CONNECT

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> "The Internet is like a giant jelly-fish. You can't step on it. You can't go around it. You've got to get through it. "
>
> *~ John Evans*

BITS, BYTES, BLOGS: SURVIVING TECHNOLOGY

Few would argue that new technologies are changing our lives everyday; and for those of us in the social-profit sector, our critical work can be enhanced when we tackle our fears, embrace new realities, and ask for help.

If you speak with colleagues and friends who know me well, without exception they would remark about my love for technology. I'm a gadget guy, an "early-adopter" in industry marketing circles. I've found that by embracing technology, I've been able to operate more efficiently, stretching limited resources and doing more with less. Much of my work also focuses on young people who are growing up in a world that is very different than when we were kids.

According to futurist Ray Kurzweil, "We're entering an age of acceleration. The models underlying society at every level . . . have to be redefined. Because of the explosive power of exponential growth, the 21st century will be equivalent to 20,000 years of progress at to-day's rate; organizations have to be able to redefine themselves at a faster and faster pace."

Social profits that want to remain competitive and become sustainable must pay attention to advances in technology. In particular, I recommend that all of my clients conduct a technology audit and develop a plan for dealing with any weaknesses that are uncovered. Most of us understand the importance of email access and the majority of our organizations have at least a simple web site, but few agencies are really harnessing the power of technology to transform your work and achieve even greater outcomes for your clients.

At Common Ground Consulting LLC, we can help you evaluate your technology needs by conducting an audit of your existing infrastructure and making cost-conscious recommendations that will improve your effectiveness without jeopardizing your bottom-line.

BLOG [blŏg]: Short for weblog.

A journal (or newsletter) that is frequently updated and intended for general public consumption. Blogs generally represent the personality of the author or the site.

According to Blogpulse.com, there are more than 21 million online blogs.

THE TOP TEN WEBSITES FOR SOCIAL PROFIT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

At Common Ground, we've compiled a list of the websites we think every social profit should know about. Take a few minutes to explore these great resources and then give us a call if we can help you to achieve your goals.

1. At http://www.foundationcenter.org the Foundation Center provides information about every foundation in the country. Most of this information is free, though some of it is for paying subscribers only.

2. At http://www.guidestar.org Guidestar provides financial information for 800,000 nonprofits. You can use Guidestar for research and you can also update your organization's entry there.

3. At http://www.idealist.org Idealist has built the leading nonprofit job site in the country. In addition to jobs, you can also list events, volunteer opportunities and internships, and at http://www.idealist.org/consultants you can find the most comprehensive directory of nonprofit consultants on the web.

4. At http://news.boardsource.org Michael Gilbert maintains a great site with daily news updates bridging the online and nonprofit worlds. You can read the news there, or you you can subscribe for weekly email updates.

5. At http://www.npgoodpractice.org/ the Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership is building a resource center with lots of great information for starting, running, and funding an organization.

6. At http://www.bridgestar.org/ Bridge star is a social profit organization dedicated to developing leadership for the sector. This site offers great tools for finding great staff and board members.

7. At http://www.networkforgood.org people can find volunteer opportunities, and they can also make donations to hundreds of thousands of nonprofits.

8. At http://www.serviceleader.org you will find information covering every aspect of volunteer management—recruitment, screening, matching, evaluation, risk management, etc.

9. At http://www.techsoup.org Techsoup has built the leading resource center for all issues related to nonprofit technology. In addition, they offer big discounts on software for nonprofits.

10. At http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/znonprof.htm you will find a virtual nonprofit library with hundreds of great links and directories.

QUICK TIP SERIES

Published monthly by Common Ground Consulting LLC, this brief is part of a series designed to support and enhance the critical work of social profit organizations.

For more information or to schedule a consultation, please contact us:

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QUICK TIPS

In 2005, social profits raised millions of dollars online. Is your web-site donor friendly? Does it convey your mission and programs using language and stories that will move people to give? Do you have a "Donate Now" button?

www.networkforgood.org

If your program uses volunteers, have you tried recruiting them online? Make sure your basic application is available for download on your site and then post a few exciting and well-written "Help Wanted" ads on sites like: **www.craigslist.org** (one of the web's hottest sites).

If internal communications is challenging in your organization (and face it, where isn't this an issue), why not set-up a staff-only blog where employees can pass along information, ask for help, share ideas, express gratitude, etc. It is a terrific way of keeping people connected between staff meetings.

LOOK FOR COMMON GROUND CONSULTING ON THE WEB

Please remember to check out the many terrific resources on our website and companion weblog.

www.commongroundconsulting.org