

Attracting Donors and Volunteers on Non-Profit and Charity Websites

116 Design Guidelines for Improving the Usability of Essential Information and Processes on Charity and Non-Profit Websites

By Janelle Estes and Jakob Nielsen

Second edition



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Executive Summary

Non-profits would collect much more from their websites if only they'd clearly state what they are about and how they use donations. Our new usability studies revealed considerable frustration as potential donors visited sites and tried to discern various organizations' missions and goals—which are key factors in their decisions about whether to give money.

In 2008, non-profits got about 10% of their donations online, according to a survey by Target Analytics. Given the high growth rate for Internet donations, we estimate that they'll constitute the majority of donations by 2020. If non-profit organizations get their sites into shape, that is.

Well-designed non-profit websites are particularly suited for attracting new donors and efficiently supporting small-scale impulse giving. Websites are less effective at sustaining long-term donor relationships. For encouraging customer (or donor) loyalty, email newsletters remain the Internet tool of choice.

USER RESEARCH

To discover how to design non-profit websites to encourage donations, we took our usual approach: we empirically observed actual user behavior as potential donors used a wide range of sites. This research was conducted in two rounds, two years apart. However, because the results were very similar in the two studies, we will not distinguish between these two rounds of research in most of this report. Instead, findings and recommendations will be reported across the studies.

In total, we tested 60 non-profit and charity websites, chosen to cover a range of categories:

- Arts, Culture, and Humanities
- Animals
- Development and Relief Services
- Education
- Environment
- Health
- Human Services
- Public Benefit
- Religion

Most of the sites represented major national non-profits, but we also tested some smaller, local charities as well as international organizations.

We tested seven tasks:

- **Choosing a recipient:** Participants used two non-profit sites within a given category and decided which of the organizations—which had roughly similar missions—was most deserving of a donation.
- **Making a first-time donation:** Using their own credit cards, participants made an online donation to the chosen charity. We reimbursed users for this expense after the study

- **Making a repeat donation:** Participants made an online donation to a charity that they had donated to in the past (prior to the study).
- **Making a non-monetary contribution:** Participants located information about donating a tangible item, such as pet food or used toys. For this task, we didn't direct users to specific sites; they used the Web to find a suitable charity to receive their item.
- **Purchasing a product:** Participants were asked to buy an item for themselves—such as a cookbook from the American Diabetes Association—that a non-profit organization sold on its website.
- **Volunteering:** Participants researched information about becoming a volunteer at one of the organizations in the study.
- **Using Facebook to research charities:** Participants compared two similar non-profits on Facebook and selected one to receive a donation.

We recruited a broad sample of test participants, ranging in age from 20–61, with a roughly equal number of men and women. We included users with relatively little Internet experience (at least one year), as well as those with more experience (at least three years). Job titles spanned the alphabet, from attorney and bank assistant vice president to microbiologist, police officer, small business owner, and teacher.

We screened out users who hadn't made at least one donation to a non-profit or charity during the preceding year. While there's a first time for everything, we wanted to test people who actually exhibit the behavior we were studying.

WHAT DONORS WANT

We asked participants what information they wanted to see on non-profit websites before they decided whether to donate. Their answers fell into four broad categories, two of which were the most heavily requested:

- The organization's mission, goals, objectives, and work.
- How it uses donations and contributions.

That is: What are you trying to achieve, and how will you spend my money?

Sadly, only 47% of the sites we studied answered the first question on their homepage. Further, only a ridiculously low 5% answered the second question on the homepage. Although organizations typically provided these answers somewhere within the site, users often had problems finding this crucial information.

As we've long known, what people say they want is one thing. How they actually behave when they're on websites is another. Of the two, we put more credence in the latter. We therefore analyzed users' decision-making processes as they decided which organizations to support.

In choosing between two charities, people referred to five categories of information. However, an organization's mission, goals, objectives, and work was by far the most important. Indeed, it was 2.6 times as important as the runner-up issue, which was how the organization uses the money it collects.

People want to know what a non-profit stands for, because they want to contribute to causes that share their ideals and values. Most people probably agree that, for example, it's good to help impoverished residents of developing countries or patients suffering from nasty diseases. Many organizations claim to do these very things. The question in a potential donor's mind is how the organization proposes to help. Often,

sites we studied failed to answer this question clearly—and lost out on donations as a result.

WHAT KILLS DONATIONS

In addition to observing what “closed the sale” for charities that attracted user contributions, we also analyzed the turn-off factors that caused charities to lose out, even after users had spent considerable time on their websites.

The donation-killers (percentages sum to 101 because of rounding):

- 50% were usability problems relating to page and site design, including unintuitive information architecture, cluttered pages, and confusing workflow.
- Amazingly, on 13% of the sites, users couldn’t find where to make a donation. You’d imagine that donation-dependent sites would at least get that one design element right, but banner-blindness or over-formatting caused people to overlook some donation buttons.
- 43% were content issues related to writing for the Web, including unclear or missing information and confusing terms.
- 8% of the time users simply disagreed with the organization’s approach.

INTEGRATING LOCAL CHAPTERS WITH THE NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL SITE

Missing or confusing information aside, the worst user experience erosion in this study was caused by heinous integration of local chapters with the higher-level organization.

As mentioned above, users wanted information about a non-profit’s activities in their communities, but the experience of actually visiting local chapter websites was stunning. Typically, such sites looked completely different than the master sites, even violating such elementary brand guidelines as using a consistent color scheme.

As for forging an integrated user experience across organization levels, forget it. Most non-profits could substantially improve their overall Web presence by creating a unified look and feel and supporting other improvements for local sites.

DONATION PROCESS: OK

Once people had decided to make a donation—and found the donation button on sites that made doing so difficult—it was fairly easy for them to proceed through the workflow and donate.

Our testing did identify some small usability problems, but the only big problem was caused by sites that used third-party payment services, which stumped some users.

Most of the donation processes had reasonable usability because they were essentially a scaled-back version of e-commerce checkout, with fewer complications. Designers know how to build good e-commerce checkouts, and users know how to deal with the expected components.

Despite these similarities, donations don’t exhibit nearly as streamlined user experience as most e-commerce sites. Completing the actual donation process took the users in our second study 7% more time on average than it took users to

complete an e-commerce checkout process in our (separate) research on e-commerce usability.¹

Even though 7% degradation of usability is not horrible, fixing a process with even minor usability problems might increase donations by around 7%. For a non-profit with a \$10M budget and an average share of online donations, such minor tweaks could mean an extra \$70,000 per year.

NON-MONETARY CONTRIBUTIONS: BAD

Users had much more difficulty with making a non-monetary contribution than they had with donating money. One reason is obviously that giving physical items is a non-standard type of online transaction where users cannot rely on previous experience with other sites. (In contrast, *giving* money is quite similar to *paying* money, at least in terms of the buttons and fields you need to use.)

Any time a website asks users to do something new, the user interface should be particularly easy, to help users overcome the hurdle of understanding the new process. Sadly, most of the charities in our study actually provided particularly *poor* usability for this more challenging task; information about donating physical items was typically hard to find and rarely sufficiently specific.

As a result of the low usability for non-monetary donations, users typically bounced between many non-profit organizations before finding one that they wanted to give their items to. Users gave this experience the lowest satisfaction score we recorded in this research: an average rating of 5.3 on a 1–7 scale (7 best).

VOLUNTEERING PROCESS: GOOD

On our 1–7 scale, users gave a stellar rating of 6.7 for the task of finding out how to volunteer at an organization. Most sites had a simple direct link to this information from their homepage. And they mostly provided straightforward information about volunteering, including descriptions of typical volunteer duties and hours, which are details that prospective volunteers want to see up front.

Many sites also had fairly simple forms for volunteering, though it's important to also provide contact information for people who want to talk to somebody before they volunteer.

TOP PRIORITY: CLEAR-SPOKEN INFORMATION

Our users gave a fairly low average rating of 5.3 for the task of finding out about an organization and determining its trustworthiness. In comparison, users' average rating of the actual donation process was 5.7 (on a 1–7 scale; averaged across the sites in the study).

While improvements are still possible for the donation process itself, our usability research clearly showed that this isn't the main difficulty that's inhibiting the potential of online donations to quintuple over the next decade. Rather, the big problem is bad content usability.

So: speak plainly and answer donors' main questions, and money will flow your way.

¹ Please see <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/ecommerce> for findings and design guidelines from our e-commerce studies. Non-profit organizations that sell products should follow e-commerce usability guidelines for the store area of their site in addition to the recommendations in the present report.

Research Overview

The findings and recommendations in this report are based on the results of two separate studies conducted to assess the usability of critical information and processes on non-profit and charity websites.

In our two studies, we tested a total of 60 websites with 21 users. We gave participants tasks to perform, and the facilitator sat next to the user and observed as the participant explored and made small donations and purchases on non-profit and charity websites.

In our first study, we asked users to research and evaluate two similar non-profit or charity organizations and choose one to make a donation to. Users were given 10–15 minutes to conduct research. After they had made a decision, they were asked to make a small donation using the organization's website.

In our second round of research, we used the same tasks given in our first study, but we selected different organizations. We asked users to complete these tasks twice: once using an organization's website and a second time using an organization's Facebook page. Additionally, users were asked to complete the following tasks on non-profit and charity websites: determine an organization's trustworthiness, make a donation (monetary and non-monetary), purchase an item, and find information about volunteering.

In order to test a wide variety of charity and non-profit websites, we broke the websites into groups, which are categorized below. We based our categorization loosely on the types of charities and non-profits listed on the Charity Navigator website (<http://www.charitynavigator.org>). We also chose charities and non-profits of various sizes; we mainly tested the sites of national organizations, but we also included the sites of some international and smaller, local organizations.

For details about the study methodology, see our Methodology section, which begins on page 209.

Web addresses for the sites tested are listed on page 208.

Type of Charity Tested	Websites Tested
Arts, Culture, Humanities	Corcoran Gallery of Art National Gallery of Art New Hampshire Children's Museum New Hampshire Historical Society Pro Portsmouth Inc. Wentworth-Gardner & Tobias Lear Houses
Animals	Cocheco Valley Animal Shelter Defenders of Wildlife Kitty Angels MSPCA Angell NEADS, National Education for Assistance Dog Services Paws with a Cause Wildlife Alliance
Development and Relief Services	Acumen Fund Global Links Heifer International Hope for Haiti International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas New Israel Fund
Education	Children's Scholarship Fund "I Have A Dream" Foundation Southern New Hampshire University Saint Anselm's College Specialist Schools and Academies Trust University of New Hampshire
Environment	Appalachian Trail Conservancy The Conservation Fund Environmental Defense Fund Resource Renewal Institute Sustainable Conservation
Health	Accelerated Cure Project for Multiple Sclerosis Alzheimer's Association American Cancer Society American Heart Association Beverly Hospital Brain Aneurysm Foundation Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center Lymphoma Research Foundation Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research Nancy Davis Foundation for Multiple Sclerosis

Type of Charity Tested	Websites Tested
Human Services	4-H Adoption Exchange American Red Cross Big Brothers Big Sisters of America Boys & Girls Club of America Child Advocates The Friends Program Goodwill Habitat for Humanity New Hampshire Food Bank Seacoast Family Food Pantry of New Hampshire Stuffed Animals for Emergencies Team Hoyt
Public Benefit	Bread for the World Institute NARAL Pro-Choice America United Way WaterStone
Religion	The Interfaith Alliance Foundation Mission America Coalition

Why Usability Matters

One of the main goals of non-profit websites is to attract and retain donors. Good design and usability will only help with these efforts. A clear, streamlined design that includes the critical information users want to know will inform people about the organization and move them through the donation process. If users struggle to understand the organization's objectives and how their donation will be used, they are likely to find another organization to donate to—one that can clearly communicate its initiatives.

Target Analytics released an *Internet Giving Benchmarking Analysis*,² based on data from 24 large non-profits. Among the participants in the Target survey, the annualized growth rate in the number of online donors was 33% a year from 2004-2008, whereas offline donors declined by 1% a year. For the latest year in the study (2007 compared with 2008), online donors grew 39% and offline declined 3%, which is in line with the 5-year average, given the natural fluctuations in such numbers.

In 2008, online only accounted for 9% of the donors and 11% of the donations. (The difference between these two percentages is due to the larger amounts donated online as compared to offline, on average.) Given the rapid growth in online donations, we estimate that online donations will account for the majority of donations by 2020, even after accounting for the inevitable decline in the growth rate in future years.

Averaged across the 24 non-profits in the Target survey, the 5-year cumulative value of a donor who started giving in 2004 was \$237 for donors acquired online and \$86 for donors acquired offline. This emphasizes the benefit for non-profits and charities to redesign their websites to appeal to new donors.

On the other hand, retention is lower for online donors than for direct-mail donors. This points to the need for non-profits to improve their email newsletters, which are the main way of promoting loyalty on the Internet³.

² <http://www.blackbaud.com/targetanalytics/benchmarking/dcinternet.aspx>

³ The design of email newsletters is beyond the scope of the present report; instead, please see our separate report on this topic, available at <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/newsletters>.

Online Donors: Why and When They Make Donations

Users in our study made decisions about what organizations to donate to and when to make donations based on a variety of factors. Most users reported that they donated to a non-profit or charity because they had a personal connection to the organization or its cause. For example, one user made an annual contribution to Saint Anselm's College because he had graduated from the college. Another user made regular donations to the American Heart Association, because an immediate family member had passed away from a heart attack. A third donated to NARAL Pro-Choice America, because she was passionate about reproductive rights in the United States.

Users explained that they were often prompted by something before making a donation. For example, one user received a phone call from an organization during its "annual giving" period, which prompted him to donate to them over the phone. Another user donated to an organization when she received an email reminder or a flyer in the mail, because it reminded her to do so. A third user always donated to a non-profit or charity after a friend or family member passed away; she donated in lieu of sending flowers. Another user donated to certain organizations if his children or children in his neighborhood were raising money for a cause.

The time of year when users donated varied across participants. For example, one user donated to organizations at the end of the year, because she wanted to help those in need during the winter holiday season in the United States. Another donated towards the end of the tax year in the United States, December 31st, to maximize his deductions when filing his taxes. Another user always donated in October, which was Breast Cancer Awareness Month in the United States. Non-profits should look for trends in online donations and consider promoting site content to spike donor interest during popular giving times, such as year-end giving or associated awareness events.

The frequency of donations varied across participants. Some donated on a regular basis, while others donated once or twice per year. One user only donated whenever he had "extra money," which was usually about six times per year. Another donated only once or twice per year, which he typically did in December. A third user made donations twice per month, which were automatically deducted from her husband's paycheck each pay period.

In general, people didn't complain about or have issues with the online donation process, and some people preferred it over other methods of donating. In fact, users gave the task of making an online donation an average satisfaction rating of 5.7 out of 7 (with 7 being the highest possible score.) One user said, "I'm more apt to do it online than through the mail." Another user, who regularly donated to Heifer International, received their catalogue through the mail. She flipped through the catalogue to choose what she wanted to donate and then used their site to make the donation.

While users didn't mind donating online, most users commented that they had to be familiar with an organization and its work before doing so. Users didn't blindly donate to organizations; they had to have prior experience with or knowledge about what they did and how they did it.

Critical Content on Non-Profit and Charity Websites

People have high expectations of non-profit and charity websites. When users are evaluating these types of organizations, they have specific questions they want answered, and they expect the website to provide the desired information in a clear and understandable manner. If this information isn't immediately available, users have little desire or motivation to find it. Critical information, such as the objectives of a non-profit or charity and how they use their donations, is frequently sought out by users.

INFORMATION PEOPLE WANTED TO KNOW BEFORE DONATING

In our studies, we asked users to tell us what they needed to know before they felt comfortable making a donation to a non-profit or charity. The table below includes the responses to this question, as well as the percentage of users who mentioned each response.

Type of Information	% of users who wanted to know this information
Mission, goals, objectives, and work	62%
Use of donations and contributions	57%
Legitimacy and reputation	57%
Local presence	19%
Site security	15%

Mission, goals, objectives, and work

Based on the responses of the users in our study, the most important piece of information people needed to know about a charity or non-profit was what they did and how they did it. Users were interested in details about the organization's objectives, mission, goals, and programs. They wanted to know what a charity or non-profit stood for, because people wanted to contribute to an organization that had acceptable goals, ideals, and values. All users reviewed the homepage and navigated to the *About Us* category on non-profit and charity websites in search of these details.

In our study, we found that many sites failed to communicate this vital information, and users were often confused or annoyed because they couldn't understand a convoluted mission statement or put together various pieces of information to form a valid opinion of the organization. On average, it took users just under six minutes (five minutes and 52 seconds) to locate the information, which was far too long.

Users were asked to answer a subjective questionnaire on their satisfaction levels after they conducted research about an organization. On a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being the most positive, the task received an average satisfaction rating of 5.3, which was one of the lowest average satisfaction ratings in our study.

For example, one user laughed out loud after reading the information on WaterStone's *About Us* page, because the convoluted explanation didn't help him understand what they did. He said he wouldn't donate to the organization.

ABOUT US

At WaterStone, we're constantly seeking new ways to help people think differently about their giving. Just as looking at a stone through water reveals its genuine luster, taking a fresh look at the principles of fellowship, stewardship and legacy gives us a new vision of truly living.

WaterStone's *About Us* page didn't clearly articulate what the organization did.

If users were unable to understand the goals and objectives of a charity or non-profit, they were unlikely to make a donation. In our study, **not one person made a donation to an organization that had objectives they didn't understand or feel comfortable with.**

Use of donations and contributions

Aside from understanding a charity or non-profit's objectives, users wanted to know how donations and contributions were spent. People wanted to be certain that their money will be put to good use.

Throughout our study, people mentioned that they were concerned with how much of the organization's donations actually went to the programs or initiatives and how much went to overhead, administrative costs, or outside fundraising organizations. Since this was a top question that users had, it's critical to provide this information on a charity or non-profit website.

Some of the sites we tested, such as Action Against Hunger, provided facts and figures around how donations were used within the organization.



Action Against Hunger clearly stated how much of their money went to programs, fundraising, and overhead.

However, more often than not, users struggled to locate this information, which left potential donors wondering how their donation would be used and what percentage of it would be put towards programs and initiatives at the organization. Without the answer to these questions, some users were hesitant to make a donation to an organization, because they were unsure how effective it would be.

Legitimacy and reputation

An organization's reputation and legitimacy is another important piece of information users needed to know before making a donation. In our study, people often used information such as watchdog ratings, high profile endorsements, testimonials, name recognition, number of years in operation, and recommendations from friends and family members to decide whether or not a non-profit or charity was worthy of their donation.

Users looked for and gravitated towards this type of information in our study and compiled it with other facts gathered from the website to decide whether or not to donate. If a non-profit or charity has this type of information to tout, it's important to do so, because users wanted to know if an organization was credible before providing it with funds.

For example, the Children's Scholarship Fund featured celebrities and other high-profile individuals in a video that explained their work, which helped build the organization's credibility.



This video, featured on the Children's Scholarship Fund's homepage, included celebrities and other well-known individuals, which helped build the organization's legitimacy among users.

Local presence

Users were interested in whether or not an organization had a presence in their local community. In our study, users were more likely to make a donation to a non-profit or charity if they worked in or provided some benefit to their local community. People were interested in improving situations around them and wanted to see their money put towards efforts that could improve their immediate surroundings.

Throughout our study, users often looked for information about an organization's work in their community. If a non-profit or charity works in various locations—across the state, country, or globe—this information should be provided on the website, because people will seek it out. For example, The Friends Program, a New Hampshire based organization, clearly stated the nine counties they served on their *About Us* page.

About Us



Our Mission: The Friends Program strengthens communities by building relationships that empower people, encourage community service, and restore faith in the human spirit – “Building Relationships... Restoring Hope.”

Our Programs: The Friends Program oversees four separate programs: Emergency Housing, Foster Grandparent, Junior Senior

Friends Youth Mentoring, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, and RSVP-Interfaith Caregivers. These programs serve communities within nine counties in NH: Belknap, Carroll, Cheshire, Grafton, Hillsborough, Merrimack, Rockingham, Strafford, and Sullivan Counties.

The Friends Program's *About Us* page included a list of the nine New Hampshire counties they served, which helped users quickly understand their local presence.

Site security

In our second study, users were more cautious about submitting their personal and billing information through online forms. Before some users felt comfortable providing these details, they wanted to make sure that their information would be protected. They looked for recognizable icons or statements that explained the site's level of security.

One user, while making a purchase on the New Hampshire Historical Society's website, immediately noticed the GeoTrust secure site logo, which made him feel more comfortable completing the checkout process.

The screenshot shows the New Hampshire Historical Society Museum Store website. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Books, Videos & Music; Gifts as Special as New Hampshire; Custom Products; For Children; What's New?; and On Sale. Below these is the New Hampshire Historical Society logo (founded 1823) and a 'Museum Store' heading. A sidebar on the left contains links for 'Store Home', 'Customer Service', and 'View Cart'. The main content area displays a shopping cart table with one item: 'A Building History of Northern New England' (item # 465099) for \$25.95. Below the table, there is a shipping section showing 'Standard' shipping for \$7.95, and a total of \$33.90. A GeoTrust 'VERIFIED BY' logo is prominently displayed above the cart table, indicating a secure connection.

Item #	Description	Qty	Price	Extension	Remove
465099	A Building History of Northern New England	1	\$25.95	\$25.95	

Shipping: Standard \$7.95
Total \$33.90

One user immediately noticed the GeoTrust logo on the New Hampshire Historical Society's site.

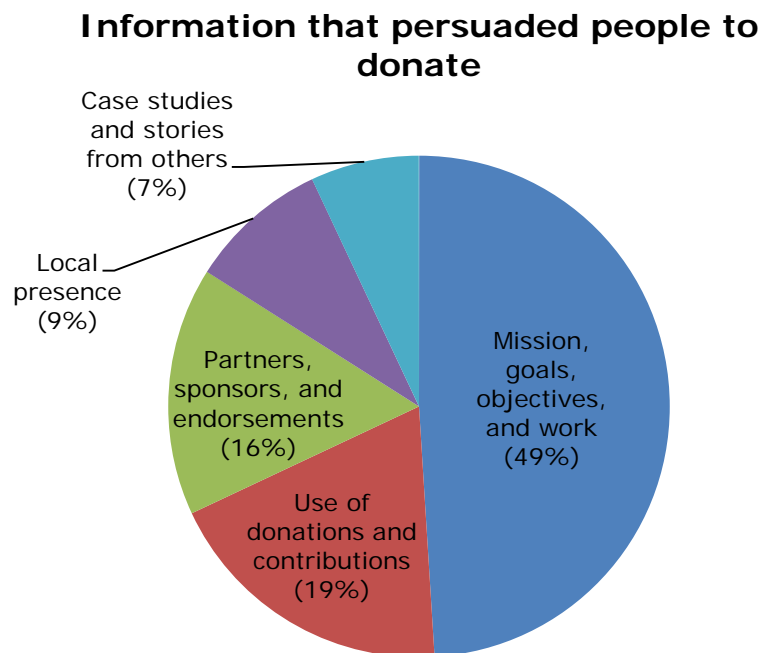
Users looked for evidence of site security, such as statements or familiar logos that they'd seen on other sites. It's important to provide these details throughout the site

and on every page of the donation and checkout processes. If users don't feel comfortable providing sensitive information, they simply won't.

INFORMATION THAT PERSUADED PEOPLE TO DONATE

Clear answers to the most frequent questions people have about an organization is vital, but additional information, such as endorsements and testimonials, can persuade users to make a contribution to a non-profit or charity. Providing this type of information allows users to better relate with the organization and the people and situations it helps.

In both studies, we asked users to research and evaluate two different charities or non-profits by using their websites and decide which charity to make a donation to. After a charity had been chosen and a donation had been made, we asked users what convinced them to donate to one charity over the other. The chart below includes the information that persuaded people to donate to an organization, along with the percentage of comments made in relation to each item.



The chart above shows the information that persuaded users to donate to a non-profit or organization, along with the percentage of comments users made related to each item: mission, goals, and objectives (49%), use of donations and contributions (19%), partners, sponsors, and endorsements (16%), local presence (9%), and case studies and stories from others (7%).

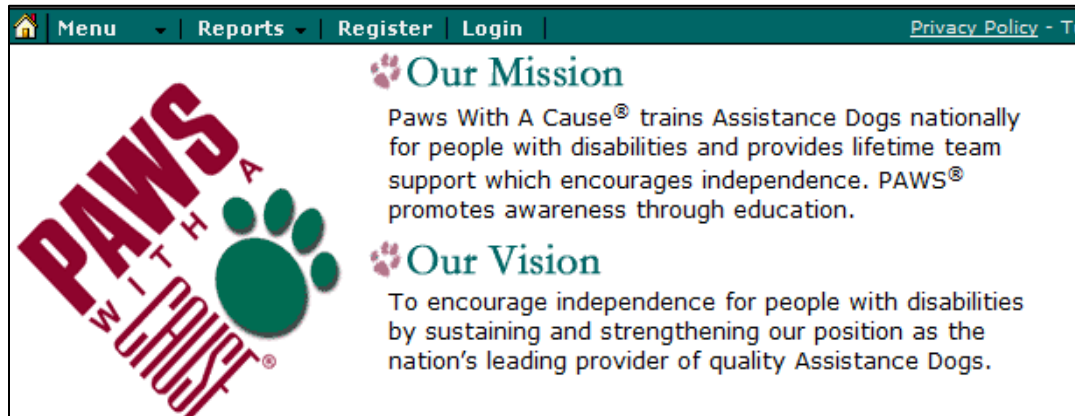
Mission, goals, objectives, and work

About half of the users in our study said that an organization's mission, goals, objectives, and work was the number one influence in choosing a charity or non-profit to donate to. This wasn't surprising, because this information is also the most requested, as shown in the previous table.

Websites that provided this information in a clear, concise, and easy-to-understand manner had an advantage over those who had convoluted or unclear goals and

objectives. The organizations that received donations during our study didn't try to "sell" or persuade people to donate to them; they simply described what they did and how they did it in a succinct and easy to understand manner, which was enough to convince people—if they agreed with their mission—to make a donation.

For example, The Paws with a Cause homepage clearly articulated their work and purpose, which convinced one user to donate to them.



The mission and vision of Paws with a Cause was clearly explained on their homepage.

Use of donations and contributions

Another convincing factor was a disclosure of how the organization used donations and contributions. The organizations that provided this information on their sites helped potential donors understand where their money would go. Even if the percentage that went to the programs and initiatives was lower than users had hoped, they were still pleased to see the information and felt confident that the organization wasn't hiding anything from them.

Financial documents, such as annual reports, also convinced users that the organization was credible and worthy of a donation. Most users didn't open or view the documents, but they were reassured by the availability of them on an organization's site. For example, one user, who was researching The Brain Aneurysm Foundation, noticed the availability of different financial documents, and said, "This is an organization that has nothing to hide."

Partners, sponsors, and endorsements

Users were often drawn to a non-profit or charity's partners, sponsors, and endorsements. If an organization partnered with a non-profit, charity, or corporation, users were interested in how the parties worked together.

Users also gravitated towards sponsors and endorsements. In particular, endorsements or high ratings from watchdog organizations, such as Charity Navigator, Independent Charities of America, and the American Institute of Philanthropy, communicated to users that the organization was credible and reliable. Credibility was a key consideration in order to feel comfortable donating, as mentioned in the previous section.

For example, The Conservation Fund mentioned their endorsements and ratings from Charity Navigator (four stars) and the American Institute of Philanthropy (A+ rating) on their homepage.



Third-party endorsements persuaded users to donate to The Conservation Fund.

Other types of endorsements, especially from high profile celebrities, athletes, or other public figures, convinced users that the organization was doing something right. Otherwise, well-known individuals wouldn't support them.

Local presence

Some users in our study were convinced to donate to an organization because they worked in or reached out to their local community. This meant a lot to users, and many gave one charity higher preference over another if they had a presence in a local town, state, or region. In fact, one user decided to donate to one charity over another because they worked only in the United States; the other charity worked around the globe. People wanted to better their surroundings and were more apt to donate to a charity that would do so. This, in turn, made them feel like they had a part in the improvement.

Case studies and stories from others

Finally, users were very interested in learning how people had benefited or situations had improved from the work of the charity. Testimonials, personal stories, case studies, and facts and figures convinced users to make a contribution.

Testimonials and personal stories were especially powerful, because users were able to associate a face or place with the work of an organization. If non-profits and charities simply describe what they do and how they do it, it can only be so informative and convincing, but stories allow users to identify with a situation, person, or problem to understand the organization's impact.

In one test session, a user was convinced he was going to donate to the first charity he looked at, but he decided to check out the second charity just to see what they were about. On the second charity's website, he found a list of people who were waiting for help from the organization. Each person provided a story about help from the organization was needed. After reading this information, the user decided to make a donation to the charity, because he felt he could "see" where his money was going.

Our Clients

We need to raise \$9,500 for each NEADS Assistance Dog team to cover part of the \$20,000 cost of raising and training the dog and for assisting our clients in learning to live and work with his or her new canine assistant. Please help a team (or more, if you can) by donating all or a portion of the sponsorship by clicking on the person listed below. You will learn a little about that person and how a dog will make a difference in their life.

Select a client.. ▾



Jennifer Gathercole

An assistance dog would help Jennifer work with teenage girls who have come from traumatic backgrounds and have behavioral and/or psychological disabilities.



John Archambault

John has MS and a Balance/walker dog would help him with his daily activities.



Carey Tipping

A car accident has taken away my independence because of a spinal injury. I am currently using a cane, but a dog would be much more helpful to add to my balance.



Kathleen Fortier

Born deaf, Kathleen would like a hearing dog to alert her to sounds she would otherwise not hear.



Jared Golden

Born hard of hearing and with progressive hearing loss, Jared has a 4.0 gpa at Universal Technical Inst. in Norwood MA. and is a diesel technician. He would like a hearing dog to alert him to everyday sounds and make his life easier and safer.

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The National Education for Assistance Dog Services (NEADS) website included stories about individuals waiting for assistance from the organization, which persuaded one user to donate to them.

BIGGEST DETERRENTS WHEN CONSIDERING A DONATION

While providing key information and other convincing facts and stories improves the chance that an individual will donate to non-profit or charity, there are many things sites can do to turn people away.

Users in our study were easily turned off or bothered by many things on non-profit and charity websites. Throughout the study, we captured the things people referred to as annoying, confusing, or frustrating. The list below highlights the top things people mentioned and the percentage of comments related to each item.

Turnoff	% of comments related to this item
Lack of or unclear information about mission, goals, objectives, or work	18%
Lack of or unclear explanation of how donations were used	15%
Inability to quickly find where to donate	13%
Busy or cluttered homepage or site	13%
Hard to read text	8%
Mission, goals, objectives, or work that clashed with personal beliefs	8%
Strange or unexpected interactions	8%
Third-party payment applications	8%
Confusing terms	5%
Unrelated news or events	5%

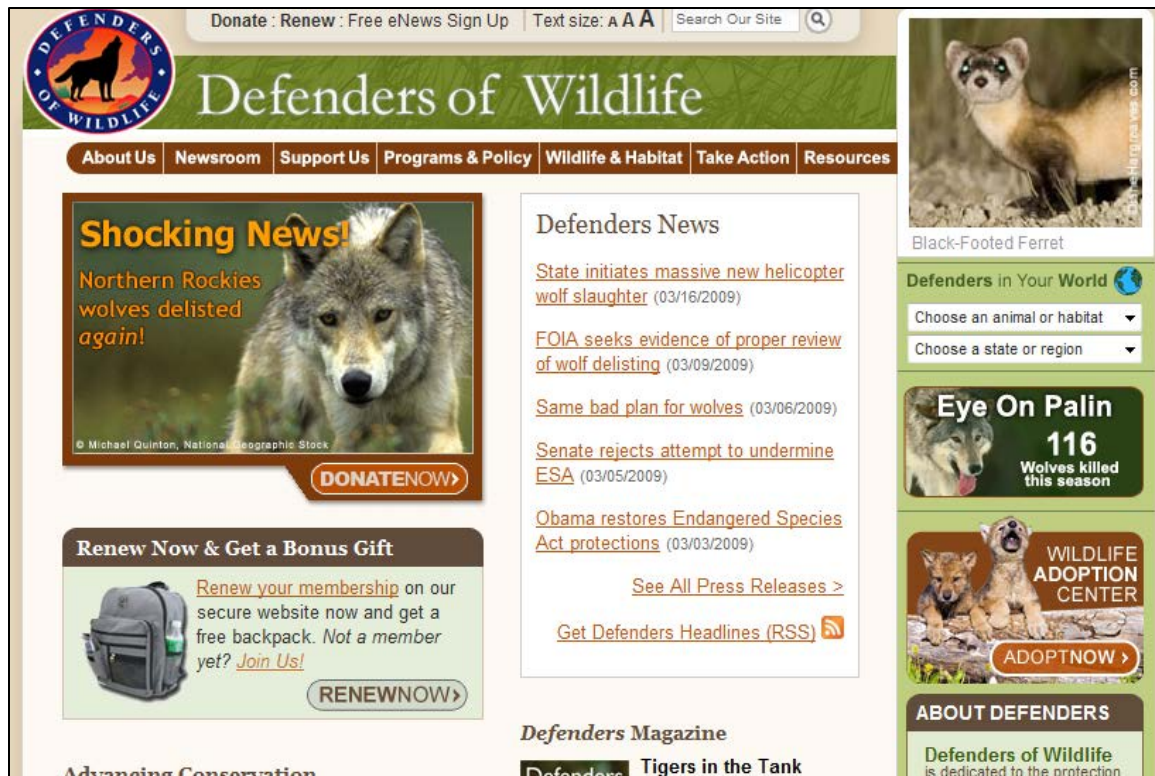
Lack of or unclear information about mission, goals, objectives, or work

One of the most frequently mentioned turnoffs was a lack of or unclear description of an organization's mission, goals, objectives, or work. This was the most important piece of information users wanted to know about a charity before they made a donation. Failure to provide this information in a clear and easy to understand manner—or at all—immediately turned off users in our study. In fact, at least three times during the study, users decided to donate to a different charity because they couldn't find or understand what the charity they were currently looking at did.

Inability to quickly find where to donate

Another aggravation commonly mentioned in our study was the inability to quickly locate where to initiate a donation. When users were ready to make a donation, they wanted to do so quickly and easily. Unfortunately, several sites in our study were designed in a way that required users to hunt for a link to donate. Users were highly frustrated by this, but if they were truly interested in donating to the organization, they put in the effort to locate the link.

For example, when users wanted to donate to Defenders of Wildlife, they had trouble locating a link to do so. The link to donate on the homepage was part of an image of a wolf, and an additional link was hidden within the *Take Action* category.



Users who wanted to donate to Defenders of Wildlife had trouble finding a way to do so. Banner blindness often makes people *less* likely to see items that are highly formatted or that are part of large graphics.

Lack of or unclear explanation of how donations were used

A lack of or unclear explanation of how donations were used was another frequent annoyance in our study. As mentioned above, this was the second most important piece of information users wanted to know before making a donation. Some sites provided this information, but others did not. Regardless, users hunted for it, and those who found it were pleased that the organization disclosed the information. Those who couldn't find the information at all were aggravated and thought the organization was inefficient or hiding something.

One user was comparing two sites: The Brain Aneurysm Foundation and the Lymphoma Research Foundation. At the beginning of the task, she stated that she wanted to donate to the Lymphoma Research Foundation, but she decided to research both organizations before she making a donation. During her research, she was able to locate information about the percentage of donations that went towards programs on The Brain Aneurysm Foundation's website, but she couldn't locate this information on the Lymphoma Research Foundation's website. Because of this, she changed her mind and donated to The Brain Aneurysm Foundation instead.

Busy or cluttered homepage or site

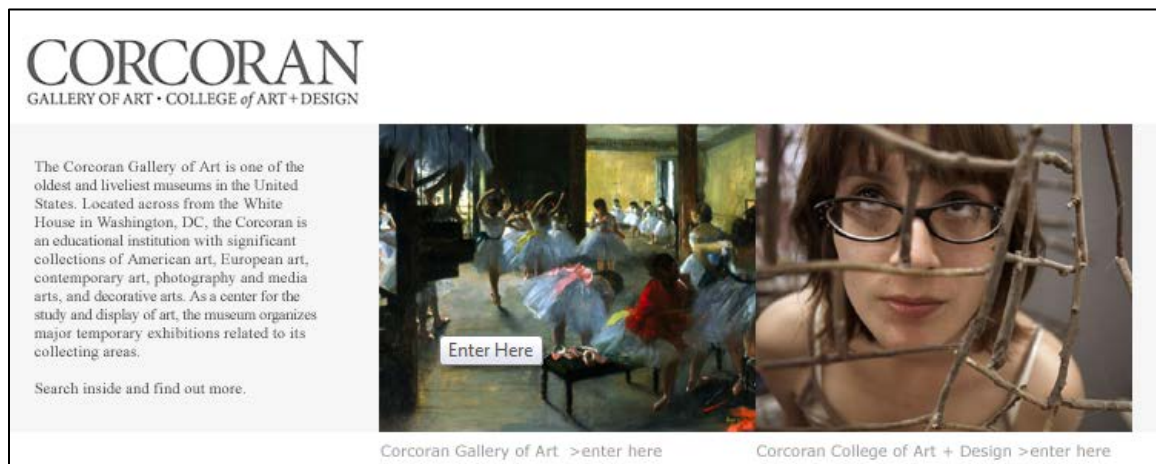
Users were often turned off by sites that seemed overwhelming or overloaded with information, especially homepages. When users went to an organization's homepage, they wanted to know—very quickly—what the non-profit or charity did and how they did it. When they were bombarded with lots of unrelated information, they became frustrated and looked desperately for basic information about the organization.

Several users in our study mentioned that they were overwhelmed by the sheer amount of content on a homepage or throughout an organization's site, especially when they didn't have a good grasp on the organization's objectives.

Hard to read text

Some users in our study commented on hard to read text, which was either too small, had poor color contrast with the background color, or both. This frustrated users, because it required them to put in extra effort to read information on an organization's site.

One user had to get far too close to the monitor to read the text on The Corcoran Gallery of Art's website and eventually moved on to another site, because it was too difficult to read. The text was too small, and there wasn't enough contrast between the font color and the background color.



Hard to read text was a turn off to users.

Mission, goals, objectives, or work that clashed with personal beliefs

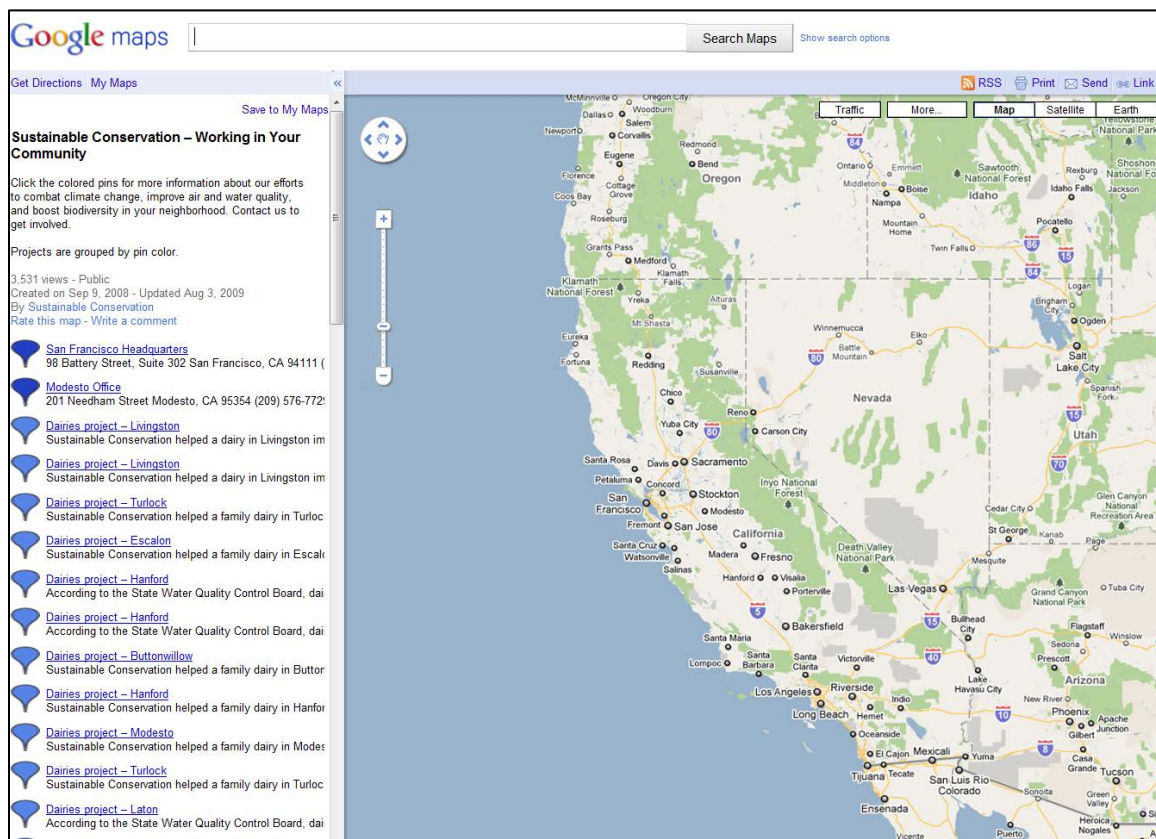
Users were turned off by organizations that completed work that didn't mesh with their own beliefs. However, users were even more turned off when organizations weren't straightforward about their views.

For example, one user realized an organization had specific religious beliefs after he had been researching on their site for over five minutes. He quickly became irritated, because the organization wasn't upfront about it. If organizations have very specific views, these views should be clearly communicated on the homepage and throughout the site.

Strange or unexpected interactions

Users were turned off by strange or unexpected interactions. These interactions tripped users up. Some users mentioned the non-standard designs, but others simply moved to another part of the site—or to a different site altogether.

When one user navigated to the *Where We Work* category on the Sustainable Conservation site, she was brought to Google Maps. She quickly closed the browser window and said, "Maps and I don't get along." This strange interaction annoyed her.



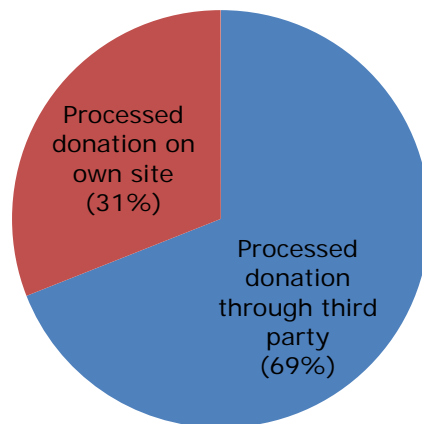
An unexpected interaction annoyed one user trying to understand where Sustainable Conservation worked.

Third-party payment applications

Users were consistently confused when they were sent to a third-party payment application, such as Google Checkout, PayPal, or GiveDirect, to complete their donation. The users in our study weren't expecting to use these tools and questioned why the charity or non-profit would ask them to do so. The users who completed their transactions using these tools eventually did so successfully, but some struggled with unfamiliar interactions, performance issues, and login problems.

Of the 39 donation processes tested in our research, 69% of sites used a third-party payment application and 31% processed donations internally.

Donation processing on non-profit and charity sites



The chart above shows how organizations included in our study processed donations; 27 organizations (69%) used a third-party payment process and 12 (31%) processed donations internally.

Confusing terms

Some websites we tested used made-up terms or names for their programs or initiatives, which confused users—especially when they didn't have a firm grasp on what the organization did or how they did it. When reading through information on a non-profit or charity site, users often paused when they read unfamiliar terms. Unusual terms and made-up words required extra processing and took away from people's ability to fully understand what the organization did.

For example, the "I Have a Dream" Foundation referred to the individuals they helped as "dreamers," which confused users who were trying to understand what the organization did.

DREAMER SNAPSHOT	
Ethnicities	
African American	50.3%
Hispanic	34.3%
Caucasian	11.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.9%
Native American	0.5%
Other	0.7%

The use of the term "Dreamers" on the "I Have a Dream" Foundation's site confused users.

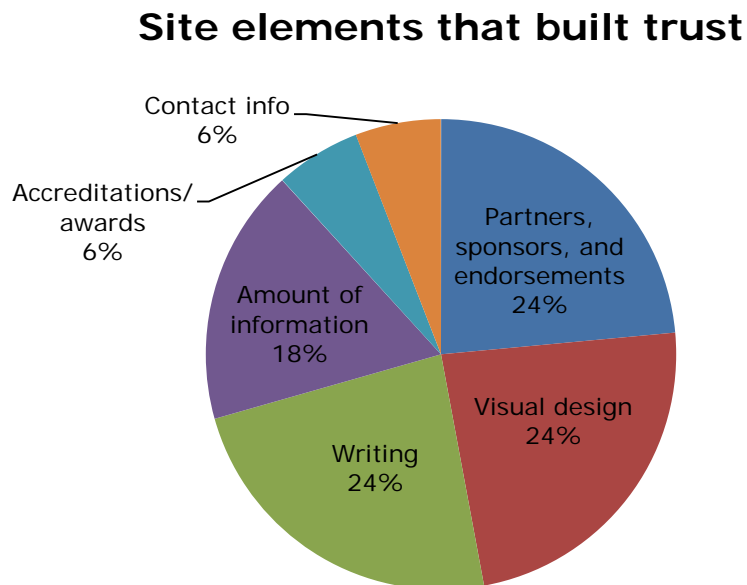
Unrelated news or events

Another confusion that occurred during our study was a lack of association between featured news stories or events and the organization featuring them. Several users

in our study navigated to a news article on a non-profit or charity website and were puzzled when the content they found wasn't clearly tied to the organization.

SITE ELEMENTS THAT BUILT TRUST

In our second study, we asked users to evaluate various organizations and determine whether or not they were trustworthy. Throughout the task, users made comments related to the trustworthiness of organizations based on their sites. The chart below includes the site elements that affected users' trust in an organization, along with the percentage of comments made in relation to each item.



The chart above shows the site elements that built trust among users, along with the percentage of comments users made related to each item: partners, sponsors, and endorsements (24%), visual design (24%), writing (24%), amount of information (18%), accreditations/awards (6%), and contact information (7%).

Partners, sponsors, and endorsements

Not surprisingly, users were quick to trust organizations that featured third-party endorsements or well-known partners and sponsors on their sites. This was also information that persuaded users to donate to an organization, as previously discussed.

Visual design

When users visited a website, they made split-second decisions and judgments about the organization based on what they initially saw. Having a professionally-designed website immediately built trust among site visitors. Organizations that had a clean design and an organized layout were considered to be more trustworthy than those that had a haphazardly designed site.

For example, those that visited the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) were immediately turned off by the cluttered homepage and rotating images. By contrast, those that visited the Global Links site said the streamlined homepage and organized layout made them think the organization was trustworthy.

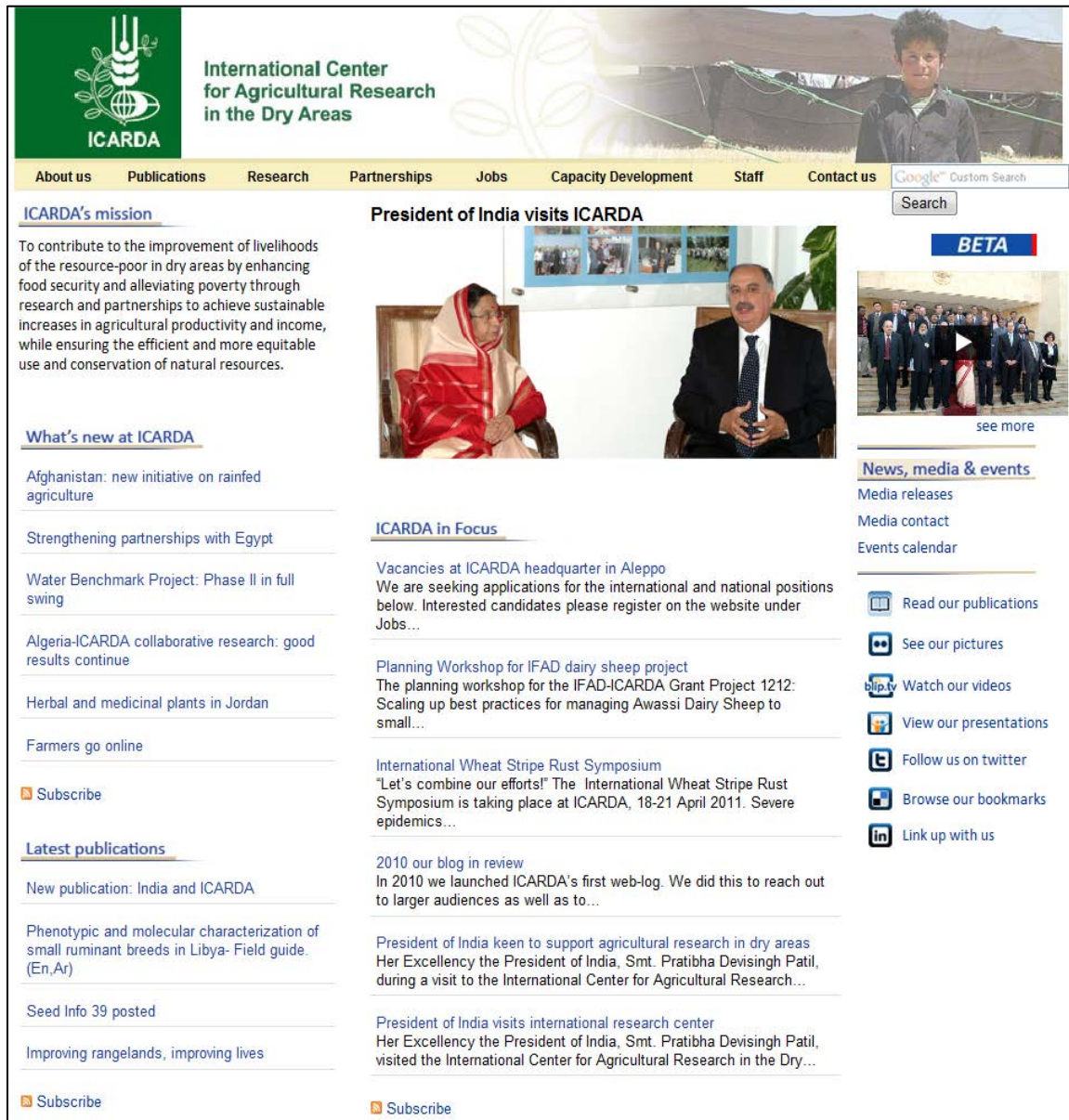


Image 1 of 2: The rotating images and cluttered homepage made users leery to trust ICARDA.





Image 2 of 2: The clutter-free and clean layout of the Global Links homepage increased users trust in the organization.

A clean, organized, and clutter-free visual design and layout is critical for non-profit and charity websites. Additionally, creating a consistent experience between the main site and affiliate or chapter sites is equally important. Users were often confused when they navigated to an affiliate or chapter site from the organization's main site, because the look and feel of the two sites was wildly different. Some questioned if they were on the right site and if the affiliate or chapter was trustworthy.

For example, a user who navigated to a Manchester, New Hampshire Boys & Girls Clubs of America site were confused, because the look and feel wasn't consistent with the organization's main site.



Image 1 of 2: The national Boys & Girls Clubs of America website had a distinct look and feel.





BE MVP.

Shaquille O'Neal · Member since 1982

Tuesday, March 17, 2009


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[About Us](#)
[News & Events](#)
[Support The Boys & Girls Club](#)
[Make On-line Donation!](#)
[Programs & Services](#)
[Membership](#)
[Alumni](#)
[Links](#)
[Calendar](#)
[Contact Us](#)



BE GREAT

BeGreatManchester.org

Congratulations, Brian...Citizen of the Year!



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF MANCHESTER**

Welcome!

The Manchester Boys Club was incorporated in 1907 and became the Boys & Girls Club of Manchester in 1983. From its meager beginnings as reading and recreation rooms, the Club has grown to include the main Clubhouse at 555 Union Street, our Administrative Offices at 44 Walnut Street, our Kids Club facility at 251 Merrimack Street, four school-based after school sites at Jewett Street and Highland Goffe's Falls Elementary Schools and the Middle School at Parkside and McLaughlin Middle School, as well as our Camp Foster summer day camp facility located in Bedford.

The tabs on the left will lead you to information about the organization. If there is anything you would like to know, but can't find there, please [let us know](#). Thank you for visiting with us!

Quick Links...


CAMP FOSTER INFORMATION NOW AVAILABLE

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© 2009 Boys & Girls Clubs of America (B&GCA). All rights reserved. See [B&GCA Legal Notice](#) and Site Owner [Terms of Use](#). Powered by [bacweb](#).

Image 2 of 2: The look and feel of the Manchester, New Hampshire Boys & Girls Clubs of America site was completely different than the national site.

Writing

Users commented on various aspects of the writing on non-profit and charity websites, from the clarity and precision of the writing to grammar and punctuation. Organizations should focus on the provided content and ensure it's clearly—and correctly—written. How your content is written is just as important as what your content says.

Users were annoyed by the vagueness of the Acumen Fund's *About Us* page, and they wanted to know what they actually did. The use of fluffy language and unclear terms made users doubt the organization's trustworthiness.

Using Patient Capital to Build Transformative Businesses

Acumen Fund is a non-profit global venture fund that uses entrepreneurial approaches to solve the problems of global poverty. We seek to prove that small amounts of philanthropic capital, combined with large doses of business acumen, can build thriving enterprises that serve vast numbers of the poor. Our investments focus on delivering affordable, critical goods and services – like health, water, housing and energy – through innovative, market-oriented approaches.

