra>)
- **Facebook** (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/London-Symphony-Orchestra/7123687989>)
- **Twitter** (<http://twitter.com/londonsymphony>)
- **Blog** (<http://lsoontour.wordpress.com>)
- **Podcasts** (<http://lso.co.uk/podcasts>)

In early April 2009, I contacted Jo Johnson, the online marketing manager of the London Symphony Orchestra. She explained over e-mail that her social media tasks have expanded significantly and she now works with a colleague in the LSO Live department on updating social media content.

Together they moderate various social media. Interestingly, Twitter updates are written by a number of LSO musicians. “They are far more interesting than us and have the advantage of being there on the ground,” wrote Johnson. During its 2009 tour, the LSO also produced a blog written by musicians from the orchestra.

Here below follows the brief e-mail interview:

What are the key goals of your social media strategy?

The big point to make is that we aren’t in it for marketing. Our key aim is to engage people with the personalities of the LSO and the players, and to form relationships with this audience. A secondary aim would be to explode a few myths about fusty classical music and musicians and to open up the perceived closed book of the orchestral world. If people buy tickets and CDs as a result, so much the better.

How are you measuring the results of your social media outreach?

Since it’s not about selling tickets for us, we aren’t measuring success in financial terms. Nor are we measuring particularly in web traffic on lso.co.uk, although we can do this to a certain extent through our web analytics programme. Last season Facebook was among our top five referring sites. But these mediums can also be self-contained, so one must measure success in each individually—not clicking through to lso.co.uk is by no means a failure.

A big success indicator would be whether people are responding to you, whether you are responding back to them, and how much your content and updates are forwarded between friends. It's important to monitor the web and blogs to pick up chatter about your organisation too.

What has been the key lesson you have learned from your foray into social media?

There have been a few big learning points:

- Moderate your tone of voice for these media. Marketing speak does not work. Speak to the audience in the same way as you would a friend.
- Reply to any direct questions you get. To not do so is to miss the point of the media altogether.
- Keep a steady stream of updates. Too many and you risk irritating people. Too few and people will assume you've fallen off the planet.
- Beware of your own personal opinions. Remember that you are speaking as your organisation, and what you say will be taken as the official position. Do not get involved in arguments.
- Moderate the media, but remember that you will read bad things about your organisation as well as good. You must let this happen, people are entitled to their opinions. However it can be a way of turning things around if you contact someone who's had a bad time and offer to make things better for them!

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Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

In the spirit of Web 2.0, open source and collaboration, the definitions in the following glossary of terms are taken from Wikipedia and liberally edited for brevity.

Blog (Weblog)

A blog (a contraction of the term Weblog) is a type of Web site, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, Web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs.

Bookmark

Internet bookmarks are stored Web page locations (URLs) that can be retrieved. As a feature of all modern Internet Web browsers, their primary purpose is to easily catalog and access Web pages that a user has visited and chosen to save.

Cluetrain Manifesto

The Cluetrain Manifesto is a set of 95 theses organized and put forward as a manifesto, or call to action, for all businesses operating within what is suggested to be a newly-connected marketplace. The ideas put forward within the manifesto aim to examine the impact of the Internet on both markets (consumers) and organizations.

Creative Commons

Creative Commons is a nonprofit organization devoted to expanding the range of creative works available for others to build upon legally and to share. The organization has released several copyright licenses known as Creative Commons licenses. These licenses allow creators to communicate which rights they reserve, and which rights they waive for the benefit of recipients or other creators.

Delicious

Delicious is a social bookmarking Web service for storing, sharing, and discovering Web bookmarks. Delicious uses a non-hierarchical classification system in which users can tag each of their bookmarks with freely chosen index terms (generating a kind of folksonomy).

Digg

Digg is a social news Web site made for people to discover and share content from anywhere on the Internet, by submitting links and stories, and voting and commenting on submitted links and stories. Voting stories up and down is the site's cornerstone function, respectively called digging and burying.

Facebook

Facebook is a free-access social networking Web site. Users can join networks organized by city, workplace, school, and region to connect and interact with other people. People can also add friends and send them messages, and update their personal profiles to notify friends about themselves.

Feed Reader

A feed aggregator, also known as a feed reader, news reader or simply aggregator, is client software or a Web application which aggregates syndicated Web content such as news headlines, blogs, and podcasts in a single location for easy viewing. Examples include Bloglines and Google Reader.

