ONLINE TECHNOLOGY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

FROM STRUGGLE TO STRATEGY

a research project of dotOrganize

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

This report is available online at:

http://www.dotorganize.net/report

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KEY CONCEPTS

This report contains both concepts and technical definitions that may be unfamiliar. For ease of reading, we have listed definitions of key overarching concepts in this section. More technical definitions, such as "Web 2.0" and "Application Service Provider," are located at the back of this report.

Many of the terms below carry conflicting or disputed meanings. The definitions provided here are intended as guidelines within the context of this report.

- **Social Change Organization:** For the purposes of this report, we refer to social change organizations as those that promote progressive social change. These groups may endeavor to serve or give voice to an underrepresented constituency or community, or they may advocate on behalf of a specific issue. Although social change organizations may work on large or small budgets, a majority of the social change groups represented in this report are small, under-resourced, and sparsely staffed.

  Some examples of groups that fall outside our working definition of social change organizations are trade groups, professional associations, social service providers without advocacy or organizing initiatives, charitable foundations, and groups advancing politically conservative agendas.

- **Organizing:** This term can mean different things to different communities. Organizing can refer to the process of base building and strengthening social movements by working with people in affected communities to define their objectives, and co-creating a strategy to achieve those objectives. Other organizing models focus more on engaging people outside of affected communities to support an issue or campaign. Yes, there is a tension between the two. Organizing activities, no matter the tactical model, can include education, outreach, power mapping, advocacy, civil disobedience, long-term relationship building, and targeting decision makers to affect policy.

- **Online Organizing:** We define "online organizing" as the use of Internet communication technologies to support the full spectrum of organizing. In practice, use of this term often assumes a clean split between offline organizing and online organizing techniques. It is our view that they work in tandem. Online technology has certainly added many tools to organizer toolboxes, such

as communicating to extended networks of people through email, providing materials for download via a website, or targeting mass communications to a legislator. However, these means often lead to the same ends intended by an offline organizing strategy. If online tactics aren't closely linked with offline tactics, in service of a stated strategy, they're probably not that effective. Legitimate outcomes cannot, by definition, be limited to the "online world."

- **Organizer:** An individual active in advancing an organizational agenda utilizing a range of on- and offline organizing techniques. Organizers prioritize building networks and relationships, cultivating a long-term power base, and activating a community or constituency around a particular issue. Organizers may also focus on broader communications efforts, developing systemic analyses, and providing information to the general public.
- **Information Management:** The practice of tracking and handling information acquired from one or many sources in a way that optimizes access by all who have a share in that information.
- **Information/Systems Integration:** The seamless movement of information from one application to another. Many of the applications in use today were developed using arcane and proprietary technologies, thus creating information silos within organizations. When different systems can't integrate effectively, they create information bottlenecks that result in data duplication and increased data entry.

INTRODUCTION

In late 2005, the dotOrganize team[1] embarked on an unprecedented effort to map the current state of online technology in the social change sector. Over nine months, dotOrganize gathered input from more than 400 social change groups, technology providers, and nonprofit technology capacity builders. dotOrganize designed its surveys and interviews to identify what organizers need to support their work, what tools are currently available, what does and does not work, and what's needed to strengthen the long-term capacity of the sector.

The goal of this report is to provide a detailed view of the sector's present situation, to give voice to the organizers who are struggling with these issues, and to offer recommendations for filling current gaps in strategy, software development, and tool adoption paths.

The dotOrganize project targets the technology needs of social change organizers working in grassroots groups, larger nonprofits, or as individual change agents. dotOrganize aims to assist these organizers in identifying and utilizing online tools as vehicles for their vision. The project also endeavors to support technology vendors, technology consultants, and funders in their efforts to serve organizers.

OUR LONG-TERM VISION: BUILDING A MORE EMPOWERED SOCIAL CHANGE SECTOR

The social change organizing sector is largely comprised of passionate people working hard to better our communities, our institutions, and our society at large. In a world rife with systemic problems, organizers work diligently to respond to these challenges in effective ways.

Organizers rely on many different tools to support their work, and the Web has emerged as one of the most promising vehicles for supporting their efforts to create lasting, substantial change.

[1] To view dotOrganize Project Contributors see http://www.dotorganize.net/who

Many inspiring examples of organizing efforts that utilize online tools have emerged over the past five years, and the potential for this medium remains largely untapped. As a movement, our current challenge rests in responding to this potential and organizers' growing enthusiasm with intelligent ways to leverage our limited resources for maximum collective impact.

Maximum impact requires a proactive shift towards technology that empowers the sector by improving the experience and efficiency of social change organizers who struggle with poorly integrated and supported tools. Empowerment demands that we put targeted information within reach of organizers, encourage community-driven software development, and strengthen essential training networks.

Historically, the enthusiasm and agility of the social change sector has enabled it to make tremendous progress with minimal infrastructure. We now have an opportunity to harness an optimized organizing infrastructure - current online tools enable organizations to build a stronger base, expand networks, raise funds, respond faster to crisis, manage events, make project coordination more collaborative, and encourage grassroots participation.