The use of vague phrases, such as “patient capital” made users doubt the credibility and trustworthiness of the Acumen Fund.

Amount of information

Users judged organizations based on the amount of information available on their sites. Those that provided ample information about their work and mission were trusted more than organizations that provided very few details.

For example, users commented that the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust was trustworthy because they provided lots of information on their site. One user said, “The depth of content makes me think they are trustworthy.”

Accreditations/awards

Some users based their assessment of an organization's trustworthiness on the accreditations and awards it had received. If non-profits and charities have received awards or recognition, they should be highlighted on the site.

For example, users commented on the banner of accreditations displayed on the bottom of the Global Links homepage. It featured various awards, endorsements, and recognition the organization had received, which impressed users.



The number of awards, endorsements, and recognitions made users think that Global Links was a trustworthy organization.

Contact information

Contact information that was readily accessible increased users' trustworthiness in an organization. Users wanted to know that the organization had a physical location, along with a phone number and an email address that they could use if they had to get in touch with someone.

HOMEPAGES LEFT MUCH TO BE DESIRED

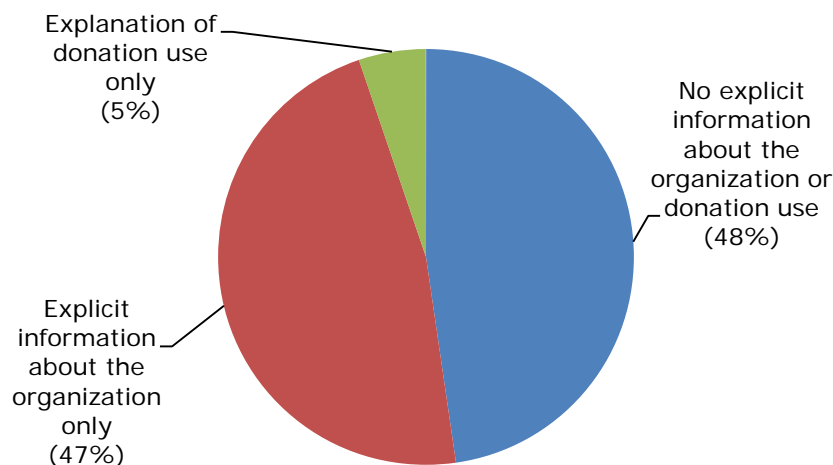
The homepage is a critical part of non-profit and charity websites, because it must provide essential details to potential donors. Based on our research, we've identified four elements that must be provided on every non-profit or charity homepage, including:

- Explicit information about the organization's work and mission
- Details about how donations are used
- A clear link to "donate"
- Applicable third-party endorsements (and ratings, if applicable)

Unfortunately, many of the homepages we tested didn't include these vital details.

For example, only 47% of the homepages we tested provided explicit information about the organization's work and mission, and only 5% provided information about how they used donations. Unfortunately, not one homepage provided both pieces of critical information.

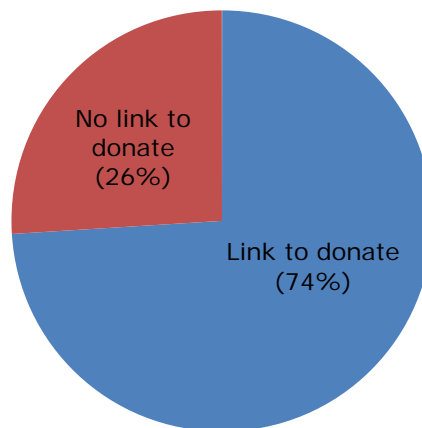
Percentage of homepages that answered users' top questions



Homepages in our study did a poor job of answering potential donor's top concerns: what does the organization do and how do they use donations?; 48% of homepages didn't answer either question, 47% of homepages provided explicit information about the organization only, and only 5% explained how donations were used. Not one homepage answered both questions.

In addition to being explicit about an organization's work and how donations are used, homepages should also present an easy-to-find link to donate. Unfortunately, over one-quarter of the homepages in our study didn't include this critical call-to-action.

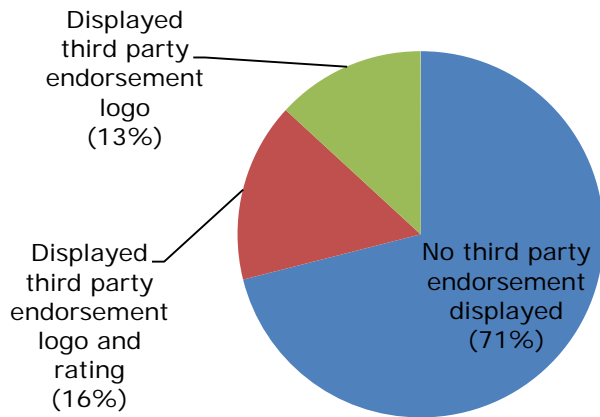
Availability of easy-to-find *donate* links on homepages



The chart above shows the percentage of homepages that contained an easy-to-find link to *donate* versus the percentage of homepages that didn't; 74% of the homepages in our studies provided a clear link to *donate* on the homepage and 26% did not.

Finally, non-profit and charity homepages should include information about any third-party endorsements, such as Charity Navigator or the American Institute of Philanthropy, and the actual ratings received. Of the 38 homepages we evaluated, five featured an endorsement logo from at least one watchdog organization, and six featured an endorsement logo and the received rating.

Prevalance of third-party endorsements on homepages



The chart above shows the percentages of homepages in the study with third-party endorsement information; 27 homepages (71%) didn't provide any third-party endorsement information, six homepages (16%) contained a third-party endorsement logo and received rating, and five homepages (13%) contained the third-party endorsement logo only.

The Usability of Additional Site Elements

In addition to the usability of organization-related content and the donation process, our second study included tasks that allowed us to research additional non-profit and charity site elements, including: information about volunteer opportunities and non-monetary donations, the e-commerce experience, and an organization's social network presence.

Volunteer opportunities

Users were able to locate information about volunteering at an organization very quickly; on average, this task took users 58 seconds to complete. In addition to being a quick task for users to complete, they rated their overall satisfaction level with completing the task, on average, as 6.7 out of 7 (with 7 being the most positive); this rating was the highest average satisfaction rating in the study.

In general, sites provided a clear category name or link to volunteer. Provided volunteer information usually included common volunteer activities, typical volunteer hours or shifts, and/or contact information. Additionally, some sites included an online form that potential volunteers could complete, which allowed users to quickly submit their information and move the application process along.

Although users were able to quickly locate information about volunteering at an organization, it was something they said they rarely did. Users in our study usually found out about volunteer opportunities through word of mouth; most didn't use the Web to locate this information.

Non-monetary donations

When users were asked to donate an item, such as clothing, used books, or food, they had a hard time finding information about donating the items on an organization's site. For this task, we didn't provide users with a specific organization or website. Instead, we asked them to use the Web to find a place to donate their non-monetary goods.

Nine out of nine users navigated to Google to locate an organization that would accept their donation. They typed in various search phrases, such as "nh animal shelters" or "clothing donation", depending on what they wanted to donate. Users clicked on search engine results quickly and if they didn't immediately find information on the site about how to donate the goods, they went back to their search results and clicked on another result that looked promising. They weren't loyal to any organizations or sites; they simply wanted to find an organization that would accept their donation.

After users completed the task (or gave up, as two out of nine users did), we asked them to rate their satisfaction level with the activity; they gave it an average score of 5.3 out of 7 (with 7 being the most positive). This rating was one of the lowest average satisfaction ratings in the study.

E-commerce experience

Users consistently commented on the similarities between making a purchase through non-profit or charity sites and making a purchase on traditional e-commerce sites, such as JCPenney.com or BestBuy.com. Because of their familiarity with making online purchases, users didn't struggle to complete purchases on non-profit or charity sites.

Thankfully, non-profit and charity organizations have many usable e-commerce sites to emulate, so they don't have any excuse to have a poor or unusable e-commerce experience.

Social network presence

Some users in our second study used Facebook to evaluate and donate to non-profits and charities. Users were directed to an organization's Facebook page to conduct research and, in one case, make a donation.

They weren't surprised that some non-profits or charities used Facebook, but they didn't expect the information to be more complete than what was on the organization's official site. In fact, one user said, after reviewing People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)'s page on Facebook, "there's probably ten times more stuff on the PETA site."

Since users expected simplified information on Facebook, it's important that non-profit and charities provide a clear and concise statement of what they do, as well as a link to the organization's full site. This will allow users to get a basic understanding of the organization's work and easily navigate to the official site if they want more information.

Instead of seeking information about the organization's mission and goals through Facebook, users were more interested in hearing from those who had benefited from the organization's work. They wanted social networks to provide the stories about real people who had been involved with the organization. For example, one user gravitated to stories about those who had been helped by Make-A-Wish Foundation, which were featured on the organization's Facebook page. Non-profit and charity organization should use social networks as a way to connect with users through real stories, conversations, and interactions.

In addition to providing details and stories about the organization's work, non-profit and charities should provide a way to donate (or initiate the donation process) through Facebook. Not one user in our study had used Facebook in the past to donate to an organization. However, one user completed a donation using Facebook during his session. He was shocked about how easy it was to do; the organization presented a streamlined form within Facebook. After completing the donation, he said he'd consider donating through Facebook again in the future. However, others adamantly stated that they'd never donate through Facebook, because they wouldn't think to do so or would prefer to use the organization's official site.

Design Guidelines

Homepage 45

1. Use the homepage to address the top two questions potential donors have: what does the organization do and how do they use donations? 45
2. Include a short, descriptive, and genuine tagline that reinforces the organization's mission. 52
3. Provide an easy-to-find link to donate. 53
4. Keep homepage content timely. 56
5. Promote any incentives associated with donating. 57
6. Highlight relevant organizational news or events and, if appropriate, cause-related news or events. 58
7. If rated highly by watchdog organizations, mention it and link to the organization's information on the watchdog site. 60
8. Feature information about volunteer opportunities and provide a link to more details. 61
9. Allow users to connect with chapter and affiliate websites from the homepage. 62

About the Organization 64

10. Be explicit about the organization's work on the *About Us* page. 64
11. Include a brief mission statement on the *About Us* page. Explain what the organization does, how it's done, and why. 67
12. Clearly explain programs and initiatives. 68
13. Consider using brief (no longer than two minutes), focused, and informative videos to communicate the organization's work and programs. If possible, include stories about how the organization positively impacted individuals or situations. 70
14. Explain the organization's position on controversial issues. 72
15. Provide information about the organization's location, along with contact information. 73
16. Clearly state the geographic locations impacted by the organization's work. 73
17. If necessary, explain work in various geographic locations. Some charities and non-profits work nationally or globally. If work varies across the country or globe, describe what is done in different areas. 75

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22.	Consider featuring stories about those who have made contributions to the organization.....	80
23.	If the charity is named after someone, provide easy access to information about that individual.	81
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- 41. Consider integrating the donation process from a chapter or affiliate site with the main site, and direct the donation to the appropriate chapter or affiliate organization by default..... 108

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- 47. Include details for those interested in making tax deductions..... 117
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- 49. Tell people exactly how donations are used, providing details about the percentage of donations that goes to programs and services versus administrative and overhead costs. 118
- 50. Make it easy for people to donate to the organization on every page of the site..... 120
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- 52. Avoid being too pushy when asking for donations. 123
- 53. Don't bombard users with donation requests via pop-ups. 123

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Homepage

1. Use the homepage to address the top two questions potential donors have: what does the organization do and how do they use donations?

Users in our study were interested in two things when they considered donating to a charity or non-profit: what did the organization do and how did they use donations? Unfortunately, many users struggled to find this information on the websites we tested, and very few found this information on an organization's homepage.

The Interfaith Alliance homepage didn't clearly communicate what the organization did and how they used donations. One user, while looking at the homepage, said, "I'd like to know a little bit about this site. Who's behind it? Where does the money go? I can't really tell from the homepage."



There was a lot of information on the Interfaith Alliance homepage, but key information—such as who they were and how they used donations—wasn't available.

Heifer International did a poor job communicating what they did on their homepage. There wasn't a clear description of the charity's objectives, recent work, or mission. Users had to dig deep into the site to get an understanding of what the charity did.



The Heifer International homepage didn't include details about what they did.

The Bread for the World homepage failed to communicate their mission and what they did. One user, while viewing the homepage, became frustrated because he couldn't quickly understand what the charity did. He said, "It just has some current events on it [the homepage] that don't seem related to figuring out what these guys do. I'm having a hard time figuring out what it is they are trying to do."

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A Christian Voice for Ending Hunger

GATHERING 2009 | Rejoice. Hope. Act.


Join us on June 14-16 in Washington, DC, for Bread for the World's Gathering 2009.

There will be worship, workshops, meals, music, visits to Congress, and of course, a celebration!

Our facilities can only accommodate 350 participants, so [register early](#). Plus you'll receive the early bird special!

INAUGURATION | 'Spirit of Service'


President Obama called for a new era of responsibility and a "recognition on the part of every American that we have duties to ourselves, our nation and the world.

"This is the price and the promise of citizenship. This is the source of our confidence—the knowledge that God calls on us to shape an uncertain destiny.

"To the people of poor nations, we pledge to work alongside you to make your farms flourish and let clean waters flow; to nourish starved bodies and feed hungry minds.

[Churches call on Obama to focus on the needs of the poor](#) »

BROADCAST | Notes from Nicaragua


Dámaris Albuquerque is the first woman to head **CEPAD**, a Nicaraguan non-profit organization, based in Managua. She discusses her organization's holistic approach to community development in the March edition of Broadcast.

ALSO...music from Radio CEPAD and the Nicaraguan musician, Carla.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...Last month, Broadcast featured an [extended interview with the Rev. Walter Fauntroy](#), icon of the Civil Rights Movement and pastor of New Bethel Baptist Church in Washington, DC.

HUNGER 2009 | Interactive Edition


Global Development: Charting a New Course.

The 2009 report analyzes the inefficiencies in the current structure of U.S. foreign assistance.

Our report maps out a series of reforms to elevate development as a foreign policy priority.

[Past reports and order information](#) »

2009 OFFERING OF LETTERS | Victory


Your Letters Make A Difference

Last week, we won an additional \$740 million in this year's budget that will put more kids in school, provide help for struggling farmers, and other development programs. Funding for development programs focused on poverty is now at \$16.2 billion in FY 2009 - up from \$6.7 billion in 2000.

This year's increase is a testament to the effectiveness of Bread for the World's Offering of Letters campaigns. Thank you for your letters, phone calls, and visits.

- [Read the press release](#) »

- [Read Rev. Beckmann's letter](#) »

LENT | Time for Prayer and Action

Lenten Prayers
Readings, prayers, and acts—prepared by Bread for the World

First Week in Lent (March 1)

Jesus is baptized and bleeds
Genesis 9:1-17 | 1 Peter 3:15-22
Psalm 22:1-28 | Mark 8:1-10
In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee.

We have a variety of free resources to help you during this season:

- [Bulletin inserts for Lent](#) (PDF);

- [Lenten Prayers for Hungry People](#) in the form of table tents; and

- [Bread for the Preacher](#), a monthly resource for pastors and church leaders.

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Bread In the News

- [Hunger Groups Push for Boost in U.S. Aid Budgets](#) — Reuters (February 24, 2009)
- [Aid Groups Plan Renewed Fight on Hunger](#) — Reuters (February 23, 2009)

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Hunger in the News

- [At the Heart of North Korea's Troubles, an Intractable Hunger Crisis](#) - Washington Post (March 6, 2009)
- [SOMALIA: Merka IDPs virtually out of food](#) - IRIN (March 6, 2009)

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SUPPORT U.S. END HUNGER.




The Bread for the World Institute didn't clearly state who they were and what they did on the homepage.

Some charity and non-profit sites clearly conveyed their goals and objectives on the homepage, which helped users quickly understand their work.

Users who visited the Paws with a Cause website could immediately tell what the organization did from the homepage, because details of their mission and vision were available. One user, after reading through *Our Mission* on the homepage, said, "It's not an overwhelming first page. No bright, flashy colors. But there it is, right at the top—*Our Mission*. The length or history is right on the homepage: 30 years. And you can see who they are affiliated with on the bottom [of the page]."

Menu | Reports | Register | Login | Privacy Policy - Tuesday, March 17, 2009

PAWS WITH A CAUSE

Donate Here

Shop @ PAWS

Theme Song

Request Information

Visitors: 2,218,418

Our Mission

Paws With A Cause® trains Assistance Dogs nationally for people with disabilities and provides lifetime team support which encourages independence. PAWS® promotes awareness through education.

Our Vision

To encourage independence for people with disabilities by sustaining and strengthening our position as the nation's leading provider of quality Assistance Dogs.

Announcements

Foster Puppy Orientation
Come learn about Foster Puppy Raising!

In The News

PAWS celebrates 30 years of service to people with disabilities!
<http://www.pawswithacause.org/events.asp>

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Logos: CPC, ICA, Charity Navigator, Vehicle Donation (Click Here or Call 1-866-332-1778)

Users were drawn to the Paws with a Cause homepage, because it clearly stated its mission and vision.


Another website that clearly stated its goals and objectives on the homepage was the Seacoast Family Food Pantry. Users who visited this site quickly understood the organization's purpose by reading the short mission statement on their homepage.




The Seacoast Family Food Pantry homepage included their mission statement and details about their programs.

It's extremely important to communicate the mission and objectives on the homepage. By not doing so, users are forced to search within the site to find the answer, and many users are too impatient or not motivated to do so.

Simply having a mission statement or information about the organization on the homepage wasn't enough. It needed to be clear, concise, and informative. For example, The Brain Aneurysm Foundation's homepage included a mission statement that clearly articulated the organization's purpose. One user read the statement and said, "A nice, simple explanation of what they are doing... right here." The mission statement was prioritized and placed above the fold, and users were able to locate the information quickly.



THE BRAIN ANEURYSM FOUNDATION



Cindy

Anna

Stella

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SEARCH

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A Brain Aneurysm Diagnosis

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Together

we teach

and learn

The Brain Aneurysm Foundation is the world's only nonprofit organization solely dedicated to providing critical awareness, education, support and research funding to reduce the incidence of brain aneurysm ruptures.


Announcements

Events

Gifts That Give Back

Gifts from our store and donations to The Brain Aneurysm Foundation are the perfect way to celebrate the season while helping to continue the fight against brain aneurysms.

Our new keychain in our [store](#)



Latest Newsletter Now Available Online

[2010FallNewsletter.pdf \(2.51 MB\)](#)

Support Our New Text to Give Program

TEXT YOUR \$10.00 DONATION TODAY

TEXT BRAIN TO 20222

[View all](#)

Taylor Mangham 1st Annual 5K Memorial Run/Walk for Brain Aneurysm Awareness, near Ft. Worth, TX

Sat, 01/22/2011

Time: 10:00 a.m.

[View full details](#)

The Wilson Walk: "A Benefit for Brain Aneurysm Awareness", Wilmington, DE

Sat, 04/02/2011

Time:

[View full details](#)

Join TeamCindy at Escape from Alcatraz Triathlon, Lake Placid Ironman, London Triathlon or Nation's Triathlon in 2011


Sun, 06/05/2011

Time:

[View full details](#)




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The Brain Aneurysm Foundation included a sentence at the top of their homepage that encapsulated the organization's work and purpose.

In contrast, the Global Links homepage included information about their efforts, but it was long-winded and vague. One user, while trying to understand what the organization did, navigated to a third party endorsement site, GreatNonprofits.org, to get additional details. After reading through the information provided on GreatNonprofits.org, he said, "The description on here is better than what is on their site. This [GreatNonprofits.org] seems to tell you more about what they are about. Their website is more a feel-good story versus what they actually do." Additionally, the information was placed underneath a large homepage image and below the fold, which made it difficult for users to quickly locate.

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Homepage

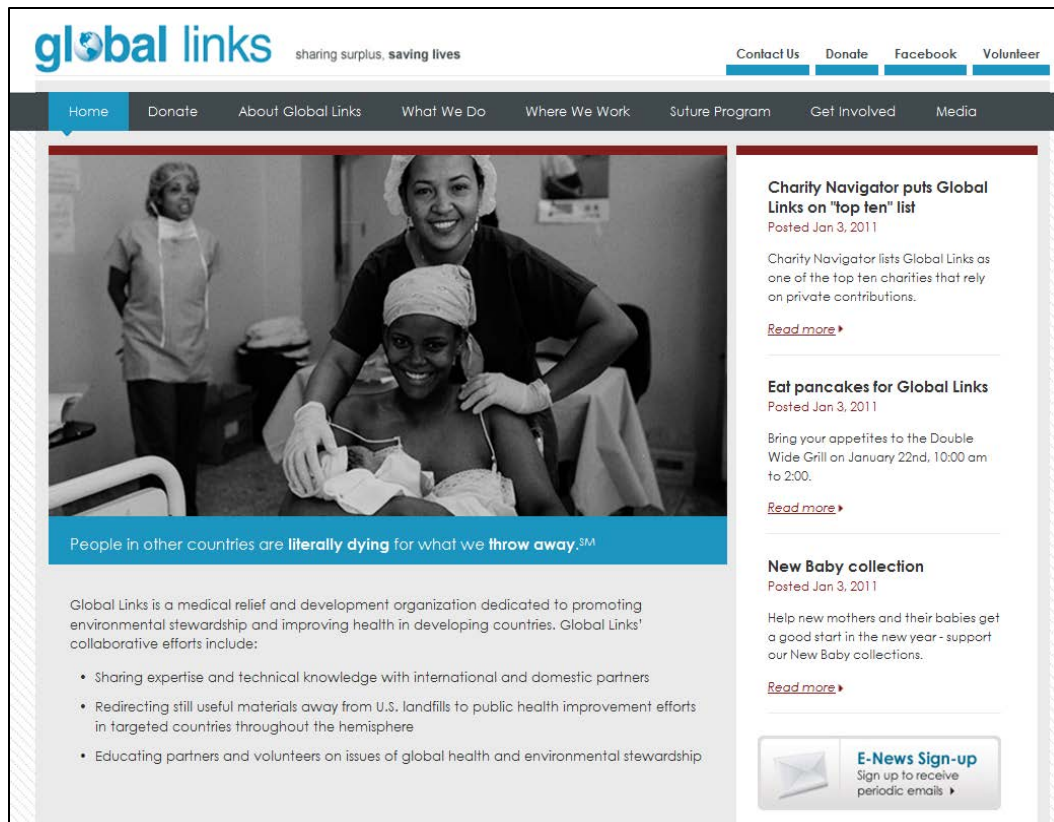


Image 1 of 2: The Global Links homepage included information about the organization, but it was vague and long-winded.

Description

Global Links is dedicated to improving healthcare and promoting health equity in developing countries through a pioneering approach to recovering surplus medical supplies and equipment for use by targeted public health systems. Global Links works to educate institutional partners and our volunteers about environmentally responsible healthcare and business practices, and is a local leader in redirecting still useful materials away from U.S. landfills to public health improvement efforts. We participate in the development and implementation of procedures that support our belief that the health of patients, medical personnel and the environment are all connected.

Key Facts

Target demographics:
We work with medically underserved communities in Latin America and the Caribbean. Also, we support U.S. healthcare facilities in their efforts to reduce the environmental impact of their operations.

Results to date:
Since its inception in 1989, Global Links has recovered over 3,500 tons of still-useful medical materials and has donated over \$168 million worth of goods to hospitals and clinics in 70 countries.

Direct beneficiaries per year:
Thousands of patients who have access to higher quality medical care as a result of the strategic

Image 2 of 2: One user found the Global Links description on GreatNonprofits.org more informative than the organization's official website.

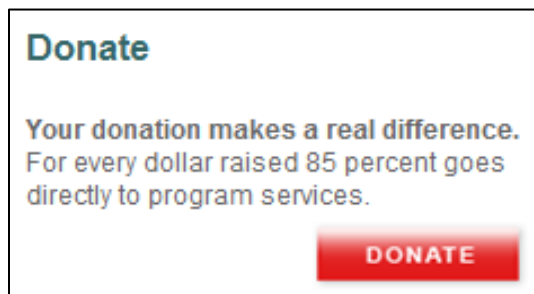
In addition to clearly stating the goals and mission on the homepage, it's also important to provide information about how donations are used to improve the organization's work or programs. Over half of the users in our studies (57%) were interested in how their money would help drive and execute an organization's visions before they felt comfortable making a donation.

The Action Against Hunger homepage included a pie chart with this information. One user was interested in how this charity used his donation. The user saw the chart and said, "They give 89 cents of every dollar to the program. I like when they are right up front about it."



The Action Against Hunger homepage explained that they spent 89% of their donations on their programs.

The Adoption Exchange provided information about how they used donations by stating on their homepage that "For every dollar raised 85 percent goes directly to program services." Although the information was provided, it was easy to miss because it was presented in small text and placed above the *Donate* button. It would have been better to emphasize this fact by presenting it on its own.



The Adoption Exchange provided information about how they used donations as text.

2. Include a short, descriptive, and genuine tagline that reinforces the organization's mission.

Some sites in our studies included a tagline to communicate the organization's mission and goals. The most effective taglines were those that were clear, concise, and meaningful. For example, the North Shore Animal League's tagline was "World's Largest No-Kill Animal Rescue and Adoption Organization." This tagline communicated the organization's main purposes, and it also provided information about the organization's credibility as the largest of its kind in the world.



The North Shore Animal League's website included a mission statement that described the organization's purpose and credibility in less than ten words.

In contrast, Sustainable Conservation provided a vague and meaningless tagline, "Because the environment is everyone's business." The tagline didn't provide any details about the organization's mission or purpose. Users assumed they worked towards improving the environment, but the organization's specific goals or work weren't part of the tagline.



Sustainable Conservation included a short tagline, but it was vague and didn't provide any specific information about the organization's mission.

Global Links also had a vague tagline, "Sharing surplus, saving lives." One user read the tagline and said, "I would say, surplus of what?" The tagline could have been much more descriptive by the addition of one word, medical, so it read as "Sharing medical surplus, saving lives."



Global Links' vague mission statement didn't clearly state the organization's purpose.

3. Provide an easy-to-find link to donate.

If users are interested in donating to an organization, they should be able to navigate to the donation process directly from the homepage. Although most users took some time to explore an organization's site—particularly the *About Us* section—before committing to a donation, it's important to provide this option on the homepage—especially for those who have already done their research or have made a donation in the past. Of the homepages we tested, 74% provided a link to donate directly on the homepage.

The link to donate on The Action Against Hunger site stood out, because it was a bright orange button and placed towards the top of the page. Unfortunately, if users were running at a low screen resolution, the button wasn't visible; users had to scroll horizontally to see it.



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Central to the targeting of malnutrition, Action Against Hunger extends water and sanitation improvements to communities with little or no access to proper sources.

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Food Security and Livelihoods Coordinator, Bukavu, D.R. Congo
Closes: Apr 1 '09

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Closes: Apr 1 '09

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Closes: Apr 1 '09

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News & Updates



Water in the Desert: ACF in the Central African Republic

Beneficiaries Story. March 10, 2009



U.N. says paralysed in Sudan without aid partners

Media Mention: Reuters. March 10, 2009



WFP seeks to overcome operating setback in Sudan

Media Mention: ReliefWeb. March 10, 2009



Aid groups on alert after NGO ouster from Darfur

Media Mention: IRIN Africa. March 10, 2009



When Drilling Makes All the Difference: Boreholes Provide Clean Water in Uganda

Beneficiaries Story. March 9, 2009



Too Much, Too Little: Water As a Seasonal Problem

Feature Story. March 9, 2009



Sudan's Move on Aid Groups Censured

Media Mention: New York Times. March 6, 2009



We are humanitarians, not activists, says aid NGO

Media Mention: France 24. March 6, 2009



A Nazi Zelig: Jonathan Littell's The Kindly Ones

Media Mention: The Nation. March 5, 2009



SUDAN: Aid agencies react to expulsions

Media Mention: IRIN Africa. March 5, 2009



Race Against Hunger

Join the thousands of middle and high school students who are coming together to fight global hunger. Enroll your school in the Race Against Hunger today! [Read More](#)



Campaign to End Malnutrition

5 million children die every year from acute malnutrition but we now have the tools to eradicate this disease. Join the Campaign to End Malnutrition! [Read More](#)

An organization you can trust



89% Field Programs

10.3% Management and Program Support

0.7% Fundraising

89 cents of every dollar donated goes directly to our field programs.

[Download our most recent Annual Report](#)




Action Against Hunger is rated as an A+ and four-star charity organization by numerous independent agencies.

[Learn more about our top ratings!](#)



Action Against Hunger / Action Contre la Faim (ACF) is an international network committed to saving the lives of malnourished children and families while ensuring access to safe water and sustainable solutions to hunger.





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The Action Against Hunger homepage had a bold, bright *Donate Now* button, which was immediately noticed by users.

The Defenders of Wildlife homepage provided a link to donate on the homepage, but it was associated with an image of a coyote and was easily overlooked. In addition, the link to donate in the main menu was hidden in the *Take Action* category, so it was challenging for users to quickly find a way to donate to the organization directly from the homepage.

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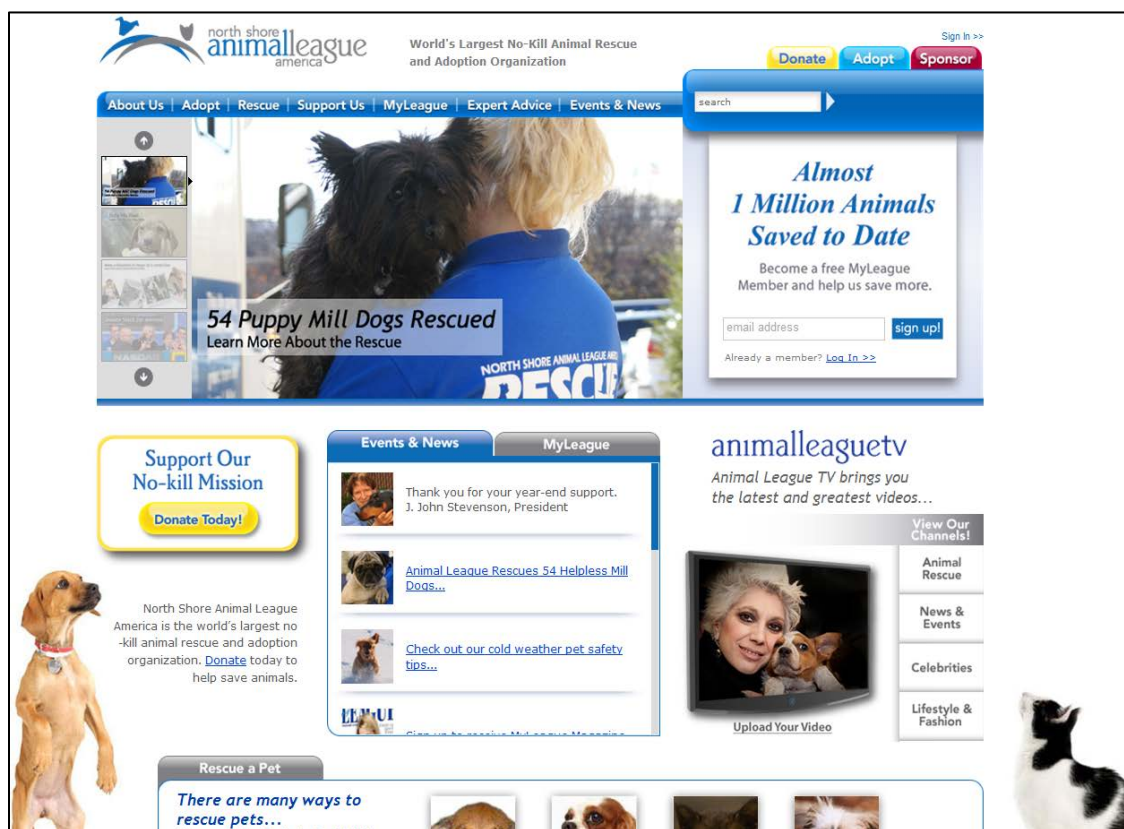
Homepage

It is important to remember that “easy-to-find” doesn’t equate to “big and colorful.” In fact, users often overlook page elements that appear overly promotional or that employ overly fancy formatting because they have been trained to associate such design techniques with advertising. Selective attention is well-documented in psychology as a human defense mechanism against information overload, and this particular form of selective attention is called banner blindness. Banner blindness is very strong on the Web because of the excessive amount of advertising found on many sites. Even though many non-profit sites may eschew commercial elements, banner blindness acts *before* users have had the opportunity to read or analyze those page elements that they unconsciously ignore.

The screenshot shows the Defenders of Wildlife homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: About Us, Newsroom, Support Us, Programs & Policy, Wildlife & Habitat, Take Action, Resources. Below this is a large banner for "Shocking News!" featuring a wolf and the headline "Northern Rockies wolves delisted again!". A "DONATENOW" button is visible. To the right, there's a "Defenders News" section with links to recent press releases. Below the main banner, there's a "Renew Now & Get a Bonus Gift" section with a backpack image and a "RENEWNOW" button. Further down, there's an "Advancing Conservation" section with a report on the Obama administration, a "Featured Report" on cutting emissions, a "Defenders Magazine" section with a tiger article, a "Creature Feature" on a jaguar, a "Defenders in Your World" section with a dropdown menu, an "Eye On Palin" section with a wolf image, a "Wildlife Adoption Center", an "About Defenders" section, a "Wildlife eNews" section with a signup form, and a "Defenders Marketplace" section.

The link to donate to the charity from the homepage was overlooked by some users, because it blended in with the image of the wolf.

A link to donate to the North Shore Animal League was placed prominently on the site's homepage and was paired with a short statement that summarized their differentiating work: "Support our No-kill Mission." The button used for the *Donate* call to action was yellow, which made it stand out from the other elements on the homepage. Additionally, a yellow *Donate* tab was placed in the navigation, which created visual consistency.



The *Donate* button on the North Shore Animal League's homepage stood out from other homepage elements.

4. Keep homepage content timely.

When users visited a charity or non-profit website, they were often drawn to content that was related to the season or a current event. Highlighting timely events, holidays, and occasions will keep the homepage fresh and make users confident that the organization is aware of current issues.⁴

Additionally, a current event might already be driving traffic to a site, so fresh content will appeal to those users who have come to the site based on a prompt, reminder, or event. For example, a disaster might prompt users to donate to the American Red Cross or UNICEF and Breast Cancer Awareness Month may trigger users to donate to the American Cancer Society.

⁴ See also our design gallery with more tips on recognizing holidays and special occasions on websites. <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/holidays>

The Child Advocates homepage featured a call to action to sponsor a child for the holidays. This promotion was featured on the site during the winter holiday season in the United States, which is a popular time to donate.



The Child Advocates homepage included a link to sponsor an abused child during the holiday season.

An Alzheimer's Association homepage promotion focused on organization-related news: National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month. Throughout the month of November, the homepage featured a reminder and a call to action to make a donation or create a tribute in honor of a caregiver.



The Alzheimer's Association homepage reminded visitors that November was National Alzheimer's Awareness Month.

5. Promote any incentives associated with donating.

Users were interested in anything additional they'd receive from an organization if they provided a monetary or non-monetary donation. If an organization provides any incentives—such as a free item, voucher, or a matching donation—this should be promoted on the homepage.

Kars4Kids.org promoted a free vacation voucher for those who donated a car to the organization. The promotion and a link to additional details were displayed on the homepage.



Kars4Kids.org promoted a free vacation voucher on their homepage for those who donated a car.

If an organization matches donations, this should be emphasized on the homepage, because it can convince donors that their contribution will go even further. The Habitat for Humanity homepage promoted end-of-year donations. The homepage emphasized the U.S. year-end tax deadline, December 31, and promised to match donations up to \$100,000.

Donate today to double your gift

<p>31</p> <p>Tax Deadline 11:59 PM EST</p>	<p>Donate by midnight December 31, and your gift will be matched dollar-for-dollar.</p>
---	---

DONATE TODAY ▶

[Last chance to have your 2009 tax-deductible donation matched!](#)
 Donate by 11:59 p.m. EST on December 31, and your gift will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to a total of \$100,000—thanks to a generous friend of Habitat. Don't wait until it's too late! [Donate today.](#)

The Habitat for Humanity homepage provided a tax deadline reminder for those who wanted to donate before the year's end.

6. Highlight relevant organizational news or events and, if appropriate, cause-related news or events.

Users were interested in charity news and upcoming events, so dedicating a portion of the homepage to this information will allow users to quickly access the desired content. In our studies, 74% of the homepages we tested featured news and/or events on the homepage, and several users navigated to more information by clicking on the featured story or event links.

Although most of the sites we tested provided links to news and events from the homepage, the types of news and events varied. Some sites featured cause-related news and events, while others featured news and press releases about their own organization. Both types of news and events were acceptable to users, as long as there was a strong correlation between the information in the news article or event description and the organization.

The Wildlife Alliance listed news and events on their homepage, which were related to their initiatives. Although the section was titled *News & Events*, only news items were featured.

News & Events

- ➔ **Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Center gives baby elephant new lease on life**

In March 2007, a team of Wildlife Alliance rangers heard reports of a baby elephant wandering through the forest. ...It is thought that the elephant had his leg caught in a snare trap designed for a creature of lesser stature....
- ➔ **Thailand Calls for Wildlife Trade Enforcement**

Thailand is training more than 200 Bangkok airport personnel to assist in the recovery of wildlife trafficked through the international gateway.
- ➔ **Laos Emerges as Key Source in Asia's Illicit Wildlife Trade**

Long an isolated land with abundant forests and biodiversity, Laos is rapidly developing as China and other Asian nations exploit its resources.

The Wildlife Alliance homepage featured news articles related to their mission and objectives.

The Habitat for Humanity homepage provided links to recent news that related to their work, which some users found interesting. However, these “news” articles actually linked to press releases published by the company, so a stronger differentiation between news and press releases would have been helpful.

From the News Desk


- [Habitat for Humanity celebrates 20 years of spring break youth volunteerism](#)
- [Lowe's renews commitment to Habitat with pledge of \\$20 million](#)
- [Habitat for Humanity kicks off 'Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project' 2009 in Asia](#)
- [More News...](#)

The Habitat for Humanity featured a list of recent press releases (labeled as *News* items) on their homepage.

Users appreciated when some types of organizations, such as organizations focused on diseases and disorders, informed them about cause-related developments and research. For example, the Nancy Davis Foundation for Multiple Sclerosis homepage provided links to recent news and developments about the disease, which was highly relevant content for site visitors. The homepage also featured upcoming events that may have interested site visitors and those involved with the charity.

EVENT UPDATES - [VIEW ALL](#)

The Eagles have been confirmed to play this year's event!




POSTED: JAN 12, 2009
The Eagles have been confirmed to play this year's event! More information coming soon.

LATEST MS NEWS - [VIEW ALL](#)


BioMS Medical's Phase III U.S. Multiple Sclerosis Trial Receives Positive...




POSTED: OCT 03, 2008
... Safety Review from Data Safety Monitoring Board Edmonton, Alberta, October 3, 2008 – BioMS Medical Corp. (TSX: ...




CENTER WITHOUT WALLS
Doctors working together toward a mutual goal.



MS ROUNDTABLE
An open forum discussion with leading scientists



POSTED: FEB 14, 2008
MS slowed in test with cancer drug



POSTED: JAN 19, 2007
BioMS Medical Cleared By FDA To Initiate Pivotal ...

The Nancy Davis Foundation for Multiple Sclerosis featured links to the latest news and developments about multiple sclerosis, along with recent updates about upcoming events.

For additional guidelines related to new and events, see the section on News and Events, beginning on page 92.

7. If rated highly by watchdog organizations, mention it and link to the organization's information on the watchdog site.

Users wanted to be sure they were donating to a worthy cause. Some organizations, such as Charity Navigator, Independent Charities of America, and the American Institute of Philanthropy, evaluated and provided ratings of non-profit and charity organizations. If a charity has received a high rating from any of these organizations, it should be clearly visible on the homepage.

Users tried to locate third-party endorsements while they were researching various organizations, particularly for organizations they weren't familiar with. One user was trying to determine if the Specialist School and Academies Trust was a trustworthy organization. While browsing their site, he said, "I was looking to see if there were any referrals. BBB [Better Business Bureau] stuff. Sometimes I've seen that on other websites just to authenticate what people are looking at."

Another user, while reviewing The Conservation Fund's homepage, noticed the high ratings given to them by Charity Navigator and the American Institute of Philanthropy, and said, "They are tracked by two watchdog organizations, so they must be efficient with their objectives."



The Conservation Fund mentioned their endorsements and ratings from Charity Navigator (four stars) and the American Institute of Philanthropy (A+ rating) on their homepage. However, the site only included a link to the full review on Charity Navigator, not the American Institute of Philosophy.

The Big Brothers Big Sisters homepage included three watchdog endorsement logos: one from Charity Navigator, one from the Better Business Bureau (BBB), and another from Independent Charities of America. Of the three, the Charity Navigator and Independent Charities of America logos contained the actual rating.



Big Brothers Big Sisters displayed three logos from watchdog organizations on their homepage.

In addition to featuring the endorsements and ratings, non-profit and charity sites should provide links to the full review on the watchdog sites. Some users in our study were interested in finding out more about an organization from an unbiased third party, especially those organizations that they weren't familiar with.

One user, while reviewing the Acumen Fund's site, noticed the Charity Navigator endorsement on their *About Us* page. She clicked on the endorsement graphic and was brought to the full review on Charity Navigator's site. She skimmed the review and noticed that they received a rating of four out of four stars, which convinced her that they were a trustworthy organization.

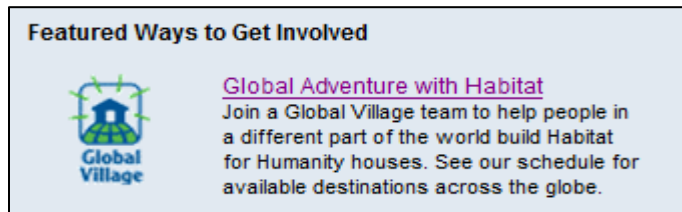
Even users who do not click through will often feel that a third-party rating or endorsement is more credible if it's "proven" by a link to supporting information on the third party's own site.

8. Feature information about volunteer opportunities and provide a link to more details.

Users who visit non-profit or charity websites may be interested in spending their time helping the organization on a regular basis or at a special event, particularly if they feel a strong connection with the organization.

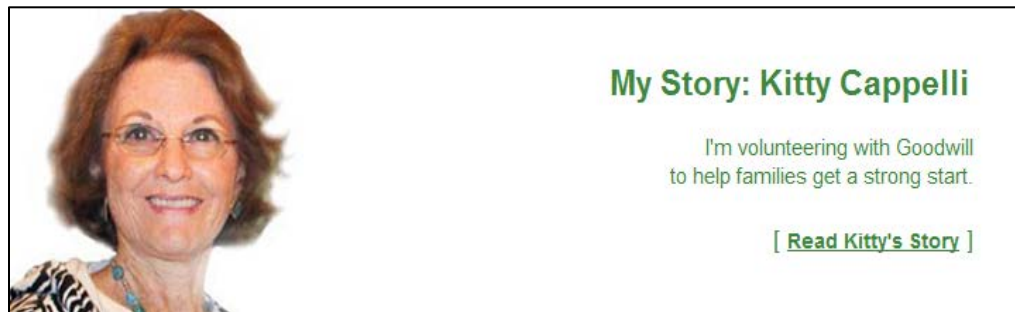
Volunteering opportunities should be featured on the homepage so interested users can be routed to the appropriate area of the site. Instead of simply including a link or category labeled *Volunteer*, feature information about volunteer opportunities with a link to more details.

The Habitat for Humanity homepage featured a brief description about a “global adventure” with the organization, along with a link to view more details and a schedule of upcoming volunteer opportunities.



The Habitat for Humanity’s homepage included information about upcoming volunteering opportunities and a link to more information.

The Goodwill homepage featured a woman who was volunteering at the organization. From the homepage, users could navigate to additional details about her involvement with the organization, along with a link to search for local volunteer opportunities.



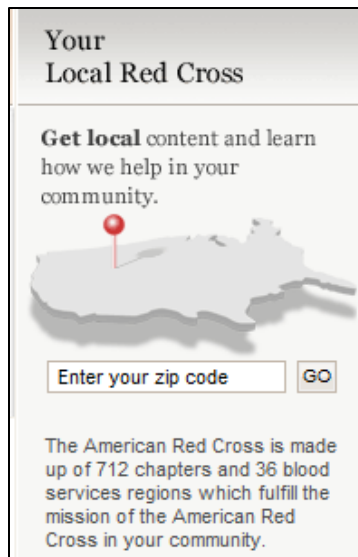
The Goodwill homepage featured one of their volunteers, which linked to her full story and information for those interested in volunteering.

For more information and guidelines about attracting volunteers, see the Attracting Volunteers section, beginning on page 130.

9. Allow users to connect with chapter and affiliate websites from the homepage.

Users in our study were consistently interested in learning if and how an organization was involved in their local community. Many people used the main website as a launching point to get to their local chapter’s website.

The American Red Cross provided users with a way to search for their local chapter right on the homepage. Users appreciated this, because they could get quickly get to their local organization’s website. One user said, “The national site will direct you to the local chapter, which is geared towards what’s going on locally.”



The national American Red Cross site provided a way for users to search for a local chapter from the homepage, and the tool was also available from any page within the site.

The Boys & Girls club offered a link to *Find a Club* in their main navigation, which one user found helpful. She said, "I like the *Find a Club Near You*, because if you are looking for one, it's nice to have the option right here."⁵



Users could search for a local Boys & Girls Club by clicking on the *Find a Club Near You* link on the homepage. The *Find a Club* menu item in the main navigation was also available throughout the site.

For additional guidelines related to chapter and affiliate sites, see the section on Chapters and Affiliates, beginning on page 97.

⁵ For additional information and guidelines about improving the usability of store finders and locators, please see our separate report on this topic.
<http://www.nngroup.com/reports/locators>

About the Organization

10. Be explicit about the organization's work on the *About Us* page.

Users wanted to know details about an organization and what they did before they felt comfortable making a donation. In our study, this was the number one piece of information that users wanted to know about a charity or non-profit. Unfortunately, users had difficulty finding this information. All users reviewed the homepage and navigated to the *About Us* area of non-profit and charity websites in search of this information. Some sites vaguely alluded to these details, which frustrated users who were interested in learning more about the charities in question.

Users who visited the Environmental Defense Fund site failed to fully understand what the organization did. Each user spent at least 10 minutes on the site and eventually moved on, because the site didn't explicitly state the organization's mission, goals, and programs.

A photograph of three men in business suits standing on a city street. The man on the left is wearing a dark suit and tie. The man in the middle is wearing a dark suit and tie. The man on the right is wearing a dark suit and a light-colored tie. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera.

An Uncommon Approach: Four Core Strategies

Founded in 1967 as the Environmental Defense Fund, we tackle the most serious environmental problems with:

- [Strong science](#)
- [Innovative markets](#)
- [Corporate partnerships](#)
- [Effective laws and policy](#)

See our [history of results](#).

Left: Board chairman Nick Nicholas, president Fred Krupp and executive director David Yarnold

The main focus of the *About Us* page on the Environmental Defense Fund website was an image of three executives and links to broad terms such as *Strong Science* and *Innovative Markets*.

Another user was researching the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and was impressed by the brevity and concision of the *Who We Are* page. She said, "It's really short and sweet. There's not a lot. You can find what you want without needing to read through lots and lots."

who we are



In every community, boys and girls are left to find their own recreation and companionship in the streets. An increasing number of children are at home with no adult care or supervision. Young people need to know that someone cares about them.

Boys & Girls Clubs offer that and more. Club programs and services promote and enhance the development of boys and girls by instilling a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging and influence.

Boys & Girls Clubs are a safe place to learn and grow – all while having fun. They are truly The Positive Place For Kids.

The *Who We Are* page on the Boys & Girls Clubs of America was short and to the point.

The same user later researched Big Brothers Big Sisters and struggled to understand what they did based on their *About Us* section. She said, “I want to know their mission and specifically what they do. They have what they say they do, but what *exactly* is it that they do?”

[Home](#) > [About Us](#) > [Who We Are](#)

Who We Are

For over a century, Big Brothers and Big Sisters have helped children reach their potential through professionally supported one-to-one relationships with proven results.

In 1904, a young New York City court clerk named Ernest Coulter was seeing more and more boys come through his courtroom. He recognized that caring adults could help many of these kids stay out of trouble, and he set out to find volunteers. That marked the beginning of the Big Brothers movement. By 1916, Big Brothers had spread to 96 cities across the country.

At around the same time, the members of a group called Ladies of Charity were befriending girls who had come through the New York Children's Court. That group would later become Catholic Big Sisters.

Both groups continued to work independently until 1977, when Big Brothers of America and Big Sisters International joined forces and became Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

More than a century later, Big Brothers Big Sisters remains true to our founders' vision of bringing caring mentors into the lives of children. Big Brothers Big Sisters currently operates in all 50 states ... and in 12 countries around the world!

The *Who We Are* page provided history information, but doesn't explicitly state what Big Brothers Big Sisters does.

Another user was reviewing the *Our aim and objectives* page on the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust website and became annoyed because they used vague terms to describe their work. She said, “Some of it starts to be like business-speak. ‘To build and embed’ ... that doesn't really mean much to me.”

Our aim and objectives

Our aim

We aim to give practical support to transforming education by building and enabling a world-class network of innovative, high-performing schools in partnership with business and the wider community.



Our objectives

We have six objectives that set out our ambition.

1. To develop the specialist schools and academies system.
2. To develop specialisms and curriculum.
3. To build and embed capacity in schools to raise achievement.
4. To develop specialist school and academy partnerships with business and the community.
5. To develop leadership and foster innovation.
6. To develop our organisation to achieve results.

The page describing Specialist Schools and Academies Trust used vague terms that one user couldn't identify with.

Some sites provided information about the charity's goals, objectives, and programs, but users had to dig to locate it.

One user had trouble understanding what the "I Have A Dream" Foundation did, even after exploring their site for almost five minutes. She couldn't find information about the ages and grade levels of the children the charity helped. Eventually, she came across a chart on the *Our Program* page, which provided this information to her in a clear and easy-to-understand manner. After viewing the chart, she said, "So it looks like they help mostly middle and high school students. This is really interesting."

Ethnicities	
African American	50.3%
Hispanic	34.3%
Caucasian	11.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.9%
Native American	0.5%
Other	0.7%
Grades	
Elementary	18.2%
Middle	30.3%
Middle/High	7.6%
High	33.3%
Year 1 College	7.6%

The *Dreamer Snapshot* chart helped one user quickly understand the grades the program targeted, but it was buried.

11. Include a brief mission statement on the *About Us* page. Explain what the organization does, how it's done, and why.

Users in our study wanted to read a clear and distinct mission statement about the organization. They weren't interested in reading paragraphs and pages of information to get the gist of an organization's purpose.

The Mission America Coalition communicated their mission with a succinct sentence on the homepage, and one user commented, "The statement 'the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole nation' is short and to the point, so I don't have to read pages of something to get the idea of what they are really about. It puts it in a nutshell what they're about."

Another user said, "They are definitely an evangelical organization, but it doesn't sound like they try to force you to choose one thing or another."

"The whole Church taking the whole Gospel to the whole Nation - and to the World."

This mission statement on the Mission America Coalition website clearly communicated the organization's objective.

The mission statement on the "I Have A Dream" Foundation website wasn't clear enough for one user, who struggled to understand what grade level the charity targeted. This information was available on the *Our Program* page, which she eventually found, but she expected to find this information in the mission statement. After she read the mission statement, she said, "I haven't figured out if this program focuses on elementary school or exactly what group, so I'm going to keep reading."

OUR MISSION

The "I Have A Dream" Foundation empowers children in low-income communities to achieve higher education and fulfill their leadership potential by providing them with guaranteed tuition support and equipping them with the skills, knowledge, and habits they need to gain entry to higher education and succeed in college and beyond.

By helping our Dreamers gain access to college, we are putting our Dreamers on a different academic and life trajectory, while having a broader impact on the students' families and the generations that follow.

The mission statement on the "I Have A Dream" foundation didn't state what grade level or age brackets they work with.

The Accelerated Cure Project for Multiple Sclerosis defined each piece of the mission statement on their *Philosophy* page. Users quickly skimmed this page and got a good feel for what the organization did based on their philosophy description. Hyperlinked words in the description allowed users to get more information.

Accelerated Cure Project Philosophy

Our mission is to cure Multiple Sclerosis

We will not be content with simply finding ways to slow the disease or treat symptoms. Curing means preventing the disability caused by MS, permanently stopping the progress of MS, and repairing the damage already caused in patients with MS.

As quickly as possible

Speed and effectiveness of finding a cure are much more important than other outcomes such as growth, wealth creation, and publicity (for the organization or any individuals involved with it).

By concentrating on finding the causes of MS

The logical route to a cure will come from determining the causes of MS.

By tapping the knowledge and good ideas of leading experts working as a team

Working together will produce the best ideas and lead to increased opportunities for leveraging our efforts. We look for people who are not only able to contribute their own ideas, but also enjoy learning from colleagues and building on their contributions. We will share this knowledge with individuals with MS and their families, clinicians, researchers, and other MS organizations to build an informed MS community.

And also by improving the way research is orchestrated, conducted, and funded

We have the exciting opportunity to not only cure MS but also achieve a breakthrough in the way medical research is carried out. We will consciously evaluate the existing methods and norms of medical research, adopting those that are effective in helping us reach our goal and creating better alternatives for those that are not.

The format of the *Philosophy* page on the Accelerated Cure Project for Multiple Sclerosis site was easy to scan, and provided clear information about what they did and how they did it.