Flickr

Flickr is an image and video hosting Web site, Web services suite, and online community platform, owned by Yahoo! In addition to being a popular Web site for users to share personal photographs, the service is widely used by bloggers as a photo repository.

Folksonomy

Folksonomy (also known as collaborative tagging, social classification, social indexing, and social tagging) is the practice and method of collaboratively creating and managing tags to annotate and categorize content. In contrast to traditional subject indexing, metadata is generated not only by experts but also by creators and consumers of the content. Usually, freely chosen keywords are used instead of a controlled vocabulary.

Forum

An Internet forum, or message board, is an online discussion site. Forums or boards are Web applications managing user-generated content. Forums are governed by a set of individuals, commonly referred to as administrators and moderators, who are responsible for the forums' conception, technical maintenance and policies. Most forums have a list of rules detailing the wishes, aim and guidelines of the forums creators.

Last.fm

Last.fm is a UK-based Internet radio and music community Web site. Using a music recommender system, Last.fm builds a detailed profile of each user's musical taste by recording details of all the songs the user listens to, either on the streamed radio stations, the user's computer or some portable music devices. The site offers numerous social networking features and can recommend and play artists similar to the user's favorites.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a business-oriented social networking site mainly used for professional networking. A contact network is built up and can then be used to find jobs, people and business opportunities recommended by someone in one's contact network.

Long Tail

The phrase The Long Tail was first coined by Chris Anderson to describe the niche strategy of businesses, such as Amazon.com or Netflix, that sell a large number of unique items, each in relatively small quantities. Anderson elaborated the Long Tail concept in his book *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More*.

Mashup

A digital mashup is a digital media file containing any or all of text, graphics, audio, video and animation drawn from pre-existing sources, to create a new derivative work. For example, user-generated video/audio mashups that juxtapose commercially produced video clips with favorite pop songs constitute a major portion of YouTube content.

Meme

The term Internet meme is a phrase used to describe a concept that spreads quickly from person to person via the Internet. At its most basic, an Internet meme is simply the propagation of a digital file or hyperlink from one person to others using methods available through the Internet (for example, e-mail, blogs, social networking sites, instant messaging, etc.).

Micro-blogging

Micro-blogging is a form of multimedia blogging that allows users to send brief text updates or micromedia such as photos or audio clips and publish them. These messages can be submitted by a variety of means, including text messaging, instant messaging, e-mail, digital audio or the Web. Many micro-blogs provide short commentary on a person-to-person level, or share news about a company's products and services. Twitter is a widely-used service.

MySpace

MySpace is a social networking Web site with an interactive, user-submitted network of friends, personal profiles, blogs, groups, photos, music, and videos for teenagers and adults internationally.

Podcast

A podcast is a series of digital media files, usually digital audio or video, that is made available for download via Web syndication. Special software can automatically identify and retrieve new files associated with the podcast when they are made available, and these files can be stored locally on the user's computer or other device for offline, on demand use.

Recommender System

Recommender systems form a specific type of information filtering technique that attempts to present information items (movies, music, books, news, images, Web pages, etc.) that are likely of interest to the user. Typically, a recommender system compares the user's profile to some reference characteristics, and seeks to predict the rating that a user would give to an item they had not yet considered. These characteristics may be from the information item (the content-based approach) or the user's social environment (the collaborative filtering approach). Services that use recommender systems include Last.fm, Pandora, Amazon and Netflix.

RSS

See Web Feed.

Search engine optimization

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the volume and quality of traffic to a Web site from search engines. Typically, the earlier a site appears in the search results list, the more visitors it will receive from the search engine. As an Internet marketing strategy, SEO considers how search engines work and what people search for. Optimizing a Web site primarily involves editing its content and HTML coding to both increase its relevance to specific keywords and to remove barriers to the indexing activities of search engines.

Second Life

Second Life is a virtual world accessible via the Internet. A free client program enables its users, called Residents, to interact with each other through avatars (virtual representation of the user). Residents can explore, meet other residents, socialize, participate in individual and group activities, and create and trade virtual property and services with one another, or travel throughout the world.