As constant advances in technology motivate and surprise us, the question becomes less about the limits of technology itself, but rather how we choose to use it, and how we make it a more accessible tool for organizers.

In order to harness the potential of new and emerging technologies, organizers need access to a comprehensive base of knowledge and resources. In contributing to this capacity-building effort, dotOrganize aims to accomplish actionable short-term goals while fostering a long-term vision of a strong social change sector.

REPORT FOCUS: USING CONTACT MANAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION, AND ONLINE ORGANIZING TOOLS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

The ultimate goal of this report is to help organizers harness the potential of online technology. To this end, we have compiled insights from organizers working to utilize new technology and provided introductory recommendations for technology developers, capacity builders, strategists, practitioners and funders. From a tools perspective, the research presented in this report focuses on the nexus of contact management, online communication, and online organizing tools, which we have broadly defined as:

- **Contact management tools** permit organizations to track their constituents or service communities. A rolodex is the simplest form of contact management; slightly more advanced is a spreadsheet. Beyond that, there are a variety of more complex programs serving different purposes, such as donor tracking, volunteer management, and relationship management.
- **Online communications tools** send information from one online computing device to another. This broad category encompasses email and email blast tools, blogs, and online event calendars.
- **Online organizing tools** permit organizations to conduct aspects of their campaigns and advocacy efforts online. Examples include online volunteer recruitment, online fundraising, and email advocacy.

Largely designed as separate applications, contact management and Web-based communication and organizing tools are now becoming increasingly integrated. For example, constituent lists organizers

previously tracked through offline databases like FileMaker Pro or Access can now be tracked online and linked automatically to email-blast functionality. Software developments such as these, which seamlessly integrate tracking power and communication technologies, offer organizers ways to streamline their work, strengthen systems, and communicate more effectively with constituents.

There are many other technologies and services, such as hardware, network administration, desktop publishing software, financial management systems, and front or back office technical support, that are crucially important to social change organizers. However, information about how organizers are using these types of technologies and services are beyond the scope of this report.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

The following report is a summary and analysis of three main data sets:

- **In-depth, qualitative interviews with 20 organizations.**[2] The interview consisted of approximately 20 questions focusing on organizational metrics, technological capacity and requirements, approaches to strategic communications, and database needs. The open interview structure enabled respondents to use set questions as points of departure to explore and expand on a variety of issues.
- **The dotOrganize survey,**[3] which included 34 questions organized in six sections: 1) organizational profile; 2) tools needed; 3) data management practices; 4) current level and approach to data integration; 5) technology habits and resources; and 6) election-related activities, with an additional area for open-ended comments.
- **Online organizing tools and resources available to the sector.** As part of the interview and survey process, it became clear that the organizing sector needs a comprehensive and dynamic matrix of tools and resources. To address this issue, dotOrganize began the process of compiling tools and resources from multiple sources, including publicly available wikis from conferences and gatherings, previous lists compiled by peer networks and capacity builders, audited nonprofit technology-specific email lists, the aforementioned interviews and survey, and the collective experience of the dotOrganize staff. Due to the ever-shifting landscape of tools and resources available to the sector, any static list would quickly become antiquated. dotOrganize has therefore used its initial compilation to seed a dynamic and participatory online directory.[4]

SURVEY RESPONDENT PROFILE

The dotOrganize online survey, which targeted North American social change and campaigning organizations, garnered a total of 378 unduplicated responses across 43 U.S. states, as well as Canada.

dotOrganize solicited participants from diverse nonprofit listserves and blogs, as well as through colleagues and allies. Respondents included executive directors, campaign directors, and organizers. Although the online format of the survey encouraged responses from organizations possessing basic online access, respondents included those identifying as "online organizers" as well as those using more traditional, offline organizing methods.

[2] See those interviewed at: http://www.dotorganize.net/rwg. Informal input was also gathered from a broad range of stakeholders including: Democracy in Action, ONE/Northwest, the Progressive Technology Project, CivicSpace, CiviCRM, Salesforce.com Foundation, GetActive, CompuMentor/TechSoup, Organizers' Collaborative, Movement Strategy Center, the SPIN Project, New Organizing Institute, Aspiration, Radical Designs, and The Linc Project.

[3] Full Survey Results and Survey Instrument can be found at http://www.dotorganize.net/apps

Respondents ranged from volunteer-run peace action groups to organizations working on youth civic engagement to national environmental groups with annual budgets well over $5 million. However, dotOrganize deliberately solicited responses from social change organizing groups working with smaller budgets and fewer staff.

Demographic responses show that:

- Survey respondents work across the spectrum of social change issues, including education (35%), the environment (30%), healthcare (34%), youth issues (29%), and economic justice (21%).
- 30% of respondents operate on a budget of $100,000 or under, and 60% operate on a budget of $500,000 or under.
- Respondents tend to have a relatively small number of paid staff. 67% employ 10 or fewer paid staff members, and a full 15% are run entirely by volunteers.

