Web Sites For Advocacy and Community Organizing: Basics, Essentials, and Best Practices

Engaging and Building Community

These training materials have been prepared by Aspiration in partnership with Radical Designs

Funded by the Community Technology Foundation of California

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Learning Goals

► Identify community building goals
► Consider trade-offs with discussion forums
► Define role of polls and surveys in campaigns
► Include “Tell a Friend” feature on site pages
► Understand potential and risks of social networking (FOAF) sites
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Community Goals

- Foster a sense of community between supporters
- Allow for feedback between your base/supporters and the organization
- Draw in new supporters through recommendations of your supporters
- Increase activity from your supporters by creating space and tools for self-organizing
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Discussion forums

- Have potential value if they ask focused questions or serve a specific purpose
- As a general way to build community, they almost always fail
  - Substantial staff or volunteer time required to keep fresh and active
  - Staff need to answer questions posted on forums
  - Inactive forums can cause more harm than good
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► Key forum maintenance
  ▪ Avoid spam and low-value posts
  ▪ Be aware of legal implications of children participating in your forums

► Discussion forum tool survey
  ▪ phpBB
  ▪ Care2 service
  ▪ Drupal
  ▪ Many, many hosted options
Welcome to the Greenpeace Forum.
Share your views about articles and issues important to you.

What are the issues you're working on in your community?

Moderators: None

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Polls and Surveys

- Good way to research feelings of your base
- Recruit your members to fill them out
  - Don't just post on website
  - Consider offering a prize for completion
- Look at drop-off rate of completion
- Have a closing date for responses
- For polls, really consider why you're doing one and what the benefits are
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► Poll and survey tools
  - SurveyMonkey.com
  - Zoomerang
  - phpSurvey
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“Tell A Friend” features on your web pages

- Include with most site features/content

Best practices

- It is bad to store the names/addresses of the folks who received recommendations
- Provide pre-written messages to be edited
- Consider allowing users to send from their own address books
- Link to privacy policy
Tell Your Friends

From:
First Name: [Input]
Last Name: [Input]
Email: [Input]

To:
Email: [Input]
Email: [Input]

Nominate your upperclass associates to join the Billionaires for Bush network!

Billionaires for Bush is honored to announce your nomination for membership to our exclusive club. At our last banquet I motioned our chair to extend this invitation, citing the particulars of your shared and vested interest in a government of, by and for the corporate elite. I hope you'll accept, and we're certain you can appreciate the market value of continuing President Bush's embrace of corporate dominance within the White House!

Tell Your Friends
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Friend of a Friend (FOAF) Networks

- Platforms have potential for spreading your message
  - Used very effectively in immigrant rights organizing
- Consider is the relationship between social networks and organization’s relationship to members
  - Understand lack of control and role of viral outcomes of social networking spaces
Sir! no Sir!

**About me:**

**CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE MOVIE TRAILER**

Welcome to the Sir No Sir myspace page. Check out a clip from the flick, listen to some tunes or meet other folks who think that George Bush's punk ass crusade sucks.

**CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE FLASH ANIMATION**

1. The Coup - Captain Sterling's Little Problem
2. Rita Martinson - Soldier We Love You

**Who I'd like to meet:**

Sir! no Sir! has 109 friends.
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► FOAF tool survey

- Myspace
- LiveJournal
- Care2Connect
- Tribe
- Friendster
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Orkut
End Of Section

► Questions?
► Comments?

Thank You!

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