Social Bookmarking

Social bookmarking is a method for Internet users to store, organize, search, and manage bookmarks of Web pages on the Internet with the help of metadata, typically in the form of tags that collectively and/or collaboratively become a folksonomy. In a social bookmarking system, users save links to Web pages that they want to remember and/or share. People can usually view these bookmarks chronologically, by category or tags, or via a search engine.

Social Media

Social media is information content created by people using highly accessible and scalable publishing technologies. It is intended to facilitate communications, influence interaction between peers and with public audiences. This is typically done via the Internet and mobile communications networks. The term most often refers to activities that integrate technology, telecommunications and social interaction, and the construction of words, pictures, videos and audio. This interaction, and the manner in which information is presented, depends on the varied perspectives and "building" of shared meaning among communities, as people share their stories and experiences.

Social Networking

A social network service focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. Most social network services are Web based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as e-mail and instant messaging services. Social networking services include Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Hi5 and Orkut.

Tag

A tag is a keyword or term assigned to a piece of information (such as an Internet bookmark, digital image, or computer file). This kind of metadata helps describe an item and allows it to be found again by browsing or searching. Tags are chosen informally and personally by the item's creator or by its viewer, depending on the system. On a Web site in which many users tag many items, this collection of tags becomes a folksonomy.

TinyURL

TinyURL is a Web service that provides short aliases for redirection of long URLs (Web addresses). Short URL aliases are seen as useful because they're easier to write down, remember or pass around, are less error-prone to write, and also fit where space is limited.

Tipping Point

The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference is a book by Malcolm Gladwell. Tipping points are "the levels at which the momentum for change becomes unstoppable." Gladwell defines a tipping point as a sociological term: "the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point." As Gladwell states, "Ideas and products and messages and behaviors spread like viruses do."

Twitter

Twitter is a social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read other users' updates known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length. Updates are displayed on the user's profile page and delivered to other users who have signed up to receive them.

User-Generated Content

User-generated content refers to various kinds of media content, publicly available, that are produced by end-users. It reflects the expansion of media production through new technologies that are accessible and affordable to the general public. All digital media technologies are included, such as question-answer databases, digital video, blogging, podcasting, mobile phone photography and wikis. In addition to these technologies, user-generated content may also employ a combination of open source, free software, and flexible licensing or related agreements to further reduce the barriers to collaboration, skill-building and discovery.

Viral Marketing

Viral marketing and viral advertising refer to marketing techniques that use pre-existing social networks to produce increases in brand awareness or to achieve other marketing objectives (such as product sales) through self-replicating viral processes, analogous to the spread of pathological and computer viruses. It can be word-of-mouth delivered or enhanced by the network effects of the Internet. Viral promotions may take the form of video clips, interactive games, images, or even text messages.

Web 2.0

Web 2.0 refers to a perceived second generation of Web development and design, that aims to facilitate communication, secure information sharing, interoperability, and collaboration on the World Wide Web. Web 2.0 concepts have led to the development and evolution of web-based communities, hosted services, and applications; such as social-networking sites, video-sharing sites, wikis, blogs, and folksonomies.

Web Feed (RSS Feed)

A web or RSS feed is a data format used for providing users with frequently updated content. Content distributors syndicate a web feed, thereby allowing users to subscribe to it. Making a collection of web feeds accessible in one spot is known as aggregation, which is performed by an Internet aggregator. A web feed is also sometimes referred to as a syndicated feed.

Wikipedia

Wikipedia is a free, multilingual encyclopedia project. Wikipedia's 12 million articles have been written collaboratively by volunteers around the world, and almost all of its articles can be edited by anyone who can access the Wikipedia Web site.

Word-of-mouth

Word-of-mouth marketing, which encompasses a variety of subcategories, including buzz, blog, viral, grassroots, cause influencers and social media marketing, as well as ambassador programs, work with consumer-generated media and more, can be highly valued by product marketers. Because of the personal nature of the communications between individuals, it is believed that product information communicated in this way has an added layer of credibility.

Yelp

Yelp is a social networking, user review, and local search Web site. It provides online local search capabilities and combines local reviews and social networking functionality to create a local online community. Yelp sites have listings for businesses throughout the United States and Canada and accept reviews of any business or service.

YouTube

YouTube is a video sharing Web site where users can upload, view and share video clips. It displays a wide variety of user-generated video content, including movie clips, TV clips, and music videos, as well as amateur content such as video blogging and short original videos.

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