	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE TOTAL
UNDER $100,000	29.2%	107
$100,000 - $500,000	**30%**	**110**
$500,000 - $1 MILLION	14.2%	52
$1 MILLION - $2 MILLION	10.4%	38
$2 MILLION - $4 MILLION	4.9%	18
OVER $4 MILLION	11.4%	42
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		**367**
(SKIPPED THIS QUESTION)		13

TABLE 1: ANNUAL BUDGET BREAKDOWN OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

4 See the dotOrganize Tools Crib at http://www.dotorganize.net/tools

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

ENTHUSIASM AND WIDE-RANGING INTEREST

- Social change organizers are largely enthusiastic about the potential of online tools and view technology as extremely important to achieving their organizations' missions.
- Because organizations' online needs and operational goals run the gamut, no one tool or tool suite can completely fill the technology gap. However, the tools respondents report using or needing most fall in to the communications and fundraising categories.

OBSTACLES TO HARNESSING ONLINE POTENTIAL

- Most organizations, whether three-person start-ups or 3 million-person coalitions, are struggling to keep their constituent databases in order, and as a result have difficulty embracing new and emerging technologies (such as, blogs, social networking, SMS/text messaging, GIS mapping, and wikis).
- 59% report being frustrated or really struggling with technology.
- A surprising number of organizations indicate they lack the capacity to employ some of the most standard online organizing techniques. 39% do not use email newsletters and 47% do not accept donations online.
- Regardless of the size of the organization, organizers across the board reported that money (57%), time (45%), and lack of staff expertise (34%) prevent their organizations from taking full advantage of databases and online tools.

DATA DISARRAY: THE GREAT EQUALIZER

- Inadequate data management emerged as a major impediment to effective organizing. More than half the respondents report using slips of paper, Excel spreadsheets, and personal address books to manage organizational data.

- Organizations across the budget spectrum experienced a similar lack of data integration in their systems. The ability to share data across platforms and between applications, such as contact databases and Web content management systems, reduces data duplication and errors, as well as time spent on manual data entry and manually synching data repositories. Only 7% of respondents reported that their current systems share data easily.
- Organizers also stress the significance of data integration in their daily operations. On a scale of 1-10, with 10 representing the importance of data integration to their work, nearly 70% of respondents chose ratings between 7-10, signifying that a vast majority consider integration to be both a key obstacle and solution.

PREDICTORS (OR NOT….) OF TECHNOLOGY SUCCESS

- The number of dedicated technology staff in an organization emerged as the most stable predictor of technology success. Respondents with a higher number of dedicated technology staff tend to be less frustrated than respondents with fewer dedicated staff.
- Although larger annual budgets had a positive impact on respondents' attitudes toward technology, funding is not a panacea for technology woes. For example, organizations that spent the least on software and online tools were just as likely to be satisfied, on average, as those that spent the most.

THE REAL COSTS OF THE TECHNOLOGY STRUGGLE

- Social change organizations are struggling to master standard and emerging technology, as well as to manage data silos and ill-suited tools. These challenges, which drain resources away from serving their communities and constituents, result in lost time, missed civic engagement opportunities, lost money, and poorly-informed decisions. For example, a comprehensive and flexible list of supporters is a core tool for organizing. Yet this tool remains drastically underutilized. 55% of respondents report that they don't keep email lists at all, and a majority of survey respondents have email lists of fewer than 1,000 supporters.

THE GOOD NEWS

Fortunately, the world of organizing and technology is ripe for change. Social change organizers have adopted enough new technology to know what works, what's missing, and most importantly, that the Web holds tremendous untapped potential. **Organizers understand that online organizing tools can dramatically increase their capacity, and are demanding the know-how and tools to progress along that path.**

Concurrently, trends in Web-based software development have created an ideal climate for collaboration and innovation. Open source development models make software code available for others to view, amend, adapt, and implement with minimal licensing fees. Open Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) enable separate applications to work with each other, and on-demand software, such as Salesforce.com or Democracy in Action, enables users to access tools that are hosted and maintained online. On-demand access is lessening the need for in-house technical staff and making a wider array of tools accessible and affordable for organizers.

A promising convergence is now on the horizon, as organizers embrace online technology and those technologies gain the diversity and flexibility needed to support this sector.

FINDINGS ANALYSIS:

ONLINE TECHNOLOGY & ORGANIZING CAPACITY

ORGANIZERS VIEW TECHNOLOGY AS IMPORTANT TO THEIR MISSION

Organizers responded emphatically when asked about technology's relevance to their goals. **95% indicated that they believe technology is important or essential to achieving their mission.** In addition:

- More than 40% of respondents see technology as essential to their work, and have embraced it as the wave of the future.
- The remaining respondents (excluding the 5% who hate or have no use for it) believe technology is important, but feel uninformed and/or frustrated about what they need or how to get it.
- When asked what prevented them from taking advantage of databases and online organizing tools, only 5% cited "staff distrust or discomfort with technology" as a primary factor, indicating that other obstacles, to be discussed in later sections, stand in the way of technology adoption.

"We love [technology], but are frustrated that the perfectly integrated system does not exist for us."

