Social Networks as Forces for Change

MENDing Poverty Conference
Pacoima, CA
June 16th, 2010

Heather McLeod Grant
Today’s Presentation

Who are We?

What Are Networks? What is Working Wikily?

Why Work Wikily?

Understanding Network Structure

Getting Started
Who Are We?

The Monitor Institute is...

... part consulting firm

... part incubator

... part think tank
How Can Networks Increase Social Impact?

With the David & Lucile Packard Foundation, in 2007 Monitor Institute began exploring the role of online and offline networks in the social sector.
Monitor Institute Continues to Explore Networks

Consulting  Incubator  Think Tank

Teach For All

Network of Network Funders
Learning Objectives

• Share high-level themes from the SSIR article “Working Wikily”
• Go deeper on our most recent research into social change with a network mindset
• Help you get started working wikily
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What Is a Social Network?

A collection of people connected by relationships
We’re Most Interested in Networks:

- Of individuals and/or organizations
- With many participants (and the potential to grow)
- Space for self-organization
- Fueled by new technologies for connection, collaboration and / or data visualization

Source of photo: flickr
Networks Aren’t New...
Social Change Depends on Collective Action
But, There Are New Tools for Sharing Content

...and New Online Spaces for Connecting People
And We are Using these New Media Tools

According to a longitudinal study that included the 200 largest American charities, nonprofits are outpacing both business and academia in using social media to fundraise, market, and organize.

A few key statistics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>89%</td>
<td>89% of the respondents use social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81% consider social media in their strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79%</td>
<td>79% use social networking and video blogging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57%</td>
<td>57% publish a blog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45% say social media is important for fundraising</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“If you think about it, often working on shoestring budgets and heartstring issues, the combination of nonprofits and social media makes perfect sense. Two of the biggest benefits of social media: efficiency and connectivity.”

Blake Bowyer, EyeTraffic Media

Source: “Still Setting the Pace in Social Media” by Nora Barnes and Eric Mattson at the U. Mass Dartmouth Center for Marketing Research.
Combined With New Understanding of Social Ties

“If someone tells you that you can influence 1,000 people, it changes your way of seeing the world.”

—Dr. James Fowler
Enabling Social Change With a Network Mindset

Working Wikily is an emerging leadership style characterized by greater openness, transparency, decentralized decision-making, and collective action.
How is this Way of Working Different?

**Established Ways of Working**
- Centralized
- Firmly controlled
- Planned
- Proprietary
- Transactional
- One-way communications

**Networked Ways of Working**
- Decentralized
- Loosely controlled
- Emergent
- Open, shared
- Relational
- Two-way conversations

Where are you? The answer will be different for different situations
Obama Campaign Mobilized 13 M Supporters

“One of my fundamental beliefs…is that real change comes from the bottom up. And there’s no more powerful tool for grass-roots organizing than the Internet.”

– Barack Obama
Tea Parties Use Networks to Coordinate Action

“Ordinary folks are using the power of the Internet to organize. In the old days, organizing large groups of people required an organization. Now people can coordinate themselves.”

– Wall Street Journal, April 15, 2009
The Way Our Work Gets Done Is Changing
Today’s Presentation

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Nonprofits Need to Find Ways to Work W którym

Increasing Number of Nonprofits

Many Nonprofits Not at Scale

82% of Nonprofits operate on less than $1M in budget

– Center for Nonprofits ‘07

More Competition for Resources

Networks are one answer for increasing scale, efficiency, coordination, and impact

Source: “Index of National Fundraising Performance, 2009 First Calendar Quarter Results”, Target Analytics, 2009, Alliance Trends
Weaving Communities
Accessing Diverse Perspectives
Building and Sharing Knowledge
Mobilizing People and Building Movements
Coordinating Resources and Action
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Social Network Analysis: A Brief History

- **First “sociograms” drawn**
- **1930s**
- **“Social networks” term coined**
- **1950s**
- **Milgram - “Small World Experiment”**
- **1960s**
- **Granovetter - “The Strength of Weak Ties”**
- **1970s**
- **Growth of organizational network analysis**
- **1980s**
- **Explosion of cheap / free online platforms**
- **1990s**
- **2000s**

Source of sociogram image: Journal of Social Structure; Source of six degrees and weak ties images: Wikimedia commons; Source of online platform: KeyHubs
A Typology of Organizing Structures

- Nonprofit organizations (without explicit network structure)
- Membership organizations (Organizations with network component)
- Nonprofits with explicit network strategy and structure
- Coalition / Alliance (network of organizations)
- Networks of networks
- Ad hoc networks

Note: These categories often overlap. Most of the examples fit in to multiple categories.

Network Mapping: Low and High-Tech
What’s Possible from Network Mapping?

- Visualize the whole: see connections
- Make visible flow of resources
- Spark strategic conversation
- Assess the “health” of a network
- Assess changes in network over time
Maps Were Used in Salinas Youth Network

Network by Organization Type

- Government
- Foundation
- Non-Profit
- For-Profit
- School
- Unknown
- Religious
- Other

Poorly connected individual networks

Sub-clusters of government actors

Funders and non-profits compose most of the core

Schools are not as well connected
The Green and Healthy Building Network: 2005

Source: Barr Foundation “Green and Healthy Building Network Case Study” by Beth Tener, Al Neirenberg, Bruce Hoppe
The Green and Healthy Building Network: 2007

Source: Barr Foundation “Green and Healthy Building Network Case Study” by Beth Tener, Al Neirenberg, Bruce Hoppe
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Why is it Hard to Work Wikily?