12. Clearly explain programs and initiatives.

Users who researched non-profits and charities became quickly frustrated when organizations didn't clearly explain what they were working on. Some sites were clear and others were vague. Users appreciated when sites precisely explained the projects, programs, and initiatives they were currently working on.

For example, one user was interested in volunteering at The Friends Program, so she navigated to their *Programs* page to learn more about what they did. The *Programs* page included a list of five initiatives, along with links to view additional details about each. Although the programs were explained in simple terms, the use of acronyms (RSVP and FGP) wasn't necessary. To their credit, they defined the acronyms before they were used. The user appreciated the simple breakdown of their work, and she decided to fill out the volunteer application.

Programs



The Friends Program strives to find ways to assist the wide range of people in our communities that are in need. Families without a home of their own; older adults who need transportation assistance and companionship; children who need positive role models, guidance and

direction; seniors who need income to make ends meet. We do this through five separate programs, each made possible by a small army of wonderfully committed volunteers, a talented staff, and the strong support of many thoughtful and generous people, organizations, and government entities throughout New Hampshire:

- Emergency Housing (1980) - provides homeless shelter in NH for families with 36 beds.
- Foster Grandparent Program-FGP (1986) - pays a federal stipend to income-eligible older adults to volunteer with children in local schools, childcare centers and other youth-service settings.
- Junior Senior Friends Youth Mentoring (1975) - provides volunteers to mentor children ages 6-18.
- Retired Senior Volunteer Program-RSVP (2006) – mobilizes volunteers 55 and over who want to provide community service.
- RSVP-Interfaith Caregivers (1999) – mobilizes volunteers from faith communities to provide non-medical supportive services to older adults and people living with disabilities.



The Friends Program website included a breakdown of their five programs, along with a link to view additional details about each.

Other organizations weren't explicit about their programs and initiatives, which aggravated users who were trying to understand what they did. For example, the Acumen Fund used vague language, such as "patient capital," and didn't provide any specific information about their programs or initiatives on the site. Instead, they talked about an "entrepreneurial approach" to their work, which turned off one user.

Using Patient Capital to Build Transformative Businesses

Acumen Fund is a non-profit global venture fund that uses entrepreneurial approaches to solve the problems of global poverty. We seek to prove that small amounts of philanthropic capital, combined with large doses of business acumen, can build thriving enterprises that serve vast numbers of the poor. Our investments focus on delivering affordable, critical goods and services – like health, water, housing and energy – through innovative, market-oriented approaches.

Users couldn't understand the programs or initiatives Acumen Fund was involved with.

13. **Consider using brief (no longer than two minutes), focused, and informative videos to communicate the organization’s work and programs. If possible, include stories about how the organization positively impacted individuals or situations.**

Some sites we tested used videos to communicate their mission and beliefs, which were helpful to some users. Users didn’t look for videos, but if they came across them while browsing, most watched them. The most effective videos were those that included stories about how the organization had positively impacted individuals or situations. Other impactful videos were those that featured well-known or recognizable individuals, as well as videos that included footage of the actual people or families that had benefited from the organization’s work.

Two users played a video featured on the homepage of the Children’s Scholarship Fund, which covered the charity’s objectives and featured some high profile endorsements. After watching the video, one user said, “You don’t have to go searching for anything. It tells me why I should donate to them. It’s just a short video, and they have answered most of my questions without having to read anything on their website. And then on top of that, they have well-known people on there: Barbara Bush, Colin Powell, Oprah, Rudy Giuliani... I mean, names you know and trust, and you don’t think it’s a fake organization. The video speaks words.”

Another user, after watching the same video, said, “There were a lot of recognizable people in the video, which I would think helps people know that there is a lot of backing to this project—that’s it’s going to be legitimate. You had some big names talking—political, entertainment...”



This video, featured on the homepage of the Children’s Scholarship Fund, gave users a good understanding of the charity’s goals, objectives, and programs.

For more information and examples about featuring high profile individuals on an organization’s website, see Guideline 27 on page 88.

Other videos were used to communicate how various charity programs worked, which also tested well with users. One user watched two videos on the National Education for Assistive Dog Services (NEADS) site to get a better understanding of how their services were run. After watching a video on the *Canines for Combat Veterans* page, he said, "I like how they have a lot of information in the video about: the training process, how they match dogs to individuals, the types of breeds they use, and the role of the animal itself."

The video featured a soldier who had benefited from the charity's work, and it told the story of his injuries, recovery, and use of an assistive dog. In our study, we found that stories of how individuals or situations had benefited from a charity were very powerful. For additional information and examples, see page 77.



The video on the *Canines for Combat Veterans* page on the National Education for Assistive Dog Services covered the basics about how assistive dogs were trained and used, which helped one user get a better grasp of this charity's role.

Other sites included videos that didn't have a clear objective, which confused users.

The Defenders of Wildlife website launched a video on the homepage with a story about Chhouk, an elephant missing a foot, as he walked through the jungle. Two people were immediately drawn to the video, and said, "There's a video here showing an elephant walking through the jungle. It looks like they are doing a live TV show." Another user said, "I'm immediately drawn to this video... Oh, this elephant doesn't have a foot."

Although the video grabbed the users' attention, it was too long and irrelevant, and both users failed to understand the significance of the video or what was trying to be communicated. The video played for several minutes, and a clear point or objective was missing. Also, it launched when the homepage loaded, and there were no video controls, so users had to navigate away from the homepage when they were no longer interested in the video.




This video launched automatically when users navigated to the Wildlife Alliance site, and no video controls were provided. The point of the video was unclear to users.

14. Explain the organization's position on controversial issues.

Some subjects that charities support are controversial, such as environmental issues, religious views, and medical research and treatments. If a charity encompasses a controversial issue, the organization's position should be clearly explained. As one user said, "I don't want to donate to something that has views that are contradictory of my own."

One user, while viewing cap and trade information on the Environmental Defense Fund website was frustrated, because he didn't understand where the organization stood on the issue. He said, "OK, so they are focused on cap and trade. It's extremely controversial and complicated. They are just sort of explaining stuff, but I don't know what their position is. The tone of everything I'm seeing here would lead me to believe that they are supporting it, but I'm not sure."

[Our Work](#) » [Global Warming](#) » [National Policy](#)



What Is Cap and Trade?

It's the policy that stopped acid rain. Our goal is to apply the same principles to stop climate change:

1. **Cap:** Limit carbon emissions
2. **Trade:** Get environmental results at lowest cost

[How it works](#) | [The acid rain story](#)

Video: 'Cursing Cap' won EDF's video contest to portray cap and trade.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

[How Can a Carbon Cap Revitalize the Economy?](#)

The scale of our new energy economy will dwarf the Internet boom.

BROAD SUPPORT

[Who Supports Cap and Trade?](#)

A range of political, business and environmental leaders express their support.

One user had trouble understanding the Environmental Defense Fund's stance on cap and trade.

15. Provide information about the organization's location, along with contact information.

Users were curious about where an organization was based, and they often had more trust in organizations that were upfront about their location. Users wanted to ensure that any contributions were going to a reputable organization with a physical location. Non-profit and charity sites should state where the organization is located and provide basic contact information, including a physical address, a phone number, and an email address.

16. Clearly state the geographic locations impacted by the organization's work.

Users were not only interested in an organization's mission and programs, but they also wanted to know where the work was done. Many were interested in local and national programs and were less interested in international initiatives.

One user, while viewing the *Places We Protect* page on The Conservation Fund site, became frustrated when he couldn't find the specific areas where they worked. He said, "It says 'from Alaska to the Adirondacks.' That's just a generic explanation."

From sea to shining sea, America's land legacy represents the natural, cultural and historic landscapes that shape us as a people and define us as a nation. They are the face of our country. From wilderness in Alaska to working forests in the Adirondacks to parks and community green space everywhere, these special places embody America's heritage, spirit and character.

The generic language used on The Conservation Fund website wasn't helpful when users were trying to understand where the charity worked.

Another user was researching the New Hampshire Food Bank and was trying to understand what geographic areas the organization served. He navigated to the *Registered Agencies* page, which had a lot of text and large images of food. He skimmed the page but couldn't gather where the food was distributed. He said, "There's a lot of food here, but I'm not sure where it goes."

Reducing Poverty through our Registered Agencies

The New Hampshire Food Bank is the only nonprofit food distribution center in the state. Committed to providing nutritious food for anyone in need, everyday we solicit, obtain and distribute donated and purchased foods to our 386* registered agencies who in turn provide this food to 71,417 hungry people in New Hampshire. Our registered agencies consist of soup kitchens, food pantries, homeless shelters, and elderly and children's programs throughout the state. They serve as the front line in the fight against hunger and provide a wide range of services, but a common goal exists between them all: to provide wholesome, nutritious meals to those in need.

Food received into the warehouse is weighed, examined closely for any contamination, and put onto our warehouse shelves for our agencies to bring back for their clients. Much of this food is distributed to our registered agencies at no cost. These items include produce, dairy, bottled water, most other drinks, breads and pastries. Because these items are perishable, it is critical that they reach those in need in a timely manner. These items represent important portions of a nutritious, balanced diet, and as such we want to encourage our agencies to provide these items frequently to their clients.



When an agency becomes registered with us, they agree to pay a *Shared Maintenance Fee* of eighteen cents per pound or less, in many situations. This fee helps us to recover transportation costs for donated goods. Some of these transportation costs include operating our own fleet of trucks and the transportation of national donations received through our affiliate, Feeding America. Our warehouse trucks deliver to agencies too far away to travel to the Food Bank, to senior centers, the inner city, and low-income sites on the east and west side of Manchester.



From this page, users couldn't understand what the New Hampshire Food Bank did with all the food they collected.

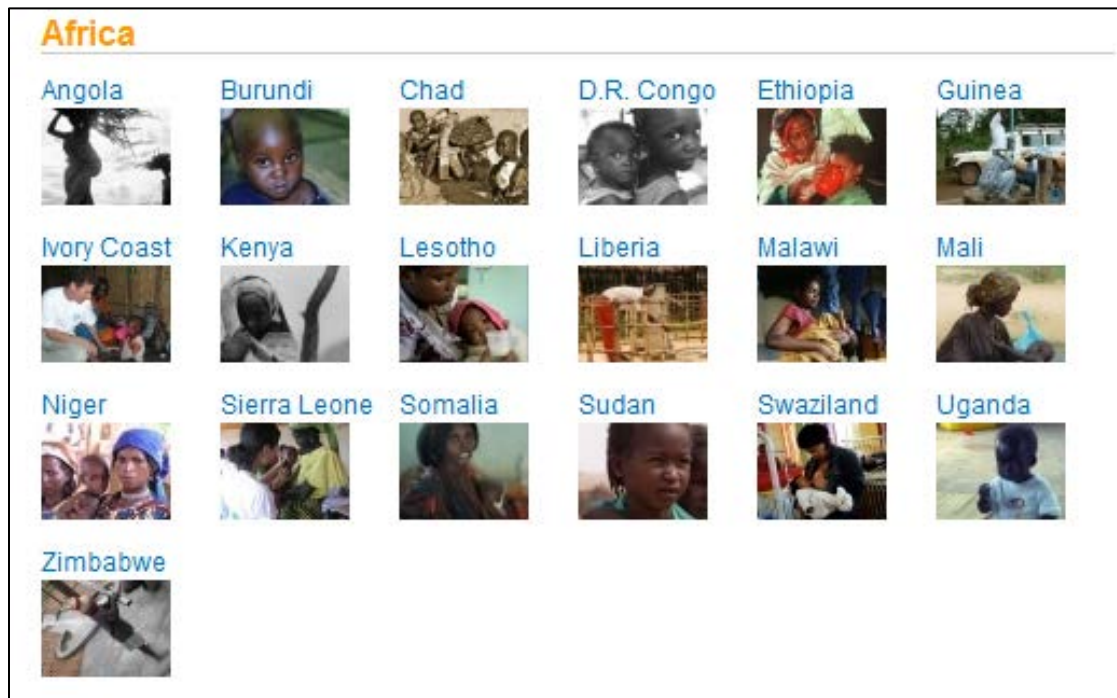
Another local organization, The Friends Program, explicitly stated the New Hampshire counties they served on their *About Us* page, which helped users immediately understand where they worked.



The *About Us* page listed the nine New Hampshire counties they served.

- 17. If necessary, explain work in various geographic locations. Some charities and non-profits work nationally or globally. If work varies across the country or globe, describe what is done in different areas.**

The Action Against Hunger site broke their work down by geographic areas, and provided detailed information about the work in each area. One user, while viewing what the charity did, arrived on this area of the site and said, "It's helpful that they break down the areas by geographical location and what they do."



The Action Against Hunger website broke their work down by geographical areas.

18. If an interactive map is used to illustrate work in various areas, accompany it with static links.

Some sites included interactive maps as a way for users to explore work being done in various areas; users could click on or place their mouse on different parts of the map to see additional information about what was being done in the area. If an interactive map is offered, be sure to accompany it with static links for those who don't want to use the interactive features as well as for those who can't access them. (For example, those not using a mouse, those accessing the site from a small-screen device, or those using an assistive device, such as a screen reader or screen magnifier.) Using maps also requires that users are familiar with geography and know the location of states, countries, or even counties. Don't assume users know what they're looking for on a map.

The Conservation Fund used a map of the United States to explain and illustrate their programs in various areas across the country. Users could use their mouse to hover over an area, such as the *West*, and a small pop-up would appear with a brief summary of the work being done in that area, along with a link for additional details. Although this interactive map contained helpful information about their programs, it would have been best to accompany it with static links to meet the needs of all users.

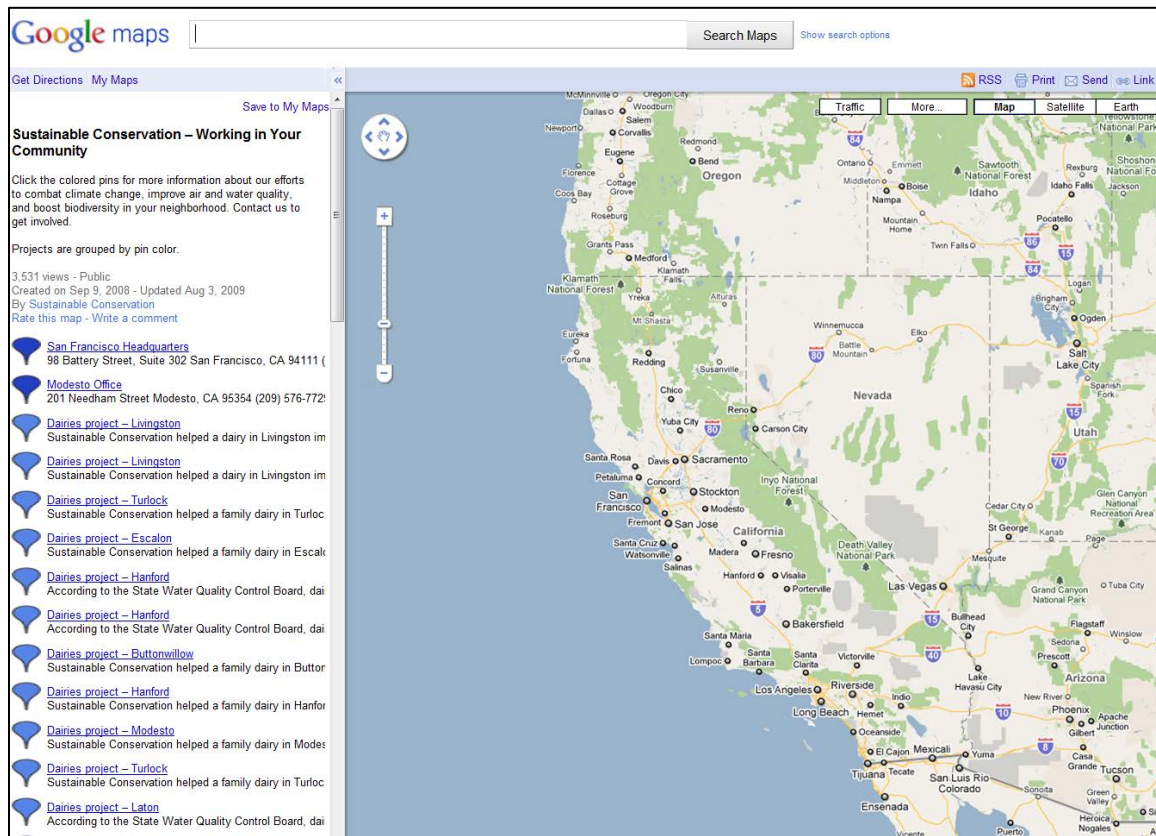


An interactive map on The Conservation Fund's site allowed users to hover over various areas of the United States to learn about specific initiatives in different regions. The site should also have provided static links to meet the needs of all users, however.

19. Avoid routing users to third-party map applications to show where work is done.

Users weren't interested in being routed to a third-party map application to understand where an organization had impact.

One user, while navigating the Sustainable Conservation site, was brought to Google Maps when she clicked the *Where We Work* category in the site's main navigation. She had trouble interacting with the map, quickly closed it, and said: "Maps and I don't get along."



Users were brought to Google maps when they clicked on the *Where We Work* category within the Sustainable Conservation main navigation.

20. Use real examples of people that have been helped and situations that have been improved.

Most users in our study gravitated towards stories of real people or situations that had benefited from the charity or non-profit they were researching. If an organization has case studies or testimonials, they should be used as a vehicle to communicate objectives and programs.

One user, while reviewing the information about the UNH Foundation on the University of New Hampshire's website, was drawn to the stories about donors and individuals that had benefited from the giving of others. In particular, she was drawn to a story about a current student who wouldn't have had the financial support to

attend the university without a scholarship. She said, "I like the stories about the people and the donors. It feels more genuine."

True North

Johnny Rancourt '13 is fourth-generation born and raised in Lancaster, a New Hampshire town 25 miles north of Franconia Notch. He shrugs off any mention of being too far away from anything and maintains he can drive "only" three hours to spend a day at the beach. Just starting his second year at UNH, he can't wait to graduate, work in finance or marketing near Boston, and save enough money to be able to move back to Lancaster, a place where three generations of his family have lived on the same street. His grandfather, John Nadeau '52, operated a dairy farm there, and his sister, Amanda '09, teaches at the Lancaster elementary school.

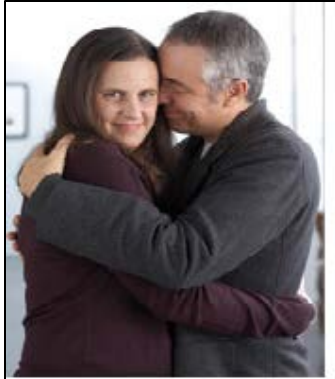
Rancourt is a recipient of the Arnold P. and Della A. Hanson Endowed Scholarship, which provides students from Coos County with significant scholarship support to UNH. Only a year ago he was wondering not only where he would go to college, but how he and his parents would pay for it. His parents had already helped two older siblings through college. "And then my mother called me at work one day and told me UNH had offered me a Hanson scholarship. I couldn't believe it," he says. "I just had no idea something like this could happen to me."

Three weeks before the move to Durham ("That trip to Durham was the first time I



A story about a scholarship recipient at the University of New Hampshire encouraged one user to donate to the scholarship fund.

Another user, while viewing the Accelerated Cure Project for Multiple Sclerosis website, came across an image of a couple, which was accompanied by a brief story about how the charity helped them. She said, "There's a photo of a couple here on the page, and it has her name and a little bit of her story. I like that. It makes it seem more personalized."



"I am so grateful for the Accelerated Cure Project. These folks are doing work that I can't do. My support of their mission gives me the hope I need to face the unknown. My goal is to continue to be active and available to my family, my friends and my community. I believe Accelerated Cure Project shares my goal."

*— Sara Whitford with
her husband David*

The brief story of how the Accelerated Cure for Multiple Sclerosis charity helped this couple resonated with one user.

21. If testimonials or personal stories are featured, be sure to provide enough detail so users know how the organization helped—or plans to help—the individual.

Although users gravitated towards stories about an organization's work, they wanted enough details to understand the impact. Sites should include enough details so users can gather a good sense of the organization's contribution.

One user, while viewing the testimonials on the Big Brothers Big Sisters site, got annoyed because he didn't think there was enough detail. He said, "I need to know how these people made a difference and what they did. They didn't provide me with any detail. They talk about the success in mentoring, but don't seem to tell me what exactly the person did to help."

Paul and Victor Join the Club



"I know that I am a better person and father for having had him in my life and for that I am truly grateful," says Big Brother, advocate, donor and agency Board Member Paul.

[more...](#)

Lori finds an Angel



Not only does Big Sister Lori provide such amazing support to her Little Sister Angel ... she wants to do more and inspire everyone to become involved. As she says, "Big Brothers Big Sisters has allowed me and those around me to witness what volunteering can do for everyone."

[more...](#)

Big Brother John and Little Brother Travion



Big Brother John has motivated his Little Brother Travion to rise above and make a positive impact on the lives of others. John's life has been enriched by the experience as well, saying "I never fully understood how beneficial it was to the person being philanthropic."

[more...](#)

One user was annoyed with the *Real Life Stories* page on the Big Brothers Big Sisters website, because he didn't think they had enough detail about how the mentors helped the children.

22. Consider featuring stories about those who have made contributions to the organization.

Not only were users interested in stories about how organizations helped individuals and situations, they also gravitated to stories about those who had contributed to an organization.

For example, one user was drawn to a story about a woman who made a donation to the UNH Foundation at the University of New Hampshire. This gave her a sense of other individuals who also supported the university, as well as their reasons for giving.

A Gift from the Heart

It isn't often that UNH Athletics receives a five-figure gift from an annual fund mail appeal—in fact, it's never happened before. So when a large gift arrived in December from alumna **Jayne "Kerry" Eastman Chandler '84**, it caught the attention of Athletics Director Marty Scarano, who called Chandler personally to thank her. Chandler, who lives in New Jersey with her husband and two children, said the reason for her gift was simply that her family was in a position to do something for a place she loved.



A woman who donated to the University of New Hampshire was featured on their site. This gave users a sense of who donated and why they did so.

23. If the charity is named after someone, provide easy access to information about that individual.

One of the charities we tested was named after an individual, Nancy Davis. The users who visited this site immediately wanted to know who Nancy Davis was and why the charity was named after her. This wasn't evident from the homepage, and one user said, "I've never heard of this, so I'm interested in finding out who Nancy Davis is and what the purpose of the organization is."

Another user, after reading the paragraph about their mission on the *About Us* page, said, "I don't even know who Nancy Davis is. I'm looking for somewhere where it shows a bio of Nancy Davis. Not knowing who she is doesn't hold that much significance to me. If it's named after someone, I want to know why."

About

Our Mission

The Nancy Davis Foundation for Multiple Sclerosis is dedicated to the treatment and ultimate cure of MS. Funding research is the core focus of the Foundation and significant strides have been made to find the cause and the cure of this devastating disease. All funds raised through our Race to Erase MS event support The Nancy Davis Center Without Walls program, a selected network of the nation's top seven MS research centers. This nationwide collaboration of physicians, scientists and clinicians is on the cutting-edge of innovative research programs and therapeutic approaches to eradicate MS. It is the hope of the Foundation that in addition to combating MS through research in a clinical environment, an increased awareness will be created by educating the public about this mystifying disease.

One user was frustrated that the Nancy Davis Foundation for Multiple Sclerosis' mission on the *About* page didn't explain who Nancy Davis was and why the charity was named after her.

Another organization, Team Hoyt, was named after a father and son who worked together to help “physically disabled individuals become active members of the community.” Information about the two men, along with the evolution of the organization, was available on the *About Team Hoyt* page. One user became wrapped up in the story and said, “This is just amazing.”



The *About Team Hoyt* page on the Team Hoyt website included details about the individuals the organization was named after.

24. Offer a full annual report. Consider offering other financial documents, such as audited financial statements, an IRS determination letter, and tax forms.

Some users in our study were interested in viewing annual reports, because they were curious about how organizations used their money. Additionally, some users wanted to see annual reports to determine an organization's credibility. If an annual report wasn't available or was difficult to locate, some users immediately dismissed an organization. Having this type of official document openly available was a great credibility booster, even to users who didn't read through it in its entirety.

One user opened the annual report on the Big Brothers Big Sisters site and quickly scrolled through the document. He said, “I like to see the different places where the money they take in gets spent and what exactly it gets spent on.”

Users made various comments about the availability of annual reports and other financial documents. For example, before making a purchase from the New Hampshire Historical Society, one user noticed that the site included audited financial

statements. He said, "I'm trying to evaluate the organization. Audited financial documents are always good. Auditors have to sign off on them."

Another user commented on the financial information on the Lymphoma Research Foundation website. Although she didn't view each document, the availability of them convinced her that the organization was trustworthy. She said, "All the tax returns, the audited financial statements, the annual reports. This is very good. This is an organization that has nothing to hide."

Annual Reports and Financial Information

The Lymphoma Research Foundation (LRF) is committed to eradicating lymphoma and serving those touched by this disease. The support and dedication of our supporters is instrumental to our vital mission. LRF is funded by individuals, private foundations, public companies and organizations committed to the Foundation's mission. To date, the Foundation has funded more than \$40 million in lymphoma-specific research.

LRF recognizes the importance of sharing our financial information with the network of volunteers, donors and partners who make our work possible. As a recipient of the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance designation and the Independent Charities Seal of Excellence, you can be confident that your donation is making a difference in the fight against lymphoma.

For complete financial information, please view our annual reports and financial statements below.

Annual Reports

[2010 Annual Report: Your Support Makes a Difference](#) **NEW**

[2009 Annual Report: Making a Difference Together](#)

[2007 Annual Report: Building On Our Strengths](#)

[2006 Annual Report: Making a Difference](#)

[2005 Annual Report: Serving Those Touched By Lymphoma...One Day at a Time](#)

[2004 Annual Report: Hope](#)

[2003 Annual Report](#)

Financial Statements

[2009 Audited Financial Statements](#)

IRS 990 Forms

[990 Tax Form 2009](#)

[990 Tax Form 2008](#) *

[990 Tax Form 2007](#)

* Please note that the Lymphoma Research Foundation changed its fiscal year (FY) from one that is calendar-based to one that starts on July 1 and ends on June 30. Due to this change, the 2008 Form 990 covers the six month period of January 1, 2008 to June 30, 2008.

The availability of financial documents on the Lymphoma Research Foundation's site convinced one user that they were a credible organization.

The same user noticed the 501(c)(3) IRS determination letter on The Brain Aneurysm Foundation website. She was impressed by the availability of this document, and said, "You know what makes me think this organization is trustworthy? The IRS determination letter. That's very good. It tells me that it's a non-profit." ⁶

⁶ For additional information and guidelines about presenting annual reports and financial data on websites, see our report on *Investor Relations*.

<http://www.nngroup.com/reports/ir>

Leadership, Sponsors, and Endorsements

25. Provide information about the organization's leaders. Include the person's name, title, responsibilities, and an image.

In our study, users were interested in the people who led or were involved with the organization, and many navigated to this information looking for people they might recognize.

One user, while reviewing the *Governance* page on the American Red Cross website, thought the information about and images of those holding the leadership positions at the organization were helpful. He said, "It shows the individual, not just a name and a bio. At least you are putting a face to a name."

Leadership

The Chairman of the Board and the President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) are significant leaders of the American Red Cross. The Chairman leads the Board of Governors in the governance and oversight of the organization. The President and CEO executes Red Cross strategies and leads the operations and business activities of the Red Cross.

[Bonnie McElveen-Hunter](#) was appointed as Chairman of the American Red Cross on June 17, 2004. Ms. McElveen-Hunter is the former U.S. Ambassador to Finland (2001 – 2003) and the CEO and owner of Pace Communications, Inc., the largest private custom publishing company in the United States.

- [Board Chairman Position Description](#) [PDF]



[Gail J. McGovern](#) was named President and CEO of the American Red Cross on April 8, 2008. Gail, who held top management positions at AT&T Corporation and Fidelity Investments, has experience running large organizations in competitive industries, and a track record for improving business performance and service delivery to the public.

- [President and CEO Position Description](#) [PDF]
- [President and CEO Evaluation](#) [PDF]



The American Red Cross website provided ample information about their leaders.

One user questioned the importance of the list of the national board of advisors on the Children's Scholarship Fund website, because there was no explanation about what the people did. She said, "All these people in charge ... not very useful. President of Intellectual Ventures? What does that mean? Are these the people who decide who gets the scholarships?"

national board of advisors

John T. Walton	CSF Co-Founder, In Memoriam 1946-2005
Theodore J. Forstmann	CSF Chairman and Co-Founder
The Honorable John B. Breaux	Former United States Senator
Eli Broad	Chairman, SunAmerica Inc.
James E. Burke	Chairman, Partnership for a Drug-Free America
Barbara Bush	Honorary Board Member
Joseph A. Califano, Jr.	Chairman, The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University
Raymond G. Chambers	
Henry G. Cisneros	President & CEO, American City Vista
Lester Crown	Chairman, Material Service Corporation
The Honorable Thomas A. Daschle	Former United States Senator
Dick DeVos	Former President, Alticor Inc.
Stanley F. Druckenmiller	
William H. Dunn, Sr.	Chairman Emeritus, J.E. Dunn Construction Company
Ronald E. Eibensteiner	President, Wyncrest Capital
The Honorable Reverend Floyd H. Flake, D. Min.	Pastor & CEO, Allen AME Church, United States Congressman (Retired)
Peter M. Flanigan	Advisor, UBS Warburg LLC
Stephen Fraidin	Partner, Kirkland & Ellis
Tom Freston	Chairman & CEO, MTV Networks
Stedman Graham	Chairman & CEO, S. Graham & Associates
The Honorable Luis V. Gutierrez	United States Representative
Dorothy I. Height	Chair & President Emeritus, National Council of Negro Women
Allan B. Hubbard	President, E & A Industries, Inc.
Robert L. Johnson	Chairman & CEO, BET Holdings Inc.
James V. Kimsey	Founding CEO & Chairman Emeritus, America Online
Martin Luther King III	President, Southern Christian Leadership Conference
The Honorable Henry A. Kissinger	Chairman, Kissinger Associates, Inc.
The Honorable Trent Lott	United States Senator
Peter S. Lynch	Vice Chairman, Fidelity Management and Research Company
Raymond A. Mason	Chairman & CEO, Legg Mason, Inc.
Mike McCurry	Partner, Public Strategies Washington, Inc. and Chairman, Grassroots Enterprise, Inc.
Nathan P. Myhrvold, Ph.D.	President, Intellectual Ventures

Users weren't sure what the people listed on the *National Board of Advisors* page did for the Children's Scholarship Fund.

Users had little patience for organizations that didn't explicitly state who lead the organization. Vague references to individuals made users think that the organization had something to hide. (This is also why photos of the leadership are important—it doesn't matter so much how they look, but it does matter that they are willing to show their face.)

Two users, while reviewing the Acumen Fund website, read a sentence that alluded to "three individual philanthropists" who founded the organization in 2001. They

were annoyed by the elusiveness of the site. One user said, “Three individuals... OK, who? If they’re not comfortable sharing their names, I’m not interested? Another said, “‘Three individual philanthropists’ is vague.”

History

Acumen Fund was incorporated on April 1, 2001, with seed capital from the Rockefeller Foundation, Cisco Systems Foundation and three individual philanthropists. Since then our network of investors and advisors has grown to include a wide range of individuals and organizations who share our belief in using entrepreneurial approaches to solve the problems of global poverty.

The Acumen Fund alluded to “three individual philanthropists” who incorporated the organization in 2001, but users thought it was too vague.

26. Avoid excessively touting leaders.

Users were turned off by organizations that bragged about or provided too much information about their leaders. Many felt that the site should be focused on the goals and mission of the organization, not on the top-level management and leaders.

One user, while viewing the Boys & Girls Club of America website, was turned off by the long descriptions on the *Executive Bios* page. He said, “No matter how great the person’s resume is, that one person isn’t the organization—it’s a bunch of people working together to accomplish a goal. It’s more about the people underneath the executives, rather than the executives, most of the time.”

Executive bios

Roxanne Spillett

President & CEO, Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Roxanne Spillett leads one of the most successful nonprofit organizations in the nation. Each year, Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) serves some 4.8 million girls and boys through membership and community outreach. There are more than 4,200 Club affiliates in the United States, and on U.S. military bases in Europe and Asia, with a combined staff of 50,000 full- and part-time employees and annual revenues of \$1.5 billion.

Spillett has led BGCA through a period of major expansion, implementing a growth strategy that doubled the size and scope of the Boys & Girls Club Movement and tripled its revenues during the last eight years. More recently, the organization unveiled a dynamic new brand strategy, featuring national spokesperson Denzel Washington, that is heightening the public profile of Boys & Girls Clubs.

Spillett also spearheaded the drive to increase services for children in nontraditional environments, including public housing and Native American lands. One of her most noteworthy achievements is initiation of a unique partnership with the Department of Defense, which has chartered Boys & Girls Clubs on more than 470 U.S. military bases worldwide.

Under Spillett's leadership, BGCA has created generation-changing initiatives in education, technology and diversity. The organization has also significantly enhanced efforts to help Clubs increase their capacities in technology, human resources, and board and resource development. Her proudest accomplishments include uniting Clubs behind a common agenda and raising hundreds of millions of dollars to support the Boys & Girls Club Movement.

Spillett has also built one of the most prestigious and engaged nonprofit boards in America, establishing an enviable governing body that includes leaders and key executives of 15 Fortune 500 companies.

Her 1996 appointment to the presidency of BGCA marked a major milestone in a career spanning more than 25 years in Boys & Girls Club work. Spillett joined BGCA in 1978 as director of the National Health Project. Within a year, she was promoted to director of Program Services, responsible for the development and implementation of many national programs and partnerships.

In 1991, Spillett became BGCA's assistant national director, and led the development of the Commitment to Quality process to ensure the effectiveness of program and service delivery in Clubs nationwide. Spillett also served as vice president of BGCA's Northeast regional office. In that role, she managed all programs and services throughout the 11-state area, raised funds and built a Northeast trustee board.

In recognition of her numerous achievements, Spillett was selected as one of the "Power 50" by The Non-Profit Times for three consecutive years. She also received the Excellence in National Executive Leadership Award presented by the National Human Services Assembly, an association of leading nonprofits in the fields of health, human and community development, and human services. In July 2006, Newsweek cited Spillett and BGCA as one of "15 People Who Make America Great," part of the magazine's annual Giving Back Awards.

President George W. Bush appointed Spillett to the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation, which promotes volunteerism, community service and good citizenship. She is past chairperson for Leadership 10, an alliance of executives from the nation's most influential nonprofits, and serves on the boards of the National Human Services Assembly and BoardSource.

In addition, Spillett teaches MBA candidates at the University of Notre Dame, focusing on governance. She also serves on the board of the Goizueta School of Business at Emory University in Atlanta.

Spillett earned her bachelor's degree in education from the State University of New York, and did graduate work in guidance and counseling at St. Lawrence University. She also studied public health administration at Hunter College in New York.

In recent years, Spillett has received a number of honorary doctorate degrees: one in law, from the University of Notre Dame; and three in the humanities, from Trinity College in Hartford, Bryant University in Rhode Island and Maran College in Indianapolis.

In 2008, Spillett led the launch of Impact 2012, a five-year strategic plan that positions BGCA more powerfully than ever as an advocacy organization of national scope and influence. The plan commits BGCA to ensure lasting impact in the lives of youth; increase high school graduation rates; build stronger revenues for Clubs; reach beyond Club walls to support families and encourage civic involvement; and build public trust.

Robert J. Bach

Chairman, BGCA National Board of Governors

A longtime supporter of Clubs, Robbie Bach, president of the Entertainment & Devices Division for Microsoft Corporation, serves as the chairman of Boys & Girls Clubs of America's National Board of Governors.

Bach brings a wealth of corporate expertise to this position. As president of the Entertainment & Devices Division, Bach manages five main businesses: the Interactive Entertainment Business, home to the Xbox and Games for Windows gaming platforms; the Mobile Communications Business, which develops and markets Windows Mobile software, services and applications; the Music Business, developers of the Zune portable entertainment devices and services; the Connected TV Business, which includes Microsoft Mediaroom and Windows Media Center; and the Specialized Devices and Applications Business, which includes PC hardware, Microsoft Surface, Mac Office, Microsoft Auto, and Windows Embedded software.

Since joining Microsoft in 1988, Bach has worked on a variety of Microsoft products in a career marked by increasingly senior management positions. His experience includes working in Europe as the manager of Business Operations from 1990-1992. He also led the marketing effort for Microsoft Office from 1992-1997. Before the formation of the E&D Division in 2005, Bach managed the global launches of Xbox and Xbox 360 in his dual role as chief Xbox officer and head of the Home and Entertainment group - a global division then responsible for Xbox, Windows games, the Microsoft TV platform, and consumer hardware and software products.

Before joining Microsoft, Bach worked as a financial analyst at Morgan Stanley & Co. He earned his bachelor's degree in economics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and his MBA from Stanford University.

Bach has tremendous experience in the nonprofit world as well. He recently chaired the BGCA Board of Governors Marketing Committee, heading vital efforts to raise public awareness about our work. Under his leadership, BGCA created a pro bono partnership with McCann Worldgroup, an international advertising firm which has launched a brand campaign to create awareness of our Clubs and our services. Also, Bach has been a driving force for the organization's efforts to bring technology skills to every Club member, while making online safety a top priority.

Previously, Bach served with distinction as a board member for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Bellevue, Wash., including a tenure as board chairman. This experience provided Bach a grassroots understanding of Clubs and their generation-changing impact, along with a high level of enthusiasm and insight in his national role. His interest in young people, however, starts at home, where he and his wife are the very active and involved parents of three children.


The long, drawn-out description of the leaders on Boys & Girls Club of America site was off-putting to users.

27. If recognizable individuals endorse an organization or have worked with the organization in the past, provide information about it.

When users evaluated the credibility of an organization, they were often drawn to people who endorsed or had worked with the charity in the past. Some sites mentioned this information, which caught the attention of users.

One user, while exploring the Boys & Girls Club of America, noticed that well-known individuals had gone through the program. He said, "Bill Cosby, Michael Jordan, Martin Sheen, Neil Diamond ... it's a good list. While I don't know any of them personally, they seem like outstanding individuals. It's a pretty impressive list, which leads me to believe that this is a good organization that does good things for people. They are people who—as an outsider—I respect."

alumni pride



Alumni – True Measure of Success

Bill Cosby... Michael Jordan... Brad Pitt... President Clinton... Jackie Joyner-Kersey... Martin Sheen... Neil Diamond... Denzel Washington.

What do all of these people, and millions more throughout America, have in common? They are all alumni of Boys & Girls Clubs.

While many Club alumni have achieved particular distinction in fields such as entertainment, business, politics and sports, the average alumnus is not famous. Most have achieved success by getting an education, raising a family, serving their country, pursuing a career or supporting the community.

Millions have benefited from belonging to a Boys & Girls Club since the first Club opened its doors in 1860. Based on research by Louis Harris & Associates, Club alumni have very strong feelings about their individual Club experiences:

- 80% said Club staff helped them learn right from wrong
- 95% indicated the Club was the best thing available in their community
- 52% said participating in the Club "saved my life"

Visit [your local Boys & Girls Club](#) and see why we're "The Positive Place For Kids."

The *Alumni Pride* page listed famous individuals that had been through the program, which impressed users.

Another user, while browsing the Habitat for Humanity site, navigated to the *Jimmy Carter and Habitat for Humanity* page, and skimmed some of the content. He was able to gather information about the various places the organization worked from the description, and said, "I'm just reading through his connection to Habitat. And this

gives me a brief history of what he's done. It shows a lot of places around the world that they've helped out with."

Jimmy Carter and Habitat for Humanity

As president of the United States, Jimmy Carter was deeply committed to social justice and basic human rights. He and his wife Rosalynn left the White House in search of meaningful ways to contribute in these areas. In addition to promoting peace and human rights through the nonprofit [Carter Center](#) in Atlanta, they lead the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project for Habitat for Humanity International one week each year.

Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project

Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter's involvement with Habitat for Humanity International began in 1984 when the former president led a work group to New York City to help renovate a six-story building with 19 families in need of decent, affordable shelter. That experience planted the seed, and the Carter Work Project has been an internationally recognized event of HFHI ever since.

Each year, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter give a week of their time—along with their construction skills—to build homes and raise awareness of the critical need for affordable housing. The Carter Work Project is held at a different location each year, and attracts volunteers from around the world.



- [CWP 2009](#) Mekong region: Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and the Yunnan Province in China. – November 2009
- [CWP 2008](#) took place along the Gulf Coast (Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas) – May 11-16, 2008
- [CWP 2007](#) took place in Los Angeles, Calif. – Oct. 28 -Nov. 2, 2007
- [CWP 2006](#) took place in Lonavala, India – Oct. 29-Nov. 3rd, 2006.
- [CWP 2005](#) took place in Detroit and Benton Harbor, Mich., the week of June 19-24, 2005.
- [CWP 2004](#) took place in two sites in Mexico—Puebla and Veracruz—Oct. 24-29, 2004,
- The Carters and more than 4,000 volunteers built 92 houses in Anniston, Ala., and LaGrange and Valdosta, Ga., during [CWP 2003](#).
- The [2002 CWP](#) took place in Africa. One thousand houses were built in 18 countries, with the final 100 houses constructed in a five-day build in Durban, South Africa.
- In [2001](#), CWP built 136 houses at six sites across South Korea with more than 9,000 volunteers participating from around the world.
- Other recent CWP builds have taken place in New York-Florida-Georgia ([2000](#), 157 houses), the Philippines ([1999](#), 293 houses) and Houston, Texas ([1998](#), 100 houses).

The first half of the *Jimmy Carter and Habitat for Humanity* page highlighted areas where he had worked for the organization, which helped one user understand the breadth of the charity's services.

28. State the names of notable endorsers in captions for their videos and photos.

Even if somebody is famous, don't assume that everybody can recognize them, particularly if they have become older since they were most prominent or if they appear briefly in a video clip.

See the screenshots under Guideline 13 (starting on page 70) for examples of well-captioned videos.

The above screenshot of the *Jimmy Carter and Habitat for Humanity* page was an exception to this guideline. Since the entire page was about Jimmy Carter, and his

name was used for the first two words of the headline immediately above the photo, there was no need to caption this photo. However, if the photo was of Carter building a house, as shown in the image below, a caption was still beneficial, because his face wasn't as recognizable in the photo.

Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project

Habitat's Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project is an annual, internationally-recognized week of building that brings attention to the need for simple, decent and affordable housing in partnership with low-income families. The Carter Work Project is held at a different location each year and attracts volunteers from around the world.

Championing basic human rights

As president of the United States, [Jimmy Carter](#) was deeply committed to social justice and basic human rights. He and his wife Rosalynn left the White House in search of meaningful ways to contribute in these areas.

In addition to promoting peace and human rights through the nonprofit [Carter Center](#) in Atlanta, each year the Carters give a week of their time—and their construction skills—to build homes and raise awareness of the critical need for affordable housing.

2010 Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project

[The 27th annual Carter Work Project](#) was held from Oct. 4-8, 2010, to coincide with the United Nation's World Habitat Day.

The Carters worked with volunteers in Washington, D.C.; Baltimore and Annapolis, Md.; Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minn.; and Birmingham, Ala. In each location, volunteers built new houses or improved existing homes.



Each year, former President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, give a week of their time to build homes and raise awareness of the need for affordable housing.

An image of Jimmy Carter building a home with his wife, Rosalynn, was featured on the Habitat for Humanity site. Although the page title included their names, it was still beneficial to include the caption, because it was difficult to discern their recognizable faces in the image.

29. Explain how corporate partners work with an organization.

Users were interested in the companies that partnered with charities and non-profits and how they worked together. Sites should provide this information in the *About Us* section.⁷

One user, while viewing the Environmental Defense Fund website, wasn't sure how the corporations listed on the *Corporate Partnerships* page worked with the charity. He said, "Their website is not clear. What is their tie to these companies? I give them money, but how do they help the environment by engaging corporations? It sounds like a lobbying effort to me."

⁷ For additional information and guidelines about improving the *About Us* area of your site, please see our separate report on this topic.

<http://www.nngroup.com/reports/about>

Corporate Partnerships

Building strategic partnerships to drive environmental solutions

Our Approach

Our Projects

- Climate Corps
- KKR – Green Portfolio
- PHH Arval - GreenFleet
- Wal-Mart - Supply Chain Sustainability
- Wegmans - Farmed Seafood
- More »

What We Work On

- Clean Fleets and Vehicles
- Climate Change Strategies
- Paper and Packaging
- Ocean-Friendly Seafood
- Safer Products & Materials

Industries We Work In

- Chemicals & Manufacturing
- Consumer Goods
- Financial Services
- Food and Beverage
- Media and IT
- Retail
- Transportation

Resources for Companies

- Paper Calculator
- Incentives
- More »

Meet Our Experts

Publications Archive

Contact Us

Our Work » Corporate Partnerships » Our Projects

Our Projects

CURRENT PROJECTS

Climate Corps

Together with Net Impact, EDF embeds trained MBA students in businesses to find energy efficiency improvements

KKR – Green Portfolio

Developing tools for companies to track and assess environmental improvements

PHH Arval - GreenFleet

Rethinking how corporate fleets are managed to reduce costs and cut global warming pollution

Wal-Mart - Supply Chain Sustainability

Factoring the environment into the equation of doing business

Wegmans - Farmed Seafood

We've teamed up with Wegmans Food Stores to offer customers superior farmed seafood.

PAST PROJECTS

- Bon Appétit - Farmed Salmon

Spearheading revolutionary standards to clean up salmon farming
- Bristol-Myers Squibb - Packaging

Designed products with the environment in mind
- Citigroup - Paper

Improved paper management
- Compass Group - Antibiotics

Keeping antibiotics working by limiting their use in chicken and pork
- DuPont - Safer Nanotech

Ensuring the responsible development of nanotechnology
- FedEx - Hybrid Trucks

Spurring a clean truck revolution in the express delivery industry
- McDonald's - Antibiotics

Set the standard for reducing antibiotic use in animal agriculture
- McDonald's - Styrofoam

Reduced waste, conserved resources

One user didn't understand the Environmental Defense Fund's ties to the companies listed on the *Corporate Partnerships* page of their site.

News & Events

30. Consider featuring relevant cause-related news and events from outside sources, along with organizational news and events.

When it was appropriate, some organizations provided relevant cause-related news and events from outside sources in addition to their own organizational news and events. This was acceptable to users, especially when they had a strong interest or attachment to the cause.

For example, some users donated to health-related causes, because the condition or disease was prevalent in their immediate or extended families. These users were interested in news related to the cause, such as recent developments or research. One user had an immediate family member pass away from Parkinson's disease, so she was interested in cause-related news, which was featured on the Michael J. Fox's Foundation for Parkinson's Research site.



The Michael J. Fox's Foundation for Parkinson's Research site included cause-related news.

31. If both organizational and cause-related news and events are provided, create a clear distinction between them.

Sites that offer both industry and organizational news must clearly differentiate between the two news types so users can quickly understand where they will go if they want to view additional details.

For example, the Susan B. Komen for the Cure homepage featured two types of news: *Breast Cancer News*, which included general news headlines about breast cancer, and *Komen News*, which included headlines about the organization. Both types of news headlines linked to full details. Each news type was placed on its own clearly-labeled tab within the *Latest Headlines* area of the homepage.



The Susan B. Komen for the Cure website clearly differentiated between the offered news by organizing them into two types: general news about breast cancer and news about the organization.

Some sites provided both industry and organizational news, but the sites didn't clearly differentiate between the two.

For example, the Adoption Exchange included an area on the homepage called *featured story*, which included adoption stories. The first story linked to an outside source, *The Denver Post*, and the second linked to a story on their own site. The stories should have been organized so users clearly knew where they were navigating to: an outside source or within the site. The labels for the two areas could have been *Our Adoption Stories* and *In the News*.



There wasn't a clear differentiation between stories featured in the news and the organization's own stories.

It is important that users know the difference between general news about a cause, which may not be directly related to an organization, and news from the organization itself.

32. If outside news articles are featured, ensure that they clearly relate to the organization's work.

If news stories from outside sources are featured, ensure that they clearly relate to the organization's work. In some instances, users skimmed an article and questioned how it related to the charity. An article's lack of relevance or clear association with the organization confused users and made them question what the charity actually did.⁸


One user, while viewing the Wildlife Alliance website, navigated to a news article with a title that suggested that the organization worked to turn "poachers into gamekeepers." As she read through the article, she became confused and said, "It's not really saying what they were going to do to change poachers, so that's confusing." The news article she read was actually a republished blog post from another organization. However, the content didn't seem relevant to the organization and caused further confusion.

Turning Poachers into Gamekeepers

February 24, 2009

Originally Published by Symbiosis Expedition Planning

February 24, 2009 blog post:
I recently visited a community deep in the Cardomom Mountains, western Cambodia that, until recently, existed to plunder the rainforest of trees and wildlife.



Chi Phat is a former logging community a 2 hour boat trip up river from the newly refurbished road linking Koh Kong to the rest of Cambodia and the largest settlement within what is now the Cardomom Mountains protected area, and it is here that the Wildlife Alliance (formerly known as Wildaid) have been driving a community based eco-tourism initiative to ween the local people off hunting endangered wildlife and chopping down the rich rainforests.

Already the commune of 4 villages and 520 families has 4 guest houses established and almost daily arrivals of Western tourists, thanks to a mention in Nick Ray's recently published, latest edition of the Lonely Planet Cambodia.

[See pictures and read more about one blogger's expedition into the heart of the Cardamoms>>](#)

Picture published by a blogger on the Symbiosis website.

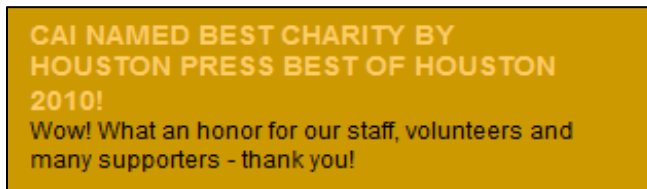
A news article featured on the Wildlife Alliance website wasn't clearly related to the organization and their work, which caused confusion for one user.

⁸ For additional information and guidelines about improving the PR area of your site, please see our separate report on this topic. <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/pr>

33. Highlight news stories in the press about the organization and link to the full story.

Users were interested in what the press was saying about an organization, and they often found positive news stories from outside sources to be more compelling and credible than an organization's own touting.

One user, while reviewing the Child Advocates homepage, noticed a link to a featured story in the *Houston Press* that named the organization the "best charity" in Houston. The user navigated to the full story on the news website and immediately decided to donate to the organization. After she made the donation, she said, "Best charity from the *Houston Press*; that sort of sealed the deal for me. When you give to a charity, you want to make sure it's worthy."



The Child Advocates homepage featured a link to a story in the *Houston Press* that named the organization the "best charity" in Houston.

34. Clearly differentiate between press releases and news.

Many charities and non-profits made the mistake of labeling press releases as *News Releases* or *News*. Do not confuse press releases with external news items. Press releases are put out by the organization itself and news is what's written by others about the organization.

If both are featured on the site, ensure there's a clear distinction between them. Label them *Press Releases* and *In the News*. The Wildlife Alliance did this on their *Newsroom* page, which helped users quickly understand the types of stories available.



The Wildlife Alliance site organized news items as *Press Releases* and *In the News*.

35. Allow users to search for events in their area.

Users were interested in an organization's presence and work in their local community. When users found information about events in their area, they expressed enthusiasm about the charity's existence in their local community. Providing an event calendar is another way for organizations to show their presence in local communities.

Event calendars can be a good addition for sites with local events in many different communities, showing the breadth of work the organization does and the variety of locations where that work is done.

One user, while viewing the Accelerated Cure Project for Multiple Sclerosis site, came across a listing of events that included two in Boston, Massachusetts. She said, "This shows me that the organization is doing a lot. And I even see places that aren't far from where I live. That would be important to me."

Upcoming Events	
04/20/2009	Boston, MA: The Accelerated Cure Project 113th Annual Boston Marathon Fundraiser
05/02/2009	Boston, MA: A Wine Tasting Evening to Benefit the Accelerated Cure Project
10/01/2009	Bay Area, CA: Tyler Hamilton Foundation MS Global 2009

The list of upcoming events on the Accelerated Cure for Multiple Sclerosis website told users that they worked in different areas, which was important to some users.

The American Cancer Society allowed users to search for local events by providing a ZIP Code. The list of upcoming events demonstrated their presence in local communities.

Displaying 1 - 10 of 14				
Event Name ▼	Location ▼	City, State ▼	Event Date ▼	Distance ▼
Relay For Life of Rochester	Spaulding High School	Rochester, New Hampshire	6/24/2011	6.59
Relay For Life of University of New Hampshire	UNH Field House	Durham, New Hampshire	4/16/2011	11.13
2011 Relay For Life of York County ME	Wells High School	Wells, Maine	6/11/2011	13.54
Relay For Life of York County Kick-Off	Wells Jr High School	Wells, Maine	2/16/2011	13.59

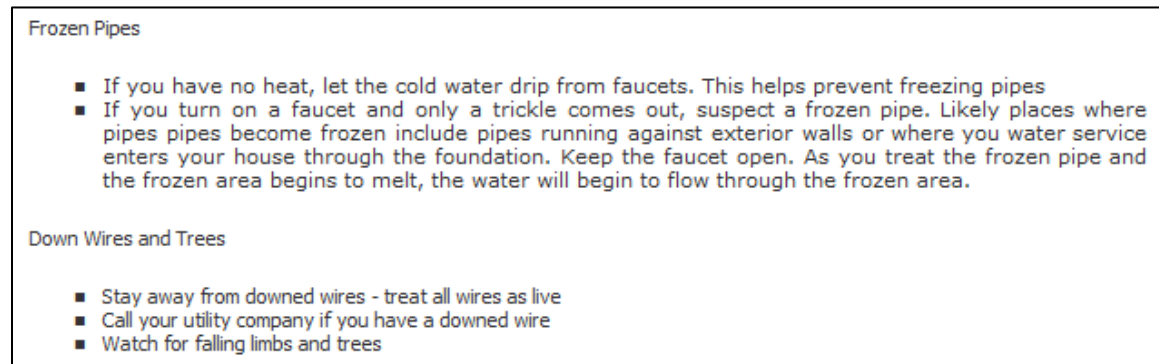
The American Cancer Society allowed users to search for local events by entering a ZIP Code.