The expansion of Internet adoption in social change organizations most likely reflects expansion amongst the general population. According to a recent Pew study, Internet penetration among U.S. adults has hit an all-time high: a full 73% of respondents (about 147 million adults) are Internet users, which is up from 35% only six years ago.[5]

5 Pew Internet & American Life Project, "Internet Penetration and Impact," April 26, 2006. http://207.21.232.103/PPF/r/182/report_display.asp

It is important to note, however, that despite this increase, access for all – especially high-speed broadband access – is still not assured. The federal government has eliminated regulations intended to ensure universal access to communications networks, while city and state-level infrastructure plans are being turned over to private companies with few service obligations.

While comprehensive online access for all communities continues to be an issue of tremendous concern, the high percentage of social change organizations with an appetite for new technologies reflects national trends, and indicates organizers are embracing both the challenge and the opportunity of technology.

"We have the tools, but not enough time to master and get the most out of them."

Capacity-building agencies, software developers, and technology strategists have been working to help organizations understand and embrace new tools. Evidence of their success shows in the high number of respondents who see technology as essential to their mission, and the low number reporting staff distrust or discomfort with technology.

TOOLS INTEREST IS WIDE-RANGING

Organizers take advantage of many online tools, such as email newsletters, accepting online donations, interactive event calendars, and Web-based publishing. While their appetite for emerging technologies, such as Podcasting, SMS/text messaging, wikis, GIS mapping, or integrated RSS feeds, is much lower, a considerable number are interested in these new online tools.

The organizers we spoke with in-person were interested in augmenting their constituent databases by integrating technologies such as barcoding, SMS/text messaging, handheld synching, GIS mapping, and voter file matching. These tools allow organizers to effectively and *rapidly* maintain, increase, and leverage existing data about constituents and potential constituents.

Technology needs differed across organizations, and thus no one tool completely governs the market. **Beyond Microsoft's Excel, Outlook and Access, users are spread out unevenly across more than 40 applications, with the majority of applications claiming no more than 5–15 organizations.** However, nine out of the top 10 most used or needed tools fell in the communications and fundraising categories, suggesting these to be the most fruitful areas for technology and resource development.

Tables 2 and 3 provide an overview of respondents' attitudes toward an array of tools: those they currently use, those they need, those they don't understand, and those they don't want.

TECHNOLOGY FUNDAMENTALS REMAIN ELUSIVE

Despite believing in the importance of technology to their missions, a surprising number of organizations are not taking advantage of basic online organizing techniques, such as collecting email addresses, sending out mass emails, posting news and information on websites, providing materials for download, and processing donations online.

These fundamental technologies have been available for many years, a majority of the online public use them, and they are widely regarded as producing enough value to be worth the initial investment.

However, survey responses show that:

- 39% of respondents still don't use email newsletters.
- 47% still don't accept donations online.
- 43% would like to, but are not providing materials for download.
- Only a small percentage of respondents are using newer Web 2.0 tools such as Podcasting (3%), public wikis (4%), and social networking tools or SMS/text messaging (9%).

ONLINE TOOL	USES	WANTS
1. POSTING NEWS AND INFORMATION TO WEBSITES	80%	19%
2. EMAIL NEWSLETTERS/EMAIL MANAGEMENT	58%	39%
3. ONLINE DONATING/DONOR TRACKING	48%	47%
4. VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND MANAGEMENT	37%	51%
5. GETTING FEEDBACK FROM CONSTITUENTS	25%	61%
6. ONLINE EVENT MANAGEMENT, REGISTRATION, AND DISPLAY	36%	46%
7. PROVIDING DOWNLOADABLE MATERIALS	38%	43%
8. SENDING LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	42%	31%
9. PARTICIPATORY LISTSERVS	50%	22%
10. BULLETIN BOARDS/ONLINE FORUMS	25%	46%

TABLE 2: TOP TOOLS ORGANIZERS CURRENTLY USE OR WOULD LIKE TO USE

ONLINE TOOL	DOESN'T WANT	DOESN'T UNDERSTAND
1. RIDES/HOUSING BOARDS	68%	13%
2. ROBOCALLS/COMPUTER-ASSISTED PHONEBANKING	68%	11%
3. PUBLIC WIKIS	32%	45%
4. BARCODE TECHNOLOGY FOR DATA ENTRY	58%	14%
5. VOTER FILE MATCHING	59%	10%
6. TEXT MESSAGING/SMS	55%	10%
7. MANAGING LOCAL CHAPTERS	63%	2%
8. PODCASTING	43%	21%
9. SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS	46%	17%
10. RSS FEEDS	21%	38%

TABLE 3: TOOLS ORGANIZERS DON'T WANT OR DON'T UNDERSTAND

INTERESTS REVEAL CONTRADICTION AND LACK OF INFORMATION

- **Survey responses show that organizers desire some older technologies despite the fact that many online strategists doubt their effectiveness.** 46% of respondents would like to use bulletin boards and online forums, for example, but these technologies are not necessarily the most useful ways to encourage peer-to-peer communication among constituents. As one technology provider put it, "Bulletin boards/forums are the number one tool people ask for but don't use once we give it to them."

  Paradoxically, 46% of respondents also express no interest in social networking tools, which are regarded as more useful than bulletin boards or forums in generating peer-to-peer communication.