Unlearning past behaviors and frameworks

Brand and message control

Privacy concerns

Dealing with information overload

Managing for accuracy

Assessing impact

Learning and leveraging new technologies

Source of images: Cut Throat Communications, Blog.com, Rutgers University RU FAIR, Kodaikanal International School, flickr
1. Design Projects Around a Problem, Not Tools
2. Combine Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches
3. Follow the Rules of Relationships
4. Integrate Online and Offline Engagement

Promote Your Project design contest
Help a playground win a $5,000 equipment grant!
The Promote Your Project Design Contest asked entrants to show their community, and the world, that they are going to build a great place to play. Now it’s your turn to choose the winners. See designs from the 10 finalists and vote for your favorite!
» Vote here.

Build a playground!
Build or improve a playspace in your community with the help of our step-by-step planner. It’s free, easy to use, and it works: The KaBOOM! process has already helped people like you to build thousands of playgrounds across the United States.
✓ Tools that help you:
  • Plan each step of your project
  • Communicate with your team
  • Recruit local volunteers
  • Raise money
✓ Free advice from the professional playground builders at KaBOOM!
✓ A community of people like you who are building playspaces around the country
» Start a Project
5. Understand Your Position Within Networks
6. Design for Ongoing Learning and Adaptation

- Connectivity
- Overall network health
- Field-level outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Trend</th>
<th>Comparable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>80%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
7. Share What You’re Doing and Learning
8. Start Small
“Networks are everywhere. We just need an eye for seeing them.”

Albert- Laszlo Barbarasi
Questions?
THANK YOU!

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www.workingwikily.net
www.monitorinstitute.com

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Appendix
(Backup Slides for Q&A)
## Characteristics of Healthy Networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Governance</th>
<th>Connection</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Learning &amp; Adaptation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Clearly articulated give and get for participants  
- Delivers value/outcomes to participants | - Trust  
- Diversity  
- High engagement | - Balance of top-down and bottom-up logic  
- Space for self-organized action | - Embraces transparency and decentralization  
- Shared responsibility  
- ‘Do-acracy’ | - Reflective of the network’s diversity  
- Transparent | - Strategic use of social media  
- Ample shared space: on-line and in-person | - Ability surface & tap network talent  
- Model for sustainability | - Mechanisms for learning-capture  
- Ability to gather and act on feedback |

Helpful Sources: M. Kearns and K. Showalter; J. Holley and V. Krebs; P. Plastrik and M. Taylor; J. W. Skillern; C. Shirky
Beth Kanter’s Framework on Getting Started

There are now frameworks available from social media experts on how today’s tools can be used in a disciplined way, such as the one below from Beth Kanter:

Beth Kanter publishes her ongoing thoughts about social media in the social sector at [http://beth.typepad.com/](http://beth.typepad.com/)
There's a lot of new tools to use out there.
What is the Work of Network Leadership?

- **Convene** diverse people and groups
- **Engage** network participants
- **Generate** collective action
- **Broker** connections and bridge difference
- **Build** social capital – emphasize **trust**
- **Nurture** **self-organization**
- Genuinely **participate**
- Leverage **technology**
- Create, and **protect** network ‘space’

Source: Adapted from *Net Work* by Patti Anklam (2007) and “Vertigo and the Intentional Inhabitant: Leadership in a Connected World” by Bill Traynor (2009)

Source of picture: flickr
So, Whether You’re Launching New Networks…

Moms Are Talking

Children fair wages health healthcare local maternity leave Media Mitch McConnell momsrising motherhood motherhood manifesto National Campaign nursing Pennsylvania politics school superintendents social change toxics winning women’s issues

Tags fueled by the MomsRising Blog

Embed this Widget

MomsRising.org

Where moms and people who love them go to change our world

Mom’s rising is new organization designed using network principles: open, flat, flexible, collaborative, adaptive, fast
AJLI: an older organization using network principles to transform itself
Social Media Milestones This Year

Jan. 20th: Obama takes office as the first president to have campaigned through social media. CNN partners with Facebook to broadcast online users' live commentary.

March 28th: Earth Hour 2009 uses social media and mobilizes ten times the number of people as in 2008.

June 13th: Iran’s Green Revolution protestors make heavy use of social media for organizing and promoting the cause.

Today: $22 million in SMS donations have arrived at the Red Cross for relief work in Haiti, with a peak rate of $500K/hour during the NFL playoffs.

October 18th: The UN End Poverty Now campaign uses social media to mobilize 173 million participants worldwide.

April 17th: Ashton Kutcher beats CNN.com in a race to become the first to gain 1 million Twitter followers.

May 25th: Target gives Facebook users the choice of how to give away $3 million in company donations among 10 charities.

October 9th: The “Sweet Seeds for Haiti” initiative in Facebook’s popular Farmville game raises over half a million in donations.

November 1st: Kiva reaches $100 million in micro-loans distributed through its online giving marketplace.

As presented in “Social Media Blueprints 1.0” by ThinkSocial at the Paley Center for Media.