Chapters and Affiliates

36. Feature timely and relevant information on chapter and affiliate websites.

Users expected to see information related to their community when they navigated to local chapter sites, so it's important to provide this type of content on these sites.

Two users navigated to the local American Red Cross website from the national site. Both were interested in information about local events and topics. One user noticed that the local American Red Cross site included information relevant to his community, "It explains how to deal with problems that are common to our area, such as downed lines and frozen pipes."



Users appreciated the content on their local American Red Cross site, because it was geared towards them.

37. Keep the look and feel of chapter and affiliate websites consistent with the main website.

Throughout the study, users navigated to chapter or affiliate sites from the main site. Unfortunately, most chapter sites didn't have the same look and feel as the main site, which confused users.

The Boys & Girls Club of America's local chapter websites had a drastically different look and feel as compared to the national site. The national site had a distinct design, which incorporated a defined color scheme and an organized approach to presenting information. The local chapter website failed to follow this design approach and used different colors and a disorganized manner of displaying information. Aside from a similar page header, it was difficult to tell—at first glance—that these two sites represented the same organization.



Image 1 of 2: The national Boys & Girls Clubs of America website had a distinct look and feel.


**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF MANCHESTER**



BE MVP.

Shaquille O'Neal • Member since 1982

Tuesday, March 17, 2009

[Home](#)
[About Us](#)
[News & Events](#)
[Support The Boys & Girls Club](#)
[Make On-line Donation!](#)
[Programs & Services](#)
[Membership](#)
[Alumni](#)
[Links](#)
[Calendar](#)
[Contact Us](#)



BE GREAT

BeGreatManchester.org

Congratulations, Brian...Citizen of the Year!



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF MANCHESTER**

Welcome!

The Manchester Boys Club was incorporated in 1907 and became the Boys & Girls Club of Manchester in 1983. From its meager beginnings as reading and recreation rooms, the Club has grown to include the main Clubhouse at 555 Union Street, our Administrative Offices at 44 Walnut Street, our Kids Club facility at 251 Merrimack Street, four school-based after school sites at Jewett Street and Highland Goffe's Falls Elementary Schools and the Middle School at Parkside and McLaughlin Middle School, as well as our Camp Foster summer day camp facility located in Bedford.

The tabs on the left will lead you to information about the organization. If there is anything you would like to know, but can't find there, please [let us know](#). Thank you for visiting with us!

Quick Links...

CAMP FOSTER INFORMATION NOW AVAILABLE

[Purchase a History Book](#)

[Alumni...Click Here!](#)

[Discovery Hour Information](#)

[Make an Online Donation](#)



Every time you search the Internet!

Visit <http://www.goodsearch.com>

Optimized for 1024x768 32Colors viewing with IE 6.0

© 2009 Boys & Girls Clubs of America (B&GCA). All rights reserved. See [B&GCA Legal Notice](#) and Site Owner [Terms of Use](#). Powered by [bacweb](#).

Image 2 of 2: The look and feel of the Manchester, New Hampshire Boys & Girls Clubs of America site was completely different than the national site.

Habitat for Humanity did a mediocre job of keeping the look and feel of their chapter sites consistent with the main site. The color schemes were similar, but the navigation was inconsistent and the search box wasn't available on the local site.



Image 1 of 2: The national Habitat for Humanity site had a defined look and feel.



Southeast New Hampshire
Building Houses, Building Hope...

Habitat
for Humanity®

PO Box 4428
Portsmouth, NH 03802-4428
Phone: 603-433-9555
Email: info@SENHHabitat.org

Explore Our Cause

Home
About Us
Donate
Volunteer
Family Selection
Supporters
ReStore

- About
- Donations
- Volunteer
- Supporters
- Directions/Hours

Press
Newsletters
Photo Gallery
Contact Us

ReStore Home

Print This Page
Share on Facebook

Southeast New Hampshire

Habitat for Humanity®

ReStore

Wednesday - Friday: 10 am - 6:00 pm
Saturday: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
15 Fourth Street
Dover, NH 03820
Phone: 603-750-3200
Email: ReStore@senhhabitat.org

What is ReStore?

The Southeast New Hampshire Habitat for Humanity ReStore welcomes the public to shop our expansive inventory of donated new and reusable building materials. Products offered include kitchen cabinets, appliances, doors, windows, tile, hard wood flooring, light fixtures, as well as many other items to help you complete your home improvement projects. Items are sold at 30% to 80% off retail!

Donate Now

Donate



Help Our Cause

Donate while you search & shop





Join Our Mail List

Name:

Email:

☒ Subscribe
☐ Unsubscribe

GO

The ReStore Mission

A program of Southeast New Hampshire Habitat for Humanity, the ReStore supplies overstocked, discontinued, new and used building materials donated by manufacturers, stores, contractors and individuals. These donated items are sold to the public or used in construction of Habitat houses.

Total proceeds from this store benefit SENH Habitat for Humanity's mission to provide safe, decent, affordable, and energy-efficient housing to hard-working, low-income families within our community.

What's NEW?

- Huge thanks for one of our major sponsors, [Simply Green BioFuels](#)! Please visit their website to learn about their company!
- ReStore has joined the [Green Alliance](#)! The Green Alliance is a growing union of green businesses on the Seacoast who are committed to promoting sustainability. Join the [Green Alliance Co-op](#) and save 10% off everything at ReStore.
- ReStore is now a battery recycle drop off. Working with [Waste Management](#) on a program called Battery Tracker, people can now drop AA, AAA, C, D, 9 volt, button and rechargeable batteries at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore for proper recycling.







Southeast New Hampshire Habitat for Humanity : Building Houses, Building Hope

Restore: [Home](#) | [About ReStore](#) | [Directions / Hours](#) | [Donations](#) | [Volunteer](#) | [Our Supporters](#)
SENH: [Home](#) | [About Us](#) | [Donate](#) | [Volunteer](#) | [Our Supporters](#) | [Press](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Photo Gallery](#) | [Contact Us](#)
[Habitat for Humanity International](#)

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Comments or questions? Please [E-mail the Webmaster](#)

Image 2 of 2: The Southeast New Hampshire Habitat for Humanity website used some of the same colors as the main site, but the navigation was inconsistent, the search box wasn't available, and the page layout was different.

Easter Seals did a decent job of keeping the look and feel of their affiliate sites consistent with the main site. Each affiliate site was designed within a standard template, which retained the same the look and feel as their main site; both the main site and the affiliate sites used the same overall page layout, color scheme, and navigational elements (search bar, global navigation, and footer navigation). The

biggest inconsistency between the main site and the affiliate sites was the main navigation. However, the main navigation across all affiliate sites was consistent, creating a cohesive experience for those who navigated to various affiliate sites.

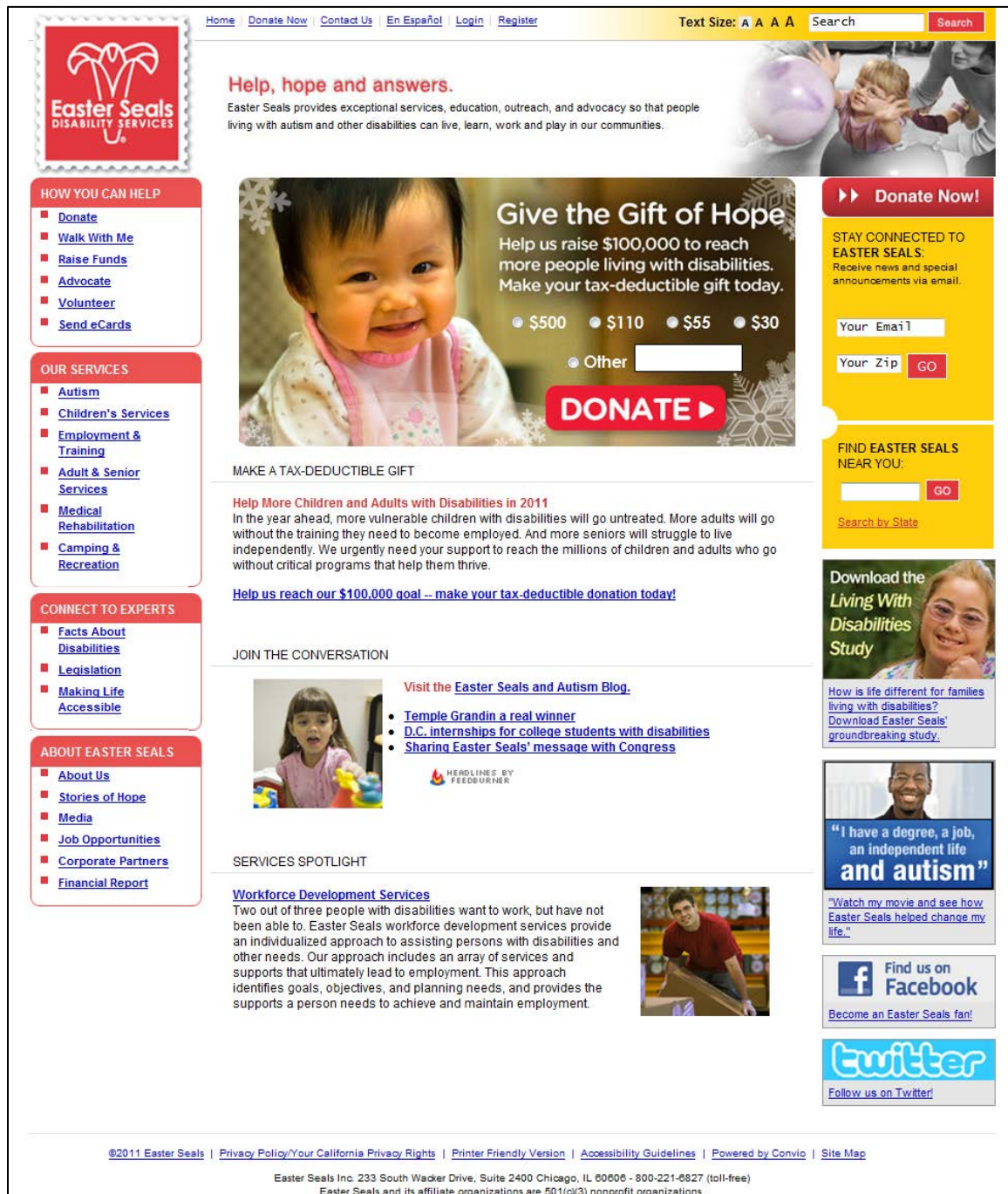


Image 1 of 2: The main Easter Seals site had a distinct look and feel, which was translated to their affiliate sites.

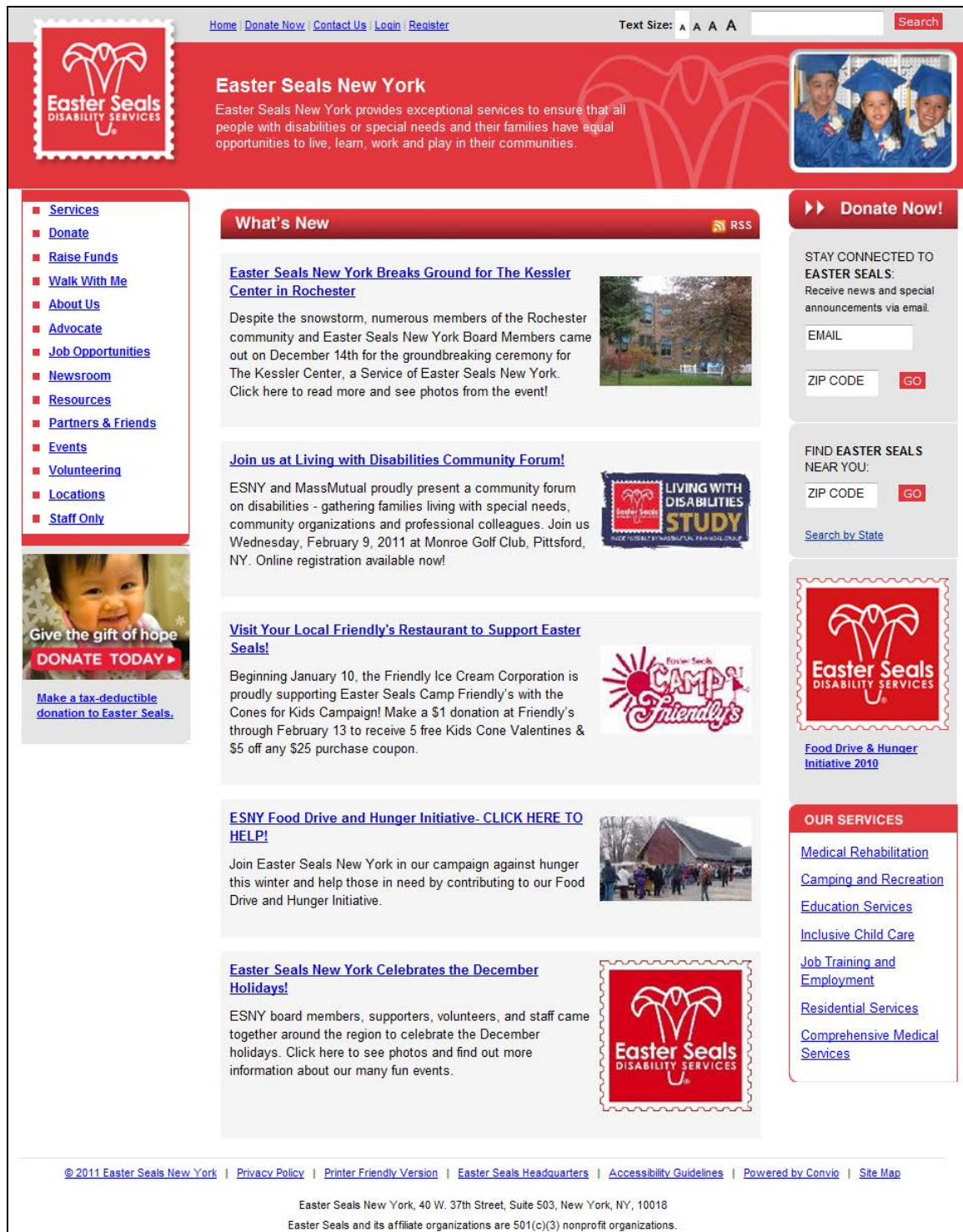


Image 2 of 2: The look and feel of the New York Easter Seals affiliate included the same overall page layout, color scheme, and navigational elements (the search bar, global navigation, and footer navigation). The New York site's main navigation didn't match the national site, but the main navigation was consistent across all affiliate sites.

38. Be sure the information on the main site is consistent with the information on chapter or affiliate sites.

A consistent look and feel is important, but having consistent information across sites is imperative.

One user, while researching upcoming local blood drives sponsored by American Red Cross, was frustrated when he didn't see any in his area on the national site. When he navigated to the local site to research the same topic, he was inundated with details about local blood drives. The user was frustrated, and said, "Between the national site and this one [the local site], they aren't connected. The national one doesn't show any blood drives, but this shows that there are plenty of blood drives around."

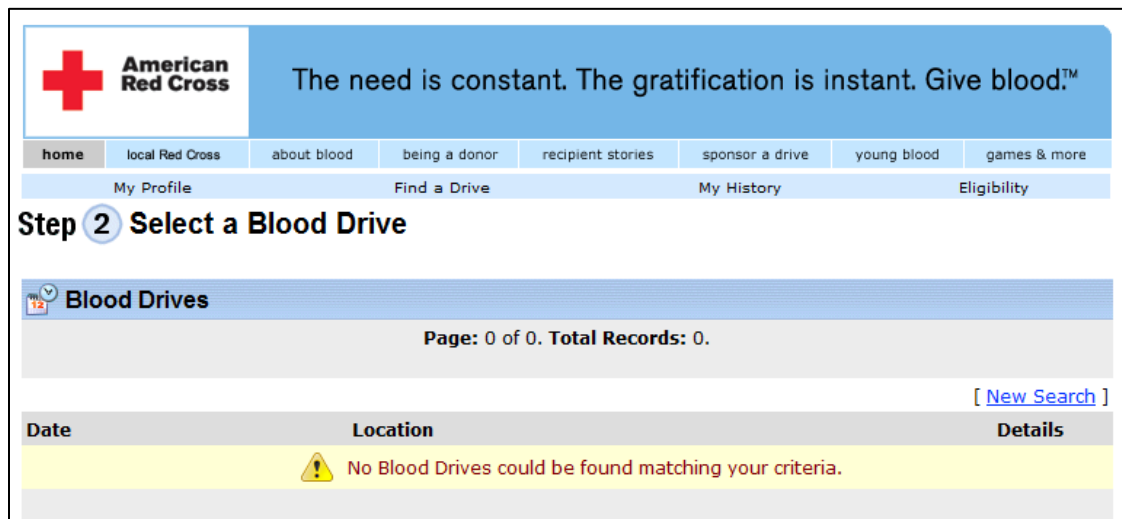


Image 1 of 2: The American Red Cross national site didn't return any results when a user searched for blood drives in his area.

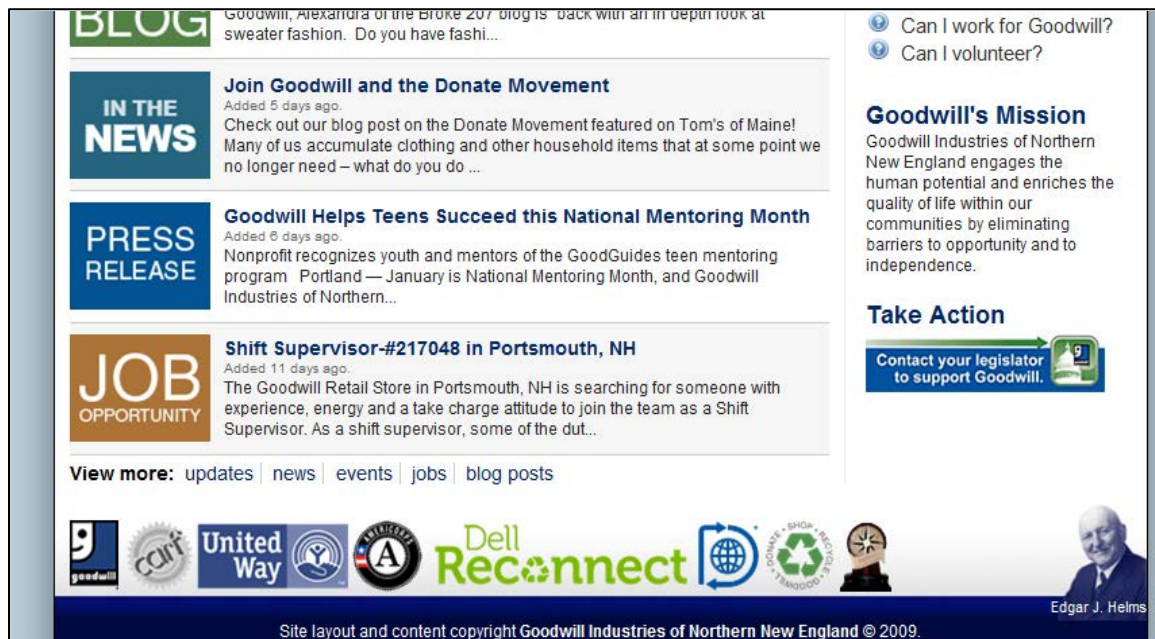
March 2009	
March 11, 2009	- - 10:00 AM/4:00 PM
March 13, 2009	- - 12:00 PM/5:00 PM - - 12:00 PM/5:00 PM
March 17, 2009	- - 2:30 PM/7:30 PM
March 18, 2009	- - 11:30 AM/4:30 PM
March 26, 2009	- - 1:00 PM/6:00 PM
March 27, 2009	- - 12:00 PM/5:00 PM - - 2:00 PM/7:00 PM
March 28, 2009	- - 10:00 AM/4:00 PM - - 8:30 AM/12:30 PM
March 30, 2009	- - 11:30 AM/5:00 PM - - 1:00 PM/6:00 PM

Image 2 of 2: When the same user checked a local American Red Cross website for blood drives, he received details for over 30 upcoming blood drives in his area.

39. Provide a way for users to easily get back to the main website from a chapter or affiliate website.

Throughout our study, users struggled to get back to the main site once they had navigated to a chapter site. It's critical that chapter and affiliate websites include a clearly visible link back to the main site. If it's too difficult to get back to the main site, users won't make the effort and may also give up on making a donation to the charity.

The website for the Northern New England Goodwill included a link back to the main site on the bottom of every page. It would have been better to place the link in a more noticeable area, such as within the main site navigation. However, simply having a link back to the main site from a chapter site was good; most chapter and affiliate sites in our study failed to do so.



A link to the main Goodwill website was available in the footer navigation on every page of the Northern New England Goodwill chapter website.

One user in our study navigated to the Great Bay American Red Cross site from the national site, but couldn't find a way to get back to the national site when he wanted to. He tried clicking on the logo in the upper left hand corner of the site, but it brought him back to the local site's homepage. He became frustrated, and said, "I'm just trying to get to where I was before. It'd be nice to be able to get back to the main site from here."

[Login](#) | [Register](#)

[SEARCH SITE](#)

American Red Cross
273 Corporate Drive
Dorchester, MA 01938
(617) 766-3440

Be Red Cross Ready

Get a kit.
 Make a plan.
 Be informed.

[HOME](#)
[ABOUT US](#)
[EVENTS](#)
[EMERGENCY SERVICES](#)
[HEALTH & SAFETY](#)
[BE PREPARED](#)
[CONTACT US](#)
[VOLUNTEERING](#)

Disaster Relief Donations

The best way to support the Red Cross disaster response work in New Hampshire is to make a contribution to the Disaster Relief Fund which provides help to people affected by this ice storm as well as future disasters.

Anyone wishing to make donations should call your local chapter at 766-5440 or you can contact our national office at 1-800-REDCROSS. You may also contribute online through this website, by mail to the chapter or via our national website at www.redcross.org.

Job Opportunities

[UNA Instructors](#)
[First Aid/ACPR/AED Instructors](#)

CURRENT NEWS

- Pandemic Planner
- Thinking of Entering the Medical Field
- NATIONAL NEWS
- Lifeguard Updates

CAR DONATION PROGRAM

Donate Online Now

Donate your car, RV, boat, truck, jet ski, or snowmobile to the Great Bay Chapter of the ARC and receive a tax deduction!

No cost, no hassle process - just call Donation Line LLC 877-227-7487 ext 2311.

or Click above:

"Donate Your Car Now" and complete the Vehicle Donation Form online. Select the Great Bay Chapter of the ARC from the dropdown list. ** Make sure to have your title in hand when you donate.

Help Now

[Blood Drives](#)
[Volunteer Now](#)

Classes

[Disaster Classes](#)
[Health & Safety](#)
[UNA Classes](#)

Corporate Support

[Adopt A Day of Disaster](#)
[Be Prepared](#)
[Preparedness](#)
[Military Services](#)

[Looking For Information](#)

March is Red Cross Month

Dine out at participating restaurants and Support your local Great Bay Red Cross Chapter!

The following restaurants will be donating a portion of their proceeds for that evening.

Participating restaurants include:

- Dinnerhorn Seafood Restaurant & Oyster Bar, Portsmouth Mon. 3/9
- Strafford Farms Restaurant, Dover, Tuesday 3/10
- Bob's Clam Hut and Robert's Maine Lobster, Wednesday 3/11
- The Blue Mermaid Island Grill, Portsmouth, Thursday 3/12
- Red Hook Brewery, Pease Tradeport, Wednesday 3/18
- The Riverworks Restaurant and Tavern, Newmarket, Tuesday 3/24

[Enter to win a Red Cross First Aid Kit!](#)

Safety Measures

Safety @ Home:

- Never run a generator inside a home, trailer or garage. You must allow adequate ventilation to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Never burn charcoal for heating or cooking indoors.
- Never use your oven as a source of heat.
- Never plug a space heater to an extension cord unless that cord is rated for the level of use.
- Make sure portable heaters are away from curtains and other flammable materials.
- Be especially careful around evergreen holiday decorations.
- Generators should be connected directly to the equipment you want to power - NOT to the home's electrical system.
- Use flashlights or hurricane oil lamps instead of candles - If you do keep away from children and NEVER leave unattended.
- Listen to battery or hand-crank radio for updated information.
- Be careful for food that has not been kept at appropriate temperatures.
- Turn off all equipment or disconnect appliances that you were using when the power went out. This will avoid the possibility of damages should the momentary "surges" or "spikes" occur when the power is turned on.
- Leave 1 light on so you will know when the power returns.
- Use phone for emergencies only.
- Eliminate unnecessary travel, especially by car. Traffic signals will stop working during the outage, creating traffic congestion.
- Remember ATM's and elevators will NOT work.
- Wear layers of warm clothing especially during these temperatures.

Frozen Pipes

- If you have no heat, let the cold water drip from faucets. This helps prevent freezing pipes.
- If you turn on a faucet and only a trickle comes out, suspect a frozen pipe. Likely places where pipes become frozen include pipes running against exterior walls or where you water service enters your house through the foundation. Keep the faucet open. As you treat the frozen pipe and the frozen area begins to melt, the water will begin to flow through the frozen area.

Down Wires and Trees

- Stay away from downed wires - treat all wires as live.
- Call your utility company if you have a downed wire.
- Watch for falling limbs and trees.

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There wasn't any way to get back to the national American Red Cross site from the Great Bay chapter site, which frustrated users.

40. Allow users to make or initiate donations on chapter or affiliate sites.

Two users in our study preferred to use a local site instead of the national site to make a donation, because they didn't trust that the national organization would get the money to the local organization in a timely manner—or at all.

One user wanted to direct his donation to a local chapter and said, "Red Cross is a reputable organization, but nothing is really telling me that it is going to make it to the local chapter." Another said, "I'd rather donate to the local chapter than depend on the national one to funnel it down to the local chapter."

For this reason, it's important to allow users to access the donation process from the local website. For example, the Maine chapter of Make-A-Wish provided a *Donate Now!* button on their site, which allowed users to make a direct donation to the local chapter.



Users could make a donation to the Maine Make-A-Wish chapter from the Maine chapter's website.

41. Consider integrating the donation process from a chapter or affiliate site with the main site, and direct the donation to the appropriate chapter or affiliate organization by default.

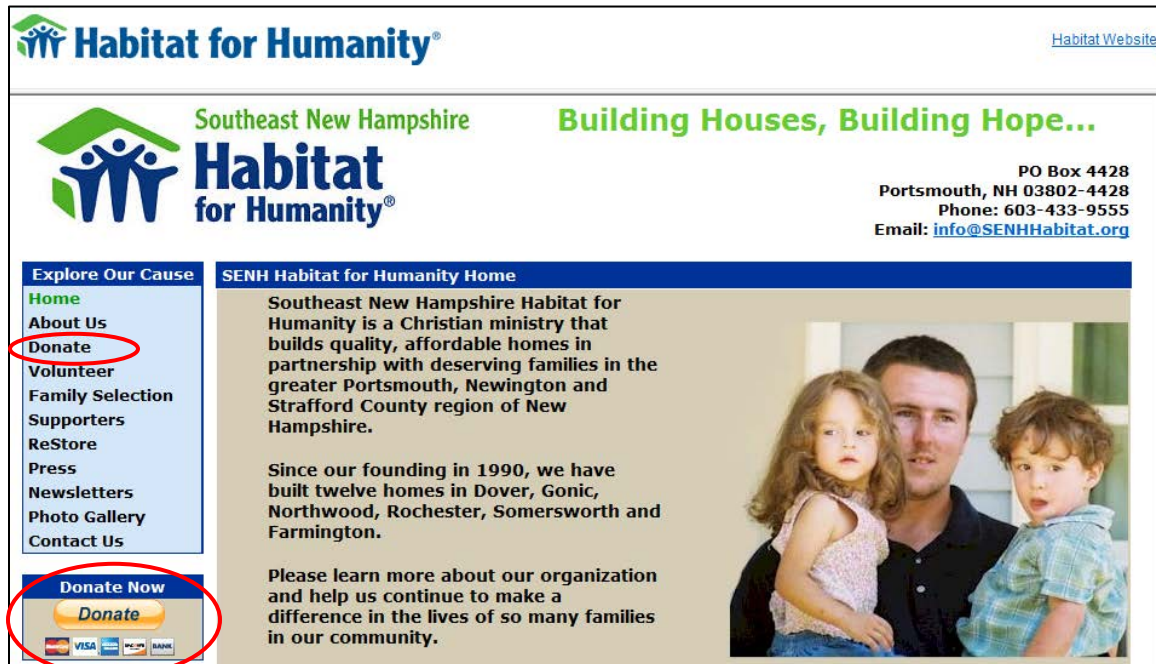
Some users in our study wanted to make a donation to a local organization through the local chapter's website. Organizations should provide this option, but they should consider routing all donations through the main website. This creates a consistent donation process across the affiliated sites. Additionally, it reduces the amount of site maintenance for chapters and affiliates; instead of requiring each chapter to be responsible for its own donation process, a single person at the main office can monitor and maintain a single donation process for all affiliated sites.

The Maine Chapter of Make-A-Wish provided a link for users to donate. If users clicked the link, they were brought to the donation process on the main website. From there, users could select a chapter to direct a donation towards, but it would have been better if the referring chapter was selected by default.

When users chose to donate from a Make-A-Wish affiliate site, they were routed to the donation process on the main site where they could choose a local chapter to direct their donation towards. It would have been better if the site had chosen the appropriate chapter, by default, based on the chapter site that the user initiated the donation from.

Some sites offered both options: to donate through the local site or to donate through the main site. This was unnecessary and confusing.

If users chose to make a donation from the Southeast New Hampshire Habitat for Humanity website, there were two links to donate: one that routed users to the national Habitat for Humanity site and another that routed people to PayPal. This was unnecessary and very confusing for users. One user noticed this, and said, "On this one, they have two places to donate... One brings you to the PayPal page and the other brings you to a page on the site. It's confusing. Why not just have one [link to donate] instead of taking up space on your site with two?"



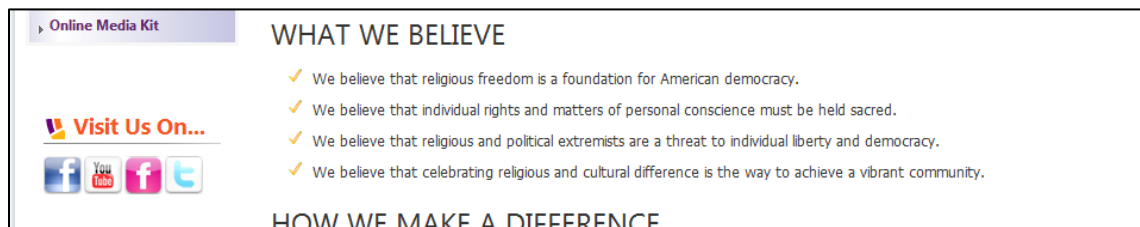
There were two links to the donation process on a local Habitat for Humanity site; one brought users to PayPal and the other brought users to the donation process on the main site. This was unnecessary and confusing.

Social Media and Interaction

42. Provide links to the organization's presence on social networks.

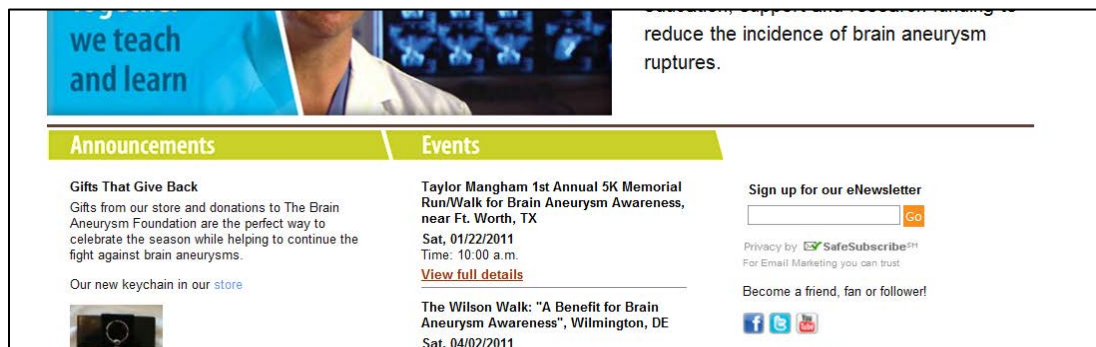
Social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr, are powerful tools that can help organizations reinforce their mission and objectives. If an organization has a presence on social networks, provide links to those pages on the official website.

The Interfaith Alliance offered links to various social tools throughout the site. One user navigated to the YouTube site by clicking a link on the *About Us* page, and she watched a video that reinforced some of the organization's objectives. After watching the video, she said, "The message they are trying to get across is keeping religion separate from the government... that's what it seems they are trying to say."



Information found by following links to popular social network tools helped one user better understand the Interfaith Alliance's objectives.

Another user, while exploring The Brain Aneurysm Foundation homepage, commented on the recognizable icons to connect with the organization on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. She said, "I like that it's connected to larger online communities here. It's right there on the homepage."



The Brain Aneurysm Foundation's homepage included links to friend, fan, or follow them on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

The American Red Cross site included a page that highlighted the various social networks where the organization had a presence. Although one user didn't navigate to any of the tools, he thought it was nice to have the option. He said, "You can connect with them on the most popular online websites, which is nice."

Social Media

Who says the Internet is only for young people? At age 127, the American Red Cross loves the Internet.

What is social media?

Any online space where people can interact with one another is considered part of the social web. Social media tools are easy-to-use platforms that allow people to connect online.

Where online is the Red Cross?

We look forward to meeting you in the following spots:

Why are we doing this?

The Red Cross belongs to the American people. You fund it, you donate your blood, you prepare for and respond to disasters, you take and instruct first aid classes. You make the Red Cross what it is today, and you hold the keys to its future.

You probably think of the American Red Cross as a big organization, but if you peer behind the curtain you'll find a bunch of individuals working hard to help you, your family and friends prepare for, prevent and respond to life's emergencies. Social media tools allow us to connect with you on an individual basis at the place where your life intersects with our mission. It makes sense that we would explore these tools and join these conversations that are an important part of your daily life.

Every day, several hundred people talk online about how their lives intersect with the Red Cross. We read and learn from every conversation. By adopting social media, we're making it easier for you to tell us how to make the Red Cross a better organization.

At the American Red Cross, we're constantly looking for new ways to connect with you and provide services to you and your community more effectively and efficiently. Stay tuned.

If you have suggestions or requests, please email [Wendy Harman and Claire Sale](#).



- » [Red Cross Chat](#)
- » [Chapter Blogs](#)
- » [Youth Blogs](#)



- » [Disaster Online Newsroom](#)



- » [Photostream Group](#)



- » [Follow National](#)
- » [Safe & Well](#)
- » [Follow Local Red Cross](#)



- » [Page](#)
- » [Group](#)
- » [Cause](#)
- » [Service to Armed Forces](#)



- » [Channel](#)

The American Red Cross provided information about and links to their presence on social networks.

43. On Facebook, default to information about the organization.

When users navigated to an organization's page on Facebook, they wanted to be presented with information about the organization. They didn't want to be immediately prompted to make a donation, sign up for a newsletter, or provide personal information.

The Volunteers of America's Facebook page defaulted to the *eNewsletter* tab, which contained open fields for *First Name*, *Last Name*, and *Email*. This was immediately

off-putting to users, especially those who weren't familiar with the organization. Although there was a brief description underneath the logo on the left hand side of the page, it would have been best to default to the *Info* tab, the *Our Services* tab, or the *Wall*.

The screenshot shows the Facebook interface for the Volunteers of America page. The top navigation bar includes the Facebook logo, a search bar, and the page name "Volunteers of America" with a "Like" button. Below this, a row of tabs is visible: "Wall", "Info", "Our Services", "eNewsletter...", "YouTube", and "Donate". The "eNewsletter..." tab is selected. The main content area features a large sign-up form titled "Sign Up to Receive Our e-Newsletter". To the left of the form is the organization's logo and a brief description: "Volunteers of America is a national, nonprofit, faith-based organization dedicated to helping those in need rebuild their lives and reach their full potential." To the right of the form is a photograph of a group of people smiling and looking upwards, accompanied by text describing the organization's 114-year history and mission. The sign-up form includes fields for "First Name", "Last Name", and "Email", each preceded by an asterisk. A "Submit" button is located at the bottom of the form. On the far left, there is a section titled "Information" showing the organization was "Founded: 1896" and a section titled "3,018 People Like This" with small profile pictures of users.

Image 1 of 2: The Volunteers of America's Facebook page defaulted to the *eNewsletter* tab, which prompted users to sign up to receive email from the organization.



Image 2 of 2: Instead of defaulting to the *eNewsletter* tab, the Volunteers of America's Facebook page should have defaulted to information about the organization, which was provided on the *Our Services* tab.

44. Provide information about current news, events, and initiatives.

Social networks were a good place to inform users about what an organization had been doing or planned to do. Details about current projects, organizational news, and upcoming events or initiatives were welcomed by users.

One user, while viewing the American Red Cross page on Facebook, appreciated the tab dedicated to the various disasters they were currently working on. One user said, "I like how they tell you about recent disasters."



A tab on the American Red Cross Facebook page was dedicated to current disaster alerts.

45. Post stories and examples to connect with users.

Users were interested in hearing about people who had benefited from the efforts of a non-profit or charity organization. Not only did they gravitate to this information on organizations' official websites, but they were also attracted to similar content on social networks.⁹

One user reviewed the Make-A-Wish Facebook page and appreciated the stories and examples of how people were benefitting from and contributing to the organization. She said, "I prefer to hear about how people are benefiting from it [the organization]."

⁹ For additional information and guidelines about improving notifications, messages, and alerts sent through social networks and RSS, please see our separate report on this topic. <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/streams/>



Make-A-Wish Foundation of America Darren could have wished for anything. He decided to give back. Take Darren's lead and transform lives in your community during Season of Wishes. Visit wish.org today!

Darren Wished to Give Back - a :30 Make-A-Wish Foundation® video
bit.ly
 Darren received so much support from his football family that when Make-A-Wish® volunteers gave him a chance to wish for anything, Darren wished to give back...

Monday at 11:06am · Like · Comment

Mark Murphy, Richard Lopez, Lynette Angell and 124 others like this.

View all 10 comments

Lynette Angell You are truly an inspiration, David. Bless your big heart ♥
 17 hours ago · Flag

Margaret Korman You're amazing Darren thank you for encouraging & inspiring us all ! :-) ♥
 15 hours ago · Flag

Make-A-Wish Foundation of America Wish kid Sarah grew up on the ski slopes. Even after she was diagnosed with a rare spinal condition, she "skied for six years on legs she couldn't feel," said her father. When Sarah was 14, it seemed that the removal of part of her spinal cord would end her skiing days. She wanted her wish granters to give her the powe...

[See More](#)



Sunday at 10:31am · Like · Comment

The Make-A-Wish Foundation used Facebook to share stories about donors and those who had benefited from the organization.

46. Allow users to initiate or make donations from social networks.

If users were interested in making a donation to an organization while viewing information about them on a social network, they wanted to do so quickly. Don't force users to search for a *Donate* call to action. Make it immediately noticeable and allow users to initiate or complete the donation via the social network.


For example, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and Volunteers of America both had a *Donate* tab on their Facebook page which included a donation form. Users could fill out the form and submit a donation from Facebook. After completing a donation to PETA, one user said, "That was surprisingly easy [to make a donation] through their Facebook site." (It took him just under two minutes to make a donation to them through Facebook, which was two minutes and 15 seconds less than the average time it took for users to make donations on organizational sites.)

Like PETA on Facebook and follow us on Twitter!
<http://twitter.com/peta>

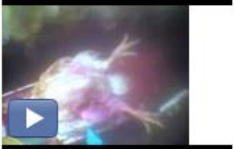
Information


Founded:
1980

925,206 People Like This



Video
2 of 203 videos [See All](#)





ABOUT SSL
CERTIFICATES

Donate

We need your financial support in order to put a stop to cruelty to animals.

Together, we can make the world a better place for all beings. Your donation will go to work instantly to help animals suffering and dying on factory farms and in laboratories, the fur industry, and circuses as well as other forms of "entertainment."

An annual donation of \$16 or more entitles you to many member benefits. Members receive a free year's subscription to our lively quarterly magazine *Animal Times*, which is packed full of the latest news, delicious vegetarian recipes, and easy tips on how to stop animal suffering in your own community.

All fields with an asterisk (*) are required.

Your Name

Title

* First

* Last

Suffix

Location Information

* Street Address

Street Address (line 2)

* City

Some organizations, such as PETA, had a donation form on Facebook so users could make donations through the social network.

Other organizations included a link to donate, which routed users to the official organization's website. For example, The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) included a link to donate on their Facebook page that brought users to the donation process on their main site.

Asking for Monetary and Non-monetary Donations

GENERAL GUIDELINES

47. Include details for those interested in making tax deductions.

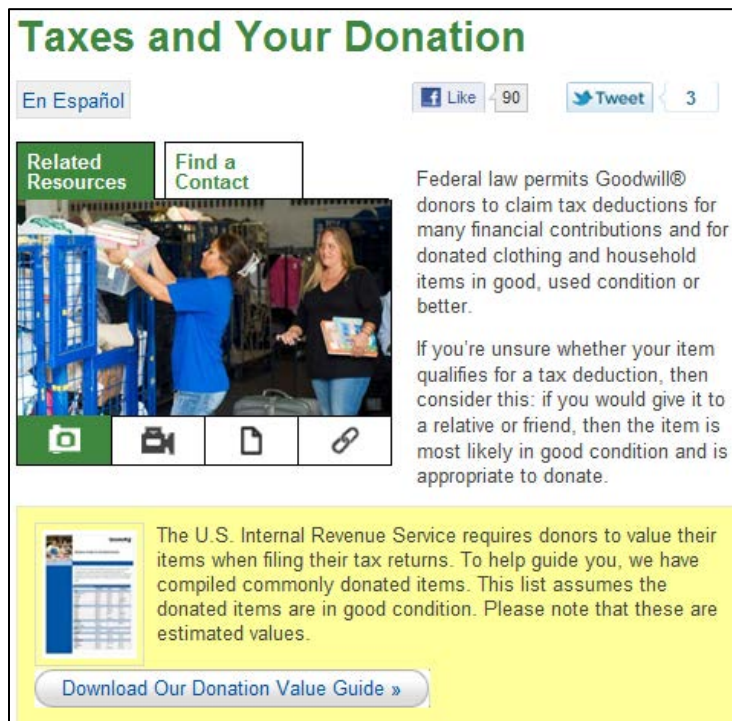
Users were interested in how making donations would help them when filing taxes. If users are able to write-off donated goods or funds, provide details.

For example, Global Links stated that all monetary donations were tax deductible “to the fullest extent of the law” on their *Financial Support* page.

Global Links is a registered 501(c)3 charity. All donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

The Global Links site clearly stated that all donations were tax-deductible on their *Financial Support* page.

In addition to monetary donations, include tax deduction details for non-monetary goods. Goodwill dedicated an entire page to information about taxes and explained, in simple terms, what qualified as a tax deduction. The page said, “If you’re unsure whether your item qualifies for a tax deduction, then consider this: if you would give it to a relative or friend, then the item is most likely in good condition and is appropriate to donate.” Additionally, they provided a downloadable *Donation Value Guide*, which classified the values of commonly donated items.



The Goodwill included tax deduction details for those who donated clothing and other goods to the organization.

48. Provide contact information specifically for donations.

If users have questions that aren't answered on the site, provide a way for them to get in touch with someone at the organization. List a contact person's name, phone number, email address, and the hours when they can be reached.

If users are unsure about what they can donate, where to bring it, or when it can be dropped off, it will be unlikely that the donation will reach the organization in need. Additionally, if users have trouble with the online donation process or have questions about how the money will be used, they likely won't make a monetary donation.

MONETARY DONATIONS

49. Tell people exactly how donations are used, providing details about the percentage of donations that goes to programs and services versus administrative and overhead costs.

Almost every user mentioned that they wanted to know where their money would go and how it would be used. Users made many comments throughout the study, including:

- "It's always good to know how much of your money is going to the cause as opposed to the administration."
- "My issue with fundraising is the cut that telemarketers get."
- "If you are going to give your money to someone, it's nice to know that it's going to be used efficiently and effectively."
- "I want to know that the money is going to the cause and not to the CEO."

Unfortunately, this information wasn't clear on a majority of the sites we tested.

The Environmental Defense Fund didn't clearly explain how they used donations. One user, after spending ten minutes on the site looking for this information, said, "They are not getting the information across. How will they use my money? I'm not saying that their work isn't valuable, but they don't do a good job of explaining where your money goes."

Some sites provided information about how they used donations in a very clear and concise manner. The Conservation Fund site included a pie chart that broke down how they used their money. One user was impressed, because they only spent 3% of their budget on fundraising and administration costs. The same user also appreciated access to other financial documents, such as audited financial statements and tax returns, from the same page.

Financials

The Conservation Fund is your best investment for protecting America's land and water legacy. For 23 years, the Fund has forged creative on-the-ground solutions that balance environmental and economic benefits. With our partners and supporters, we have protected more than 6 million acres of working forests, wildlife habitat, open space, historic sites and recreation destinations.

Small and strategic, the Fund leverages conservation dollars from our public and private partners, saving taxpayers more than \$1 billion in land purchase costs to date on lands valued in excess of \$3.6 billion.

The Fund puts an average of 97 percent of its budget directly into conservation programs and just 1 percent into fundraising. Both [Charity Navigator](#) and the [American Institute of Philanthropy](#) have awarded The Conservation Fund their highest ratings for effectiveness and efficiency.

The Conservation Fund's work is made possible with generous support from individuals, foundations, corporations and government agencies. Its commitment to accountability and donor transparency remains a cornerstone of its operations. The Fund never sells its donor information, nor does it make its donor list available to anyone outside the organization.

The Conservation Fund's 2007 Consolidated Audit ([download PDF](#))

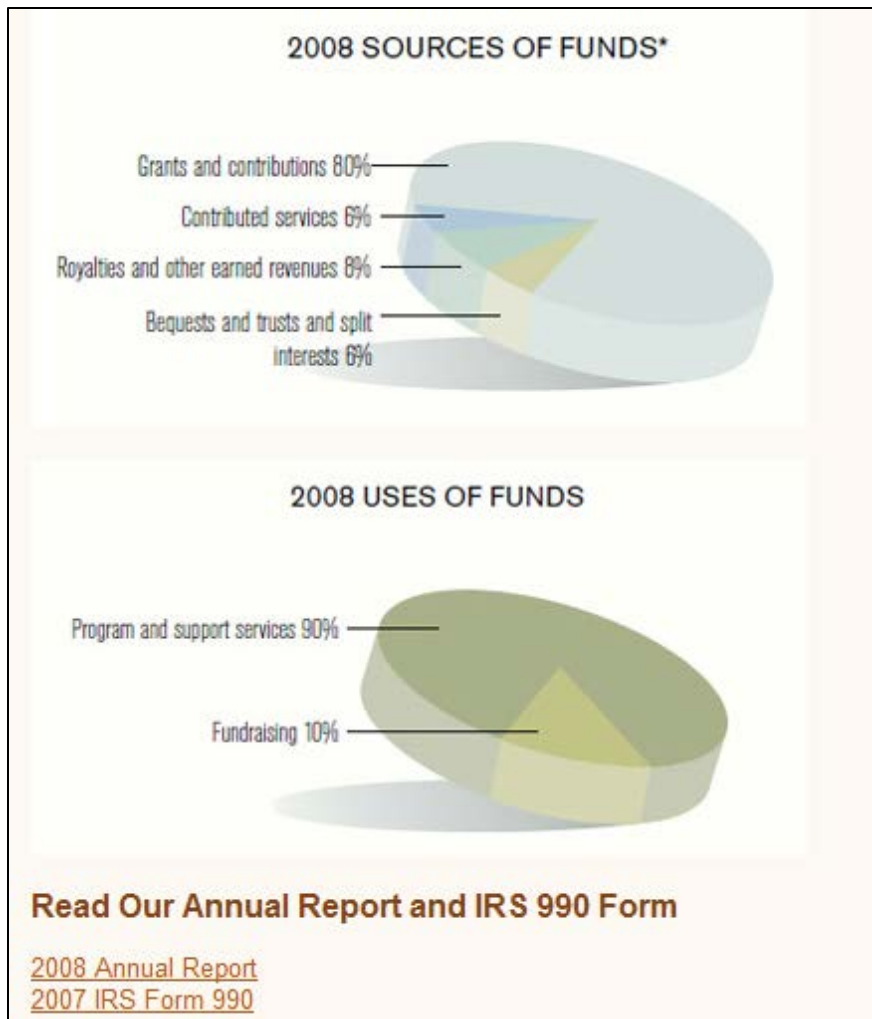
The Conservation Fund's 2007 990 Tax Return ([download PDF](#))



The Conservation Fund provided a breakdown of how they used their money, which persuaded one user to donate to them.

While this pie chart was helpful, the label "Conservation Programs" was extremely vague. More detail about the programs they funded (or links to them), along with the percentage of donations allocated to each program, would have been helpful and would have made the organization's spending more transparent.

The Defenders of Wildlife site also provided a breakdown of how they used their funds—as well as how they obtained them. Users appreciated this disclosure, because they were interested in both how the organization raised and used their money. One user said, "It's good to know if you donate if it's going to go to the cause or the administrative overhead. It says 90% goes to the organization." This same user also appreciated the links to their annual report and IRS Form 990. He said, "They even have a link to their financial report, which is nice that they are upfront about where their money goes."



Users were drawn to the pie charts that communicated how the Defenders of Wildlife earned and spent their money.

Again, in this example, the label “program and support services” is open to interpretation. A more detailed breakout of the percentage of funds allocated to each program would improve users’ trust in the validity of this diagram and the organization itself.

50. Make it easy for people to donate to the organization on every page of the site.

When users were ready to make a donation, they wanted to get to the donation process quickly and easily. Unfortunately, many users spent too much time looking for a way to donate when they were ready to.

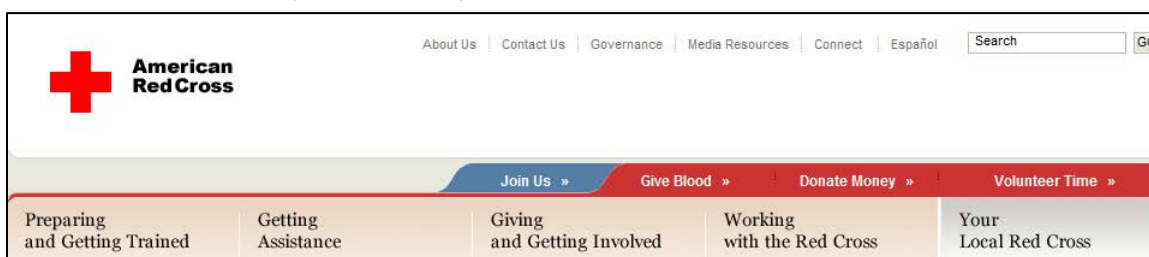
Some sites included a menu item in their main navigation that allowed users to quickly get to the donation process. This worked well, because it was available on every page of the site.

The Seacoast Family Food Pantry had a *Donate* menu item as part of their main navigation. When one user was interested in making a donation to this charity, he quickly found the menu item, and said, “They have a link to donate online right here.”



The Seacoast Family Food Pantry of New Hampshire included a *Donate* menu item in their main navigation, which was available from any page within their website.

The American Red Cross included a menu item in their main navigation labeled *Donate Money*, which was visible throughout the site. When users were ready to make a donation, they could easily find the link to do so.



The American Red Cross had a menu item named *Donate Money* in their main navigation, which was available on every page throughout the site.

Some sites provided an easy-to-find link to make a donation consistently throughout the site, which helped users when they were ready to make a donation. The link wasn't in the main navigation, but it was in an area of the site that remained unchanged regardless of the page the user was on. One user, after deciding to donate to the Nancy Davis Foundation for Multiple Sclerosis, said, "There's a big square at the top right that says *DONATE NOW!* so it's pretty easy to figure out how to do that."



The Nancy Davis Foundation for Multiple Sclerosis site featured a large *DONATE NOW!* button consistently throughout the site.

Similarly, the American Cancer Society included a *DONATE* call to action in the upper right hand corner on every page. It wasn't part of the main navigation, but it remained visible as users navigated throughout the site.



A *DONATE* call to action was available in the upper right hand corner of every page on the American Cancer Society website.

Other sites buried the donate call to action, and users had a hard time finding a way to contribute to them. To make an online donation on the National Education for Assistive Dog Services' (NEADS) website, users had to click on an image on the *Individual Contributions* page to launch the donation process.

Both users who donated to this organization struggled to find a way to make a donation. Once they navigated to the correct page, users had to click an image of two golden retriever puppies to launch the donation process. After discovering this, one user said, "It doesn't say *click here*, but you have to click the dog. If it said *click here* or something, it would have been easier." While on the *Individual Contributions* page, another user said, "I'm looking to donate with a credit card, but I'm having a hard time finding it."