- **Respondents do not always want valuable newer technologies, because they don't understand them, or they don't recognize their strategic value.** For example, 55% of respondents explicitly express no interest in text messaging although this technology has proven to be an extremely effective organizing tool worldwide. This suggests that organizers simply may not have the information and resources needed to successfully integrate this technology into their campaigns.

- **In other cases, respondents request tools they mistakenly believe do not exist.** Some respondents express deep frustration that certain tools, like targeted emails to legislators, do not exist. This frustration is most likely caused by a lack of information about available options.

ORGANIZERS ARE FRUSTRATED WITH THEIR CURRENT TOOLS

While organizers indicate a readiness to embrace emerging tools, dissatisfaction with their current technology experiences creates a major obstacle to progress.

As shown in Figure 1, **a majority of organizers (59%) indicate that they feel frustrated, at best, with their technology efforts.**

Surprisingly, funding levels do not emerge as a strong factor in positive attitudes toward technology efforts. Notably, more than one-third of respondents from organizations with annual budgets of over $4 million report either being frustrated or struggling with technology.

When asked about their frustrations, organizers reported that their software possesses insufficient features, comes with inadequate training, and lacks integration with other systems:

- 45% report feeling uninformed or frustrated about what technology they need or how to get it.
- 61% of respondents complain that their tools don't share data with one another. When given the opportunity to respond with open comments, organizers literally howled about the lack of integration between their tools.
- More than 50% report that their tools do not have all the features they need for successful daily operations.

"None of our software talks to each other easily. We have to pry out information to compare. We don't have an accurate count of how many supporters we even have names and addresses for."

- Those organizations that spent the least money on software and online tools rated their satisfaction the same, on average, as those that spent the most. This finding suggests that financial resources are not the bottom line when it comes to satisfaction with technology, and that other factors have equal or stronger impact on organizations' sense of their own success.

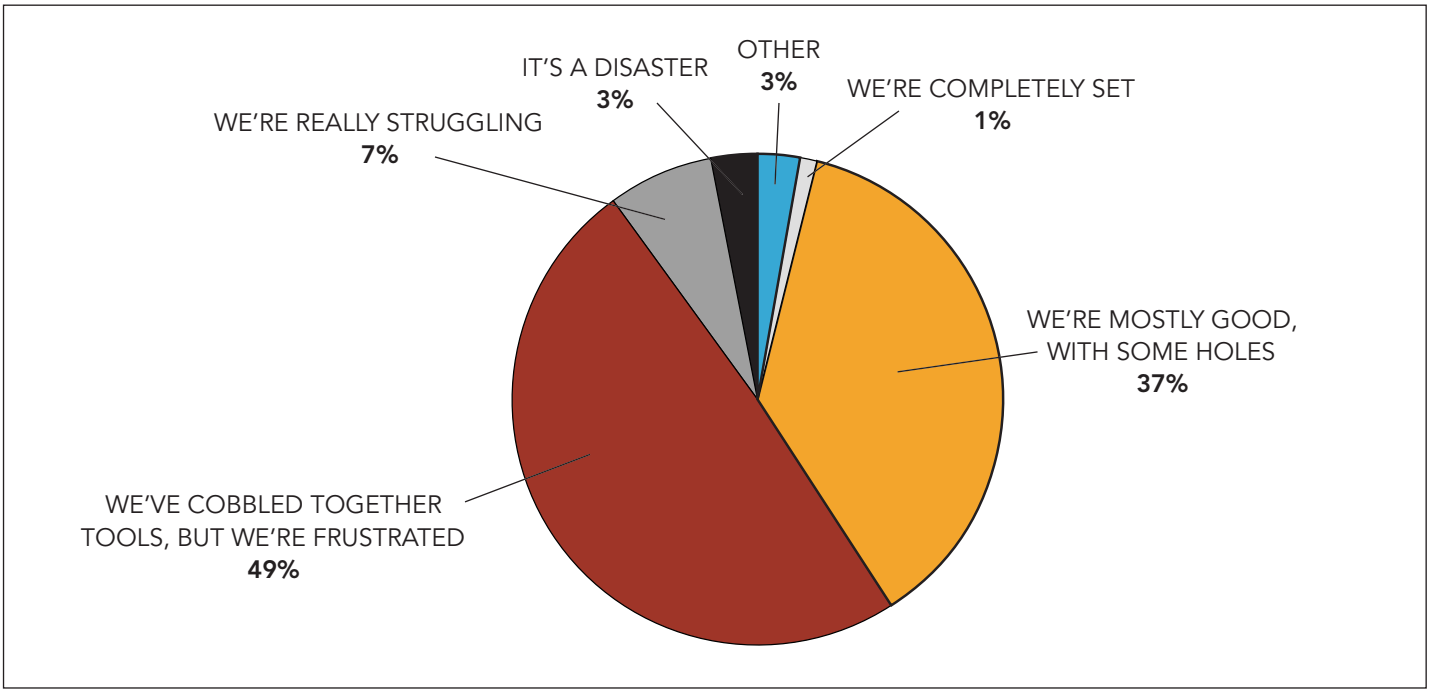

FIGURE 1: RESPONDENTS ASSESS THEIR CURRENT TECHNOLOGY EFFORTS

LACK OF TIME, MONEY, AND EXPERTISE PREVENTS ADOPTION OF NEW TOOLS

While the amount of money spent on tools did not affect respondents' level of technology satisfaction, money, along with other factors, is a major obstacle to the adoption of new technology. Regardless of the size of the organization, organizers across the board reported that money (57%), time (45%), and lack of staff expertise (34%) prevent their organizations from fully taking advantage of databases and online tools (see Table 4 below).

