

Social Media

A Maturing Channel

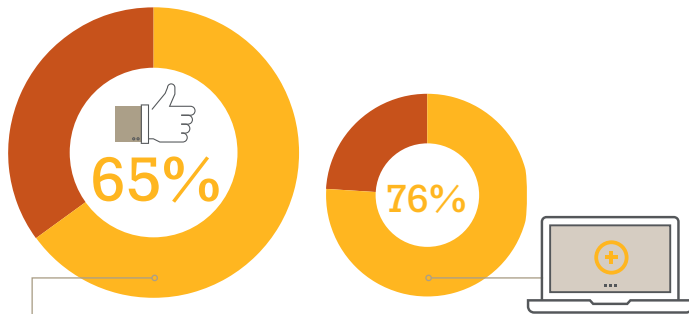


The reach of social media is increasing daily—and so is the cost of ignoring it.

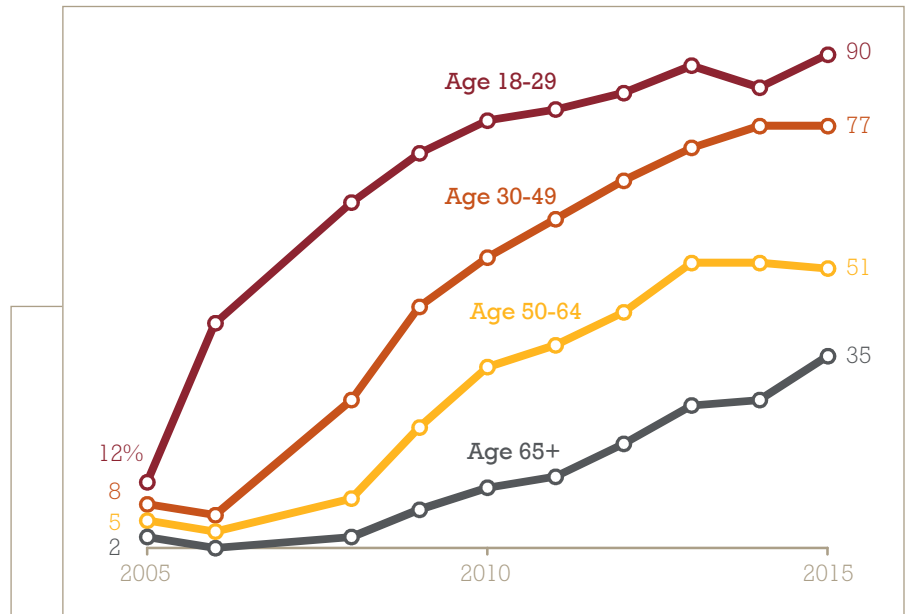
Social media—from juggernauts like Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest to growing networks like Snapchat and LinkedIn—has exploded in the last few years, becoming a vital part of how we interact with each other and learn about the world. Today, using social media to connect with your audience is no longer a luxury—it's a necessity.

How Widespread is Social Media?

Social media is nearly universal for younger Americans, and the generational divide is narrowing. A majority of every demographic group under 65 is now on social media.



65 percent of Americans use social media (**76 percent** of all Internet users) – up from 7 percent in 2005.¹



The growth of social media in the last few years has been fueled by older users; while young adults have reached saturation, older Americans are joining in ever-growing numbers.²



Social media penetration is higher in higher-income households and among Americans with college degrees.³









Majorities of both sexes and all races are on social media.⁴



Majorities of rural, urban and suburban Americans all use social media.⁵

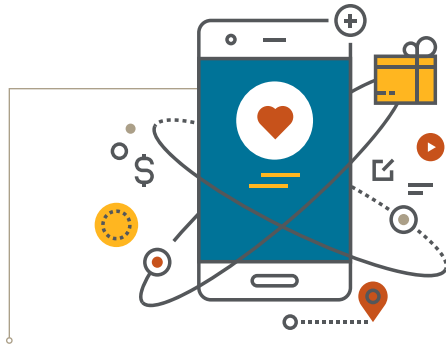
What are the most popular networks?