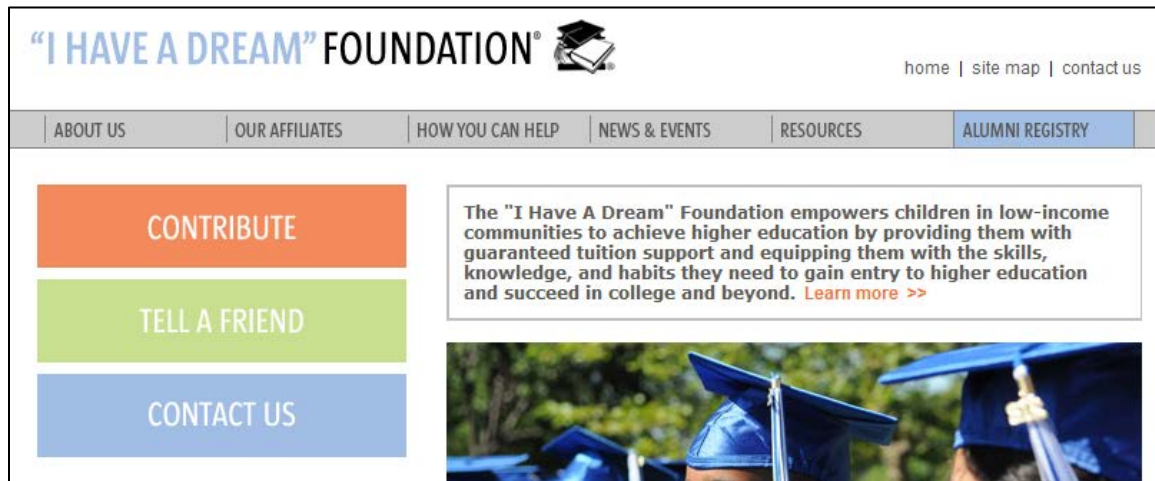
In order to launch the donation process on the NEADS site, users had to navigate to the *Individual Contributions* page and click on the image of the dogs to the left of the text, which was unintuitive.

51. Use the labels "Donate" or "Donate Now" to describe the link that launches the donation process.

When users were ready to make a donation, they quickly scanned the page they were on and looked for a link that described the act of donating. It's best to use clear, concise words, especially when asking for monetary donations. The words "Donate" and "Donate Now" were immediately understood by users in our study.

The "I Have A Dream" Foundation had a link to donate on the homepage, but it was labeled as *CONTRIBUTE*. Users noticed the orange *CONTRIBUTE* button right away, because it was big and bold and the first button in a series of three, but they questioned what the word *contribute* meant. Most assumed it was a monetary

donation, but it could also be interpreted as another type of giving, such as time or goods.



The orange button on the homepage labeled *CONTRIBUTE* was immediately noticed by users, but users weren't sure what *CONTRIBUTE* meant.

52. Avoid being too pushy when asking for donations.

There is a fine line between making it easy for users to donate and being too aggressive in asking for donations. A consistent link to donate is a good idea, as noted above, but be cautious of how the link is presented.

One user, while viewing the Children's Scholarship Fund site, noticed that the *Donate* menu item was larger than the rest of the menu items, which was off-putting. She said, "I notice that they have the word 'donate' bigger and in a different font. I don't like it. I need to learn more before it's in my face. I don't want to say it's rude, but it's a little pushy."



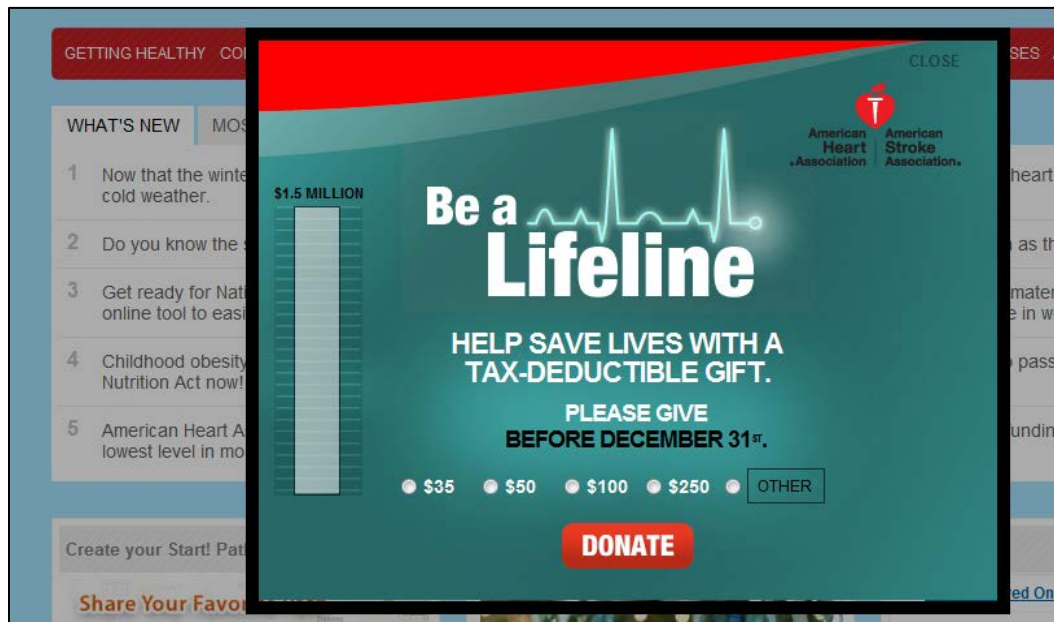
The large *donate* in the main navigation off-put one user, because it was larger than the other navigation items.

53. Don't bombard users with donation requests via pop-ups.

Some sites used pop-ups to prompt users to make a donation. Unfortunately, this backfired, because people didn't want to be interrupted by a pop-up soliciting them for money.

One user, while visiting the American Heart Association to purchase a product, was presented with a pop-up that asked her to donate to the organization seconds after the homepage loaded. She became annoyed, sighed, and said, "That's obnoxious."

Pop-ups are obnoxious.” Not only do users find pop-ups annoying and immediately dismiss them, but they are also ineffective if users have pop-up blockers installed in their browsers.



One user was prompted with a pop-up to donate to the American Heart Association. She was annoyed, because she had gone to the site to purchase a product, not to make a donation.

54. Tell the stories of individuals or situations that will be helped with donations.

Users were interested in how their donations would be used, and they appreciated it when sites provided stories about how the money would be spent.

Two users viewed the National Education for Assistance Dog Services' (NEADS) website and were immediately drawn to the *Our Clients* page, which described specific individuals in need of assistive dogs. Each client story included the person's name, why an assistive dog was needed, an image of the client, and a link to the full story. This layout allowed users to quickly scan through the list of clients and their stories, and they could easily navigate to additional details, if desired.

One user, after viewing some stories on the page, said, "This gives a personal touch, because you see the faces of people who need these animals: one is hard of hearing, one was in a car accident, one has MS... So this is a very personal page. I like that... I can see what I'll be donating towards."

Our Clients

We need to raise \$9,500 for each NEADS Assistance Dog team to cover part of the \$20,000 cost of raising and training the dog and for assisting our clients in learning to live and work with his or her new canine assistant. Please help a team (or more, if you can) by donating all or a portion of the sponsorship by clicking on the person listed below. You will learn a little about that person and how a dog will make a difference in their life.

Select a client.. ▾



Jennifer Gathercole

An assistance dog would help Jennifer work with teenage girls who have come from traumatic backgrounds and have behavioral and/or psychological disabilities.



John Archambault

John has MS and a Balance/walker dog would help him with his daily activities.



Carey Tipping

A car accident has taken away my independence because of a spinal injury. I am currently using a cane, but a dog would be much more helpful to add to my balance.



Kathleen Fortier

Born deaf, Kathleen would like a hearing dog to alert her to sounds she would otherwise not hear.



Jared Golden

Born hard of hearing and with progressive hearing loss, Jared has a 4.0 gpa at Universal Technical Inst. in Norwood MA. and is a diesel technician. He would like a hearing dog to alert him to everyday sounds and make his life easier and safer.

Page 1 of 10 [next >](#) [last >>](#)

The *Our Clients* page on the National Education for Assistance Dog Services' website described the people waiting for assistive dogs, which convinced one user to donate to the organization.

55. Provide information for those interested in making larger donations through planned giving or a charitable gift annuity.

Some users may be interested in researching options for making larger contributions now or in the future. It's important to provide users with the information and tools to answer questions they may have.

For example, the Southern New Hampshire University included a list of planned gifts with supporting details for each. This allowed people to understand how they could contribute to the university in ways that would have a larger impact than a smaller monetary or non-monetary donation.

The screenshot shows the Southern New Hampshire University website. The header includes the university's name and logo, along with links to 'Visit SNHU' and 'Contact Us'. A search bar is also present. Below the header, there's a navigation bar with 'Home / Alumni & Giving / Giving to SNHU / Planned Giving'. The main heading is 'Types of Planned Gifts'. A subheading states: 'Giving options provide exceptional planning strategies and flexibility and may minimize tax implications.' Below this, a list of benefits is provided: 'Reduce your income taxes', 'Avoid capital-gain tax', 'Increase your spendable income', 'Retain payments for life', and 'Achieve no-cost, worry-free asset management'. The page is divided into sections: 'Types of Giving Include:', 'Gifts of Assets' (describing cash, stocks, bonds, and property), 'Gifts by Will' (describing bequests), 'Gifts That Pay You Income' (describing life-income gifts), 'The Charitable Lead Trust' (describing property transfers), and 'Gifts of Retirement-Plan Benefits' (describing retirement-plan benefits). A sidebar on the right contains a list of links: 'Planned Giving', 'Types of Planned Gifts', 'Life-Stage Gift Planner', 'Gift Strategy Chart', 'Featured Articles', 'Newsletter', 'Bequest Language', 'Personalized Gift Calculation', 'Glossary', and 'Disclaimer'. At the bottom of the sidebar, there's a 'Contact us about planned giving' section with contact information for Gail Dexter. Another sidebar section titled 'Ways to Give' lists: 'Donate Online', 'University Fund', 'Supporting Scholarships', 'Matching Gifts', 'Donate a Timeshare', 'Stock Transfers', 'Endowment Gifts', 'Planned Giving', and 'The President's Circle'. A final section titled 'President's Circle' mentions the 'Quill Society'.

The Southern New Hampshire University included information about planned gifts for those who wanted to make high-impact contributions.

NON-MONETARY DONATIONS

56. Provide a list of needed items.

When users were interested in giving a non-monetary donation to an organization, they wanted to be sure that they were giving something that the organization needed.

One user was interested in donating pet food to an animal shelter. She couldn't locate the types of pet food they needed on their site so she said she'd probably just "give them some money, because they know best what the animals need."

Another user was interested in donating food to the Seacoast Family Food Pantry. He navigated to the *Donate* page on their site and found a list of needed items. He immediately knew what was needed and what he could donate.



The Seacoast Family Food Pantry included a list of acceptable items to donate to the organization.

57. Explain donation requirements.

Some organizations that collect non-monetary donations have specific requirements for donated items. For example, a food pantry may only accept non-perishable goods and a consignment shop may only accept clean clothing and accessories.

If there are specific requirements for donated goods, they should be explicitly stated. One user located the requirements for donating stuffed animals on the *How to Donate* page on the Stuffed Animals for Emergencies site; donated items were required to be "gently used."

ATTENTION:

Please note that if you are donating gently used stuffed animals they need to be in good condition. If they are falling apart, have lots of stains, smells or rips or are old and well worn out, please do not donate those. These need to be thrown away. We cannot donate stuffed animals to an organization in this condition. Thank you!

The Stuffed Animals for Emergencies site stated that donated items must be in "good condition" and free of "stains, smells or rips."

Another user was interested in donating used books and toys to the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. She found the page on their site with basic information, but key questions, such as what could be donated and where they could be dropped off, weren't answered. She said, "I would prefer if it had information about the items they need and any germ concerns. Also, I'm certain there are toys they can't take, so a list of good items and perhaps a contact email address would be helpful."

Today more than ever, the compassionate giving of people like you makes a real difference in the quality of health care available from Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center.

How you can help:

- [Donate online](#)
- [Make a Planned Gift](#) (provide scholarships, professorships and other capital gifts through bequests from wills or trusts)
- [Volunteer your time](#)
- [Give blood](#)
- Donate used toys, games and other items to [Children's Hospital at Dartmouth \(CHaD\)](#) by contacting the [Child Life Program](#) at (603) 650-8831

Select the links on the left for more information on the ways you can help Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center.

No matter how transformed the American system of providing health care appears to be or how complex the financing of health care becomes, the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center is still about the intensely personal and deeply human aspects of the relationship between you and those from whom you seek care.


Thank you for letting us know you care!

The Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center's website didn't provide adequate details about what could be donated to the Children's Hospital.

58. State when and where users can drop off items. Provide or link to directions and a map.

If users were interested in donating items, they wanted to know where to bring the items and when they could be dropped off.

Unfortunately, some sites, such as the Salvation Army, required users to contact the organization prior to making a donation. One user wanted to donate some clothing, but he couldn't find a way to locate the donation boxes on their site. Instead, the site told him to call someone to find out where they were. He said, "That's annoying. If I wanted to donate, I wouldn't, because I don't want to call someone. I want to know where those big boxes are that I can drop stuff off at."

IN-KIND DONATIONS 

If you would like to donate clothing, furniture and household items, please call the number below for connection to our thrift stores, which benefit The Salvation Army's adult rehabilitation program.

To Schedule a Pick Up :
 Call 1-800-SA-TRUCK (1-800-728-7825) to discuss a pick up of your items or to find out the nearest drop off location.

The Salvation Army website informed users interested in donating items to call a toll-free number to find out where drop-off locations were or to schedule a pick up.






Other sites, such as the Seacoast Family Food Pantry, provided the location where and times when donations were accepted.

How to Donate

Seacoast Family Food Pantry is grateful for the support of its neighbors and friends. Cash donations may be made to the agency (Seacoast Family Food Pantry) and sent to our address listed below. Donations can also be made by clicking the Donate button. Food donations are welcome to be dropped off at the agency during our pantry hours.

Hours	Address
Monday: 10:00am - 3:00pm	7 Junkins Ave
Tuesday: 3:00pm - 6:00pm	Portsmouth, NH
Wednesday: 10:00am - 3:00pm	03801
Thursday: 3:00pm - 6:00pm	phone: 603-436-6161
Friday: 10:00am - 3:00pm	phone: 603-436-0641

[**Donate**](#)

The Seacoast Family Food Pantry provided an address where donations could be dropped off, along with the times when they were accepted.

Attracting Volunteers

59. Provide a list of common volunteer duties, along with typical hours or shifts.

Users who were interested in volunteering wanted to know what the opportunity would entail. Details such as typical duties as well as hours or shifts when volunteers are needed should be provided on the site.

The New Hampshire Children's Museum provided a list of common duties that volunteers could expect to do. Activities such as "assisting with off-site events and outreach programs" and "providing office support" helped set expectations with users. Additionally, the typical museum and office shifts were listed on the site so users could quickly determine whether or not volunteering at the museum would fit into their schedule.

Volunteer

Help children and their families learn and grow by:

- Aiding children in the Project Area with art and science projects
- Showing visitors how to get the most out of our exhibits
- Providing admissions and museum shop sales support
- Participating in special events
- Sharing a special hobby, craft or talent
- Assisting with off-site events and outreach programs
- Providing office support
- Assisting with general maintenance

Typical museum shifts are from 10 am - 1 pm, 11 am - 3 pm and 1-5 pm.

Most office shifts are from 10 am - 1 pm. We request a minimum commitment of four hours per month.

To volunteer, please call volunteer coordinator Gabe Doleac at (603) 742-2002 or fill out and submit this form.



The New Hampshire Children's Museum listed typical volunteer tasks and shifts to help set expectations and weed out those who weren't interested or available.

60. If volunteers must meet specific requirements, list them.

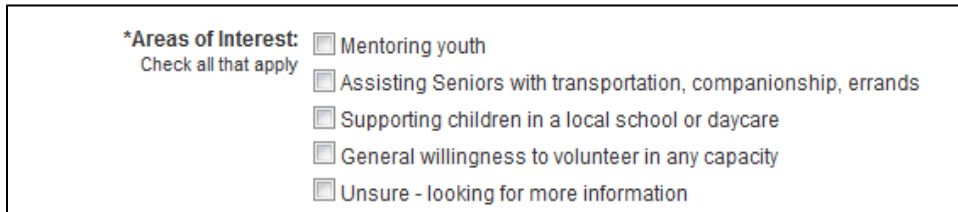
Some organizations may require volunteers to meet specific requirements. For example, volunteers may be required to be over the age of 18. Other organizations may require volunteers to be CPR certified, and others may ask volunteers to have their own transportation.

If specific requirements must be met, identify and explain them. If necessary, provide links to resources, such as CPR training courses, for those who want to volunteer but don't yet meet requirements.

61. Collect volunteer information via a form. Allow users to choose their volunteer interests on the form.

To avoid spending too much time fielding phone calls and email regarding volunteer opportunities, provide an online form for those interested in volunteering. Ask only necessary information, such as a name, contact information, availability, and how

they'd like to contribute to the organization. For example, The Friends Program asked potential volunteers to select their *Areas of Interest*.



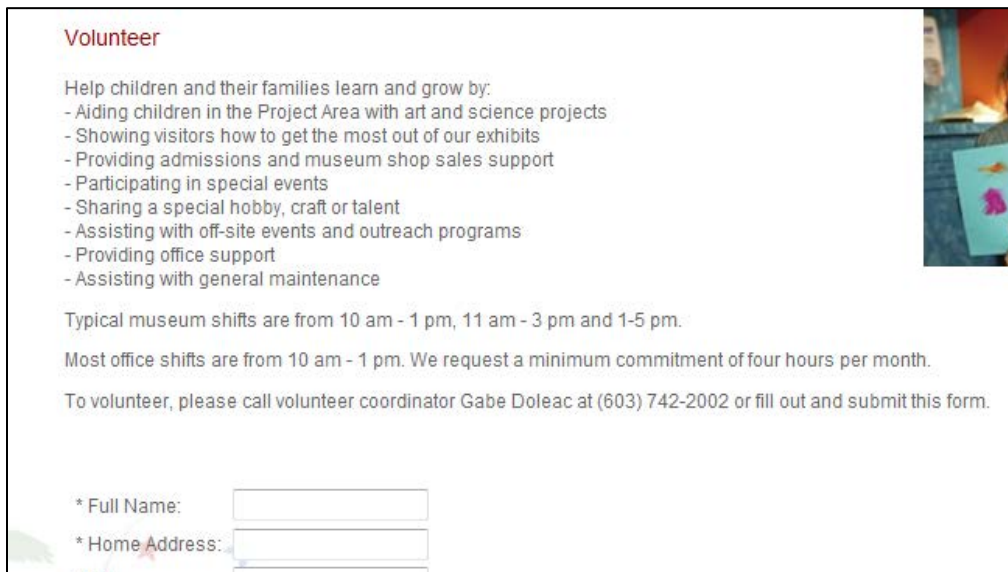
***Areas of Interest:** ☐ Mentoring youth
Check all that apply ☐ Assisting Seniors with transportation, companionship, errands
☐ Supporting children in a local school or daycare
☐ General willingness to volunteer in any capacity
☐ Unsure - looking for more information

The Friends Program asked users to choose the volunteer opportunities they were interested in as part of the online form.

62. Provide contact information along with the form.

Although the volunteer process can be streamlined by collecting information via an online form, not all users were interested in doing so.

One user, who was interested in volunteering at the New Hampshire Children's Museum, appreciated that the site provided him with the name and phone number of the person who managed volunteers. He said, "You can call or fill out the form. Not everyone likes to fill out a form. Some people want to talk."



Volunteer

Help children and their families learn and grow by:

- Aiding children in the Project Area with art and science projects
- Showing visitors how to get the most out of our exhibits
- Providing admissions and museum shop sales support
- Participating in special events
- Sharing a special hobby, craft or talent
- Assisting with off-site events and outreach programs
- Providing office support
- Assisting with general maintenance

Typical museum shifts are from 10 am - 1 pm, 11 am - 3 pm and 1-5 pm.

Most office shifts are from 10 am - 1 pm. We request a minimum commitment of four hours per month.

To volunteer, please call volunteer coordinator Gabe Doleac at (603) 742-2002 or fill out and submit this form.

* Full Name:

* Home Address:

The New Hampshire Children's Museum gave interested volunteers the option to call the volunteer coordinator for more information or fill out the volunteer form.

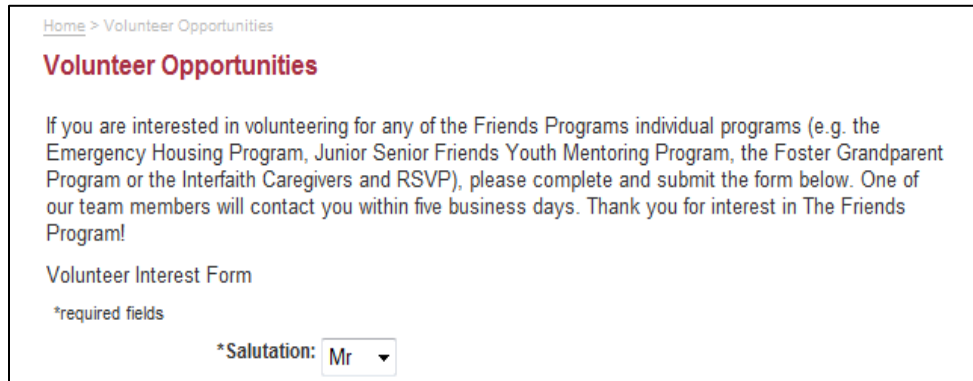
At the very least, sites should list the name, phone number, and email address for the individual who oversees the volunteers at the organization.

63. Tell users when to expect a response on the form and the confirmation page.

If volunteers can submit their contact information and interests through an online form, it's important to clearly state when they can expect to be contacted by someone at the organization. This information should be provided on the form as well as on the confirmation page, which should appear after the information has been submitted.

Setting proper expectations will help users understand when they will be contacted and can potentially save organizational staff time by not having to field phone calls and email from potential volunteers who are waiting to hear about the opportunity.

The Friends Program clearly stated that a team member would be in contact with the potential volunteers within five business days. This was stated at the top of the volunteer form and on the confirmation page.

A screenshot of the top portion of a web form titled "Volunteer Opportunities". At the top, there is a breadcrumb trail: "Home > Volunteer Opportunities". Below this is the section title "Volunteer Opportunities" in a bold, dark red font. The main text of the form explains that if the user is interested in volunteering for any of the Friends Programs' individual programs (e.g., the Emergency Housing Program, Junior Senior Friends Youth Mentoring Program, the Foster Grandparent Program, or the Interfaith Caregivers and RSVP), they should complete and submit the form below. It states that one of the team members will contact the user within five business days. Below the text, it says "Volunteer Interest Form" and "*required fields". At the bottom, there is a label "*Salutation:" followed by a dropdown menu currently showing "Mr".

[Home](#) > Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer Opportunities

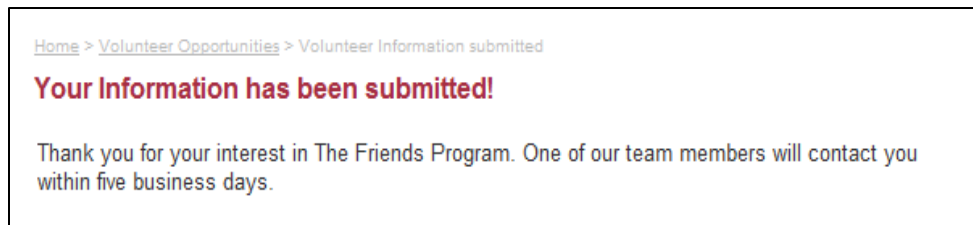
If you are interested in volunteering for any of the Friends Programs individual programs (e.g. the Emergency Housing Program, Junior Senior Friends Youth Mentoring Program, the Foster Grandparent Program or the Interfaith Caregivers and RSVP), please complete and submit the form below. One of our team members will contact you within five business days. Thank you for interest in The Friends Program!

Volunteer Interest Form

*required fields

*Salutation:

Image 1 of 2: The Friends Program included details about when to expect to hear from someone at the organization at the top of the volunteer form.

A screenshot of a confirmation page titled "Your Information has been submitted!". At the top, there is a breadcrumb trail: "Home > Volunteer Opportunities > Volunteer Information submitted". Below this is the title "Your Information has been submitted!" in a bold, dark red font. The main text of the page says "Thank you for your interest in The Friends Program. One of our team members will contact you within five business days.".

[Home](#) > [Volunteer Opportunities](#) > Volunteer Information submitted

Your Information has been submitted!

Thank you for your interest in The Friends Program. One of our team members will contact you within five business days.

Image 2 of 2: On the confirmation page that appeared after users submitted the volunteer form, The Friends Program's website reiterated when potential volunteers could expect to hear from someone at the organization.

The Donation Process

DONATIONS VS. E-COMMERCE TRANSACTIONS

Users have been making purchases on the Web for years, and many saw similarities between purchasing an item and making a donation. They said:

- “Even though it’s a donation, they are going to send you a receipt for your records, and they have all your information as if you were buying something online.”
- “It’s very similar, but easier. You don’t have to put in shipping information.”
- “If you are buying two things from a website, you have a cart, but you are choosing one [donation] amount, so there’s no cart. It’s more streamlined.”
- “It’s pretty similar. They learn from Amazon.com.”

Because of the similarity between the processes of making a donation and purchasing an item, all users were able to make a donation successfully. In fact, the average success rate for the donation task was 100%. This high success rate can be explained with three reasons:

- **Familiarity with completing online transactions:** Users are already familiar with completing e-commerce transactions on the Web. As mentioned previously, they’ve been doing it for years. For this reason, non-profit and charities should pay close attention to best practices on e-commerce sites so they can integrate them into the donation process on their sites.
- **Less required information:** The amount of information required to make a donation is less than the amount of information needed to complete an e-commerce transaction, so the process is simpler and more streamlined—leaving less room for error.
- **Non-profit and charities’ necessity for an easy-to-use donation process:** Non-profit and charity organizations rely on donations to survive. For this reason, they must design and implement a donation process that is easy-to-use. To their benefit, they can refer to many other successful e-commerce and donation processes to help inform their donation process design.

As compared to the checkout process on an e-commerce site, the donation process on a non-profit or charity site has less required information. To complete a donation, organizations must collect three essential items:

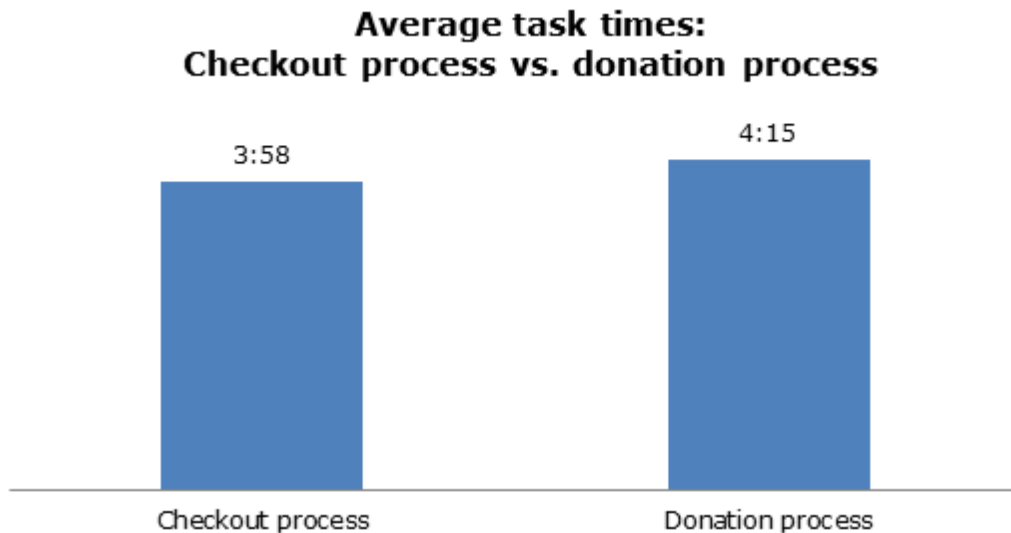
- Donation amount
- Donor’s name (or “anonymous”)
- Billing information (credit card details and billing address)

Additional information that can be collected during the donation process, but is not be required to complete a donation, includes:

- A name the donation is being made in honor or memory of

- A specific program or area to apply the donation toward
- A donation frequency (one-time donation or a recurring donation)

Although the donation process requires less information than the checkout process, it took longer for users to complete, on average, than the checkout process. In our studies, the donation process took, on average, four minutes and 15 seconds (from clicking the “donate” call to action until the confirmation page displayed). In our e-commerce study, the checkout process took, on average, three minutes and 58 seconds (from clicking the “checkout” call to action until the confirmation page displayed).



The chart above shows the average task time for the checkout process (3 minutes and 58 seconds), as tested in our e-commerce studies, and the donation process (4 minutes and 15 seconds).

The longer task time, on average, was likely caused by a few factors:

- **More familiarity with the checkout process:** Most users in our studies made more online purchases than online donations per year, so they were more familiar with the checkout process and knew what to expect. For this reason, it's imperative that non-profit and charities strive to mimic the checkout process within the donation process on their sites.
- **More cognitive processing required in the donation process:** Some donation processes had fields or actions, such as making a donation in someone's honor or setting up recurring donations, which required more cognitive processing than the typical e-commerce checkout.
- **Streamlined checkout processes:** A typical checkout process required users to provide more information, such as a shipping address, as compared to a typical donation process. However, some e-commerce sites provided the option to replicate the billing information in the shipping fields, or vice versa, by selecting a checkbox. This streamlined design allowed users to complete the process more quickly than if they were required to input all requested information manually.

Less information is required to complete a donation as compared to an e-commerce transaction, so the donation form can easily be contained to one page. The sites we tested took various approaches to the donation process, but many limited the form to one page. Some sites broke the process down into multiple steps on several pages. Sites that use this approach should display the steps throughout the process, and allow users to navigate back to previous steps to make a change—which is something that is often done on e-commerce sites.

Most e-commerce sites allow users to create an account that retains their information for future purchases. Non-profits and charity sites may also want to do the same, especially if they have online donors who make regular contributions. In our study, very few sites offered this option for repeat donors.

As observed in both e-commerce and donations studies, users are reluctant to give up personal information, especially phone numbers and email addresses. Non-profit and charity sites should explain why they are asking for this information, and how it will be used.

Confirmation pages are critical on both e-commerce and donation sites. However, non-profit and charity sites must include a confirmation page as part of the donation process, which should include a receipt for tax purposes. Additionally, a receipt should be emailed if an email address is provided during the donation process.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

64. Answer people's questions before they initiate the donation process.

As mentioned previously, users were interested in two things before they felt comfortable making a donation to a non-profit or charity organization. They wanted to know what the organization did and how they used donated funds. Users struggled to locate these facts on the homepages and within the sites of non-profits and charity organizations.

In many cases, critical details, such as how donations were used, were only available once users initiated the donation process. Unfortunately, this information was only found by people who had already decided to make a contribution to the organization. Other users simply researching and evaluating an organization never found these critical details, because they were placed within the donation process.


For example, the Habitat for Humanity website included details about how common donation amounts would be used on the first page of the donation process. One user saw this and said, "It tells you what your donation will buy. That's interesting. I like the fact that you are actually seeing where your money is going. For \$10, I'm buying a box of nails."



The Habitat for Humanity site provided examples of tangible items that would be purchased with various donation amounts, but the information was hidden within the donation process.


One user noticed information to convince users to donate to Sustainable Conservation after clicking the *Donate* link. However, he was surprised by its placement on the first page of the donation process. He said, "If I'm going to this page, I've already decided to donate. I think you are already preaching to the choir here."

Reasons to Give




Top Honors

Since 2003, Sustainable Conservation has received top honors from America's premier independent non-profit evaluator, **Charity Navigator**, for our financial strength and ability to maximize donations. Only 5% of all US nonprofits have received four consecutive four-star ratings.




Outstanding Leadership

Among other honors, Sustainable Conservation Executive Director Ashley Boren received the prestigious **2007 James Irvine Foundation Leadership Award**. The award recognizes Ashley's innovative, collaborative approach to solving California's toughest environmental problems. [More awards.](#)



Financial Transparency

Sustainable Conservation is committed to openly sharing financial information. Please see our most recent [Financial Highlights](#) and [Audited Financial Statements](#).



Results

Reduced California agriculture's greenhouse gas emissions by 12,000 tons since 2003. That's like taking 40,000 cars off the road. [More...](#)

- Expanded our Partners in Restoration program across millions of acres in California to boost water quality and fish habitat. [More...](#)
- Promoted the adoption of low-intensity soil cultivation on farms that, if used statewide, could cut dust pollution from agriculture by up to 85%. [More...](#)

The first page of the donation process on the Sustainable Conservation website included reasons to give to the charity. Users who had decided to donate to the organization thought it was too late in the process to present this information.

Although providing this information was helpful, it would have been better to show this prior to the first page of the donation process. Users didn't see this information until they had already decided to make a donation, but it was critical information that should have been available to everyone researching and evaluating the organization.

Other sites were better at disclosing information about how donations would be used prior to the donation process. The Big Brothers Big Sisters website highlighted how donations would be used on their *Support Us* page; they specifically listed four ways that donations would improve their programs. The page also stated that 92.2% of their donations were put towards their programs. This information was available prior to moving into the donation process, which allowed users to fully understand

how donations were used within the organization before initiating the donation process.

92.2% of every dollar you give goes directly to making and supporting matches. The remainder covers overall program administration. Charity Navigator, the country's premier independent charity evaluator, has awarded Big Brothers Big Sisters of America a 4-star "exceptional" rating for outstanding fiscal management for the fifth consecutive year.

Donating will help to:

- Help recruit new Big Brother and Big Sister volunteers
- Cover the costs of background checks and insurance, while ensuring trained professionals match children to caring and responsible Bigs
- Offer one-on-one, ongoing supervision and support for every match
- Provide cultural and social activities to enrich the opportunities for children

The Big Brothers Big Sisters site provided information about the percentage of donations that were put towards their programs, along with some brief details about the programs being funded.

65. Make registration optional.

Users want to get through the donation process as quickly and easily as possible. Sites shouldn't require users to register or log in to make a donation. It's a deterrent. If site registration or logging in is required, people will be less willing to donate.

One user thought she might have to be a member to donate to the Defenders of Wildlife, because a donation call to action was labeled *Donate/Become a Member*. This actually wasn't the case, but the unclear label discouraged her from making a donation. She said, "Defenders of Wildlife might be asking for a membership. I don't like to subscribe on the Internet, and you get lots of spam mail. I don't mind donating though."

Support Us



Donate/Become a Member

Join more than 500,000 Defenders of Wildlife supporters who have donated to protect wildlife for future generations. As thanks for your donation of \$20 or more, we'll send you a free Defenders windbreaker.

DONATE NOW >

A link to donate to the Defenders of Wildlife was labeled *Donate/Become a Member*, and one user thought she had to be a member to donate.

Users were required to register or log in to donate to Paws with a Cause, which was annoying for one user, who decided to donate to another charity.

PAWS **register**

User Registration

In order to donate or purchase items from our catalog, you will need to be registered with our website. Please take a few minutes to enter the information below. Once completed, you will have access to donate and shop our catalog.

🐾 = Required to gain access

🐾 E-Mail Address:

🐾 First Name:

🐾 Last Name:

Phone:

🐾 Address:

City:

🐾 State: ALABAMA ▼

🐾 Postal Code:

Country:

🐾 Password: **Note: 6 characters or more.**

🐾 Verify Password:

Submit

Users shouldn't be required to register in order to donate to an organization, which was done on the Paws with a Cause website.

Registration should not be required, but it can be optional. Some users visiting charity or non-profits sites may know they will donate on a regular basis, so they may benefit from setting up an account; creating an account that includes and stores all necessary information makes regular donations quicker and easier.

Registration can be optional by the simple addition of an optional password field in the donation process. The optional password field should be clearly marked as optional. Also, sites should consider listing the benefits of registration, such as quicker future donations, next to the optional form field.

For example, the Child Advocates donation process included optional registration fields, along with an explanation of why regular donors may want to register. Although registration was optional, the placement of the fields in the right margin was problematic; users typically ignore this area of the page because it's where advertisements typically appear. Additionally, the visual treatment was similar to that of an advertisement. It would have been better to incorporate the *Password* field into the form, preferably after the *Email* field. (Also, using an email address as the user name would have been better; that way users wouldn't have to create or remember a login ID.)

childadvocates®

Please complete the following information. When you are finished, click Continue to enter your donation.

* Denotes Required Information

Registration Information

Title

First Name

Last Name*

Address*

City, State ZIP*

Country*

Phone

Fax

Email*

☒ I wish to receive future email correspondence.

☐ I prefer to make my donations anonymously.

Optional Login

[Sign up](#) for a free account that will enable you to easily make future donations and view previous Web transactions with Child Advocates, Inc.

Login ID*

Password*

[Forgot my password](#)

The Child Advocates donation process included optional registration.

66. Explain why someone would want to register on the site.

Users don't want to register on a site unless there are clear benefits for doing so. If site registration is offered, sites should clearly communicate what they offer for those who register.

The Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (CHADD) website included a page at the beginning of the donation process that asked users to log in, sign up, or

make a donation without logging in or signing up. Although the three options were presented, the benefits of registering on the site weren't communicated to donors.

SEARCH: [GO](#) [En Español](#) | [Log in](#)

CHADD
Children and Adults with
Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

[About CHADD](#) [Understanding AD/HD](#) [Finding Support](#) [Membership](#) [Conferences & Training](#) [Store](#)

[Home](#)
[Print this Page](#)

[Learn more about AD/HD](#)

National Resource Center on AD/HD
A program of CHADD

Get Involved...

- [Join CHADD](#)
- [Connect with Others](#)
- [Influence Policy](#)
- [Find Local Chapters](#)
- [Advertise with Us](#)
- [Donate to CHADD](#)

Your Gift to CHADD Helps People Affected by AD/HD

CHADD is the nation's leading nonprofit organization working at the national and local levels to improve the lives of people affected by AD/HD. **Contributions to CHADD are tax deductible to the full extent of the law .**

Donating online is a great way to show your support for **CHADD!** Using this quick and easy method for donating significantly cuts down on the administrative costs associated with processing donations that come in the mail, so a greater part of every dollar goes toward our mission.

Please select your donation preference. You can contribute easily and securely online by credit card, or download and pay by mail. For further information, contact the CHADD Development Department at (240) 487-2310.

Thank you for your support.

If you are already a member of CHADD, have donated in the past, or have registered at the CHADD web site, please "Sign In" below.

Username

Password

[Forgot your Username or password?](#)

If you are new to CHADD, please complete the simple Site Registration so we can process your online donation.

Don't Want to Register Or Login

[Home](#) [Contact](#) [Join CHADD](#) [E-News](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Site Map](#) [Donate](#)

© 2010 by Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD). All rights reserved.

The CHADD website provided an option for users to register for the site before making a donation without explaining why users may be interested in doing so.

67. Provide login fields for returning donors.

For those who have created a site registration, provide login fields or a link to them. On the first page of the donation process, the American Heart Association provided a *Sign In* link in the left-hand navigation for returning donors. However, the call to action was hidden within the navigation, which made it difficult for returning donors to quickly locate it on the page. Instead, the page could have included a *Sign In* link at the top of the form for returning donors, which wouldn't distract new or unregistered donors from making a donation—and might catch returning donors who don't want to enter all their information again.

The American Heart Association provided a *Sign In* link within the navigation. It would have been better to place this link at the top of the page where it would be more noticeable.

68. Create a donation process that makes sense to users. Consider the transaction and the required information to craft an appropriate donation process.

When users decided to make a donation, they wanted to do so quickly and easily. Creating a seamless donation process will increase the odds of getting users to complete the process.

In our study, we saw varying approaches to the donation process. Some processes had two steps—a form and a confirmation page—and others were broken down into smaller, incremental steps. Users didn't gravitate towards one process over another. As long as the information being requested was presented in a clear and easy-to-understand manner, users completed transactions successfully. Problems with completing donations were attributed to undefined steps, poorly labeled fields, required site registration, and unclear error messages, but they weren't related to the overall method of collecting the information.

Some donation processes were extremely short and to the point. The donation process on the Environmental Defense Fund website was only two steps: a donation form and a confirmation page. The donation form only collected the required information to complete the transaction: the amount of the donation and billing information (name, address, and credit card details). This donation process didn't

offer a verification page that allowed users to review details before submitting their donation, but a message at the bottom of the page under the *Donate Now* button said “Your credit card will be charged.” After the form was submitted, a confirmation page containing the donation details displayed.


The screenshot shows a donation form titled "DONATE" with a blue header bar. A note "All fields required." is in the top right. The form is divided into three main sections: "Amount", "Billing Address", and "Credit Card Information".

- Amount:** Features radio buttons for \$25, \$50, \$100, \$500, \$1,000, and \$5,000. The \$25 option is selected. Below is an "Other: \$" field with a text input. A note states: "Minimum payment: \$5" and "Maximum payment: \$25000".
- Billing Address:** Includes an "Email:" field, "First Name:" and "Last Name:" fields, an "Address:" field, a "City:" field, a "State/Province:" dropdown menu (currently showing "-Choose One-"), a "ZIP/Postal Code:" field, and a "Country:" dropdown menu (currently showing "United States").
- Credit Card Information:** Includes a "Payment method:" dropdown menu (currently showing "Visa"), a "Card number:" field, an "Expiration date:" field with two dropdowns (currently showing "01" and "2009"), and a "Card Security Code" field. A link "(what's this?)" is below the security code field. A "Donate Now" button is at the bottom right of this section.

At the very bottom of the form, a message reads: "Your credit card will be charged."

The donation process on the Environmental Defense Fund website had two clear steps: a short donation form and a confirmation page.

The American Heart Association also consolidated their donation process to two steps: a donation form and a confirmation page. Users submitted the donation amount and billing information (name, address, and credit card details). When users completed the form and clicked the *Donate* button, the information was submitted and a confirmation page appeared.



Your support is critical to our mission:

- to provide the essential tools to fight cardiovascular disease
- to be where you live, work and play working for your health and to save lives
- to train and educate millions of children, adults and medical professionals
- to invest millions of dollars to fund research to solve pressing heart problems

Donation Amount



☐ \$35.00
☐ \$50.00
☐ \$100.00
☐ \$250.00
☒ Other
 (minimum \$10.00)

Your Information

First Name
 Last Name
 Email Address
 Country
 Street Address
 Street Address 2
 City
 State
 Zip Code

Payment Details

Credit Card Number
 Verification Code [What's this?](#)
 Expiration Month
 Expiration Year

Contributions to the American Heart Association are tax-deductible. The American Heart Association has partnered with Kimbia, Inc. to provide secure processing of your donation. The American Heart Association respects your privacy, we will never share your donation information.

DONATE

The American Heart Association broke the donation process into two steps: a donation form and a confirmation page.

Some sites broke the donation process down into smaller steps, which was also successful with users. Each step in the process collected specific information so users could focus on the information being requested, and they weren't distracted by unrelated fields on the page.

The Defenders of Wildlife's donation process was five steps: select a gift amount, accept or deny a gift (discussed in more detail on page 148), payment and billing information, a verification page, and a confirmation page/receipt.

Gift Amount ✓
Premium ✓
Payment Info
Review & Submit
Receipt

You have chosen to donate \$25.00. Besides helping to save wildlife you'll also receive our Gray Defenders Windbreaker.

Please fill in the following information to complete your contribution

* = Required Fields

The Defenders of Wildlife broke their donation process down into five smaller steps, which were displayed at the top of the page throughout the process.

Other sites used the shopping cart method to process donations. In some instances, this made sense, because users were donating a tangible item as opposed to money. For example, users could purchase an animal or a share of an animal for a community or family in need on the Heifer International site. The site needed to support multiple donations in one transaction, so it made sense to use an e-commerce type process that included a shopping cart and a checkout process.

View Order

Please review the items in your shopping cart. If you wish to make changes please click on the update changes button on the bottom of the page.

Shopping Cart

Review Order

To change your order quantity, adjust the value in the "Qty" box and click "Update Total" at the bottom of the page.

Confirm	Name	Description	Qty	Price	Total
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chicks	Chicks: A Good Choice	<input type="text" value="1"/>	x US\$20.00	US\$20.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Goats	Goats: The Most Giving Animals Around Goat Gift of a Goat	<input type="text" value="1"/>	x US\$120.00	US\$120.00

Product Sub Total: **US\$140.00**

Total: **US\$140.00**

If you would like to make an additional donation to support Heifer International, enter the amount below:

Amount:

US\$

[Order More Items](#)

[Update Total](#)

[Proceed to Checkout](#)

The donation process on the Heifer International website followed a more traditional e-commerce process, but it worked because users were purchasing animals or shares of animals for families in need.

69. Show the steps in the donation process, and allow users to go back to previous steps.

For multi-step donation processes, it's important to indicate the step the user is currently on. This allows users to understand what they have completed and the steps they still need to complete.





It's not uncommon for users to make mistakes during the donation process. For this reason, it's important to allow users to go back to previously completed steps to make changes.

The American Red Cross website used a four-step donation process: the first step required users to select a program to apply their donation towards; the second step collected billing and personal information via a form; the third was a verification page; and the fourth was a confirmation page. The first step of the process, the program selection, was technically a step, but it wasn't shown as a step in the overall donation process. If users wanted to change the program they'd selected when they were further along in the process, they had to abort the donation process and start over.

Donate Now!

Please make your selection below and click "Continue".

Financial contributions to the American Red Cross are tax-deductible.

- ☐  **DISASTER RELIEF FUND**
You can help the victims of thousands of disasters across the country each year, disasters like the recent tornadoes and winter storms, by making a financial gift to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. This Fund enables the Red Cross to provide shelter, food, counseling and other assistance to victims of disaster. The American Red Cross honors donor intent. If you wish to designate your donation to a specific disaster please do so at the time of your donation. Call 1-800-REDCROSS or 1-800-257-7575 (Spanish) or mail your donation, with the designation, to the American Red Cross, P. O. Box 37243, Washington, DC 20013.
- ☐  **INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE FUND**
You can help the victims of countless crises around the world each year by making a financial gift to the American Red Cross International Response Fund, which will provide immediate relief and long-term support through supplies, technical assistance and other support to help those in need. The American Red Cross honors donor intent. If you wish to designate your donation to a specific disaster, please do so at the time of your donation by mailing your donation with the designation to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37243, Washington, D.C. 20013 or to your local American Red Cross chapter. Donations to the International Response Fund can be made by phone at 1-800-REDCROSS or 1-800-257-7575 (Spanish) or online at www.redcross.org.
- ☐  **WHERE THE NEED IS GREATEST**
The American Red Cross is where people mobilize to help their neighbors—down the street, across the country and around the world—in emergencies. The American Red Cross, a humanitarian organization led by volunteers, guided by its Congressional Charter and the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross Movement, provides relief to victims of disasters and helps people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies. You can help ensure that the Red Cross can continue to provide these lifesaving services and has the resources, talent and ability to continue to deliver them by making a donation to support all of its core services today.
- ☐  **SERVICE TO THE ARMED FORCES**
The American Red Cross is a lifeline for deployed military members, allowing them to communicate to loved ones back home during emergencies. We also provide social services, emergency travel, financial assistance and mental health support for our returning troops and their families. You can help the Red Cross help military families with a gift to Red Cross Services to Armed Forces.
- ☐  **YOUR LOCAL RED CROSS CHAPTER**
Your local Red Cross chapter is committed to meeting the humanitarian needs of the people in your area, be it in disaster preparedness, disaster relief, first aid or CPR training, or disease prevention. You can help support your local chapter programs and services through a gift to your local Red Cross chapter. The gift will be sent to the local area chapter based on your zip code.

CONTINUE

Please make your selection above and click "Continue".

Image 1 of 2: The first step in the American Red Cross donation process was to select a program to receive the donation.

1 Gift & Payment Information

2 Review Gift

Make this a RECURRING GIFT

You can provide sustained Red Cross support through the year by becoming a recurring gift donor.

Where The Need Is Greatest

The American Red Cross is where people mobilize to help their neighbors - down the street, across the country and around the world - in emergencies. Together, we provide relief to victims of disasters, collect and supply blood for those in need and help people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies. You can help ensure these lifesaving services are always available, and the Red Cross continues to have the resources, talent and ability to deliver them.

Minimum Donation Amount of \$10.00

*Enter A Gift Amount:

Billing Information

Title:

*First Name:

Middle Name:

*Last Name:

Suffix:

*Email Address:

☒ I may be contacted by email

*Street 1:

Street 2:

*City:

*State/Province:

*ZIP/Postal Code:

*Country:

Phone Number:

Company/OrganizationName:


Tribute Gift Information

☐ Yes, this is an honor or memorial gift.

Recipient First Name

A special gift card will be mailed to your tribute recipient notifying them of your thoughtfulness.

Payment Information

Credit Card Type: 

*Credit Card Number:

*CVV Number: [What is this?](#)

*Expiration Date:

Image 2 of 2: The *Gift & Payment Information* page was listed as *Step 1* in the donation process on the American Red Cross website, but it was actually the second step; the first step was the program selection. Users couldn't go back and change the area they wanted to donate to unless they started the donation process again.

The American Cancer Society had a four-step donation process. The first step asked users to select a donation amount, gift type (general, memorial, or honor) and program to apply the donation towards. The second step asked for a name and billing information (contact information, credit card details, and a billing address), and the third and fourth steps asked users to review and submit the provided information.

Throughout the donation process, users could see their location in a progress bar at the top of the page. Before they submitted the donation, they could navigate back to a previously completed step to make changes or edits to the provided information by clicking on the step in the progress bar.

The screenshot shows a four-step progress bar at the top: 'MAKE A GIFT' (active, orange), 'CONTACT AND BILLING INFO' (orange), 'REVIEW YOUR GIFT' (grey), and 'CONFIRM' (grey). Below the progress bar, the text reads 'Donate Now: Please enter your contact and billing information.' The main form area is titled '1 YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION' with a '* Required Fields' note. The form contains the following fields: 'First Name*', 'M.I.', 'Last Name*', 'Address Line 1*', 'Address Line 2', 'City*', and 'State' (with a dropdown arrow). Each field has a corresponding input box.

The American Cancer Society included a four-step donation process. Users could see their progression through the process and navigate to previously completed steps to make changes.


70. Streamline the donation process.

Some of the sites we tested had unnecessary steps within the donation process, which only confused users.

When users tried to make a donation on the Defenders of Wildlife website, they selected a donation amount, and were then asked if they wanted a free jacket with their donation of \$20 or more. This step was unexpected and confusing for users. Instead, this site should have grouped this with another step, such as the *Gift Amount* step, or removed it altogether from the donation process.

Gift Amount ✓
Premium
Payment Info
Review & Submit
Receipt

We want to thank you with a free gift for your donation of \$25.00



Gray Defenders Windbreaker
Gray Defenders Windbreaker (shipped to U.S. addresses only)

Accept Premium

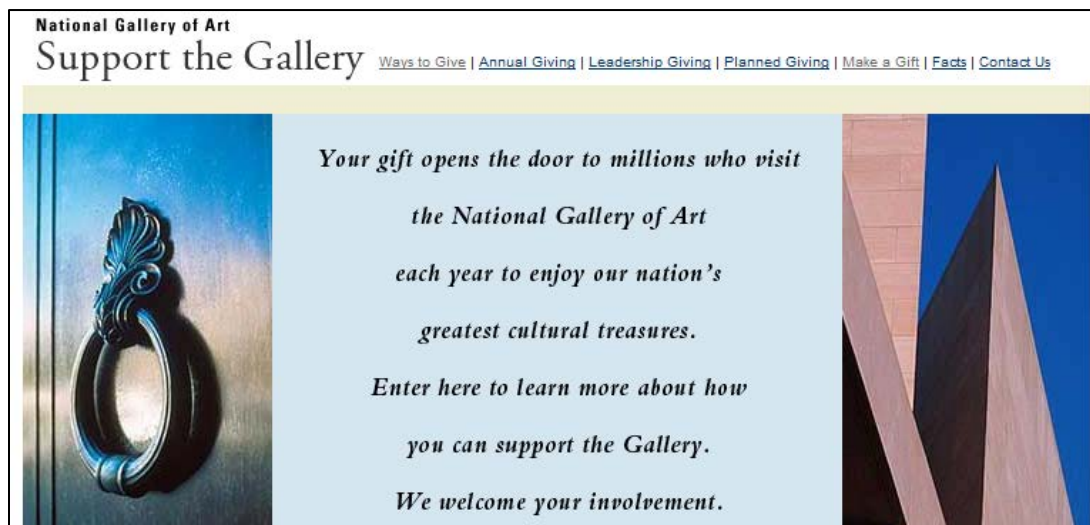
If you'd prefer not to receive a free gift with your donation, please click on the "no premium" button.

No Premium

Previous Step
Cancel

This random *Premium* step in the donation process on the Defenders of Wildlife site was unnecessary and unexpected as a separate step.

The first step in the donation process on the National Gallery of Art website showed a brief statement and two images that had to be clicked in order to launch the second step in the process, the donation form. This was an unnecessary step and should have been omitted.



Users had to click on one of these two images to get to the second step in the donation process, which was an unintuitive and unnecessary step.

71. Avoid routing users to a third-party application as the only option to complete the donation process.

On several sites, users were routed to a third-party application when they initiated the donation process. Of the 39 donation processes we tested, 69% brought users to a third-party payment application, such as PayPal, Google Checkout, GiveDirect, or

another payment application, to complete the donation process. Users were annoyed and confused when this happened. They said:

- "I've never seen a charity site link to Google Checkout."
- "I think I have a Google Checkout login, but I'm not sure."
- "The credit card is easier, because I can't always remember my PayPal login."
- "This must be like 'PayPal' for charities."