Lack of time and resources prevent organizers from understanding what's available, from customizing solutions, and from developing a firm technology knowledge base.

"We lack the money to purchase and customize software, to purchase hardware, to purchase consultants, to train technical support staff and end users, and to hire technical staff to support new technology."

THE DEARTH OF TRAINING

In the survey's open-ended comments section, respondents repeatedly stressed the issue of training. **Even those organizations satisfied with tool features and functionality cited lack of adequate training as a huge impediment to their successful use of technology.** While few express major resistance from upper management to adopting new technology tools, many felt that their executive directors and CEOs do not necessarily prioritize what it takes to effectively implement new technologies in organizational budgets and staff schedules. As one respondent put it, "For better or worse, I think most of our problems [with] this tool stem from training and staffing issues rather than actual technical or software design flaws."

It is important to note, however, that while training is cited as one of the major impediments to technology adoption, organizations tend to ask for more training than they are willing to commit to. Technology providers indicate that users will often request trainings, then fail to attend them.

"The tools are one thing, getting the training to understand how to use them in the best, most efficient, and effective way is another. I need help organizing our capabilities and getting the most out of the tools we have available."

High turnover rates typical of nonprofit organizations only exacerbate training and expertise issues. A combination of poor knowledge management structures, inadequate documentation of organizational systems, and scarce time for training results in an organizational inability to develop *and maintain* technology proficiency.

	1 PRIMARY FACTOR	2	3	4 NOT A FACTOR
WE DON'T HAVE THE MONEY	**57% (186)**	25% (82)	25% (82)	5% (18)
WE DON'T HAVE THE TIME	**45% (147)**	37% (119)	37% (119)	7% (24)
LACK OF RELIABLE COMPUTERS, NETWORK, OR INTERNET CONNECTION	12% (35)	21% (60)	21% (60)	**47% (134)**
DON'T HAVE THE STAFF EXPERTISE	**34% (107)**	**34% (107)**	34% (107)	13% (42)
STAFF FEARFUL OR RESISTANT TO CHANGE	6% (18)	27% (81)	27% (81)	**43% (129)**
STAFF DISTRUST/DISCOMFORT WITH TECHNOLOGY	5% (15)	20% (59)	20% (59)	**47% (138)**
NO NEED - WE'RE DOING FINE WITH OUR CURRENT TOOLS	2% (5)	8% (21)	8% (21)	**68% (176)**
NO NEED - CONSTITUENCY NOT ONLINE OR COMPUTER LITERATE	4% (10)	9% (25)	9% (25)	**70% (189)**
BAD PAST EXPERIENCE WITH TECHNOLOGY OR TECH VENDORS	4% (10)	10% (28)	10% (28)	**67% (184)**
OVERWHELMED OR CONFUSED BY OPTIONS	12% (34)	30% (85)	**30% (85)**	28% (82)
			TOTAL RESPONDENTS	**344**
			(SKIPPED THIS QUESTION)	**35**

TABLE 4: FACTORS PREVENTING ORGANIZERS FROM TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF TECHNOLOGY

THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM: DATA DISARRAY

In both the nonprofit and commercial sectors, data management is key to implementing and maintaining successful operations. Running an organization on multiple isolated applications spells redundant daily processes and database maintenance. **Figuratively speaking, practicing poor data management is akin to building a house with no foundation, or worse, building a city without intersecting streets.**

"There are multiple spreadsheets all over. We have to check a half a dozen places to get information that we need. Updating data is a nightmare for the same reason."

One of the areas hardest hit by this data disarray is contact management. At any given time, organizers need to keep track of information about supporters, potential volunteers, phonebankers, people who play a bridge role and can activate their networks rapidly, and current or potential donors. Any organizer will tell you that understanding their organizational base is a fundamental component of running (and winning) campaigns. In order to serve them best, you need to know them.

Yet, in the absence of infrastructure to manage information about constituents and communities, organizers often cannot engage and serve them in the most productive ways. Responses to our questions about data management revealed the extent of technology chaos within many organizations:

- More than 50% of organizations use slips of paper, Excel spreadsheets, and personal contact managers (such as Outlook) to manage organizational data.
- 51% were managing more than four repositories of data about the organization's various constituents.
- Only 7% of respondents said that their systems share data easily (see Table 5).

If you have more than one place that you keep your contacts, do your systems share data with each other? (For example, can you email a list of donors from the same system which tracks these donations, as opposed to exporting the donor names from your donor management system to your email system?)