-  **Facebook.** With 1.5 billion visitors every month, Facebook *is* social media for many users.⁶
-  **Tumblr.** This microblogging platform skews young, although with usage topping 500 million, its penetration is rapidly increasing in other demographics.⁷
-  **Instagram.** The premier image-sharing service, Instagram's 400 million active users are deeply integrated with Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms.⁸
-  **Twitter.** 305 million people use Twitter. While the platform's growth has stalled, Twitter remains a vital way to reach influencers on social media.⁹
-  **LinkedIn.** The 100 million visitors to LinkedIn are generally there to find jobs and network, although the site is trying to increase the depth of the user experience.¹⁰
-  **Pinterest.** Pinterest, with 100 million monthly users, is indispensable to many visitors. 71 percent of its users are women, and people who see a product or service on Pinterest are more likely to spend money than those who interact with that same product or service through a different social media platform.¹¹

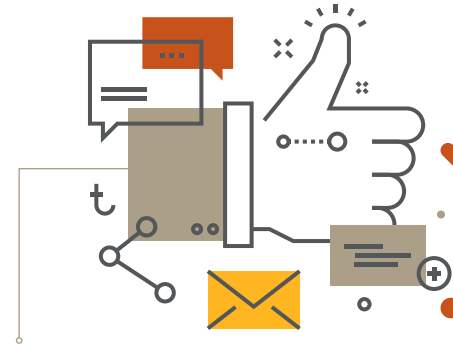
Why Use Social Media in Nonprofit Marketing?

As we've seen, social media has a truly impressive reach. Communicating via social media can reach a large audience, which can be closely targeted. More importantly, younger users rely on social media to research and make decisions about giving.

Much of today's nonprofit advertising is aimed at older Americans. While retired Americans give more on average to more causes than Generation X donors, they represent less than a third of total donations. Any organization hoping to secure its future must appeal to Generation X and Generation Y donors.



Nearly half of Generation X donors follow at least one nonprofit on social media—and the same number would consider donating via smartphone.¹²



17 percent of Generation X and Generation Y donors think social media is the most important way to get information about their favorite charities.¹³

Just as importantly, traditional means of reaching these audiences are increasingly less effective.



The average time spent reading newspapers **fell by 25%** from 2010-2014.¹⁴



47 percent of households no longer have a landline, making telephone outreach increasingly ineffective.¹⁵



Younger viewers watch about **30 percent less television** than they did a decade ago;¹⁶ and 15 percent of Americans have given up cable or satellite television entirely since 2010.¹⁷

How Can I Succeed Using Social Media?

The most important consideration is to be genuine and listen to your audience. Younger donors are deeply interested in transparency and involvement. They want to know where their donations are going, and they want to see visible proof of their work. Social media excels at telling these stories, with teaser headlines and links leading to articles, photos and videos that vividly demonstrate the work of the nonprofits they choose to invest in, financially and emotionally.


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Gamification and Social Media

Another consideration to help boost your social media success is to incorporate elements of **gamification into your social platforms**. Gamification is the process of adding games or game-like elements to something so as to encourage participation. Gamification is effective because it taps into people's natural desires for competition and achievement.¹⁸ This is particularly effective paired with social media. Social games encourage participation, sharing, comments and likes while building a sense of community and inclusiveness around your nonprofit.

The image displays three overlapping promotional cards for a game called "The Circle of Life".

- Left Card:** Titled "THE Circle OF Life GAME". It features a navigation bar with "Details", "Play Game", and "Rules". The main content shows a person standing at a fork in the road with two paths leading away, one red and one blue. A thought bubble with "???" is above the person. The text asks "Which Path Did You Take?" and describes the game as a reflection on life experiences. A red "Play Game" button is at the bottom right.
- Middle Card:** Titled "STAGES" in large blue letters. It has a red navigation bar with "Details" and "Rules". The main text asks "How Does Your Everyday Outlook Reflect Your Place in Life?". It includes a paragraph about life stages, a sub-section "In this game, take time to pause and reflect on your place in life.", and another paragraph about creating a plan for tomorrow. A red "Play Game" button is at the bottom right.
- Right Card:** Titled "MY STORYBOOK" in large, stylized letters. It features a dark red background with a book cover illustration. The text discusses a child's imagination and the world. A dark blue "Create Your Story" button is at the bottom right.

Maximize the Impact of Your Social Media Presence.

Social media can drive traffic to your online presence, and opens a valuable new channel to your prospective and current donors. While effective on its own, social media stands out when integrated into a broader campaign. Careful planning, and the use of complementary channels like websites and video, are keys to your success.

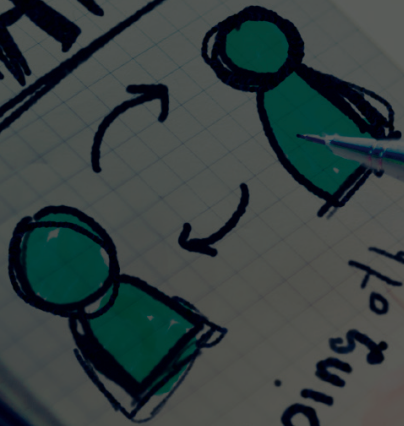
The Stelter Company has decades of experience in designing strategies that make the best use of many outreach channels. We can help you maximize the impact of your social media presence and deepen your relationship with your donors. Put Stelter's social media experience to work for you. Contact us today at 800-331-6881 or at stella@stelter.com.



Endnotes

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