Not only was the experience jarring and unexpected, but it also caused a lot of frustration. Applications like PayPal and Google Checkout suggested that users log in to complete a transaction, but users in our study either didn't have a login or couldn't remember it. Although these applications allowed users to complete the transaction without registering or logging in, they were designed in a way that made this unintuitive or confusing.


Unfortunately, if users are routed to a third-party application to complete the donation process, organizations have no control over the usability or performance of the system and may lose donations due to these factors.

The Seacoast Family Food Pantry required users to check out using PayPal, which was problematic for one user. The "Update Total" interaction wasn't entirely clear, which caused him to type in his information twice. It took him twice as long to make a donation as it should have, and he grew frustrated with the process.

The screenshot shows the Seacoast Family Food Pantry website. At the top, there's a header with the organization's name. Below it, a blue box contains a red instruction: "Please enter your donation amount and click **Update Total**." Below this is a table with three columns: Purpose, Donation amount, and Total. The first row shows "Seacoast Family Food Pantry" under Purpose, a dollar sign and an empty input field under Donation amount, and a dollar sign under Total. Below the table is a blue button labeled "Update Total". To the right of the table, there's a "\$ USD" label. Below the table, there's a section titled "Donate quickly with PayPal" with the PayPal logo and "Secure Payments" text. Below this, a paragraph states: "PayPal securely processes donations for Seacoast Family Food Pantry. You can complete your payment with just a few clicks." Below this, there's a section titled "Why use PayPal?" with three bullet points: "It's easy to send money and shop online", "You can donate without sharing your financial information", and "Over 50,000 online merchants accept PayPal". Below this, there's a section titled "Don't have a PayPal account?" with the text "Use your credit card or bank account (where available). [Continue](#)". At the bottom left, there are logos for VISA, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover. At the bottom right, there's a "LOG IN TO PAYPAL" section with fields for Email and Password, a "Log In" button, and a link for "Forgot email address or password?".

If users wanted to make a donation to the Seacoast Family Food Pantry, they were required to complete the transaction using PayPal. One user was slowed down when he didn't understand he needed to click *Update Total* in order to submit his donation amount. This was a poor design.

[Help](#)



Donation Details - The Race to Erase MS, 310 440-4842, 1801 Ave of the Stars, Suite 1400, Los Angeles, CA ...

Qty	Item	Price
1	The Race to Erase MS - Thank you for your donation!	\$15.00
Subtotal: \$15.00		

Create a Google Account to continue


Shop confidently with Google Checkout
Sign up now and get 100% protection on unauthorized purchases while shopping at stores across the web.

Your current email address:

Choose a password:
Minimum of 8 characters in length. [?](#)

Re-enter password:

Location: United States ▼

Card number:


Expiration date: Month ▼ / Year ▼ CVC: [What's this?](#)

Cardholder name:

Billing Address:

City/Town:

State: Select state ▼

Zip: [?](#)

Phone number:
Required for account verification.

My shipping address is:
☒ My billing address
☐ A different address

I agree to the [Terms of Service](#).

Agree and Continue

You can still make changes to your order on the next page.

Or sign in

If you already have a Google Account

Email:

Password:

Sign in and continue

[I cannot access my account](#)

To make a donation to the Nancy Davis Foundation for Multiple Sclerosis, users had to complete the donation using Google Checkout.

72. If routing users to a third-party payment application, warn them.

If organizations use a third-party payment application, this should be clearly stated within the donation process. This allows users to be fully informed about who is handling their sensitive information.

The American Heart Association clearly stated that Kimbia, Inc. was used for the "secure processing" of donations. This statement was provided at the bottom of the donation form and reiterated on the confirmation page.

Contributions to the American Heart Association are tax-deductible. The American Heart Association has partnered with Kimbia, Inc. to provide secure processing of your donation. The American Heart Association respects your privacy, we will never share your donation information.

The American Heart Association's donation form clearly stated that a third party was being used to process donations given to the organization.

73. If using a third-party payment application, create a seamless experience. Use a visual design that's the same as the organization's main site, and don't launch the payment application in a new window.

Some third-party payment applications, such as those provided by Blackbaud, allowed organizations to design and integrate the application into their own site so the experience was seamless; the payment application opened in the same window and the visual design followed the organization's main website.

For example, when users clicked the *Make a Gift* link on the Lymphoma Research Foundation website, the first page of the donation process loaded in the same window and was visually consistent with the rest of the site.

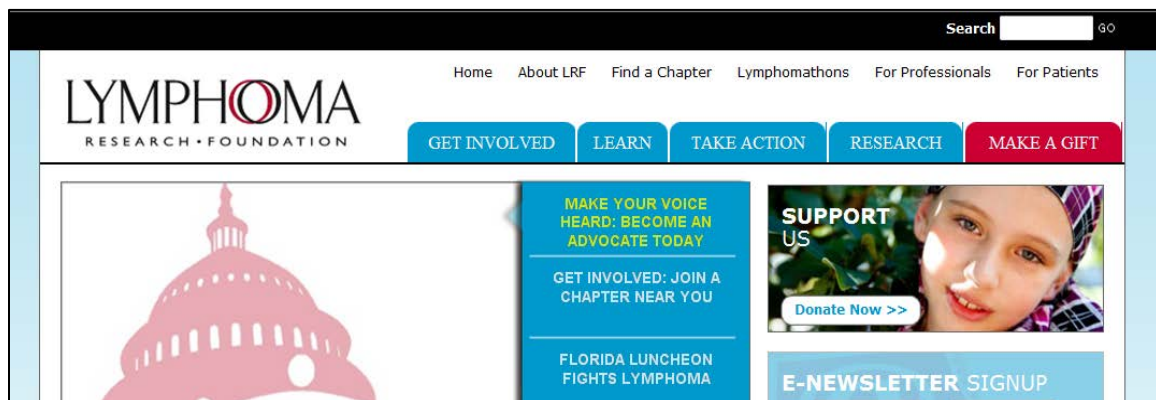


Image 1 of 2: The Lymphoma Research Foundation's homepage had a white background and used blue, black, and red as main site colors.

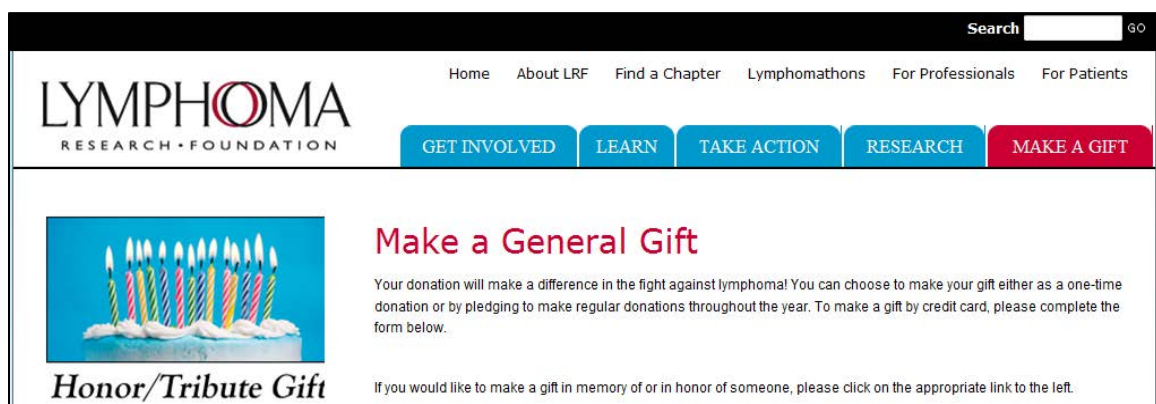


Image 2 of 2: The first page of the donation process on the Lymphoma Research Foundation's site had a visual design and navigation system that was consistent with the rest of the site, which created a seamless donation experience for users.

In contrast, when users chose to donate to Pro Portsmouth Inc., a new window launched with the JustGive.org third-party payment application, which had a visual design that was jarringly different than the main site.



Image 1 of 2: The Pro Portsmouth Inc. homepage included a white background and the use of yellow, blue, and red as the main colors.

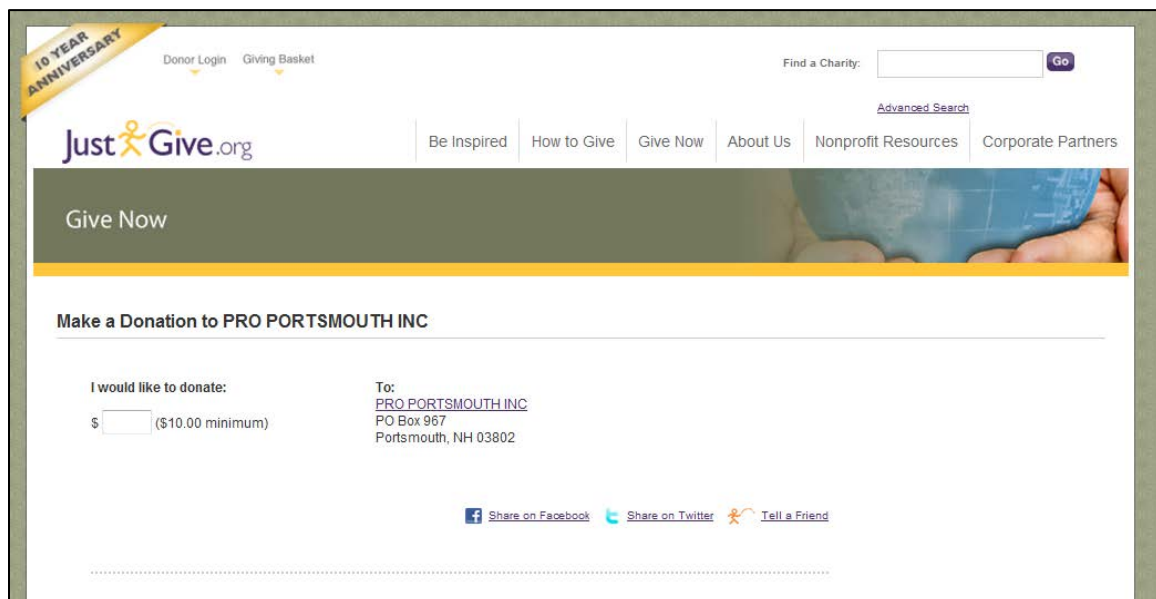


Image 2 of 2: The donation process for Pro Portsmouth Inc. launched in a new window, and the visual design and navigation system were drastically different than the organization's main site.

74. Don't allow third-party payment applications to solicit additional funds from donors.

The third-party payment application used by some sites asked users to give an additional donation that would be directed to them.

One user in our study noticed that JustGive.org selected a checkbox by default that would direct an additional \$3.00 donation to them when he made a \$10.00 donation to Pro Portsmouth Inc. He was annoyed that the application tried to trick him into making an additional donation to them, because he knew the company likely already received a percentage of the total donation. He said, "I don't want to donate to JustGive. They are just the vehicle. Besides, I'm sure they already take a portion of this \$10.00."

The screenshot shows the JustGive.org website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: "Be Inspired", "How to Give", "Give Now", "About Us", "Nonprofit Resources", and "Corporate Partners". Below this is a "Give Now" banner. The main section is titled "Your Donations" and contains a table with the following columns: ORGANIZATION, DESIGNATION, GIFT, MEMORIAL, and AMOUNT. A single donation is listed for "Pro Portsmouth Inc." with an amount of "\$10.00". Below the table, there are links for "Save Your Basket for Later >>" and "Empty Basket >>". A "Total: \$10.00" is displayed. At the bottom, there is a checkbox labeled "Check here to donate \$ 3.00 to JustGive. Thank you!" which is checked by default.

ORGANIZATION	DESIGNATION	GIFT	MEMORIAL	AMOUNT
Pro Portsmouth Inc. Po Box 967 Portsmouth, NH 03802				\$10.00

Save Your Basket for Later >> Empty Basket >> Add More Charities >

Total: \$10.00

JustGive believes that giving brings meaning to life—and we're passionate about helping others. Will you help us do more with a voluntary donation?
☒ Check here to donate \$ 3.00 to JustGive. Thank you!

The third-party payment application used by Pro Portsmouth Inc., JustGive.org, automatically opted users into a \$3.00 donation that would be directed to them.

Don't allow third-party payment applications to solicit additional donations from donors. If it must be provided as an option, ensure that users have to select the option by default, not de-select it.

75. Consider providing familiar third-party payment options *in addition to* payment through the website.

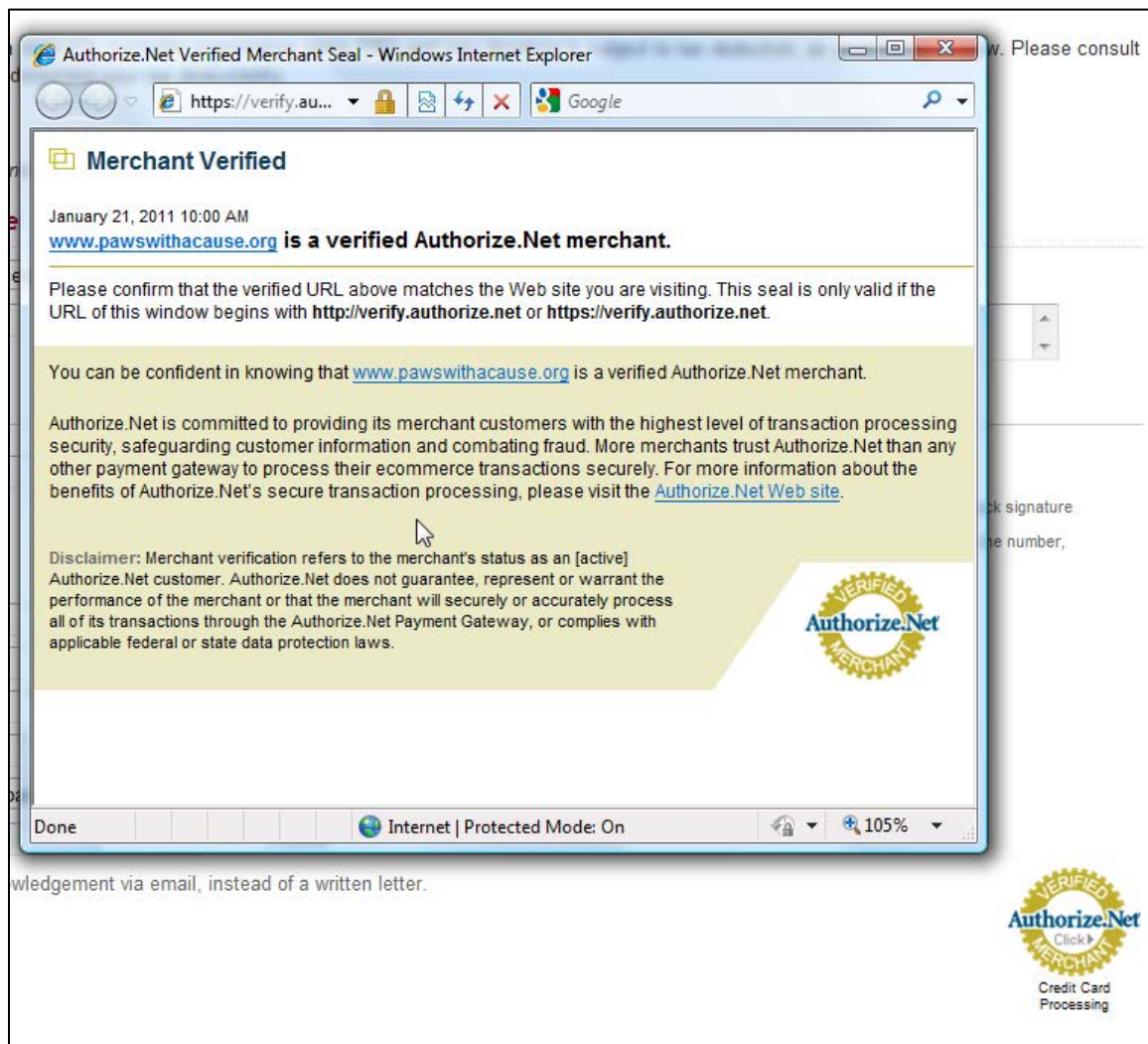
Although sites shouldn't rely on third-party payment options as the only way for users to make a donation, they should consider providing options for those that want to use familiar payment applications. People in our studies made comments about the lack of a PayPal option during the donation process on some sites. One user said, while completing the donation process on the New Israel Fund website, "It'd be nice if there were a PayPal option."

Another user talked about what prevented her from making a donation to some organizations in the past. She said, "The only thing that has prevented me [from donating] is when I didn't have my wallet in front of me and the site didn't have a PayPal link."

76. Provide information and a link to more details about secure payment processing.

Users were cautious when providing sensitive information online. Some looked for information about secure payment processing. Information about security should be provided on every page of the donation process, along with a link to additional details.

Paws With A Cause included an Authorize.Net security logo, which linked to additional details about how the third-party protected provided sensitive information.



An Authorize.Net logo informed users that the third-party protected their sensitive information. The logo linked to additional information about their transaction processing security.

77. Clearly present options to make an offline donation, such as over the phone or through the mail.

Some users may want to donate to an organization, but they may not feel comfortable providing sensitive information online, especially if they are brought to a third-party site that doesn't seem to be part of the main organization's website.

For this reason, it's important to provide information about other ways to donate to the organization, such as through the mail or over the phone. For example, the Children's Scholarship Fund described three ways to donate: online, through the mail, or through wire transfers/stock. This allowed users to choose the donation method they were most comfortable with. It also would have been helpful to provide a toll-free number for those who wanted to donate over the phone.

How to Donate



Online
To give securely online by credit card, please **click here**.



Mail
To make a gift by mail, please send a check or money order to:

Children's Scholarship Fund
Development Office
8 W. 38th Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10018



Wire Transfers / Stock
To donate stocks, bonds, or other marketable securities, or if you have further questions about contributing, please contact Elizabeth Toomey by e-mail or call (212) 515-7134.

The Children's Scholarship Fund provided three ways to donate to the organization: online, through the mail, or through a wire transfer/stock.

Goodwill provided details about mobile text (SMS) donations on the first page of their donation process. In addition to the texting instructions, details about the donation amount, applicable rates, additional tips, and a link to the full terms were provided.

Donate online below, or "Give on the Go" by texting GOODWILL to 85944 on your mobile device*.

*A one-time donation of \$10 will be applied to your mobile phone bill. Messaging and data rates apply. Donations are collected for Goodwill Industries International by mobilecause.com. Reply STOP to 85944 to stop. Reply HELP to 85944 for help. For terms, see www.igfn.org/t

Goodwill provided instructions on texting donations to the organization.

The ability to receive mobile donations is especially important for causes that can have a time-sensitive or location-dependent element—these being the two main reasons for people to use a mobile device instead of a desktop computer. Examples include disaster relief (when they hear breaking news, people may be motivated to donate here and now) and museums and performing arts (for example, while

somebody is viewing a painting that's currently on loan, ask them to contribute to the permanent acquisition of that painting).¹⁰

DATA COLLECTION

- 78. Focus on collecting the required information to complete a donation: the donation amount, the donor's name (as well as an "anonymous" option), and the billing information (credit card details and billing address). Make optional fields clearly optional.**

Sites should pay close attention to making it quick and easy for users to provide the information required to make a donation: the donation amount, the donor's name, and billing information.

Additional optional form fields, such as making a donation in honor of someone, should only be displayed if users have indicated that they want to provide it.

For example, the American Heart Association presented users with a form that focused on the required information. This allowed users to focus on what they needed to provide in order to complete the donation, and they weren't distracted by optional form fields.

The donation form on the American Heart Association website was streamlined and only asked for the information required to process a donation.

Other sites had more complex donation processes and included optional form fields even when users hadn't indicated that they were interested in completing them.

For example, the donation form on the St. Anselm College's website included options to create a joint gift with a spouse, make a donation in honor of someone, and make

¹⁰ For detailed usability guidelines for the design of mobile user interfaces, please see our separate report on this topic. <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/mobile/>

a donation on behalf of a person or organization. These options didn't apply to the user in our study, and he had to scroll past them to get to the required fields. Additionally, the optional fields weren't clearly labeled as optional, so the user had to review each field individually to decide whether or not he was required to provide the information.

Please indicate if this is a joint donation on behalf of you and your spouse.

Joint Donation ☐

Spouse Name

Name under which you would like this gift recognized:

Tell us if your spouse is an alumnus/alumna, and any other information we should know, such as class year, school, etc.

Please indicate if this donation is on behalf of a person or organization.

Name of person or organization:

Please provide us with the contact information for notification purposes

Please indicate if this donation is being made 'in honor of' or 'in memory of' an individual.

Donation is ☐ in honor of ☐ in memory of

Name:

Tell us about the person being honored or memorialized:

Indicate notification: ☐ I prefer that this contribution remain anonymous ☐ Please notify the honoree or family member being memorialized

Provide us with the contact information for notification purposes

The donation form on the St. Anselm College's website included numerous optional form fields that cluttered the page and added unnecessary complexity.

If optional form fields are provided by default, clearly indicate that users do not need to provide the information to make a donation. Users must be able to quickly identify what's required. Otherwise, they may be overwhelmed by the amount of information they think they need to provide. This can be done by placing an asterisk at the beginning of the form field label, like the Alzheimer's Association did, so users can quickly identify required fields as they scan down the left side of the page.

Donor Information

*First Name:

Middle Name:

*Last Name:

*Street 1:

Street 2:

*City:

*State/Province:

*ZIP/Postal Code:

Country:

*Email Address:

☐ Yes, I would like to receive updates from the Alzheimer's Association.

Gift Information

*Gift Amount: ☐ \$35.00 ☐ \$60.00 ☐ \$120.00 ☒

The Alzheimer's Association indicated required fields on their donation form with a red asterisk at the beginning of the form field label.

79. Use progressive disclosure to simplify forms.

Some sites used a progressive disclosure approach on the donation form to simplify the process. Users were only shown additional fields if they selected the applicable option, such as making a gift in honor of someone. This streamlined the donation form and didn't cause users to become overwhelmed with the amount of open form fields (both required and optional) that displayed on the donation form.

For example, the "I Have A Dream" Foundation's donation form collected two types of information: donor information and billing information. However, if a user selected any of the checkboxes on the form, such as *Yes, my employer will match donations.*, additional fields appeared.

I wish to make a contribution to support the national "I Have A Dream" Foundation and help Dreamers achieve higher education.

*Denotes Required Information

Donor Information

Title: *

First Name: *

Last Name: *

Address 1: *

Address 2:

City: *

State: *

Zip: *

Country: *

Telephone: *

Email: *

Gift Amount: *

☒ Yes, my employer will match donations.

Company: *

Special Instructions:

Billing Information

Credit Card Type: *

Cardholder's First Name: *

Cardholder's Last Name: *

Number On Card: *

Expiration Date: *

Security Code: *

☐ Enter billing address. (If different from above)

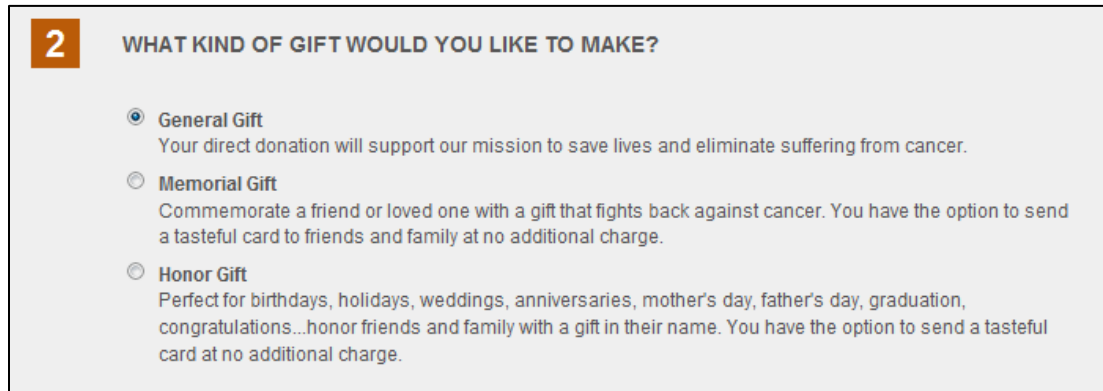
☐ I would like this to be an anonymous gift.

☐ Please acknowledge my gift in "I Have A Dream" promotional materials.

☐ I would like to make this gift in honor/memory of:

The *Company* and *Special Instructions* fields only appeared if the checkbox above the fields (*Yes, my employer will match donations.*) was selected.

The American Cancer Society asked users a series of questions during the first step of the donation process. If certain selections were made, such as making a gift in someone's honor, the applicable fields would display.



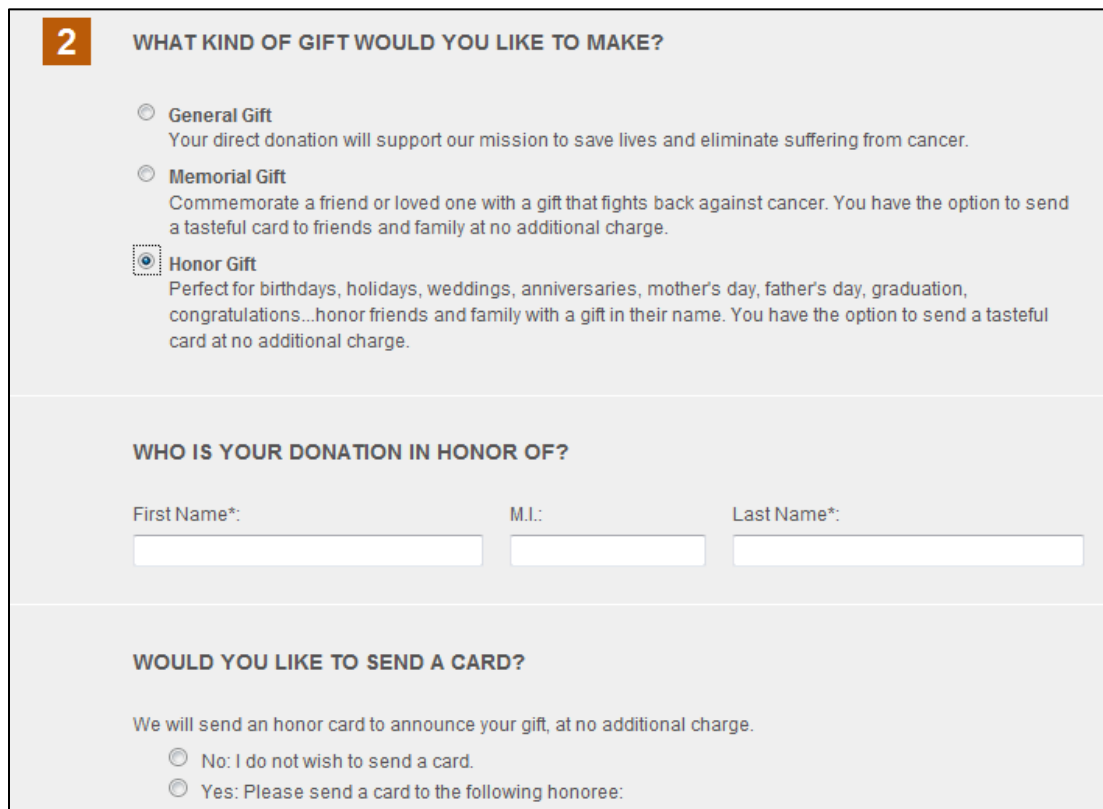
2 WHAT KIND OF GIFT WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE?

☒ **General Gift**
Your direct donation will support our mission to save lives and eliminate suffering from cancer.

☐ **Memorial Gift**
Commemorate a friend or loved one with a gift that fights back against cancer. You have the option to send a tasteful card to friends and family at no additional charge.

☐ **Honor Gift**
Perfect for birthdays, holidays, weddings, anniversaries, mother's day, father's day, graduation, congratulations...honor friends and family with a gift in their name. You have the option to send a tasteful card at no additional charge.

Image 1 of 2: The first page of the American Cancer Society donation process included a series of three questions. Additional fields displayed when necessary. For example, users could choose to make a general gift, a memorial gift, or an honor gift. If they chose to make a memorial or honor gift, additional fields displayed.



2 WHAT KIND OF GIFT WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE?

☐ **General Gift**
Your direct donation will support our mission to save lives and eliminate suffering from cancer.

☐ **Memorial Gift**
Commemorate a friend or loved one with a gift that fights back against cancer. You have the option to send a tasteful card to friends and family at no additional charge.

☒ **Honor Gift**
Perfect for birthdays, holidays, weddings, anniversaries, mother's day, father's day, graduation, congratulations...honor friends and family with a gift in their name. You have the option to send a tasteful card at no additional charge.

WHO IS YOUR DONATION IN HONOR OF?

First Name*: M.I.: Last Name*:

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEND A CARD?

We will send an honor card to announce your gift, at no additional charge.

☐ No: I do not wish to send a card.

☐ Yes: Please send a card to the following honoree:

Image 2 of 2: If users chose to make an honor gift, the form displayed additional applicable fields: *First Name*, *Last Name*, and the option to send an announcement card.

80. Consider using a gateway page to route users to the appropriate form.

Another option that can be used to simplify the donation process is to present a gateway page to send users to the appropriate form. This allows the site to identify the donation type so the appropriate information can be collected during the donation process.

For example, the first step in the Southern New Hampshire University donation process asked users to choose to make a one-time gift or a monthly gift. Based on what users selected, the appropriate form fields displayed.

Although the two options were provided, the page was text-heavy and the calls to action weren't prioritized. It would have been better to present two links or buttons (*Make my Single Year Gift* or *Enroll in Monthly Giving*) at the top of the page, followed by an explanation of each option.



The first step in the donation process on the Southern New Hampshire University site asked users to choose to make a one-time or recurring donation. However, the page contained too much text, which pushed the calls to action further down the page.

Although a gateway page can simplify the process, there are some things to be cautious of. First, when users click a “donate” call to action, they expect to see a form that asks for the donation amount and payment information. If they are presented with a page asking them to identify their donation type, they may be confused or think they did something wrong. Additionally, users may be put-off by having to make such a detailed decision so early in the donation process.

Also, gateway pages can be designed incorrectly. For example, the gateway page on the Sustainable Conservation website asked users to make a one-time gift, a recurring gift, or an honorary gift. Unfortunately, these options weren't mutually

exclusive. If a user wants to make a one-time gift in honor of someone, what link should they choose?



The first step in the donation process on the Sustainable Conservation site asked users to select a one-time, monthly, or honorary gift. Although it may have streamlined the next steps in the process, the options weren't mutually exclusive.

81. Allow users to make an anonymous donation.

Some sites provided users with the option to make an anonymous donation, which some users appreciated, because they didn't want to get bombarded with mail, phone calls, and email.

One user noticed the option on the Sustainable Conservation site. Although he didn't select it, he said, "It's nice, because I can donate anonymously so my name doesn't get traded to other lists or charities." Another said, "I like that you can do it anonymously. Unfortunately, after you make a donation, they do nothing but hound you repeatedly for repeated ones."

Anonymous Donation Information:

☒ Please provide my name and contact information to Sustainable Conservation

☐ I prefer to make this donation anonymously.

Users were able to make an anonymous donation on the Sustainable Conservation site, which was appreciated by some users.

82. List pre-defined contribution amounts, along with an "other" option for users who want to donate a different amount.

Some sites suggested various donation amounts, which some users found helpful. Some users selected a pre-defined amount and others chose to input their own donation amount.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America listed predefined amounts, along with an “other” option for users who wanted to contribute a different amount.

Gift Information	
*Select Gift Amount:	<input type="radio"/> \$20.00
	<input type="radio"/> \$35.00
	<input type="radio"/> \$50.00
	<input type="radio"/> \$100.00
	<input type="radio"/> \$500.00
	<input type="radio"/> <input type="text"/>

Users could select a suggested amount or type in a different amount on the Boys & Girls Clubs of America site.


83. Consider associating donation amounts with tangible items.

Users wanted to know how their donations would make an impact. To help users visualize how their donation will be used, sites should associate donation amounts with tangible items that will be provided to individuals, families, or communities. For example, the Action Against Hunger site listed pre-defined contribution amounts as well as what each amount would purchase, which helped users understand the impact of their donation.

Make a One-Time Donation to Action Against Hunger	
*Gift Amount:	<input type="radio"/> \$35.00
	Helps pay for a hand pump to provide clean water.
	<input type="radio"/> \$50.00
	Provides 45 days of therapeutic treatment for a starving child.
	<input type="radio"/> \$75.00
	Helps pay for the purification of 52,000 gallons of water for a community.
	<input type="radio"/> \$100.00
	Helps pay for the provision of seeds and farming equipment to a family.
	<input type="radio"/> \$250.00
	Helps pay for the provision of cholera medication to 25 children.
	<input type="radio"/> \$500.00
	Helps pay for the delivery of freshwater to a village.
	<input type="radio"/> \$1,000.00
	Helps pay for the creation of a 50ft well in a village.
	<input type="radio"/> \$10,000.00
	Helps pay for the creation of a well from an underground aquifer.
	<input type="radio"/> Enter an amount
	<input type="text"/>

The Action Against Hunger site suggested donation amounts and associated tangible items with each amount.

The Heifer International charity allowed individuals to purchase animals for communities in need instead of giving a general donation. For each animal type, they explained how the recipients would benefit from the gift. One user said, “I’d probably choose to donate to this, because it’s so unique... so personable.”



Pig

Pigs Provide for Families

Heifer animals are like "living savings accounts" for struggling families, and the pig may well be the most interest-bearing.

Each gift can give a valuable source of protein, income from the sale of offspring and manure to nourish crops and soil and increase crop yields.

Pigs need little land and can thrive on crop and garden by-product scraps. An average sow can provide a family with up to 16 piglets a year. Pigs usually double their three-pound birth weight in their first week and can grow to more than 200 pounds in six months! This fast-growing gift means communities can be quickly transformed as offspring and training are passed on and on.

☒ Gift of a Pig (US\$120)
 ☐ Share of a Pig (US\$10)
 Add to Cart

"If there is one thing I could give to the struggling people of the world it would be self-reliance. Everyone deserves the dignity of providing for themselves and their families. That's why I support Heifer International."

— Walter Cronkite, journalist and Heifer supporter

The description of how families would use a pig convinced one user to donate to Heifer International.

84. Provide the option for users to set up a recurring donation, but always provide the option for a one-time donation.

All users made one-time donations during our study, but some appreciated the option to set up a recurring donation. The National Education for Assistive Dog Services (NEADS) website allowed users to make a one-time donation or set up a recurring donation.

Gift Amount in USD (\$10 minimum)

\$.00

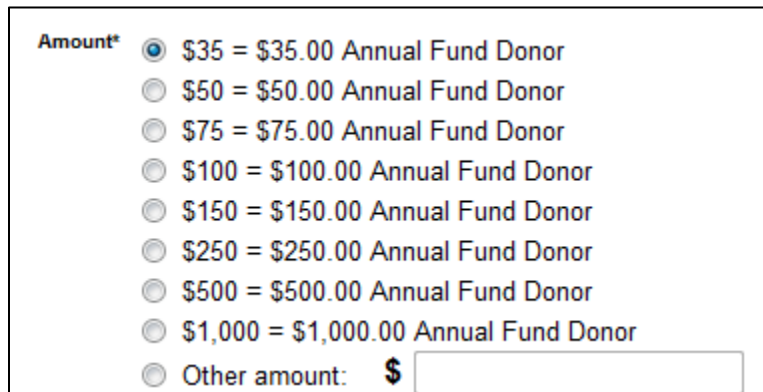
Donation Preferences

☒ This is a one time donation
 ☐ I would like to make this a recurring donation deducted Monthly ▼

The NEADS website allowed users to make a one-time donation or set up a recurring (monthly or quarterly) donation.

One user, while attempting to donate to the Corcoran Gallery of Art, couldn't find a place to make a one-time donation. All pre-defined donation amounts included the phrase "Annual Fund Donor," which made her think it would be a recurring donation. She became frustrated, and said, "It says annual fund. I'm not sure what annual

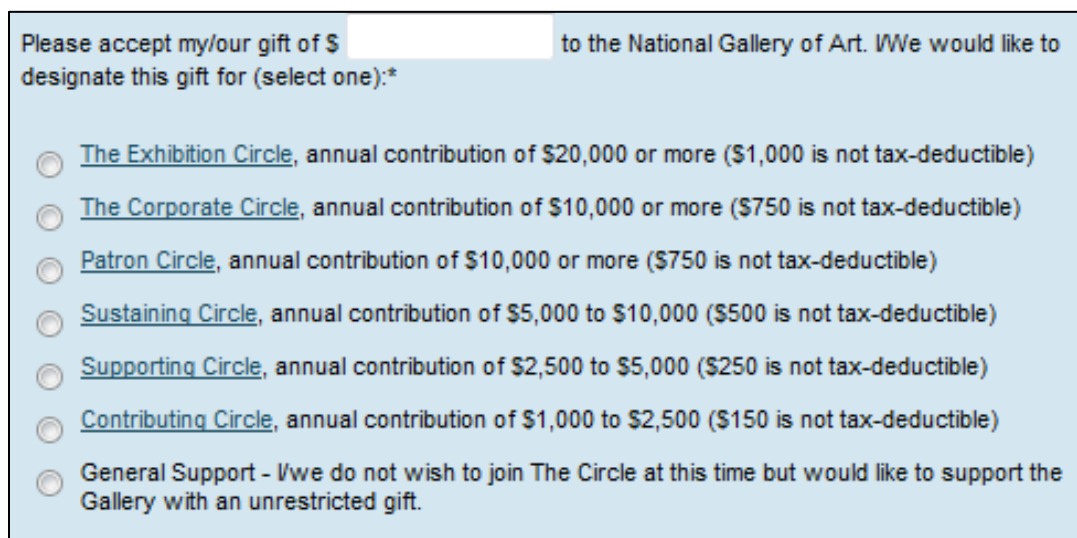
fund is. Is it some sort of term that galleries use? It looks like annual contributions. At this point, I would hightail it out of here.”



A screenshot of a donation form. At the top, it says "Amount*" followed by a list of radio button options. The first option, "\$35 = \$35.00 Annual Fund Donor", is selected. The other options are: "\$50 = \$50.00 Annual Fund Donor", "\$75 = \$75.00 Annual Fund Donor", "\$100 = \$100.00 Annual Fund Donor", "\$150 = \$150.00 Annual Fund Donor", "\$250 = \$250.00 Annual Fund Donor", "\$500 = \$500.00 Annual Fund Donor", "\$1,000 = \$1,000.00 Annual Fund Donor", and "Other amount: \$" followed by an empty text box.

One user couldn't find a way to make a one-time donation to the Corcoran Gallery of Art. The word "annual" made her think it was a recurring donation.

The same user went to the National Gallery of Art's website and had trouble finding a way to make a one-time donation on their site as well. She thought she could only make an annual donation and was skeptical to choose *General Support*, because it wasn't clear if she was committing to donate to them each year. She said, "If this is a way to make a one-time donation, they need to clearly state it. It's really hidden. It leads you to think that whatever the 'circle' is, you'd be a regular contributing member."



A screenshot of a donation form for the National Gallery of Art. It starts with "Please accept my/our gift of \$" followed by an empty text box, and "to the National Gallery of Art. We would like to designate this gift for (select one):*". Below this is a list of radio button options: "The Exhibition Circle, annual contribution of \$20,000 or more (\$1,000 is not tax-deductible)", "The Corporate Circle, annual contribution of \$10,000 or more (\$750 is not tax-deductible)", "Patron Circle, annual contribution of \$10,000 or more (\$750 is not tax-deductible)", "Sustaining Circle, annual contribution of \$5,000 to \$10,000 (\$500 is not tax-deductible)", "Supporting Circle, annual contribution of \$2,500 to \$5,000 (\$250 is not tax-deductible)", "Contributing Circle, annual contribution of \$1,000 to \$2,500 (\$150 is not tax-deductible)", and "General Support - We do not wish to join The Circle at this time but would like to support the Gallery with an unrestricted gift."

It wasn't clear to users if the *General Support* donation on the National Gallery of Art's website was a one-time donation or an annual commitment.

85. Allow users to apply their donation to a specific area or program, but always provide a "general support" or "greatest need" option.

Some users wanted control over where their donated money would be applied. Several sites we tested allowed users to designate a program or area that their donation would be used for.

For example, users who donated to the University of New Hampshire could choose to direct their donation to various programs or schools. They also had the option to direct their donation to the *Greatest Need/Unrestricted*.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Please select the fund(s) you would like to support." in blue text. Below the title is a list of donation options, each with a checkbox. The first option, "Greatest Need/Unrestricted (formerly the President's Fund for Excellence)", is selected and highlighted in light blue. To its right is a small input field with a dollar sign. Below this are three unselected options: "Scholarships", "Library and Technology", and "Parent's Fund". A section header "Schools and Colleges" follows, with a list of six unselected options: "College of Engineering and Physical Sciences", "College of Liberal Arts", "College of Life Sciences and Agriculture", "College of Health and Human Services", "Whittemore School of Business and Economics", and "UNH Graduate School". A vertical scrollbar is visible on the right side of the form.

Donors could choose how they wanted to direct their donation on the University of New Hampshire website.

The Children's Scholarship Fund allowed users to select a geographical area to support. One user appreciated the option, but decided to apply her donation as *General Support*.

Program Area
To direct your donation to a specific program or fund, please select it from the list below.

General Support
Nationwide
Anaheim/Orange County CA
Baltimore MD
Bridgeport CT
Buffalo NY
Charlotte NC
Cincinnati OH
Colorado Springs CO
Dallas TX
Dayton OH
Denver CO
Detroit MI
Elizabeth NJ
Fort Worth TX
Indianapolis IN
Jackson MS
Jersey City NJ
Los Angeles CA
Memphis TN
Minneapolis MN
New Mexico
New Orleans LA
New York City
Man/Bronx/SI Catholic schools
Brooklyn/Queens Catholic Schools
Newark NJ
Omaha NE
Philadelphia PA

characters left

Users could select a *Program Area* to support on the Children's Scholarship Fund site or they could choose the *General Support* option.

Goodwill allowed users to direct their donations to a local chapter. On the first page of the donation process, they asked users to direct their donation to one of three areas: programs in their local community, programs in the United States and Canada, or programs outside of the United States and Canada.

If a user chose to donate locally, for example, they were able to search for affiliates by state, which returned relevant affiliates to direct a donation towards.

These options were nice to have, but the site should have also provided a "greatest need" option for those who didn't have a preference.

Beneficiary Contact Info Payment Donate

A financial gift to Goodwill helps us help people earn their own way. Contributions benefit people who need help learning career skills, finding jobs or advancing in the workplace. In 2008, Goodwills provided employment and training services to over 1.5 million people.

Cash gifts to Goodwill are tax-deductible, as provided by law. You will receive a receipt for your financial donation at the end of this transaction.

Please select one of the following:

I would like to financially support:

- ☒ My local Goodwill® (Programs in your community)
- ☐ Goodwill Industries International, Inc. (Programs across the U.S. and Canada)
- ☐ Goodwill's international development (Emerging Goodwills outside the U.S. and Canada)

CONTINUE ➔

Image 1 of 2: At the beginning of the donation process, Goodwill asked users to select one of three areas to direct their donation towards. It also would have been nice to provide a “greatest need” option.

Beneficiary Contact Info Payment Donate

Please select your search criteria for locating a Goodwill in a local community

Search By: **State** ▼ **DC** ▼ **SEARCH** ➔

1 Goodwill found

Goodwill of Greater Washington
2200 South Dakota Avenue, N. E.
Washington, DC 20018

CONTINUE ➔

Image 2 of 2: Users could search for and choose the local Goodwill chapter they wanted to direct their donation towards during the donation process.

In addition to selecting a location or program on the donation form, some sites provided tools that routed users to affiliate or chapter sites. This isn't as desirable, because it removes users from the donation process on the main site and routes them to the local site which may not have an easy-to-use donation process. However, users still appreciated the option to donate locally.

One user had an option to specify her donation on the Boys & Girls Club website, and said, “I like the idea of donating to a specific club, so let me look for a local club.”

The *Find a Club* link on the donation page brought her to the site's search feature that allowed her to locate a club by ZIP Code. The site returned a list of local chapters, and she navigated to the Manchester, New Hampshire club's website and made a donation through their site.

Thank you for helping to create a positive place for kids to learn and grow.

Donating to a specific Club? Use our [Find a Club](#) feature to donate directly to a Club in your community.

Users appreciated the Boys & Girls Club *Find a Club* feature; it allowed users to search for and navigate to local affiliate sites to donate to.

86. If users can designate their donation to a specific program, define the programs in context.

Although users appreciated the ability to choose where their money went, it was useless if they didn't understand what the programs were about.

While making a donation on the Wildlife Alliance website, one user noticed she could designate her donation to a specific program and said, "So you can choose a program, which is pretty nice. I will choose 'The Rescue Center'... or the 'Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team.' I'm not entirely sure what these programs are."

1 Gift & Payment Information ————— 2 Review Gift

Please Choose from the Donation Options Below

*Choose a program to support with your gift:

☐ Use my gift where it is needed most.

☒ Direct my gift to:

Select a program

Select a program

Kouprey Express

Phoenix Fund, Russia

Support Rangers in the Southwest Elephant Corridor

Sustainable Community Agriculture (CADP)

The Rescue Center (PTWRC)

Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team

*Select Gift Amount:


One user wanted to choose a specific program for her donation to the Wildlife Alliance, but she wasn't sure what the various programs were about.


The American Red Cross allowed users to select the program they wanted to donate to, and provided ample information about each program. While making a donation to the American Red Cross, one user said, "I like the idea that I have a choice to designate my donation, and I can see what each program is about."


Donate Now!


Please make your selection below and click "Continue".


Financial contributions to the American Red Cross are tax-deductible.

- **DISASTER RELIEF FUND**

You can help the victims of thousands of disasters across the country each year, disasters like the recent tornadoes and winter storms, by making a financial gift to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. This Fund enables the Red Cross to provide shelter, food, counseling and other assistance to victims of disaster. The American Red Cross honors donor intent. If you wish to designate your donation to a specific disaster please do so at the time of your donation. Call 1-800-REDCROSS or 1-800-257-7575 (Spanish) or mail your donation, with the designation, to the American Red Cross, P. O. Box 37243, Washington, DC 20013.
- **INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE FUND**

You can help the victims of countless crises around the world each year by making a financial gift to the American Red Cross International Response Fund, which will provide immediate relief and long-term support through supplies, technical assistance and other support to help those in need. The American Red Cross honors donor intent. If you wish to designate your donation to a specific disaster, please do so at the time of your donation by mailing your donation with the designation to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37243, Washington, D.C. 20013 or to your local American Red Cross chapter. Donations to the International Response Fund can be made by phone at 1-800-REDCROSS or 1-800-257-7575 (Spanish) or online at www.redcross.org.
- **WHERE THE NEED IS GREATEST**

The American Red Cross is where people mobilize to help their neighbors—down the street, across the country and around the world—in emergencies. The American Red Cross, a humanitarian organization led by volunteers, guided by its Congressional Charter and the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross Movement, provides relief to victims of disasters and helps people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies. You can help ensure that the Red Cross can continue to provide these lifesaving services and has the resources, talent and ability to continue to deliver them by making a donation to support all of its core services today.
- **SERVICE TO THE ARMED FORCES**

The American Red Cross is a lifeline for deployed military members, allowing them to communicate to loved ones back home during emergencies. We also provide social services, emergency travel, financial assistance and mental health support for our returning troops and their families. You can help the Red Cross help military families with a gift to Red Cross Services to Armed Forces.
- **YOUR LOCAL RED CROSS CHAPTER**

Your local Red Cross chapter is committed to meeting the humanitarian needs of the people in your area, be it in disaster preparedness, disaster relief, first aid or CPR training, or disease prevention. You can help support your local chapter programs and services through a gift to your local Red Cross chapter. The gift will be sent to the local area chapter based on your zip code.

CONTINUE

The American Red Cross clearly defined the programs users could direct their donations towards.

87. Consider allowing users to identify an individual to make a contribution in honor or memory of.

Some charities, especially those that support medical research, treatment, and awareness should allow users to specify an individual to make their donation in honor or memory of. Other charities should consider doing the same, because users in our study appreciated the option (although no one actually did it). Another reason to have this feature: It's becoming more common for family members of a deceased person to request that people

send donations to a charity instead of sending flowers. Several people in our study said they made donations in honor of loved ones after they had passed.

Some of the sites we tested allowed users to do this. On The Conservation Fund site, users could identify an individual to make a tribute to, and they could also send a tribute card to the individual or a family member.

The screenshot shows a form titled "Optional Tribute Information" with a sub-header "This donation is a tribute." The form contains the following fields: "Tribute Type" (a dropdown menu with "- select -"), "Name of Tributee" (a text input field), "Occasion" (a text input field), "Please send the tribute card to:" (a label), "Recipient Name" (a text input field), "Street Address" (a text input field), "City" (a text input field), "State" (a dropdown menu with "- select -"), and "Zip Code" (a text input field).

Users could make a tribute to someone when they made a donation on The Conservation Fund's website.

Other sites were simpler when capturing this information, such as the American Red Cross. The donation form asked for the individual's first name only, and the donor wasn't able to send a tribute card.

The screenshot shows a form titled "Tribute Gift Information" with a checkbox labeled "Yes, this is an honor or memorial gift." Below the checkbox is a text input field labeled "Recipient First Name".

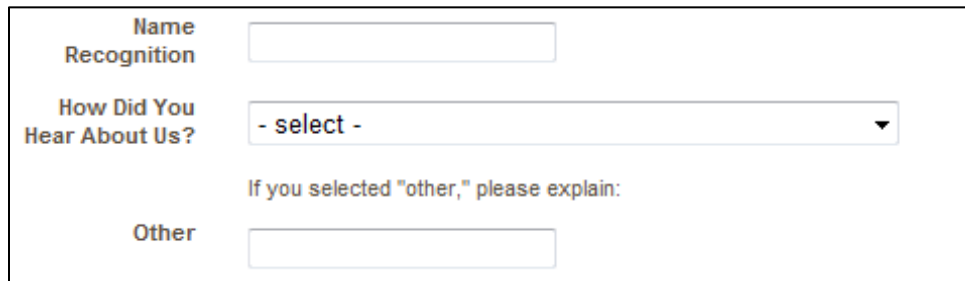
Users could make a donation as a tribute to an individual on the American Red Cross site.

88. Don't ask for unnecessary information.

Avoid collecting information that isn't relevant or necessary to complete the transaction. Asking for information that isn't required to complete a donation causes user confusion, creates a longer donation process, and increases the number of opportunities for users to make mistakes that prevent them from successfully completing the task.

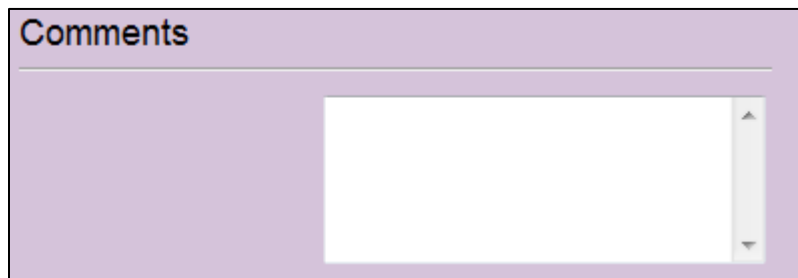
One user, while making a donation on The Conservation Fund website, was stumped by the field *Name Recognition*. She also was annoyed by the *How Did You Hear*

About Us? field. Although these fields weren't required, they got in this user's way as she filled out the form.

A screenshot of a form section. It contains three main fields: 'Name Recognition' with a text input box, 'How Did You Hear About Us?' with a dropdown menu showing '- select -', and 'Other' with a text input box. Below the dropdown menu, there is a text label: 'If you selected "other," please explain:'.

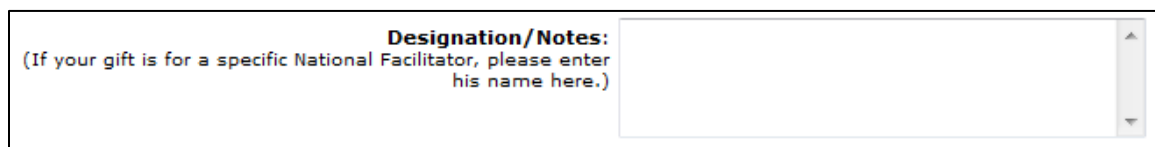
Some fields on The Conservation Fund's donation form annoyed one user, because the information wasn't necessary to complete the transaction.

Several users were confused by the *Comments* field on many of the donation forms we tested. One user came across the *Comments* field on the New Hampshire Food Bank site, and said, "Comments? I don't have anything so I'll leave that blank."

A screenshot of a 'Comments' field. The title 'Comments' is in a purple header bar. Below it is a large, empty text area with a vertical scrollbar on the right side.

The *Comments* field on the New Hampshire Food Bank's donation form confused one user.

The Mission American donation form had a field for *Designation/Notes* and instructional copy that asked users to specify the name of the national facilitator that the donation was for. If this was a popular piece of data collected, there should have been a specific field on the form dedicated to it.

A screenshot of a 'Designation/Notes' field. The title 'Designation/Notes:' is in bold. Below it is a text input box. To the left of the input box is instructional text: '(If your gift is for a specific National Facilitator, please enter his name here.)'.

The *Designation/Notes* field on the Mission America donation form was unnecessary.