	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE TOTAL
YES, THIS IS EASY	7.5%	25
YES, BUT WE HAVE TO TWEAK IT TO MAKE IT WORK	16.2%	54
NO, THE SYSTEMS ARE TOTALLY SEPARATE	**61.3%**	**204**
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THIS MEANS	8.7%	29
OTHER	10.5%	25
TOTAL RESPONDENTS		333
(SKIPPED THIS QUESTION)		46

TABLE 5: DATA INTEGRATION BETWEEN SYSTEMS

Interestingly, larger annual budgets have little relationship to the ease of data integration. Organizations with budgets over $4 million were nearly as likely as those with budgets under $100,000 to report maintaining separate systems without easy data integration.

Many organizers indicated they could use data better if they had more segmentation or tracking power. They reported wanting better ways to track, tag, and identify members. When asked how long it would take them to assemble a clean list of their constituents, only 34% could do this in under an hour. **47% of respondents reported it could take anywhere from 3 to 25 hours to complete this simple task.**

On a scale of 1-10, respondents were asked to rate the importance of data integration between their fundraising and online organizing tools. Nearly 70% chose ratings between 7-10, signifying that **a vast majority consider integration to be both a key obstacle and solution.**

ORGANIZATIONS WITH DEDICATED TECHNOLOGY STAFF FARE BETTER

Organizations with dedicated technology staff were much more satisfied with their systems than those who relied on vendors and out-of-the-box tools. As shown in Figure 2 (below), the number of dedicated technology staff correlates strongly with attitude:

- Organizations with no dedicated technology staff are twice as likely to express dissatisfaction with their technology experiences.
- Meanwhile, those with four or more technology staff are three times as likely to express satisfaction.

In addition, dedicated technology staff correlates with how fast an organization can compile a supporter list. The fastest compilation occurred in organizations with four or more dedicated technology staff, and the slowest average occurred in organizations with no dedicated technology staff.

Interestingly, although more respondents cite lack of money than lack of staff expertise as their primary obstacle to technology adoption, funding is not as reliable a predictor of technology success as the number of dedicated technology staff. **Larger budget organizations still report inadequate data integration and an inability to efficiently compile supporter lists.** Although the fastest list compilation came from organizations with annual budgets of $1–$2 million, the slowest average came for the next largest budget group, those with $2–$4 million.

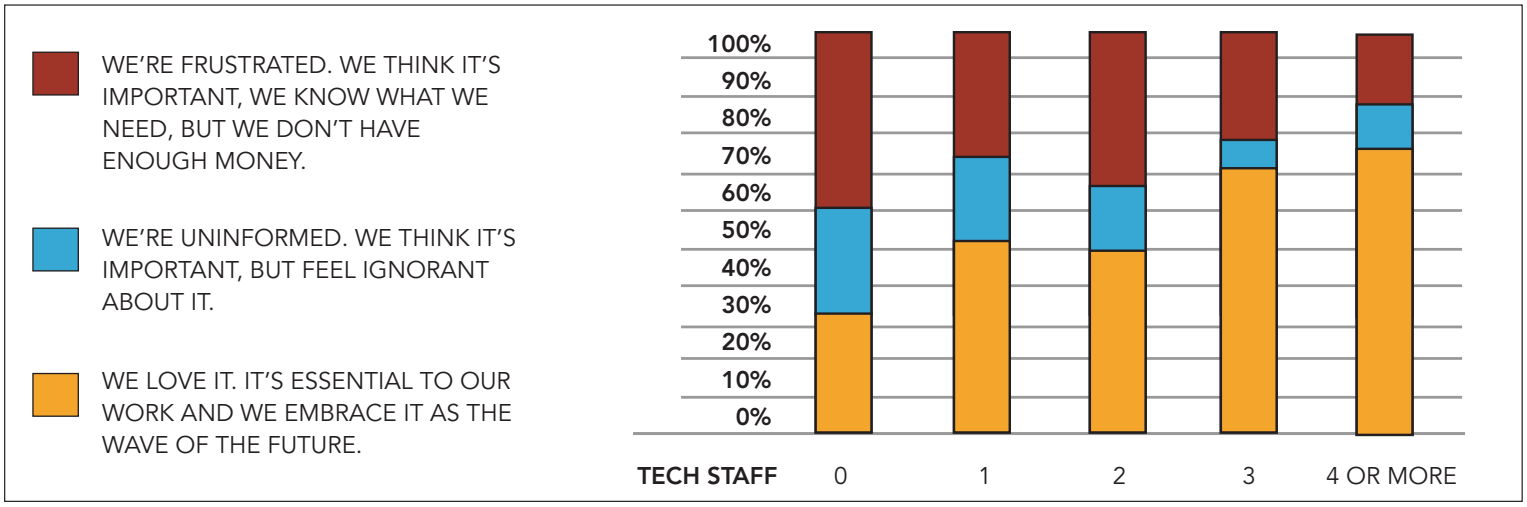

FIGURE 2: THE IMPACT OF DEDICATED TECHNOLOGY STAFF ON ATTITUDES TOWARD TECHNOLOGY

THE RESULT? TECHNOLOGY STRUGGLES STUNT IMPACT

Social change organizations are struggling to master standard and emerging technologies, as well as to manage data silos and ill-suited tools.