89. If an email address or phone number is required, explain why it's needed and how it will be used.

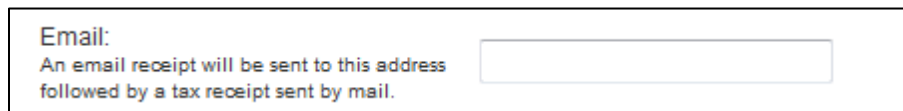
Users in our study were hesitant to give out their phone numbers and email addresses, but one or both were required to complete a transaction on most of the websites we tested. Although the organizations requested this information, most websites failed to explain why they needed it or how it would be used.

Users made comments throughout the studies when they were asked for their phone numbers and email addresses. They said:

- “I hope they don’t call me.”
- “I hate giving my email, because I don’t want to get spammed.”
- “It’s asking for my phone number, and I don’t like to give that out.”
- “Phone number isn’t required... good. I don’t want people calling me at home.”

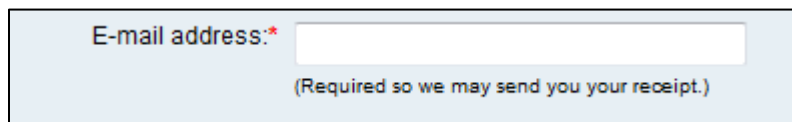
In our study, many sites failed to explain why they asked for an email address or phone number. However, some sites we tested, such as Heifer International and Habitat for Humanity, provided some explanation about why they needed an email address.

Heifer International provided a short explanation under the email field label that explained that a receipt would be emailed to the address for tax purposes.

A screenshot of a donation form from Heifer International. It features a label "Email:" followed by a text input field. Below the label, there is a line of text: "An email receipt will be sent to this address followed by a tax receipt sent by mail."

The donation form on the Heifer International site explained how the provided email address would be used.

Habitat for Humanity had a similar explanation about why they requested an email address on their donation form.

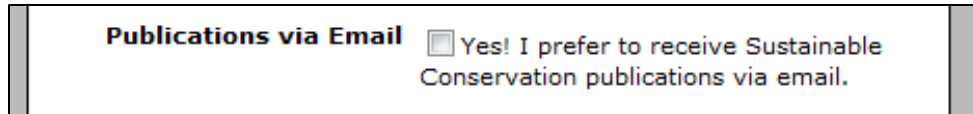
A screenshot of a donation form from Habitat for Humanity. It features a label "E-mail address: *" followed by a text input field. Below the label, there is a line of text: "(Required so we may send you your receipt.)"

The donation form on the Habitat for Humanity national site explained why they needed the donor’s email address.

90. Let users opt-in (not opt-out) to further email communications.

Users were aware that organizations may use their email address to send further communications. As he was filling out the email address field while completing a donation, one user said “I’ll use the one I don’t really check,” because he didn’t want to be bombarded with unwanted email.

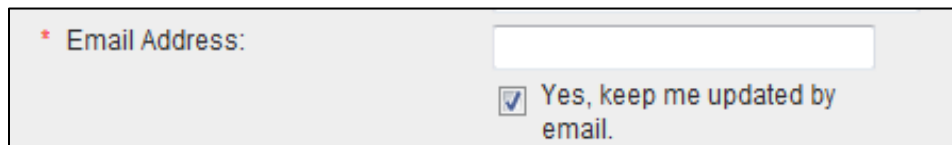
If offering newsletter or email subscriptions as part of the donation process, always give users the choice to opt-in to the email by default. Don’t automatically register users for email as part of the donation process. Users may not notice the pre-selected checkbox as they complete the donation process, and they may feel annoyed and deceived when they start receiving unsolicited email. Even worse, they may decide to stop supporting the organization if they feel as though they’ve been “tricked” into receiving email or become annoyed with the messages.



Publications via Email ☐ Yes! I prefer to receive Sustainable Conservation publications via email.

Sustainable Conservation offered a subscription to their email publications as part of the donation process, giving the users the option to choose to receive them by selecting the checkbox.

NARAL Pro-Choice America opted users in for email updates by default as part of the donation process. It would have been better to leave the checkbox deselected by default so users could make a conscious decision to receive email communications from the organization.



* Email Address:

☒ Yes, keep me updated by email.

NARAL Pro-Choice America opted-in users to email communications by default during the donation process on their site.

SUBMITTING AND VERIFYING INFORMATION

91. When an error occurs, indicate which fields had the problem and how to fix the error.

When error messages are poorly indicated, users overlook them and question why the form isn't being accepted by the site. When a user has left a required field blank or filled in a field incorrectly, indicate which field has the problem and explain how to fix the error.

One user, while making a donation to The Conservation Fund, forgot to put her credit card number in the form before she hit the *Submit* button. The form wasn't accepted, but it displayed a clear error message at the top of the page and the problematic field was indicated on the form.

Support TCF's conservation efforts across America

Please correct the following errors in the form fields below:

- Card Number is a required field.

All fields with an * are required.

Contribution Amount *

☐ \$ 50.00 USD
☐ \$ 100.00 USD
☐ \$ 250.00 USD
☐ \$ 500.00 USD
☐ \$ 1,000.00 USD
☒ Other Amount

Other Amount \$

☒ I want to make a one-time contribution.
☐ I want to contribute this amount every

-period- ▼ for installments

Your recurring contribution will be processed automatically for the number of installments you specify. You can leave the number of installments blank if you want to make an open-ended commitment (you can choose to cancel at any time). You will receive a year-end acknowledgement of your contribution total.

Image 1 of 2: The error message at the top of the donation form on The Conservation Fund's website clearly indicated what the problem was.

Credit or Debit Card Information

Card Type

CARD NUMBER Card Number is a required field.
 Enter numbers only, no spaces or dashes.

Security Code 
 Usually the last 3-4 digits in the signature area on the back of the card.

Expiration Date

Image 2 of 2: The field that needed to be corrected was highlighted in red, which was helpful, because the form was extremely long and the *Card Number* field was below the fold. (Note that a small percentage of the population has color-deficient vision and may not perceive red as a distinct color. Thus, it's recommended to employ redundant design cues that work even for users who can't distinguish the colors: here, upper-case text and a bolder border.)

Another user, while trying to make a donation to the National Gallery of Art, didn't provide his evening telephone number in the form and received an error message when he tried to submit his donation. The error message displayed at the top of the form in tiny red text and was easy to miss because there was a substantial amount

of text at the top of the form. He didn't realize what was wrong and blamed himself. He said, "Oh no, what did I do? Maybe I can't donate online. Maybe I have to print this out and send it in."

He read through the text at the top of the screen very intently but continued to miss the error message because it wasn't big enough, and the problematic field wasn't indicated on the form itself.

MAKE A GIFT

Thank you for considering a gift to the National Gallery of Art.

Please supply the following information:
Evening Phone

There are several ways to make a gift to the Gallery, including [Annual Giving](#), [Leadership Giving](#), [Unrestricted Giving](#), [Planned Giving](#), and [Other Opportunities](#), as well as [Gifts of Art and In-Kind Gifts](#).

- To contribute by mail via check or credit card, print and complete this form. If you prefer to pay by check, please make the check payable to the **National Gallery of Art** and mail it with your completed form to: **Development Office**, National Gallery of Art, 2000B South Club Drive, Landover, MD 20785.
- To contribute by fax, please print, complete, and fax this form to (202) 789-4577.
- To contribute by phone, please call (202) 842-6372.
- For information on making a gift of securities, please call (202) 842-6372 or [e-mail us](#).
- To contribute online, please supply the information on the form below and click "submit."

For a description of the protections we offer for making a secure gift online, please see our [privacy policy](#).

Contact Information
(* required field)

Title

First Name*

Jane

Middle Name

Last Name*

Doe

Address 1*

123 32nd St

Address 2

City*

New York

State*

New York

Zip/Postal Code*

10001

Country*

United States

Daytime Telephone*

212-582-5111

Evening Telephone*

The error message on the National Gallery of Art's donation form was easy to miss, because the text was too small and placed above a large block of text, and the problematic field wasn't indicated on the form itself.

92. Provide a page where people can review and verify information before finalizing the donation.

Users make errors while filling out forms and are especially wary when submitting sensitive information, such as billing information. When all necessary information has been collected, present it back to the user so it can be verified.

One user, when making a donation to the New Hampshire Food Bank, completed a donation form and when she clicked *Submit*, her donation was immediately processed. She expected to have a chance to review the details before she committed to the transaction and said, “I see a confirmation page. There’s no way to check my information before submitting?”

93. Allow users to go back and make changes before submitting their donation.

In addition to presenting information back to the user to verify, allow users to go back to make edits to incorrect information. If this isn’t allowed, users will need to abort the process and begin again—which may never happen.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America provided a verification page that users could review before submitting the transaction. The page allowed users to go back and make changes by clicking the *Previous* button.

Transaction Summary	
Transaction Date:	3/15/09
Gift Information	
Amount:	\$15.00
Billing Information	
Billing Title:	Mr.
Billing First Name:	C.
Billing Middle Name:	
Billing Last Name:	
Billing Suffix:	
Billing Street 1:	
Billing Street 2:	
Billing City:	
Billing State/Province:	
Billing ZIP/Postal Code:	
Billing Country:	
Billing Email Address:	@comcast.net
I would like to give this gift anonymously	false
Email opt-in:	No
Remember me:	Yes
Payment Information	
Payment type:	Credit Card
Credit Card Number:	*****1530
<div><div>Cancel</div><div>Previous</div><div>Process</div></div>	

The verification page on the Boys & Girls Clubs of America site allowed users to go back and make changes, if necessary.

CONFIRMATION PAGE

94. Confirm that the transaction has been processed.

Once a user's information has been submitted, present a confirmation page that details the donation. Confirmation pages communicate to users that their actions were successful. If a confirmation page isn't presented, users will doubt that they submitted the donation correctly.

One user, after submitting a donation on the National Education for Assistive Dog Services site, received a confirmation page that highlighted the details of his contribution. He said, "It's always nice to have an acknowledgement, because if not, you don't know if it went through or not."

95. Thank users for their donation, and tell them how it will be used.

On the confirmation page, thank users for their donation. It doesn't need to be elaborate, but a simple recognition is appreciated. Also, it's nice to reiterate how the money will be used.

The Wildlife Alliance's confirmation page thanked the user and explained how the money would help improve specific programs.

Thank you for your donation in support of Wildlife Alliance's mission to provide direct protection to endangered wildlife and endangered habitat.

Your gift will make a difference — it enables us to consistently provide direct protection to wildlife by strengthening parks, stopping the illegal wildlife trade and reducing demand for products made from endangered species.

Wildlife Alliance is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization in the United States of America with Federal Tax ID #52-1934148. No goods or services of any value were received in exchange for this gift. Your gift may be tax-deductible in accordance with U.S. tax law. Please see below for a receipt of your transaction.

Once again, on behalf of all the animals we strive to protect, thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Wildlife Alliance

The Wildlife Alliance's confirmation page thanked the user and provided details about how the money would be used.

The Action Against Hunger's confirmation page thanked donors for the contribution and provided the specific percentage (90%) of the donation that would be used for their programs.

Dear [REDACTED]

We are truly grateful for your generosity and support. Thank you for partnering with us to help the individuals we serve all over the world.

Because nearly 90% of every donation we receive goes directly toward funding our programs, your gift will make a huge impact in saving lives and communities.

Sincerely,
Action Against Hunger

The Action Against Hunger confirmation page thanked the donor and stated that 90% of the donation would be used towards funding their programs.

96. Provide a printable receipt that can be used for tax purposes.

People write off donations. Allow users to print the donation information for tax purposes by presenting a receipt that includes necessary information, such as the amount, date, the name of the charity, and the charity's tax ID.

97. If an email address is collected during the donation process, state that a receipt will be sent to the provided email address.

In addition to presenting a printable receipt on the confirmation page, also tell users that a receipt will be sent to the email address provided during the donation process. Some users may not have access to a printer at the time of donation, so sending another copy to their email for their records is helpful. Emailed receipts are especially important for donations made on mobile devices.

One user, while skimming a confirmation page, noticed that it asked him to print the receipt for his records, and it didn't state if it would be emailed to him. He was annoyed that a copy of the receipt wouldn't be emailed to him, and said, "It'd be nice if they emailed this to me as well since I gave them my email address. It doesn't look like they will."

98. Consider asking users to email the site or information about the charity to their friends.

It's a good idea to use donors as messengers, but organizations should be tactful and ask at the right time.

One user, after making a donation on the Habitat For Humanity website, received a confirmation page that requested he send information about the charity to his friends. This user thought it was a good idea, and he said, "When it comes to fundraising, I'm open to anything. There are never enough ways to get the word out."

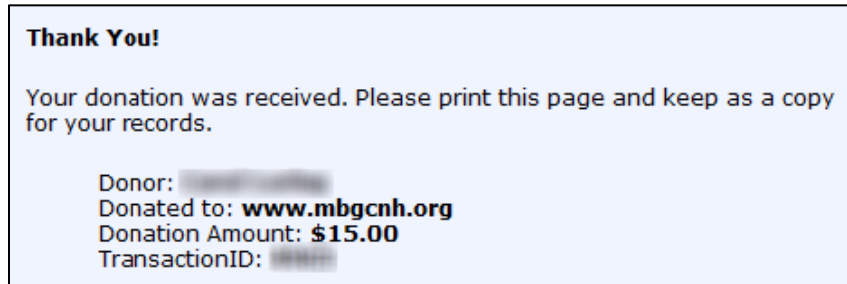
If you know someone who would be interested in helping us continue our important work, please send them a link to our Web site by [clicking here](#).

The confirmation page on the Habitat for Humanity site prompted donors to send a link to the site to their friends, which one user appreciated. However, the non-descriptive link name, *clicking here*, was easy to overlook, because it didn't accurately describe where it would bring the user.

99. Consider including a tracking code or an identification number unique to the transaction.

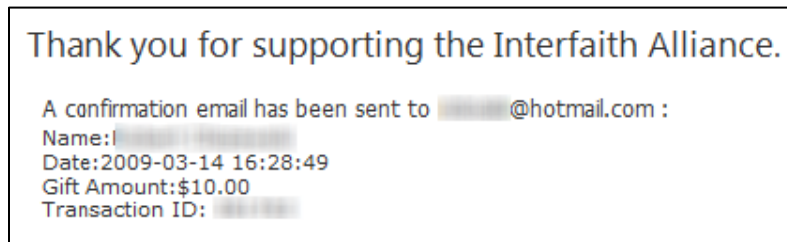
Some users may need to contact an organization regarding a donation. To make things easy, consider providing a tracking code or unique number for each donation made on the site. This will be handy for both the organization and the donor if they are contacted about the transaction in the future.

The Boys & Girls Club of America provided a 4-digit transaction ID on their confirmation page, which could be used if the donor needed to contact the organization about the donation.



The confirmation page on the Boys & Girls Club of America's site provided a transaction ID.

The Interfaith Alliance also offered a transaction ID for each donation made on the site.



The Interfaith Alliance assigned a unique 6-digit transaction ID to each donation made on the site.

100. If the name of the charge that shows up on a credit card statement will be different than the charity name, notify users.

To avoid calls, questions, and credit card disputes, let users know if the charge name on their credit card statement will be different than the charity name. Users are wary of unrecognizable charges made to their credit cards, so alerting them ahead of time may help in avoiding unnecessary phone calls and email at a later date.

The Children's Scholarship Fund used GiveDirect to process their donations, and let users know on the verification and confirmation pages that the name GIVEDIRECT would be associated with the donation on their credit card statement. However, the information was overlooked by users in the study, because it was easily mistaken for fine print, which is something that users typically ignore.

Note: To eliminate processing fees, we are using a non-profit service to process our credit card transactions. GIVEDIRECT is the name that will appear on your credit card statement. You will receive a written acknowledgement and tax receipt from the Children's Scholarship Fund. If you have questions about your donation, please contact us by calling (212) 515-7100 or emailing etoomey@scholarshipfund.org.

The Children's Scholarship Fund explained that GIVEDIRECT would be associated with the charge on the donor's credit card statement.

Similarly, GROUNDSRING.org processed the donations made through the Sustainable Conservation website, and this was stated in a bolded red font in all caps on the confirmation page, which was overkill, particularly since red is commonly used for error messages. It would have been better to use bolded text in sentence case; it would have caught users' attention without being over-emphasized. The formatting also made the message more difficult to read.

IMPORTANT: THIS DONATION WILL APPEAR ON YOUR CREDIT CARD STATEMENT AS "GROUNDSRING.ORG". GROUNDSRING IS OUR SERVICE PROVIDER FOR ONLINE DONATIONS

Sustainable Conservation informed users that GROUNDSRING.org would appear on their credit card statement.

101. Prioritize details on the confirmation page.

Many details need to be provided on the confirmation page, but they should be prioritized. If information isn't prioritized on the confirmation page, it can be easily missed by donors.

Information on the confirmation page should be given priority and presented in the following order:

- "Thank you"
- Receipt will be sent to email address, if provided
- Printable receipt
- Tax deduction details
- How the money will be used

The following optional details can be provided afterwards, if necessary:

- The name of the charge to expect on a credit card statement, if different than the organization name
- Tracking code or ID number
- Requests to email friends or share on social networks

The Heifer International confirmation page displayed optional details before higher-priority details. For example, they provided a link for donors to tell their family and friends about the organization via email towards the top of the page. This call to action pushed other essential information, such as the printable receipt, below the page fold.

When one user saw the confirmation page, she wasn't sure if her donation had been processed. She said "So, I'm not really sure where it says that it's complete, but I guess that's it."

Thank you! Your generosity just sparked a cycle of giving...



...a cycle that will
transform lives for
generations to come.

Heifer recipients receive months of training in how to care for their animal; sell the milk, eggs or other products at market; and restore the environment. Passing on this knowledge as well as the offspring of the gift animal is at the heart of Heifer's model which has been ending hunger and poverty for over 60 years.

You can bring that change home to your own community in the following ways:

- 1 Tell your friends and family you support Heifer.**
[Send your friends and family an email](#) through our easy-to-use email tool and let them know you choose to support Heifer this year.
- 2 Team up with your employer.**
Thousands of employers will match your charitable gift to Heifer International. You can check if yours does by submitting your employer's name to [our online matching gifts search](#) tool.
- 3 Send a card with your Heifer gift.**
Our online cards are a great way to notify your friend or family member of the special Heifer gift you made in their honor. [Send an e-card or print out a card online now.](#)

Important information wasn't prioritized on the Heifer International confirmation page.

Selling Products

Users expected the shopping experience on non-profit and charity websites to mimic their experiences on other e-commerce websites. For that reason, it's important to integrate recognizable and usable e-commerce interactions and patterns into product browsing, the shopping cart, and the checkout process.

The purpose of this section is to identify and discuss guidelines that are specific to the e-commerce process on non-profit and charity sites. For additional information and general e-commerce guidelines, please see our extensive report series.

<http://www.nngroup.com/reports/ecommerce/>

102. Sell items users expect to purchase from a non-profit or charity: branded items and products related to the organization's mission.

Users who purchased items from non-profit and charity websites were drawn to items that included the organization's name, such as a t-shirt, or were related to their work. Some users became overwhelmed with the number and variation of items available for purchase on some sites.

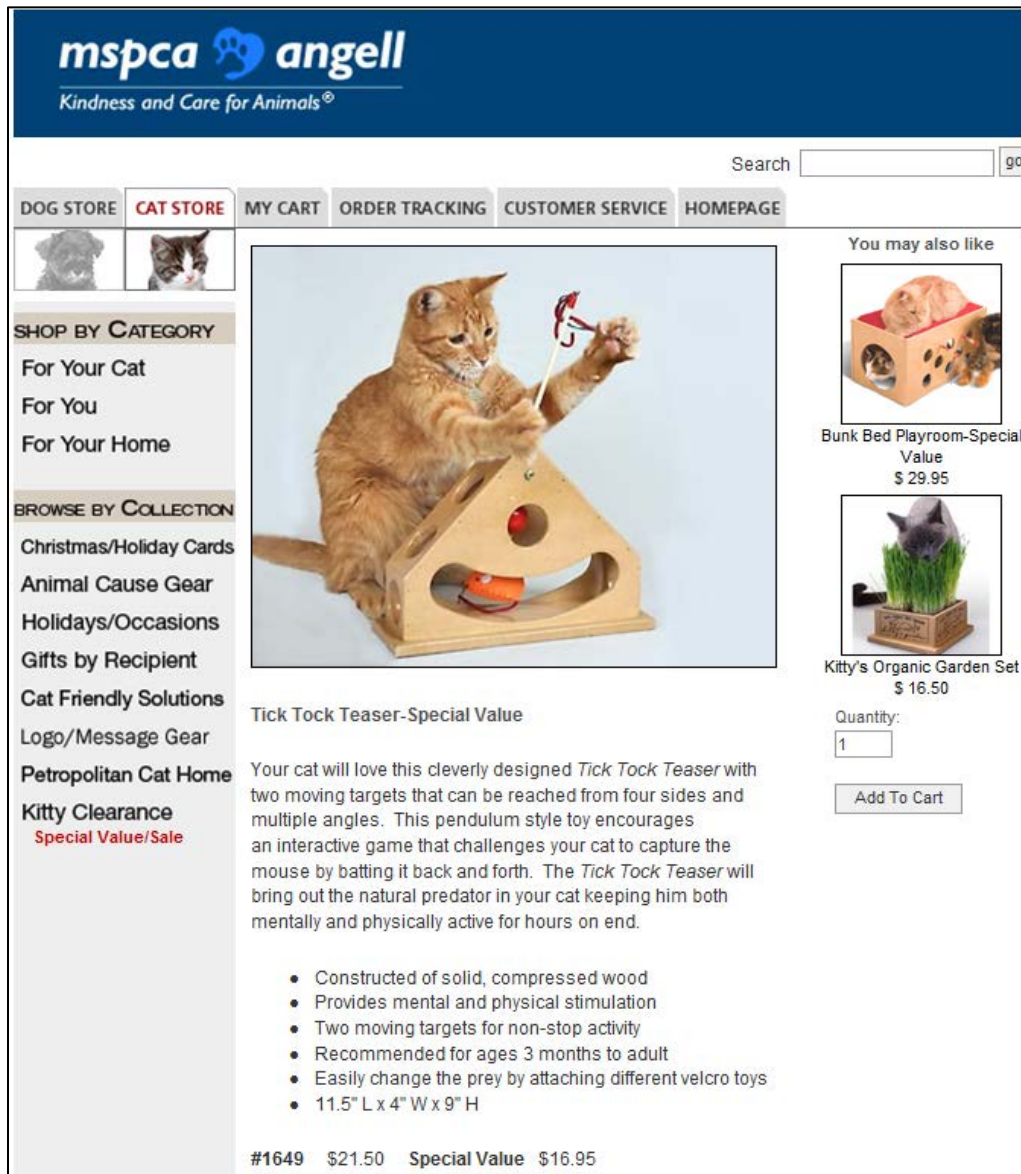
For example, the American Diabetes Association sold a variety of different branded products: from t-shirts to cookbooks. These were items that users expected to see on the site. However, they also sold other items that weren't clearly branded or related to their overall mission. For example, users could purchase a travel alarm clock from the site.



Users could purchase a travel alarm clock from the American Diabetes Association, but it didn't contain branding and wasn't clearly related to their mission and goals.

Other sites only provided items that were clearly related to the organization's work. The MSPCA Angell website provided two mini-stores on their site: a dog store and a cat store. One user in our study was interested in buying a toy for her cat, and she

was able to quickly navigate to the appropriate area of the site and locate an item to purchase.



One user purchased a cat toy from the MSPCA Angell organization. She was able to quickly locate the item, because the store was organized by pet type: dog and cat.

103. Create a cohesive site experience by placing the e-commerce area within the main site.

To create a cohesive user experience for users who are interested in purchasing a product, place the shopping area of the site within the main site. This will allow users to seamlessly navigate to the e-commerce area of the site without being interrupted by a new window or a change in visual design or navigation.

The American Diabetes Association contained the e-commerce area of the site within the *Shop* category. Users navigated to this area of the site to browse products and make a purchase, which had a navigation system and a visual design that was consistent with the rest of the site.



Image 1 of 2: Users could access the e-commerce area of the American Diabetes Association's site from the homepage (shown above) or from any other page in the site.

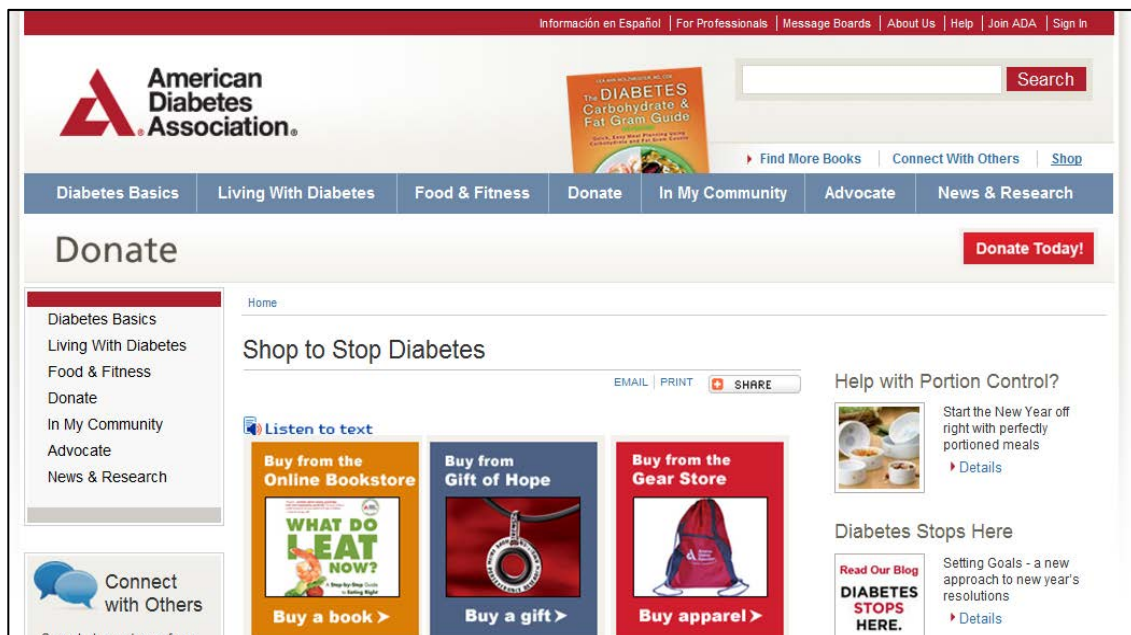


Image 2 of 2: When users navigated to the e-commerce area of the American Diabetes Association, the visual design and site navigation was consistent with the rest of the site.

104. If users are sent to a new site or URL, create a visual consistency between the main site and the shopping site.

If users must be sent to a specific e-commerce site to make a purchase, ensure there is visual design consistency between the main site and the e-commerce site. If the look and feel of the shopping site is drastically different than the main site, users may question whether or not they are in the right place, and they may hesitate to browse products or make a purchase.

For example, the main colors on the MSPCA Angell homepage and site were bright blue, white, and yellow. If users clicked on the *Online Store* category in the main navigation, they were brought to a new site that used dark blue, white, and red as the main colors. The visual design was inconsistent and jarring.

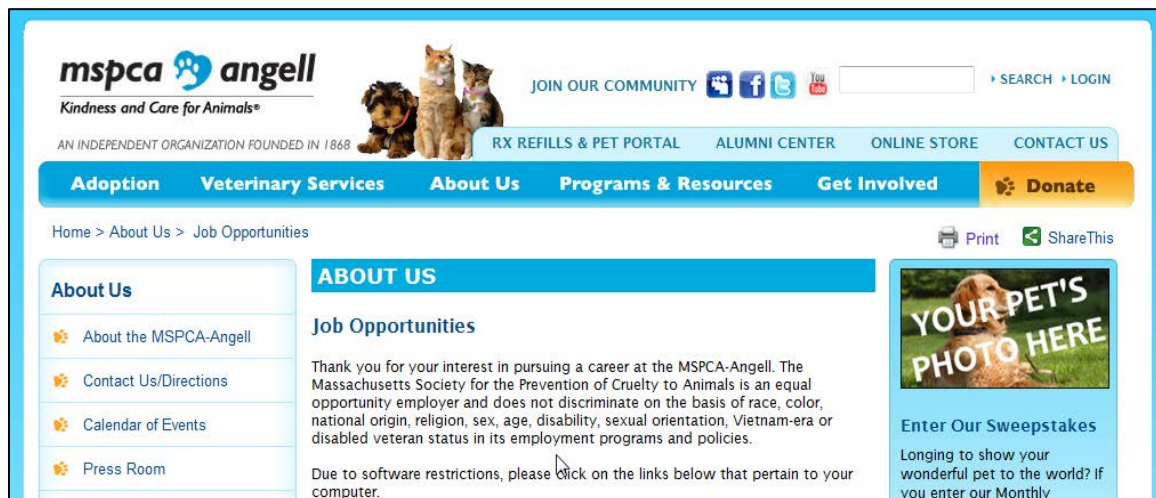


Image 1 of 2: The MSPCA Angell homepage and site used bright blue, white, and yellow as the main colors.

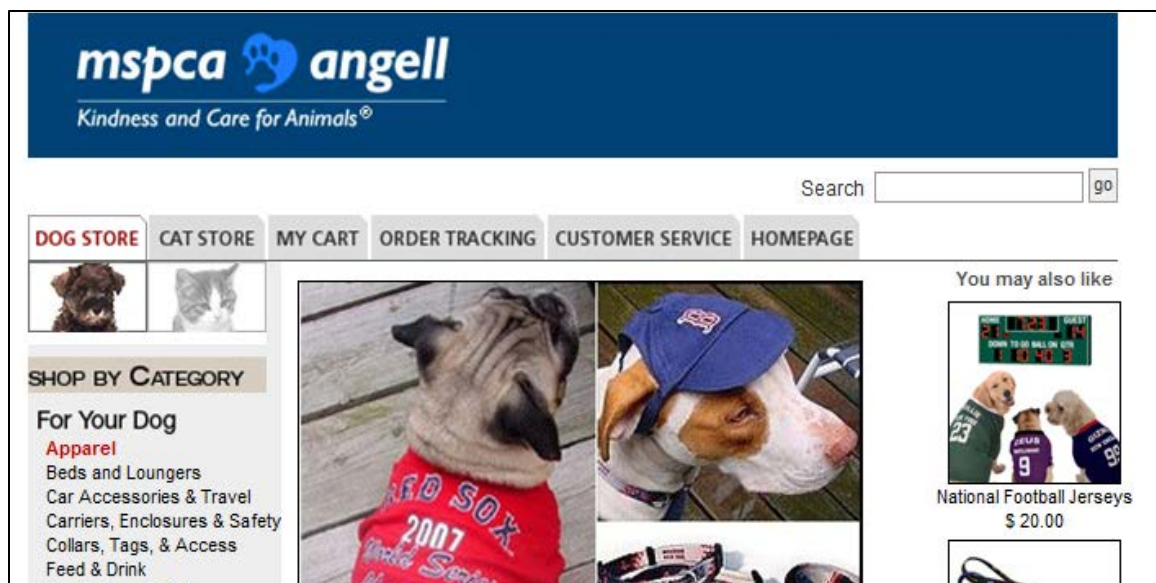


Image 2 of 2: Most colors used on the MSPCA Angell online store were inconsistent with the main site: dark blue, white, gray, and red.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy had a shopping site that was more visually consistent with the main site. The main colors used on both sites were light green, blue, orange, and white, which created a more cohesive experience for shoppers.



Image 1 of 2: The Appalachian Trail Conservancy homepage and site used a specific set of colors: bright green, blue, orange, and white.

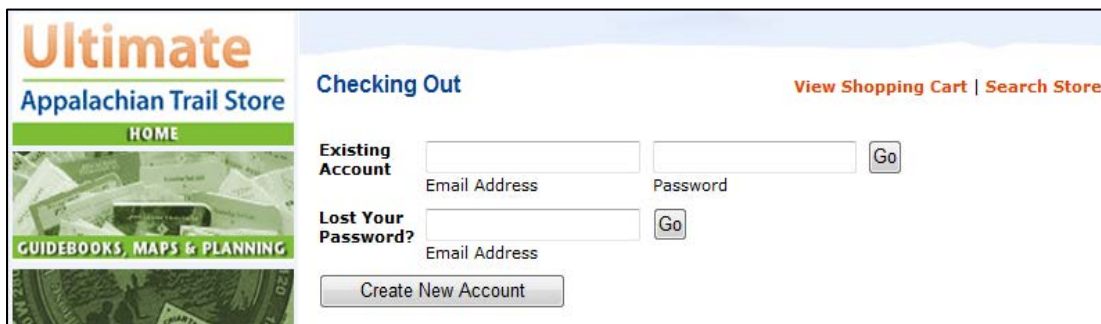


Image 2 of 2: The colors used on the Appalachian Trail Conservancy shopping site were consistent with the organization's official site.

105. Allow users to purchase an item without registering on the site.

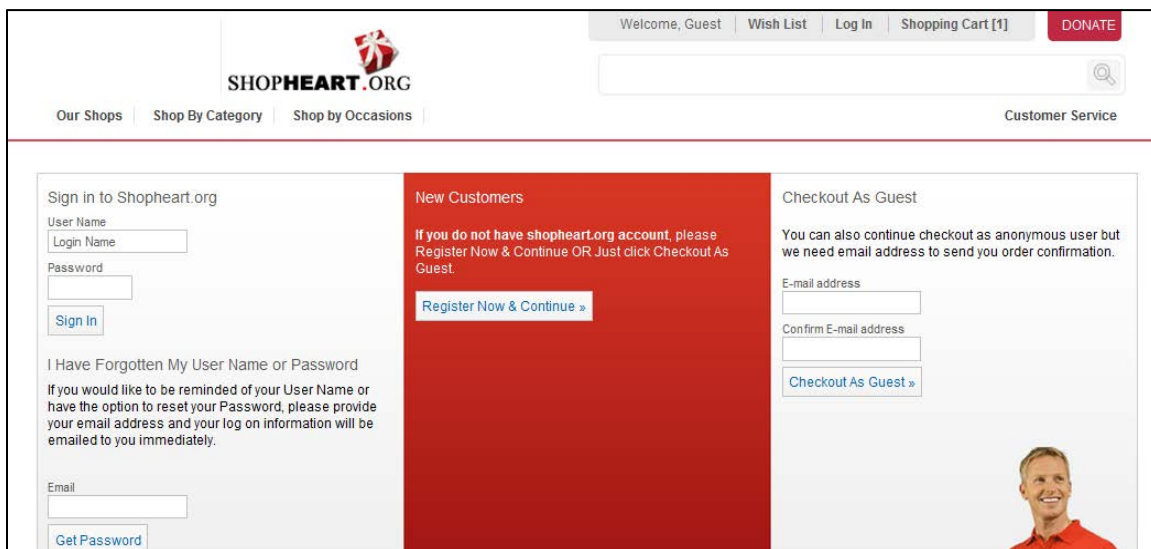
Users don't want to register on a site to make a purchase (or a donation, as discussed in Guideline 65 on page 137). Users don't want to take the time to register, provide personal information, and create (yet another) username and password. For this reason, it's important to allow users to make a purchase without registering on the site.

Some sites, such as the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, required users to register in order to make a purchase. When a user who wanted to make a purchase saw the registration request, he became annoyed and said, "I don't like this business about having to register. I just want to buy without registering on the site. For this site, I don't think it's possible. I don't want to open an account and all that jazz. I just want to buy something."

The screenshot shows the 'Ultimate Appalachian Trail Store' checkout page. On the left is a navigation menu with 'HOME' and 'GUIDEBOOKS, MAPS & PLANNING'. The main heading is 'Checking Out'. There are links for 'View Shopping Cart' and 'Search Store'. The 'Existing Account' section has input fields for 'Email Address' and 'Password', followed by a 'Go' button. Below that, the 'Lost Your Password?' section has an 'Email Address' input field and a 'Go' button. At the bottom is a 'Create New Account' button.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy required users to register or sign in to the site in order to make a purchase. This was off-putting to one user.

If users wanted to make a purchase on the American Heart Association's website, they were given three options: log in, create a new account, or checkout as a guest. This allowed users to purchase without registering or logging in to the site. A user in our study didn't have an existing account and didn't want to create one, so she purchased a product as a guest.

The screenshot shows the ShopHeart.org checkout page. The top navigation bar includes 'Welcome, Guest', 'Wish List', 'Log in', 'Shopping Cart [1]', and a 'DONATE' button. Below the navigation bar are links for 'Our Shops', 'Shop By Category', 'Shop by Occasions', and 'Customer Service'. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column is for 'Sign in to Shopheart.org' with fields for 'User Name' (Login Name), 'Password', and a 'Sign In' button. Below this is a link for 'I Have Forgotten My User Name or Password' and a section for email reminders. The middle column is a red banner for 'New Customers' with the text 'If you do not have shopheart.org account, please Register Now & Continue OR Just click Checkout As Guest.' and a 'Register Now & Continue »' button. The right column is for 'Checkout As Guest' with the text 'You can also continue checkout as anonymous user but we need email address to send you order confirmation.' and fields for 'E-mail address' and 'Confirm E-mail address', followed by a 'Checkout As Guest »' button. A small photo of a smiling man is in the bottom right corner.

Users who purchased from the American Heart Association weren't required to log in or register on the site; they could make a purchase as a guest.

106. Don't ask users to donate or become a member during the checkout process. If it can't be avoided, be graceful when doing so.

Users who purchase from charity or non-profit sites expect the experience to be quick, easy, and similar to experiences on other e-commerce sites. They don't want to be distracted or annoyed with additional offers or solicitations. Sites should avoid any additional requests for money during the checkout process, because users may become irritated and leave the process altogether—resulting in a lost sale.

If donation or membership requests must be integrated into the checkout process, be sure the request isn't bombarding or overly distracting.

For example, during the checkout process on the American Red Cross' e-commerce site, a pop-up displayed on the page where users were asked to review their order details. The pop-up asked users to donate to disaster relief by "rounding up" the order total or by specifying a donation amount. The pop-up was intrusive and appeared during a very critical step in the checkout process: the *Review* page. Additionally, the "rounding up" option was unclear. One user wasn't sure if his \$7.95 order would be "rounded up" to the nearest dollar or up to \$10.00.


The screenshot shows the American Red Cross Store checkout process. A pop-up window on the left asks, "Would you like to donate to disaster relief?" with three radio button options: "Not today, thank you." (selected), "Yes! Round up my order total.", and "Yes! Add this amount: \$". Below the options are "Add Donation" and "Close" buttons. The main checkout page shows a progress bar with steps: Contact, Shipping, Payment, and Review. The "Review" step is active. Below the progress bar, there are sections for "CUSTOMER CONTACT" and "SHIPMENT ADDRESS", each with an "edit My Address" button. Below these is the "SHOPPING CART" section, which includes a table with the following data:

Item #	Description	Unit Price	Units	Quantity	Price
Part #RC600 SKU #RC600	American Red Cross Pocket First Aid	\$2.95	EA	1	\$2.95


Below the table, the payment method is "Visa ending in 1835" and the shipping method is "FedEx, Home Delivery (residential)". The order summary shows: Order Sub-Total: \$2.95, Shipping & Handling: \$5.00, and Order Grand Total: \$7.95. At the bottom are "Back" and "Submit Order" buttons.

The American Red Cross' checkout process included a pop-up on the *Review* page that asked users to donate to disaster relief by "rounding up" the order total or by specifying a donation amount.

The American Heart Association used a more subtle approach to asking for donations during the checkout process. The request displayed within the *Shopping Cart* before users began the checkout process. It was placed below the item listed in the *Shopping Cart* and gave users pre-defined donation amounts, along with an open field for specifying a different amount. This was less intrusive than the American Red Cross' approach, because it didn't abruptly interrupt the purchasing process and could be easily ignored.



American Heart Association
Learn and Live



SHOPHEART.ORG

Welcome, Guest
Wish List
Log In
Shopping Cart [1]
DONATE

Our Shops
Shop By Category
Shop by Occasions

Customer Service

Shop

American Heart Association

Go Red


Power To End Stroke

Start!

My Cart (1) item

Continue Shopping

Proceed to Checkout »

Remove	Product	Unit Price	Qty	Total
	START IPOD HOLDER	\$5.00	1	\$5.00

Coupons and Promotions Applied to this Order

Shipping, handling and tax will be added to this subtotal.

Sub Total

\$5.00

All proceeds from this purchase benefit the American Heart and American Stroke Associations. Please consider adding a donation to your purchase. The gift will appear as a separate charge on your credit card for billing and tax purposes.

Donate:
☐ \$25.00
☐ \$50.00
☐ \$75.00
☐ \$100.00
☐ Other

Donations will appear as a separate charge from product purchases on your credit card.

Update Quantity/Remove Items

Check Out »


The American Heart Association asked for donations on the *Shopping Cart* page, but placed the information below the most critical details—what was in the cart—and provided pre-defined donation amounts along with an open field for specifying another amount.

The New Hampshire Historical Society integrated membership options into the checkout process on their site. When users added an item to the shopping cart and initiated the checkout process, they were provided with various membership options, along with an option to checkout without becoming a member.

If users decided to become a member, they'd receive 15% off their order along with "other great year-round benefits." Benefits of membership should have been displayed on the page so users could make an informed decision about joining. Simply offering membership, with a fee of at least \$40, wasn't enough to entice users to join. One user, while viewing the offer, said, "I'm not going to pay \$40.00 to get \$5.00 off my book purchase."

Both users who made purchases on the site chose not to become a member during the checkout process, but they weren't annoyed with the request. One user said, "It doesn't surprise me, and it doesn't offend me or bother me either."

Books, Videos & Music	Gifts as Special as New Hampshire	Custom Products	For Children	What's New?	On Sale
--------------------------	--------------------------------------	-----------------	-----------------	----------------	---------



Museum Store

[Store Home](#)

[Customer Service](#)

[View Cart](#)

search

☒ Find Any Words
☐ Find All Words

Want to save 15% on this order?

New Hampshire Historical Society members get a 15% discount on museum store purchases and other great year-round benefits.

Join now and save by selecting a membership level below. If you don't want to become a member right now, simply choose the button to continue checkout without joining the Society.

- ☐ Individual Membership \$40
- ☐ Couple Membership \$50
- ☐ Family Membership \$60
- ☐ Individual Life Membership \$800
- ☐ Couple Life Membership \$1,200
- ☐ Continue checkout without joining the Society

During the checkout process, the New Hampshire Historical Society gave users the option to become a member and save 15% off their order or to make the purchase without becoming a member.

Maintaining a Relationship with Donors and Volunteers

107. Use confirmation messages to verify donation details.

Similar to a confirmation page that displays after a donation has been submitted (See the Confirmation Page guidelines, beginning on page 178), there are details that must be communicated to donors in a confirmation email message.¹¹

Information in confirmation email should be given priority and presented in the following order:

- “Thank you”
- Printable receipt
- Tax deduction details
- How the money will be used

The following optional details can be provided afterward, if necessary:

- The name of the charge to expect on a credit card statement, if different than the organization name
- Tracking code or ID number
- Requests to email friends or share on social networks

In a confirmation message sent from UNICEF, some of the required details were included, such as a “thank you,” a printable receipt, and how the money would be used, but most of this information was placed below the optional details, such as links to share the donation with friends on social networks or through email. This information should have been provided below the critical details, which were displaced by these lower-priority calls to action.

¹¹ See our separate report with more general guidelines for confirmation email and other transactional messages. <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/confirmation/>

Date: Fri, 15 Jan 2010 11:41:13 -0600
From: webmaster@unicefusa.org
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Thank you for your contribution!

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your generous donation to help save the lives of children in Haiti after this terrible disaster. 100% of every dollar given to the U.S. Fund for UNICEF will be sent directly to UNICEF to support emergency relief efforts in Haiti. You can spread the word and encourage others to donate by:

- [Clicking here](#) to post a message to your Facebook page.
- [Clicking here](#) to post a message to Twitter.
- Emailing your friends with this link: <http://www.unicefusa.org/haitiquake>

Your support during this troubling tragedy is greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,

U.S. Fund for UNICEF



Please print and retain this message as a record of your contribution.

Transaction Summary

Transaction Date: 1/15/10
Gift Information
Level: Enter an Amount
Amount: \$100.00

Contact Information

Donor Title:
Donor First Name: [REDACTED]
Donor Last Name: [REDACTED]
Spouse/Partner First Name
Spouse/Partner Last Name
Company Name
Donor Street 1: [REDACTED]
Donor Street 2: [REDACTED]
Donor City: [REDACTED]
Donor State/Province: [REDACTED]
Donor ZIP/Postal code: [REDACTED]
Donor Country: [REDACTED]
Donor Phone Number:
Email Address: [\[REDACTED\]@unicefusa.org](mailto:[REDACTED]@unicefusa.org)

Payment Information

Payment type: [REDACTED]
Credit Card Number: [REDACTED]

Billing Information

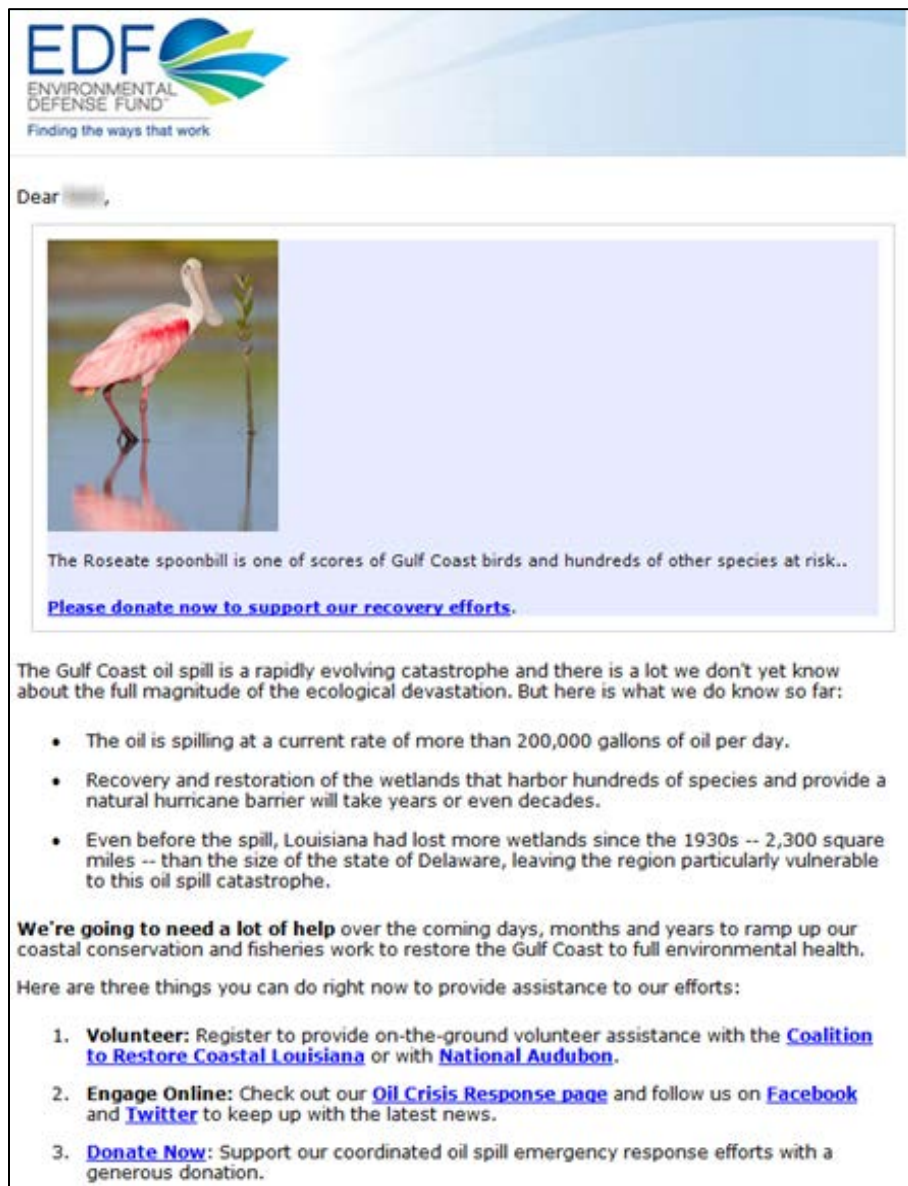
Billing same as donor: Yes
Billing First Name: [REDACTED]
Billing Last Name: [REDACTED]
Billing Street 1: [REDACTED]
Billing Street 2: [REDACTED]
Billing City: [REDACTED]
Billing State/Province: [REDACTED]
Billing ZIP/Postal Code: [REDACTED]
Billing Country: [REDACTED]
Email opt-in: Yes
Gift Amount: \$100.00
Tax-deductible Amount: \$100.00
This organization's tax ID is: [REDACTED]
Tracking Code: [REDACTED]

The confirmation message from UNICEF included some of the required details, but they were displaced by requests to share the donation details with friends and family via social networks or email.

108. If users opted-in to receive additional information during the donation process, use email to build and maintain relationships.

If users choose to receive further email communications during the donation process, messages can be sent to build a stronger relationship with donors. However, messages should be sent strategically, because users don't want to be bombarded with email. Choose the best times to send email, such as during times of need or times of the year when making donations and volunteering are popular.




For example, the Environmental Defense Fund sent an email requesting donors, volunteers, and advocates to help support their work after a catastrophic oil spill had occurred.



The Environmental Defense Fund sent an email asking for support after an oil spill.

New York Cares sent an email asking for coat drive donations on a cold winter morning. The email asked for donations so the organization could purchase coats, meals, and other items for those in need.

If you do not see the images below, visit www.newyorkcares.org/coatdrive for information about the New York Cares Coat Drive.




22nd Annual New York Cares COAT DRIVE

Imagine if your grandmother couldn't afford a warm coat. On a cold day like today, she would be rendered homebound. She wouldn't be able to go to the doctor. She wouldn't be able to go to the supermarket. She wouldn't even be able to refill her prescriptions.

It's shocking how important an item of clothing can be.

The [New York Cares Coat Drive](#) ensures that at-risk New Yorkers receive warm coats to help them go about their lives. And our work doesn't stop when the snow melts. Every day, New York Cares volunteers provide a lifeline of social activities for lonely seniors, tutor low-income students in math and reading, and help homeless adults find jobs to break the cycle of poverty for good.



With your financial donation, we will create more volunteer programs to assist those who have nowhere else to turn.

Thank you so much for your generosity.

Click to Donate

\$100

Grants books to 15 low-income children in an Early Morning Reading program.

Click to Donate


\$50

Feeds 900 meals to homeless and homebound New Yorkers.

Click to Donate

\$25

Distributes warm coats to 16 impoverished people.

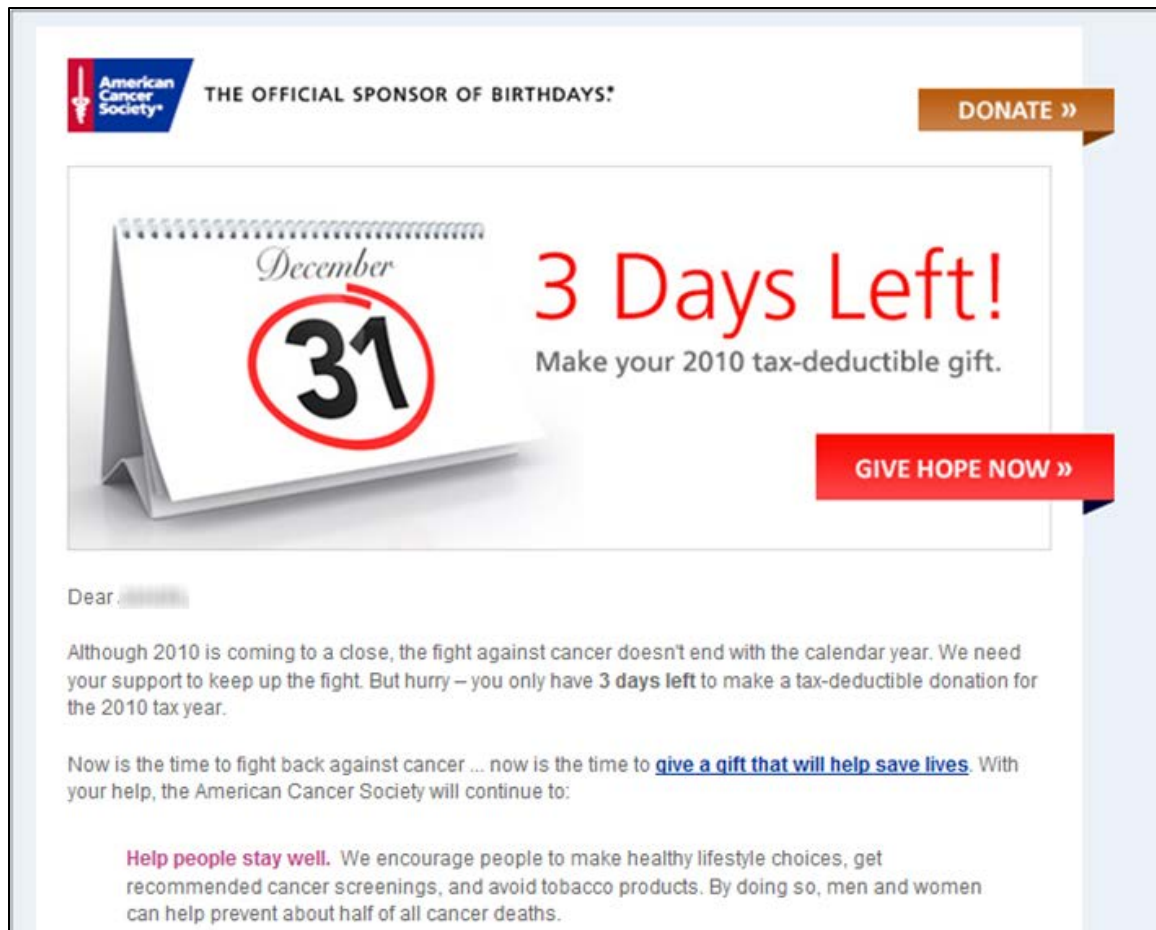


Charity Navigator awarded New York Cares its highest four-star rating for organizational efficiency in 2009. Charity Navigator is the industry's leading independent charity evaluator.

New York Cares | 214 W. 29th Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10001 | 212-228-5000
www.newyorkcares.org | info@newyorkcares.org

New York Cares sent a timely email during a cold winter day asking for coat drive donations.

Popular times to donate can also be used as the basis for an email. For example, American Cancer Society sent a donation reminder three days before the year-end tax deadline.

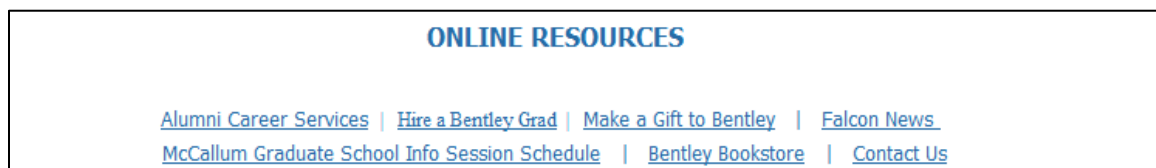


The American Cancer Society sent a donation reminder during a popular time of year to give: the year-end tax deadline.

109. Include donation and/or volunteer calls-to-action in standard newsletters.

Email newsletter recipients can be reminded to donate or volunteer in standard newsletters, but the request should be placed in a low-priority area, such as the footer navigation (unless there is a large emphasis on donating or volunteering in a particular newsletter).¹²

The Bentley University newsletter included a “Make a Gift to Bentley” call to action in the footer navigation. It was de-emphasized in the footer, but it was still available for those interested in contributing to the university.





Bentley University included a link to donate in the footer of an email newsletter.

¹² For additional information and guidelines about email newsletter usability, see our separate report on that topic. <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/newsletters/>

110. Provide links to the organization's social network presence within email messages.

To develop relationships with donors and volunteers on social networks, add links in your newsletter to your social network presence on sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. Again, ensure that high-priority messages are communicated before these calls-to-action. These can be placed towards the end of the message, such as how a Hoboken Museum newsletter displayed the link to their Facebook page.

	<p>charitable giving. Visit our website and click on the "Contributions and Endowment" link in the left column to make a donation online. Or stop by the Museum and pick up one of our Annual Fund and Membership brochures. While you're thinking of it, renew or start up an annual membership.</p> <p>Memberships also make great holiday gifts. And don't forget that our gift shop is your best source for "only in Hoboken" gifts. We have a wide selection of T-shirts, hats, historic prints, books, cards and "Heaven, Hell or Hoboken" mugs.</p>
<p>Find us on Facebook! Log on and search for Hoboken Museum, or follow this link to www.facebook.com/HobokenMuseum. We're also on Twitter.</p>	
<p>This e-mail was sent from Hoboken Historical Museum Immediate removal with PatronMail® SecureUnsubscribe</p>	
<p>To forward this e-mail to a friend or colleague, use this link.</p>	
<p>To change your e-mail address or update preferences, use this link.</p>	

The bottom of the Hoboken Museum newsletter included a link to their Facebook page. The newsletter should have also provided a link to Twitter, which is mentioned but not linked. Don't leave people guessing, especially since it can be hard to locate the correct Twitter account, given that site's confusing search.

For more information and guidelines about creating a presence on social networks, see the Social Media and Interaction guidelines, beginning on page 110.

Site-Wide Guidelines

This section contains guidelines that can be used throughout charity or non-profit sites and aren't necessarily related to a specific site area.

111. Use images that reinforce the charity's work and help convey information. Avoid using images purely for decoration or aesthetics.

Several sites we tested used images on the homepage purely for decoration. These types of images take up precious real estate that can be used for more important information or meaningful graphics. Graphics that show real content can complement the site's text and make it more interesting and appealing to users.

The Accelerated Cure Project for Multiple Sclerosis site had images of people across the top of the page. These images caught the attention of users but quickly confused them. One user said, "There are pictures of people at the top, but I don't know who they are at this point. Are they people with MS? It doesn't say anything about them." Another user said, "I'm pretty drawn to people's faces, and the variety of different people is appealing. I'm not sure if these people have MS or work for this project."



The images of people at the top of the Accelerated Cure Project for Multiple Sclerosis homepage confused users.

Although this site used poor imagery on the homepage, they used an information graphic to communicate their research efforts on another page of the site. While one user was reviewing their work, she came across the *Cure Map Diagram*, which displayed where the organization was in their research process. This user found the graphic very helpful, and said, "They have a diagram which shows how they've broken down the five different causes that contribute to MS and the four different phases, and then they have 'complete' listed. That's a cool graphic. It shows that progress is being made in finding a cure or treatment ... The cure map breaks down the research that's necessary for each phase of the disease."

Phase 1: Clearly articulate what is known about each sub-type of the 5 root causes, organizing that knowledge in a logical way that is easily understood. This will give us an understanding of what all the possible areas of cause can be.

Phase 2: Review current and past MS research to overlay results on what we determined in Phase 1. This will help organize the vast information body on MS so that different works can be related to each other in the context of a bigger framework.

Phase 3: Analyze what are the most promising areas to rule in or out. Some research has clearly demonstrated that certain causes are not at work, while other research hints that still other areas may be involved. Also, there may be areas that haven't been investigated at all. Determine how each area might be addressed and estimate the payback from a success in that area.

Phase 4: Create programs to do the work that is most promising for determining a causal component or of eliminating one as a possibility. These programs may be conducted by existing research teams or companies, or may require the formation of new teams. That assessment will be made on a per-program basis.

C U R E M A P D I A G R A M

	GENETICS	PATHOGENS	NUTRITION	TOXIC AGENTS	TRAUMA
Phase 1	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE
Phase 2	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE
Phase 3	In Progress	In Progress	In Progress	In Progress	In Progress
Phase 4	In Progress: MS Repository				

The *Cure Map* on the Accelerated Cure Project for Multiple Sclerosis communicated where the organization was in their research process.

The New Hampshire Food Bank featured a graphic related to a hair show in the middle of their homepage, which confused a couple users who visited the site. One said, "Now this is a food bank site, so I'm not sure what the hair competition is about." Another user said, "What does the hair show have to do with this? That's weird."

New Hampshire Food Bank

Home Page

Do you have your tickets yet? Order yours here!

THE INTERNATIONAL FANTASY
HAIR COMPETITION

WEBSITE

is proudly presented by

Hypertherm®

April 23, 2009
7:00 PM
Verizon Wireless Arena
Manchester, NH

March is Bean Month!

If you are organizing a food drive in the month of March, please tell everyone to bring cans of beans to donate- baked beans, kidney beans, lima beans, black beans, white beans, beans and franks- any kind of bean that you can find. Beans are a nutritious, staple food that our registered agencies need to bring back to their clients. By donating cans of beans during March, you will help our agencies by giving them a food item they desperately need.

Looking ahead: April will be Tuna Month- canned tuna and other canned fish

The New Hampshire Food Bank is a member of

Click on the logo to learn more!

Contact the NH Food Bank Development Department before using this Feeding America logo.

Get Help

To download a complete listing of the New Hampshire Food Bank's registered agencies, visit our Agency page.

How can I help the NH Food Bank?

Donate money

or become a member of our Freedom from Hunger monthly giving club.

Host a Food Drive

Participate in a food or fund drive

Attend an NHFB Event

Call or email for more information on ways to help at (603) 669-9725 or info@nhfoodbank.org.

Food Bank Hours & Directions

Warehouse

Mon. - Thurs.
8 to 3pm
Fri. 8 to 2 pm

Office

Mon. - Thurs.
8 to 4pm
Fri. 8 to 2 pm

Directions to the NH Food Bank

The advertisement for a hair competition on the New Hampshire Food Bank homepage confused users.

112. Avoid using stock photography.

Users were put-off by imagery that appeared to be fake or overly-staged. If images are used, particularly those of people, ensure that they are truly involved with the organization: donors, leaders, or people who have benefited from the organization are good candidates to include in imagery.

The images of “students” on the Southern New Hampshire University website bothered one user. She said, “They are trying to be multi-cultural and ethnically diverse, right on the front page. That doesn’t really appeal to me. I think they are trying too hard to be politically correct.” She compared that with the images of students and donors on the University of New Hampshire website, which were paired with stories about the individuals. She said, “The website seems a little more genuine. I like that this one has personal stories about people, about donors, and the decisions that they make.”

200

INFO@NNGROUP.COM

Site-Wide Guidelines



Image 1 of 2: One user didn't respond well to the stock photography on the Southern New Hampshire University site.

A Gift from the Heart

It isn't often that UNH Athletics receives a five-figure gift from an annual fund mail appeal—in fact, it's never happened before. So when a large gift arrived in December from alumna **Jayne "Kerry" Eastman Chandler '84**, it caught the attention of Athletics Director Marty Scarano, who called Chandler personally to thank her. Chandler, who lives in New Jersey with her husband and two children, said the reason for her gift was simply that her family was in a position to do something for a place she loved.

What was so special to you about UNH?
Everything! I transferred to UNH after attending several schools. Not long after my arrival, I felt that I was finally where I truly belonged. At UNH, I developed a sense of who I was and who I wanted to be. There is also no doubt that my UNH experience laid the

Image 2 of 2: An image (and accompanying story) of a University of New Hampshire donor seemed more "genuine" to one user.

113. Present information in a way that supports scanning.

Our research has shown that users don't read word for word on the Web. Instead, they skim pages trying to pick out a few sentences or words that hold the information they want.

People prefer information that is short and to the point. They don't want to be overloaded people with too much text. Websites should support people's online reading behaviors by providing key elements that facilitate scanning, such as headings, subheadings, large type, bold text, highlighted text, and

bulleted lists. Content that is properly formatted will encourage people to read more about the organization.

One user, while trying to learn about the Nancy Davis Foundation for Multiple Sclerosis, was annoyed when she reached the *About* page, because it was a large wall of text. She said, "I don't want to have to read a lot of information. I like to have smaller bits of information that I can click on to get more."

NANCY DAVIS FOUNDATION FOR MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

[DONATE NOW!](#)

[HOME](#)[ABOUT](#)[CONTRIBUTE](#)[CENTER WITHOUT WALLS](#)[EVENTS](#)[MEDIA](#)[RESOURCES](#)[CONTACT](#)

[NANCY DAVIS BIOGRAPHY](#)[BOARD OF DIRECTORS](#)

About

Our Mission

The Nancy Davis Foundation for Multiple Sclerosis is dedicated to the treatment and ultimate cure of MS. Funding research is the core focus of the Foundation and significant strides have been made to find the cause and the cure of this devastating disease. All funds raised through our Race to Erase MS event support The Nancy Davis Center Without Walls program, a selected network of the nation's top seven MS research centers. This nationwide collaboration of physicians, scientists and clinicians is on the cutting-edge of innovative research programs and therapeutic approaches to eradicate MS. It is the hope of the Foundation that in addition to combating MS through research in a clinical environment, an increased awareness will be created by educating the public about this mystifying disease.

Our History

The Nancy Davis Foundation for Multiple Sclerosis was founded by Nancy Davis in 1993 after being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. After her diagnosis, she was determined to devote her time and resources to finding a cure. Nancy's hope, courage and strength continue to inspire her to maintain a vibrant quality of life despite this chronic disease, but most of all, she remains positive, continues to live her life to the fullest and is tireless in her efforts to finding the cure for MS.

In the process of learning all she could about multiple sclerosis, she discovered that MS affects close to two million Americans primarily between the ages of 20 and 40, and three times as many women as men. Nancy Davis made it her deep personal commitment to help find the cause and ultimately the cure of this disease. In 1993 she founded The Nancy Davis Foundation for Multiple Sclerosis and held the first Race to Erase MS event – an intimate ski getaway weekend in Aspen, Colorado – that pulled in over \$1.3 million for the Foundation. Since its inception, the Race to Erase MS has become an exciting star-studded gala. The foundation has gained the support of many key individuals in the fashion and entertainment worlds, including Tommy Hilfiger who has been a major sponsor since 1997 and who has a sister living with MS. The annual Race to Erase MS event has raised over \$30 million for multiple sclerosis research to date.

All proceeds directly fund the foundation's **Center Without Walls program**, a selected network of the nation's top seven MS research centers. This nationwide collaboration of physicians, scientists and clinicians are on the cutting-edge of innovative research programs and therapeutic approaches to eradicate MS. The Centers work as a team constantly communicating, never duplicating. It was the goal of Nancy Davis to build a winning team and the Foundation sought out the best and the brightest MS research facilities throughout the world. It is the hope of her Foundation that in addition to combating MS through research in a clinical environment, that an increased awareness will be created by educating the public about this devastating disease.

"While there's no cure for MS yet, we have broken so much new ground in a very short time and we will not stop until we cross the finish line and find a cure for MS," Nancy explains. It's amazing how the landscape has significantly changed over the years. At the time Nancy was diagnosed in 1993, there were no drugs on the market to help stop the progression of this disease. Miraculously, there are now six with FDA approval with a seventh very near approval and others to be approved in the very near future. We are now so much closer to finding a cure.



LATEST MS NEWS - VIEW ALL

BioMS Medical's Phase III U.S. Multiple Sclerosis Trial Receives Positive...



POSTED: OCT 03, 2008
...Safety Review from Data Safety Monitoring Board Edmonton, Alberta, October 3, 2008 – BioMS Medical Corp. (TSX: ...



POSTED: FEB 14, 2008
MS slowed in test with cancer drug



POSTED: JAN 19, 2007

The *About* page on the Nancy Davis Foundation for Multiple Sclerosis was a daunting wall of text, which discouraged users from reading.

Another user, while viewing information on the *Hate Crimes* page on the Interfaith Alliance's website, said, "It doesn't have anything in between to break it out to make it more interesting, like pictures of what they're doing. Although they have stuff on the side to click on, it'd be helpful to have a video right on the page directly related to the topic."

We know The Interfaith Alliance members made a difference because the Senate's lead sponsor said that on the Senate floor.

Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA) said, "The Interfaith Alliance - a nonpartisan advocacy organization representing 75 different religions - said that hate crimes are an assault upon 'the belief that lies at the core of our diverse faith traditions [and] that every human being is endowed with dignity and worth.'"

But our work to pass comprehensive hate crimes legislation is not done. We need you to keep the pressure on your Senators and Representatives to make sure that the amendment survives the conference process. The House passed the bill earlier this year by a strong bipartisan majority of 237-180.

Please send a message to tell your elected officials that hate is neither a religious or American value. **Your support will help us tell the White House that, as fair-minded Americans who care about the well-being of our fellow citizens, we will not tolerate a veto of this important legislation.**

The Interfaith Alliance calls on our members and all Americans to urge the United States Congress to pass comprehensive hate crimes legislation. Those who value religious pluralism must send a strong, unified message that democratic and religious values call for equal protection for all people to be free from attacks motivated by bigotry. Religion and government must work together to create an America in which diverse people are safe as well as free.

Why Do We Need This Legislation:

Crimes motivated by hatred or bigotry are an assault not only upon individual victims' freedoms, but also upon a belief that lies at the core of our diverse faith traditions --that every human being is endowed with dignity and worth. Every American should enjoy the strongest possible guarantee of freedom from attacks motivated by bigotry.

- The US Supreme Court has upheld the constitutionality of a hate crimes bill that define when a person's bigoted thoughts or speech turn into a crime against another person or persons.
- As of 2006, five states do not have hate crimes laws covering individuals (Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina, and Wyoming). Among states that have hate crimes laws, some communities are protected, while some are not.
- Since 1991, the **FBI has documented** almost 100,000 hate crimes. During that period, however, the Justice Department has filed fewer than 75 cases under the current, narrow federal law. And a new government report states that the real number of hate crimes in the United States is more than 15 times higher than FBI statistics reflect.
- According to FBI statistics, hate crimes most often target people because of their race, religion, and sexual orientation.
- To view a report from the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights documenting the "Human Face of Hate Crimes," please [click here](#)

What Will This Legislation Do:

Democratic and religious values call for equal protection for all people in all places. National hate crimes legislation will help ensure equal protection under the law for all Americans.

• To ensure equal protection under the law, hate crimes prevention legislation must ensure

Action Alerts

NONE AT THIS TIME

Legislation

S. 1105
- Introduced 4/12/2007

H.R.1592
- Introduced 3/20/2007
- **Passed** May 3, 2007 by a vote of 237 to 180.

E-Post Card

NONE AT THIS TIME

Fact Sheet

Background, recent actions and talking points, PDF

Although the *Hate Crimes* page on the Interfaith Alliance's website used headings, bold text, and bulleted lists, one user was still overwhelmed by the amount of information on the page and wanted to see images or videos to break up the text.

114. Avoid using organization-centric terms.

Some websites we tested used made-up terms, jargon, and internal names, which confused users. Don't assume users understand these terms. If they must be used, they should be explicitly explained.

One user, while viewing the Accelerated Cure Project for Multiple Sclerosis website, noticed the use of "cure map" on their *About Us* page, and said: "They have a process called 'cure map' but that doesn't mean anything to me."

In this case, the term was hyperlinked, and she clicked on the link to get more information about the name of their research program. It would have been better to include a brief explanation in context, as well as providing a link to additional information.

About

The Accelerated Cure Project for Multiple Sclerosis is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to curing [Multiple Sclerosis \(MS\)](#) by determining the cause of MS.

We believe the route to finding the cure will most quickly come from determining the cause or causes of MS. The causes will be found by developing a logical, organized, straight-forward process based on what is known about the causes of disease in general. This process must be clearly spelled out and presented in a manner that is accessible to those involved: researchers, clinicians, and individuals with MS.

We call the plan that is emerging from this process the "Cure Map."

The development and execution of the Cure Map is supported by:

- A top notch [Scientific Advisory Board](#)
- An [Information Portal](#) to distribute information on MS, the Cure Map, and related materials
- [Fundraising](#) efforts to pay for the development of the [Cure Map](#)
- A [Community](#), both online and off, of our constituency

Our constituency includes:

[Individuals with MS and their families](#) - Involving and educating those who are most affected by MS as to what is known, what is being done, and what should be done is critical. Ultimately it is people with MS and their loved ones who are responsible for promoting the efforts for a cure.

[Clinicians treating individuals with MS and researchers working on areas related to MS](#) - We collect all the news and information on MS that we can. We make this information available in a single, easy-to-use forum called [MSNews](#) so that it is not difficult to keep up to date with what is happening in the world of MS.

[Other nonprofit MS organizations](#) - We share our research, framework, and technology with any organization who can help people with MS. It is important for any beneficial information or technology to reach as many people as necessary.

The use of the term "cure map" on the Accelerated Cure Project for Multiple Sclerosis' *About* page confused users.

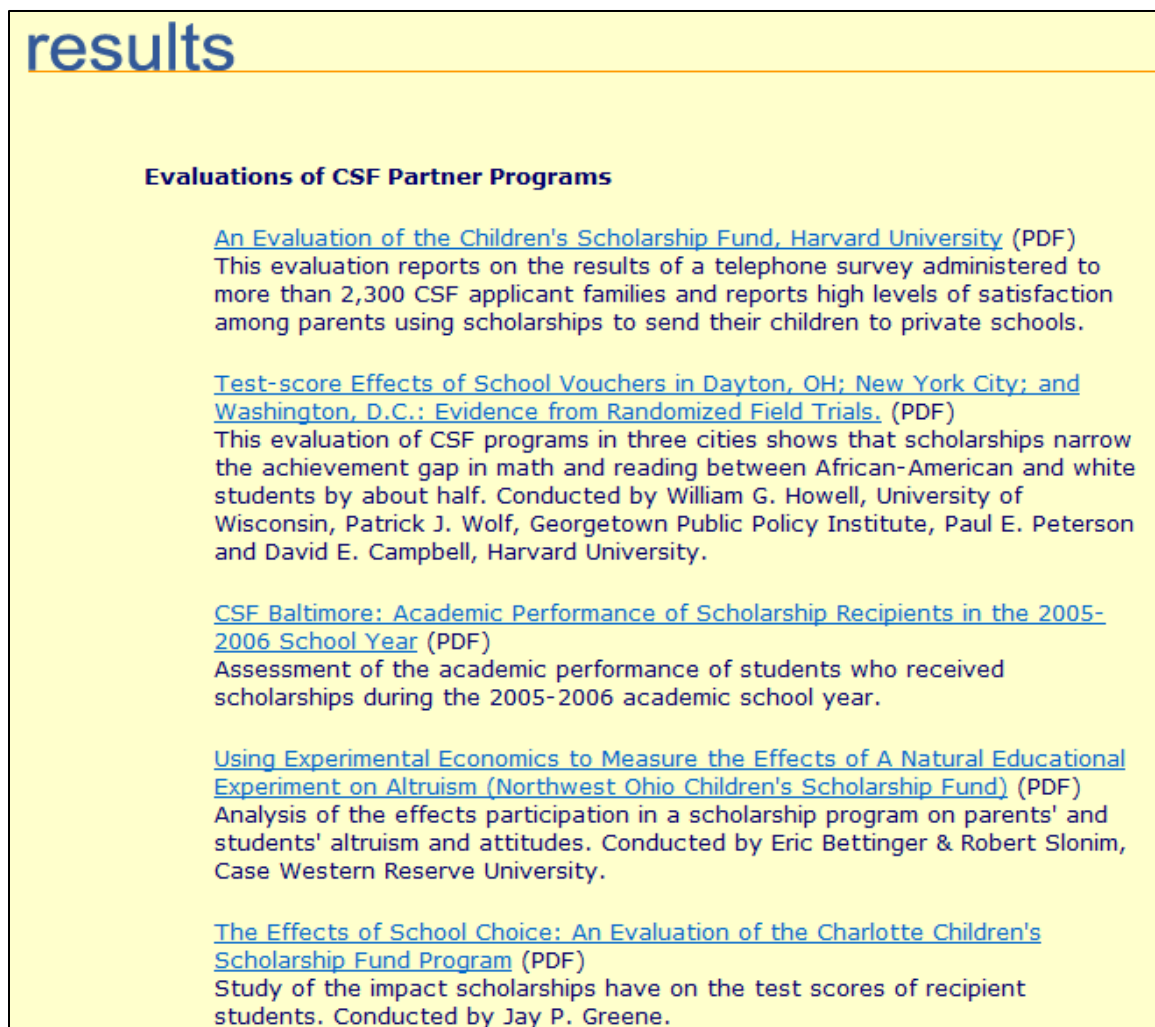
The "I Have A Dream" foundation referred to the children in their programs as "dreamers," which confused one user, because she didn't have a firm grasp on what

the organization did. She said, "They are calling the kids 'dreamers.' What is it that they give these kids to call them 'dreamers?'"

115. Don't place essential information in PDF documents.

In our previous studies, we've found that users don't like downloading and reading information in PDF files. Users often get lost inside PDF files, which are typically big, linear files that are good for print, but unpleasant to read and navigate online.

One user in our study was trying to understand how the Children's Scholarship Fund worked and navigated to their *Results* page. She clicked on a link titled *The Effects of School Choice: An Evaluation of the Charlotte Children's Scholarship Fund*, which launched a PDF. She said, "I'm just scanning this, because it looks like a lot of information. This would be presented better if it were visual." She quickly closed the PDF and moved onto another page in the site.



results

Evaluations of CSF Partner Programs

[An Evaluation of the Children's Scholarship Fund, Harvard University](#) (PDF)
This evaluation reports on the results of a telephone survey administered to more than 2,300 CSF applicant families and reports high levels of satisfaction among parents using scholarships to send their children to private schools.

[Test-score Effects of School Vouchers in Dayton, OH; New York City; and Washington, D.C.: Evidence from Randomized Field Trials.](#) (PDF)
This evaluation of CSF programs in three cities shows that scholarships narrow the achievement gap in math and reading between African-American and white students by about half. Conducted by William G. Howell, University of Wisconsin, Patrick J. Wolf, Georgetown Public Policy Institute, Paul E. Peterson and David E. Campbell, Harvard University.

[CSF Baltimore: Academic Performance of Scholarship Recipients in the 2005-2006 School Year](#) (PDF)
Assessment of the academic performance of students who received scholarships during the 2005-2006 academic school year.

[Using Experimental Economics to Measure the Effects of A Natural Educational Experiment on Altruism \(Northwest Ohio Children's Scholarship Fund\)](#) (PDF)
Analysis of the effects participation in a scholarship program on parents' and students' altruism and attitudes. Conducted by Eric Bettinger & Robert Slonim, Case Western Reserve University.

[The Effects of School Choice: An Evaluation of the Charlotte Children's Scholarship Fund Program](#) (PDF)
Study of the impact scholarships have on the test scores of recipient students. Conducted by Jay P. Greene.

The links on the *Results* page launched PDF files, which made it difficult for users to locate essential information.

Another user in our study was interested in the recovery plan for the Ivory-Billed Woodpeckers on the Defenders of Wildlife website. He clicked a link titled *recovery*


plan for the ivory-billed woodpecker, which launched a PDF that was 182 pages long. As he scrolled through the document, he became frustrated and said, "I would not necessarily read all of that, but I would read whatever plan they had to help the animal. I would probably print this and read it offline. I like to get brief flashes of information on the Web, and if I need to read something long, I'll print it out and read it [offline]."

Ivory-Billed Woodpecker

"With the apparent re-discovery of a very few Ivory-billed Woodpeckers in both Arkansas and Florida, Defenders will closely track this extraordinarily rare bird's conservation future.

Ivory-billed Woodpecker Draft Recovery Plan

On August 22, 2007 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released a [recovery plan for the ivory-billed woodpecker](#).

Read Defenders' view of the plan in our October 5, 2007 publication: [Technical Comments on the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Ivory-billed Woodpecker Draft Recovery Plan](#) .

Federal and state agencies, non-governmental conservation organizations, and even private citizens are fanning out across the southeastern United States to [search for more woodpeckers](#).

Disputes about the quality of evidence for the woodpecker's presence have arisen, however, and searches by researchers are continuing (for example, the article [Evidence Suggesting that Ivory-billed Woodpeckers Exist in Florida](#)).

Both links to the recovery plan for ivory-billed woodpeckers opened a lengthy PDF document that was difficult to parse.

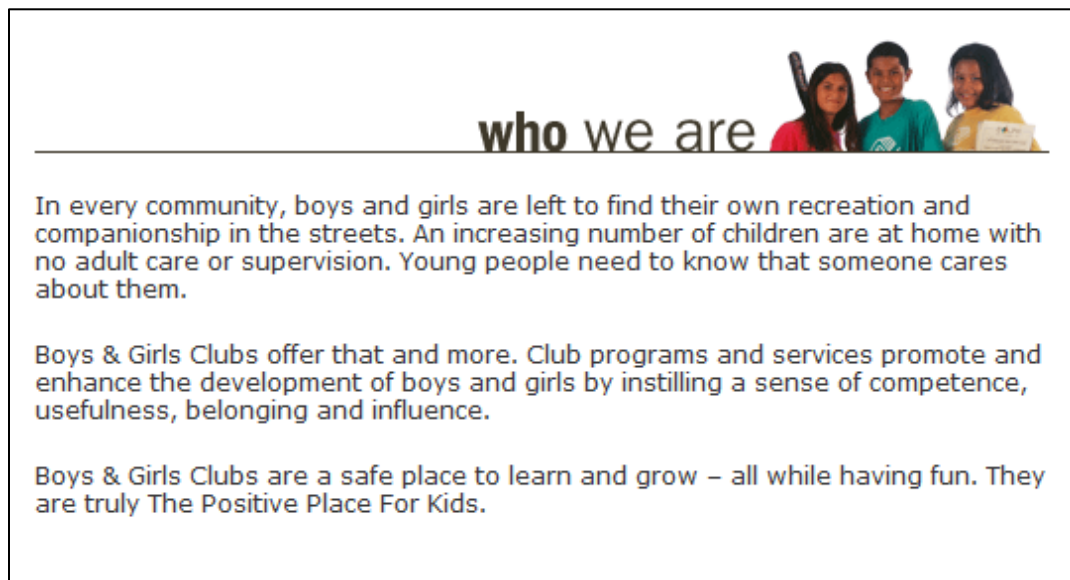
116. Use a readable font, and ensure adequate contrast between the background and text.

Reading onscreen is much more difficult than reading printed material. Remember your target audience when selecting font sizes. Choose sharp, crisp fonts. We recommend using 12-point fonts. When possible, use fonts that are optimized for onscreen reading. Sans-serif fonts, such as Verdana, are easiest to read onscreen.

Maximize legibility by using highly contrasting text and background colors. For optimal legibility, we recommend using black text on a white (or very light gray) background.

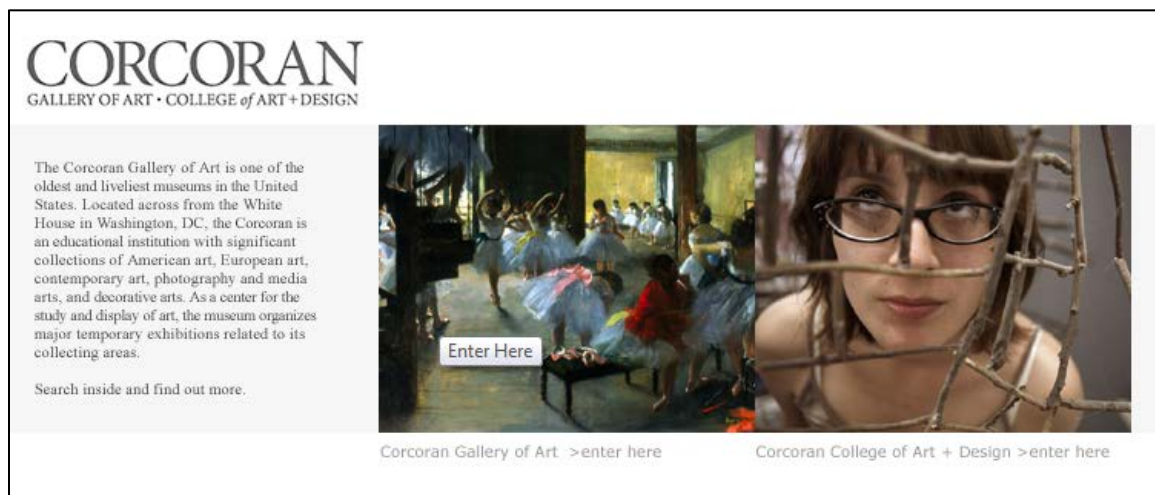
Large fonts and clear contrast are particularly important for sites with many elderly users, but our research with younger users (such as teenagers and college students) has found that young people also prefer text with good legibility. Young eyes may still be keen enough to cope with less-legible text, but young users tell us that they prefer not having to bother.

Users made comments about text size and contrast throughout our study. One user, while viewing the *Who We Are* page on the Boys & Girls Club of America website, said, “I like this website. When I need to read something, I prefer white backgrounds and black letters, or at least dark letters.”



One user thought the *Who We Are* page on the Boys & Girls Club of America website had proper contrast between font and background colors.

Another user struggled to read the tiny, poorly contrasted font on the Corcoran Gallery of Art entry page, which only appeared when she placed her mouse over the image to the right. She said, “The text on the left is popping in and out, and it’s really tiny print for this big white space.”



The grey font on the left hand side of the page was too small, and there wasn’t enough contrast with the white background.

Appendix

WEBSITES TESTED

We tested the websites of a variety of 60 non-profits and charities. The table below includes the organization names and URLs included in our study.

Website	URL
4-H	http://www.4-h.org
Accelerated Cure Project for Multiple Sclerosis	http://www.acceleratedcure.org
Action Against Hunger	http://www.actionagainsthunger.org
Acumen Fund	http://www.acumenfund.org
The Adoption Exchange	http://www.adoptex.org
The Alzheimer's Association	http://www.alz.org
American Cancer Society	http://www.cancer.org
American Heart Association	http://www.americanheart.org
American Red Cross	http://www.redcross.org
Appalachian Trail Conservancy	http://www.appalachiantrail.org
Beverly Hospital	http://www.beverlyhospital.org
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America	http://www.bbbs.org
Boys & Girls Club of America	http://www.bgca.org
The Brain Aneurysm Foundation	http://www.bafound.org
Bread for the World Institute	http://www.bread.org
Child Advocates	http://www.childadvocates.org
Children's Scholarship Fund	http://www.scholarshipfund.org
Cochecho Valley Human Society	http://www.cochechovalleyhumanesoc.org
The Conservation Fund	http://www.conservationfund.org
Corcoran Gallery of Art	http://www.corcoran.org
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center	http://www.dhmc.org
Defenders of Wildlife	http://www.defenders.org
Environmental Defense Fund	http://www.edf.org
The Friends Program	http://www.friendsprogram.org
Global Links	http://www.globallinks.org
Goodwill	http://www.goodwill.org
Habitat for Humanity	http://www.habitat.org
Heifer International	http://www.heifer.org
Hope for Haiti	http://www.hopeforhaiti.com
"I Have A Dream" Foundation	http://www.ihaveadreamfoundation.org
International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)	http://www.icarda.org
The Interfaith Alliance Foundation	http://www.interfaithalliance.org
Lymphoma Research Foundation	http://www.lymphoma.org

Website	URL
Kitty Angels	http://www.kittyangels.org
Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research	http://www.michaeljfox.org
Mission America Coalition	http://www.missionamerica.org
MSPCA Angell	http://www.mspca.org
Nancy Davis Foundation for Multiple Sclerosis	http://www.erasems.org
NARAL Pro-Choice America	http://www.naral.org
National Education for Assistance Dog Services	http://www.neads.org
National Gallery of Art	http://www.nga.gov
New Hampshire Children's Museum	http://www.childrens-museum.org
New Hampshire Food Bank	http://www.nhfoodbank.org
New Hampshire Historical Society	http://www.nhhistory.org
New Israel Fund	http://www.nif.org
Paws with a Cause	http://www.pawswithacause.org
Pro Portsmouth Inc.	http://www.proportsmouth.org
Resource Renewal Institute	http://www.rri.org
Saint Anselm's College	http://www.anselm.edu
Seacoast Family Food Pantry of New Hampshire	http://seacoastfamilyfoodpantry.org
Southern New Hampshire University	http://www.snhu.edu
Specialist Schools and Academies Trust	http://www.ssatrust.org.uk
Stuffed Animals for Emergencies	http://www.stuffedanimalsforemergencies.org
Sustainable Conservation	http://www.suscon.org
Team Hoyt	http://www.teamhoyt.com
United Way	http://www.liveunited.org
University of New Hampshire	http://www.unh.edu
WaterStone	http://www.waterstone.org
The Wentworth-Gardner and Tobias Lear Houses	http://www.wentworthgardnerandlear.org
Wildlife Alliance	http://www.wildlifealliance.org

Additionally, we tested the Facebook pages of six organizations. The table below includes the organization names and Facebook URLs included in our study.

Organization	Facebook URL
American Red Cross	http://www.facebook.com/redcross
The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)	http://www.facebook.com/aspca
Make-A-Wish Foundation of America	http://www.facebook.com/makeawish
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)	http://www.facebook.com/peta

Organization	Facebook URL
Ronald McDonald House Charities	http://www.facebook.com/rmhcgglobal
Volunteers of America	http://www.facebook.com/VoLOfAmerica

METHODOLOGY

The usability sessions included in both rounds of research were held in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. In our first round of research, each session lasted 60 minutes. In our second round of research, each session lasted 90 minutes. In each session, we gave users tasks to perform. The facilitator asked users to think aloud, or explain what they were doing as they were doing it, as they worked through each task. The facilitator sat next to the user, observed, and took notes as the participant attempted tasks on various charity and non-profit websites.

Users completed tasks on a computer using Windows Vista and Internet Explorer (Version 7). Sessions were recorded using Morae, which recorded the screen and mouse movements, as well as facial expressions and comments from participants.

To ensure consistency, the same facilitator ran all sessions in both studies.

Tasks and Questionnaires: First Study

Task 1: Use organizational websites to research two non-profit/charities and choose one to donate to

The moderator gave each participant two similar non-profit or charity organizations to research. She gave users 10-15 minutes to conduct some research on the two organizations using their websites, which were bookmarked in the browser. Users were asked to choose one of the two organizations to make a small donation to.

The two organizations given to the user had similar missions and goals so users could make a fair comparison between the two; for example, users weren't asked to choose between a medical research non-profit and a youth enrichment non-profit.

- Task description (given to users): Review these two websites and decide on the best organization to make a donation to:

<non-profit/charity 1>: www.org1.org

<non-profit/charity 2>: www.org2.org

The sites are bookmarked in the browser.

Task 2: Make a small donation to the non-profit or charity chosen in the previous task

The second task was to make a small donation (\$10–15) to the charity or non-profit they chose in the previous task. Users were required to use their own credit card to make the donation; the donation was reimbursed at the end of the session. (Users were told they would be required to do this during the recruiting process.)

- Task description (given to users): Please use your credit card to give a \$10 donation to one of the charities you just reviewed.

Questionnaire (given after Task 2 was completed)

After choosing one of two non-profit or charity sites to make a donation to and completing the donation using the organization's website, users were asked to fill out two questionnaires: one questionnaire for each site.

We asked users to evaluate each site they visited on a 7-point scale for the following attributes:

- Satisfaction
- Ease of use
- Understanding/Comprehension

Each participant completed Task 1 and Task 2 twice, evaluating a total of four organizations. After tasks were completed, participants answered some interview questions about the websites they visited during the session.

Tasks and Questionnaires: Second Study

Task 1: Research a non-profit/charity and determine trustworthiness

The moderator gave each participant a non-profit or charity organization to research and evaluate. She gave each user about five minutes to conduct some research on the organization's website, which was bookmarked in the browser.

- Task description (given to users): Find out what <non-profit/charity> does and decide whether or not they are trustworthy.

Questionnaire

We asked users to evaluate the website and organization they researched on a 7-point scale for the following attributes:

- Ease of understanding
- Writing
- Design
- Frustration while completing the task
- Trustworthiness

Post-Task Questions

- What made you think this organization was trustworthy/not trustworthy?
- What did you think about how the organization described what they did?
- Do you have any unanswered questions? Is there anything you want to know about the organization that you couldn't find?
- After reviewing information about the organization, would you be interested in donating to them? Why or why not?

Task 2: Use organizational websites to research two non-profit/charities and make a donation to one

This task was similar the two tasks given to users in the first study, but the organizations chosen for the tasks were different.

The moderator gave each participant two similar non-profit or charity organizations to research. She gave users 10–15 minutes to conduct some research on the two organizations' websites, which were bookmarked in the browser. Once users had chosen an organization to donate to, they were asked to complete the process.

- Task description (given to users): Review the websites of the following two organizations and decide on the best organization to make a donation to. Make a small donation (\$5-10) to the organization of your choice using your credit card. You will be fully reimbursed for the donation you make:

<non-profit/charity 1>: www.org1.org

<non-profit/charity 2>: www.org2.org

The sites are bookmarked in the browser.

Questionnaires

After choosing one of two non-profit or charity sites to make a donation to and completing the donation using the organization's website, users were asked to fill out three questionnaires: one questionnaire about the information on each site and another questionnaire about the donation process.

We asked users to evaluate the websites and organizations they visited on a 7-point scale for the following attributes:

- Ease of understanding
- Writing
- Design
- Frustration while completing the task
- Trustworthiness

Additionally, we asked each user to evaluate the donation process on the site they used to make a donation. Users evaluated the following attributes on a 7-point scale:

- Ease of use
- Frustration while completing the task
- Comfort

Post-Task Questions

Asked for each site:

- What was your overall impression of the site?
- What are some things you liked about the site?
- Was there anything the site could do to improve?
- Was there anything you didn't like?
- Was there anything that confused you?
- What made you think this organization was trustworthy/not trustworthy?

Asked about selecting an organization to donate to:

- Which site did a better job of informing you about what you were interested in?
- What made you decide to donate to the organization you chose?
- Was one site more convincing than the other? If so, how?

Asked about the donation process:

- What did you like about the donation process?
- What would make the process better?

Task 3: Find out how to make a non-monetary donation to a charity or non-profit organization.

Participants were instructed to find a way to donate tangible items, such as pet food, used toys and books, non-perishable goods, and clothing to a non-profit or charity of their choice. They weren't directed to a specific site; they used the Web to complete the task.

- Task description (given to users): You'd like to give some <non-monetary item> to an organization that distributes these items to people in need. Use the Web to find out how and where you can do this.

Questionnaire

We asked users to evaluate the organization and site they visited on a 7-point scale for the following attributes:

- Ease of use
- Frustration while completing the task
- Comfort
- Trustworthiness

Post-Task Questions

- What made you choose this charity/non-profit to donate to?
- What did you think about completing this process?
- What did you like the process?
- What would make the process better?

Task 4: Purchase a product

Participants were instructed to purchase an item for themselves using a site selected for the study. The sites were bookmarked in the browser.

- Task description (given to users): Purchase an item for yourself. You will be fully reimbursed for the item you purchase.

Questionnaire

We asked users to evaluate the site and purchasing process on a 7-point scale for the following attributes:

- Ease of use
- Frustration while completing the task
- Satisfaction
- Comfort

Post-Task Questions

- Will any proceeds from your purchase go directly to the organization?

- What did you like about the purchasing process?
- What would make the process better?

Task 5: Find a way to volunteer

Participants were instructed to find information about volunteering at an organization selected for the study. The sites were bookmarked in the browser.

- Task description (given to users): Find information about how to contribute some of your time to <non-profit/charity name>.

Questionnaire

We asked users to evaluate the site they visited on a 7-point scale for the following attributes:

- Ease of use
- Frustration while completing the task

Post-Task Questions

- What made you choose this charity/non-profit to volunteer for?
- What did you like about completing this task?
- What would make the process better?

Task 6: Donate to a charity you regularly donate to.

The facilitator asked users to donate to a charity or non-profit that they made regular donations to. Eight out of nine participants in the second study completed this task.

- Task description (given to users): Make a small donation (\$5-10) to an organization you regularly donate to. You will be fully reimbursed for the donation you make.

Questionnaire

We asked users to evaluate the donation process on a 7-point scale for the following attributes:

- Ease of use
- Frustration while completing the task
- Comfort

Post-Task Questions

- Why did you choose to donate to this charity/non-profit on a regular basis?
- How frequently do you donate to this organization?
- What did you like about the donation process?
- What would make the process better?

Task 7: Use Facebook to research two non-profit/charities and make a donation to one.

If time permitted, the moderator gave each participant two similar non-profit or charity organizations to research using Facebook. Users were instructed to research the organizations and make a donation to one.

Three out of nine users researched organizations on Facebook, and one user made a donation on Facebook.

- Task description (given to users): Use Facebook to review the following two organizations and decide on the best organization to make a donation to. Make a small donation (\$5-10) to the charity of your choice using your credit card. You will be fully reimbursed for the donation you make.

<non-profit/charity 1>

<non-profit/charity 2>

Each organization's Facebook page is bookmarked in the browser.

Questionnaire

After choosing one of two non-profit or charity sites to make a donation to and completing the donation using Facebook, users were asked to fill out three questionnaires: one questionnaire about the information on each organization's Facebook page and another questionnaire about the donation process.

We asked users to evaluate each organization and its Facebook page on a 7-point scale for the following attributes:

- Ease of understanding
- Writing
- Design
- Frustration while completing the task
- Trustworthiness

Additionally, we asked each user to evaluate the donation process on the organization's Facebook page. Users evaluated attributes on a 7-point scale:

- Ease of use
- Frustration while completing the task
- Comfort

Post-Task Questions

Asked for each site:

- What was your overall impression of the organization's page on Facebook?
- What were some things you liked about the organization's page on Facebook?
- How did the information about the organization on Facebook compare to the information you saw on organizational sites in the previous tasks?

- Would you consider using Facebook to make a donation in the future? Why or why not?
- Was there anything that could be improved?
- Was there anything you didn't like?
- Was there anything that confused you?
- What made you think this organization was trustworthy/not trustworthy?

Asked about selecting an organization to donate to:

- Which organization did a better job of informing you about what you were interested in?
- What made you decide to donate to the organization you chose?
- Was one organization more convincing than the other? If so, how?

Asked about the donation process:

- What did you like about the donation process?
- What would make the process better?
- How did the donation process on Facebook compare to the donation process you completed in the previous task?

Post-Test Questions

Study 1

In our first study, we didn't ask any post-task questions. Instead, we waited until the end of the study and asked a series of post-test questions.

- What are the things you'd need to know about a charity before you make a donation? Did the sites you visited answer those questions?
- For the first two charity sites you visited:
- What was your overall impression of site A/site B?
- What were some things you liked about site A/site B?
- What were some things you disliked about site A/site B?
- Which site did a better job of informing you about what you were interested in, site A/B?
- Is there anything Site A/Site B could do to improve?
- What made you choose charity A over charity B?

For the second two charity sites you visited:

- What was your overall impression of site A/site B?
- What were some things you liked about site A/site B?
- What were some things you disliked about site A/site B?
- Which site did a better job of informing you about what you were interested in, site A/B?
- Is there anything Site A/Site B could do to improve?

- What made you choose charity A over charity B?

Study 2

In our second study, we asked users a series of post-test questions, which were broken into categories.

Donation History

- When was the last time you made a donation?
- What was the last organization you donated to?
- What prompted you to make the donation?
- On average, how many donations do you make per year?
- When do you typically give donations?
- Are there any organizations/types of organizations you prefer to make donations to? Why?
- Are there any sites you've had a good or bad experiences on when finding information about an organization or making a donation? Please explain.

Organizational Websites vs. Facebook

- What did you think about the information about organizations available on Facebook?
- How did the information about the organization on Facebook compare to the information on an organization's website?
- Have you ever made a donation through Facebook in the past? Why or why not?
- [If user answered no in previous question, ask] Now that you have made a donation (as part of the study), is this something you might do on your own in the future? Why or why not?
- Was it easier or harder to make a donation through Facebook vs. an organization's website?

Information Needed/Biggest Turnoffs

- What do you need to know about an organization before you feel comfortable donating to them?
- In your opinion, what information is the most convincing when you are considering making a donation to an organization?
- Is there anything on or about an organization's website that makes you not want to donate to them? If yes, what? Why?

Donation Process

- What did you think about the donation processes on the sites you used?
- Is there anything you liked? Anything you think could be improved?
- How did the donation process compare to your experience with purchasing products on other sites?

Purchasing Process

- What did you think about the purchasing process on [organization name]'s website?
- Is there anything you liked? Anything you think could be improved?
- How did the purchasing process compare to your experience with purchasing products on other sites?

Volunteering History/Volunteering Process

- Have you ever volunteered for a charity/non-profit in the past?
- If yes, what was the last organization you volunteered for?
- What prompted you to volunteer for them?
- On average, how often do you volunteer per year?
- When do you typically volunteer?
- Are there any organizations/types of organizations you prefer to volunteer for? If yes, which ones and why?
- What did you think about the volunteering process on [organization]'s website?
- Is there anything you liked? Anything you think could be improved?

Participants

We recruited people who had a range of Internet experience, from relative novices (1–2 years) to more experienced users (3+ years).

We screened out any participants who were “technical experts,” such as IT personnel, programmers, or Web or software engineers, since they have expert knowledge in using the Web. We also screened out any participants who worked at a non-profit or charity organization, because they have expert knowledge about these types of organizations.

First Study

A total of 12 people participated in the study, all from the United States. Participants' ages ranged from 20–61, and there were 7 men and 5 women.

Study participants had diverse occupations, including:

- Assistant Vice President of a bank
- Attorney
- Database Analyst
- Financial Advisor
- General Contractor
- Microbiologist
- Police Officer
- Professional Photographer
- Sales Representative
- Server
- Small Business Owner
- Teacher

All users were required to:

- Have made a donation (online or via mail) to a non-profit or charity in the 12 months prior to the study.
- Be willing to make small donations to non-profits or charities using their credit card during the session. They were fully reimbursed for the contributions made during the study.

At least six participants were required to:

- Have made a donation online using the organization's website in the 12 months prior to the study. (Seven out of 12 participants met this requirement.)

Second Study

A total of nine people participated in the second study, all from the United States. Participants' ages ranged from 20–59, and there were 4 men and 5 women.

Study participants had diverse occupations, including:

- Baker
- Business Analyst
- Lecturer
- Political/Campaign Worker
- Respiratory Therapist
- Retail Associate
- Small Business Owner
- Special Educator
- Wedding Coordinator

In our second study, we wanted to ensure we had a strong mix of users who had varying experience with and frequency of online giving, volunteering, and online purchasing. Additionally, we recruited users who donated to a mix of international, national, and local non-profits and charities.

We used the following criteria to locate appropriate people for the study:

All users were required to:

- Have made an online donation to a non-profit or charity in the 12 months prior to the study
- Be willing to make small donations (no more than \$40 total) to non-profits or charities using their credit card during the session. They were fully reimbursed for the contributions made during the study.

At least six participants were required to:

- Have volunteered at a non-profit or charity in the three years prior to the study. (All nine participants met this requirement.)
- Have a Facebook account that they logged into at least several times per week. (Eight out of nine participants met this requirement.)

At least three participants were required to:

- Make regular donations to the same charity. (All nine participants met this requirement.)

- Work for an organization that matched donations to a non-profit/charity. (We were unable to recruit anyone who met this requirement.)

ABOUT USING THIS METHODOLOGY

After planning and conducting the first study, we learned some lessons that helped inform our second study. When planning for the second study, we kept the following things in mind:

Participant requirements

The participants in our first study provided many insights and clearly communicated what they liked and didn't like about the information and donation processes on non-profit and charities websites.

However, in our second study, we made a stronger effort to recruit a wide range of participants that had varying frequencies of making donations, volunteering, and making online purchases. This allowed us to gain a range of perspectives from users who had varying levels of involvement with non-profit and charity organizations. (For example, some were frequent donors and volunteers and other only donated or volunteered once or twice per year.) Additionally, we wanted to recruit users who had involvement with varying non-profits and charities (size, work, and areas served).

Task variation

In our first study, we tested two tasks: 1) research two similar non-profits/charities and 2) make a donation to one. When planning our second study, we wanted to incorporate additional tasks, such as asking users to donate non-monetary goods, volunteer, and make purchases. We also asked users to review non-profit information on Facebook, as well as make donations through that site.

Variety of organizations to research and donate to

Each user in our first study was able to choose a "type" of organization to research and donate to. Once they chose a type, the facilitator gave them the names of two organizations they were to use to complete the tasks. Some users were very interested in the organizations they were asked to research and donate to, and others were not.

For our second study, we tried to select organizations that would appeal to a broad audience. However, we ran into the same problem in the second study; some users were interested in donating to, volunteering at, or purchasing from the organizations we selected and others were not. In our next round of research, we plan to include more open-ended tasks that allow users to choose the specific organizations they want to engage with.

Future considerations

After the planning and conducting the second study, we have some additional items to consider in the next round of research:

Session length

In the next round of research, we plan to allow more time to complete tasks and ask follow-up questions. Although we had 90-minute sessions in the second round of

research, it was difficult to get through all the tasks on time. In the next round of research, we plan to allot two hours per session.

Additional research areas

Although we covered a wide range of topics in our second study, there are additional areas we'd like to research in the next round of research, which includes, but is not limited to: gaining advocates, making donations with matching contributions, and obtaining larger gifts or contributions. (Note: although we tried to recruit users who had employers that matched donations, we were unable to meet the recruiting requirement.)

About the Authors

Janelle Estes is a User Experience Specialist with Nielsen Norman Group. She works with clients in a variety of industries and presents regularly about usability methods, email newsletters, writing for the Web, and the user experience of non-profit websites. She has been the primary researcher on and co-author of several NN/g reports: email newsletters, transactional email messages, donation usability for non-profit and charity websites, and social media. Prior to joining NN/g, Estes was a research associate on the Customer Experience team at Forrester Research, where she was involved with many research efforts related to user experience and user centered design. Additionally, Estes has worked as a user experience consultant with companies across many industries, including retail, financial services, healthcare, manufacturing, and telecommunications. Most recently, Estes worked at Chordiant Software as a Human Factors Engineer in an agile development environment. Estes holds a BS in Information Design and Corporate Communication and an MS in Human Factors in Information Design, both from Bentley University.

Dr. Jakob Nielsen (www.useit.com) is a principal of Nielsen Norman Group. He is the founder of the “discount usability engineering” movement, which emphasizes fast and efficient methods for improving the quality of user interfaces. Nielsen, noted as “the world’s leading expert on Web usability” by *U.S. News and World Report* and “the next best thing to a true time machine” by *USA TODAY*, is the author of the bestselling book *Designing Web Usability: The Practice of Simplicity* (2000), which has sold more than a quarter of a million copies in 22 languages. His other books include *Hypertext and Hypermedia* (1990), *Usability Engineering* (1993), *Usability Inspection Methods* (1994), *International User Interfaces* (1996), *Homepage Usability: 50 Websites Deconstructed* (2001), *Prioritizing Web Usability* (2006), and *Eyetracking Web Usability* (2009). Nielsen’s Alertbox column on Web usability has been published on the Internet since 1995 and currently has about 200,000 readers. From 1994 to 1998, Nielsen was a Sun Microsystems Distinguished Engineer. His previous affiliations include Bell Communications Research, the Technical University of Denmark, and the IBM User Interface Institute. He holds 79 US patents, mainly on ways of making the Internet easier to use.



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