These challenges, which drain resources away from serving communities and constituents, result in:

- **Lost time. 65% of organizations require five or more hours to compile a clean supporter list.** Time spent manually compiling lists, reentering data, and recreating documents translates into time not spent developing creative strategies, building movements and mobilizing current supporters in constructive ways.
- **Poor constituent relationship management.** Building power to affect change is largely about building the right relationships, with the right people, in the most efficient ways possible. Inconsistent or inadequate data about an organization's constituents and community results in uninformed decisions and missed strategic opportunities.
- **Fewer supporters and missed civic engagement opportunities.** Having a large number of supporters is certainly not the only measure of organizing success, and is not a substitute for galvanizing or serving individuals already within a community. However, a comprehensive and flexible list of supporters is a core tool for organizing which remains drastically underutilized sector-wide. **55% of respondents report that they don't keep email lists at all, and a wide majority have email lists of fewer than 1,000 supporters.** Only about 8% of survey respondents have email lists with over 10,000 names (see Figure 3 below).

  Poor tracking of information about an organization's service or community, and lack of tools to contact them, means lost opportunities to engage them.

"It seems that the tools out there are designed for money tracking rather than for organizing. Why can't I print out a list of activists by legislative districts? Why can't I track who has taken action on what issues easily? Why can't I find out who else is in our database within a 25-mile radius of someone who wants to help activate folks in their area? Why can't I do a personalized email merge from our donor database to targeted activists?"

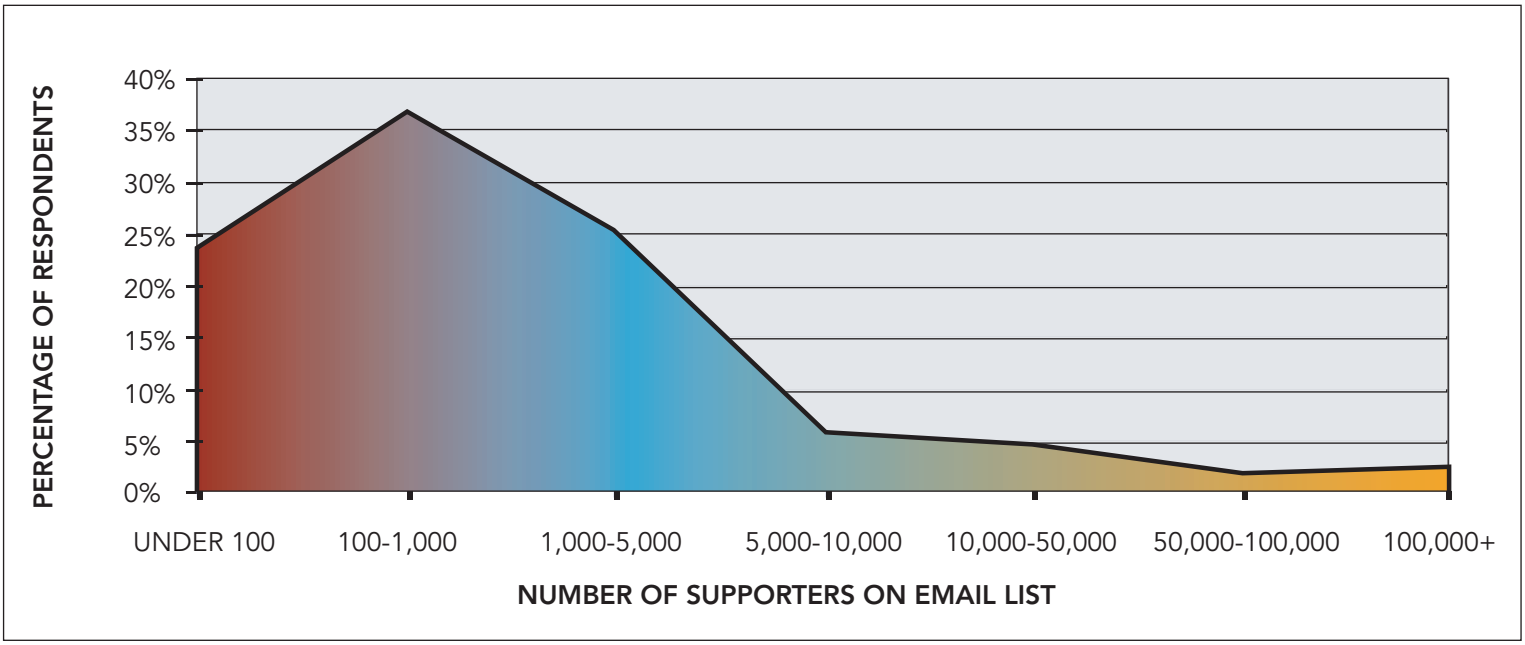

FIGURE 3: MEMBER/SUPPORTER TRACKING

- **Lost money.** 51% of organizations surveyed don't possess a basic online donating system. The lack of convenient donation vehicles, combined with fewer supporters and poor tracking of information, means less money coming in the door.

THE WRAP

Organizers are clearly struggling, despite their general enthusiasm for technology tools. Regardless of budget size, they feel strapped for time, money, and know-how. They believe that their software lacks the features they need, that they lack the training and support to use the software, and they're frustrated by the lack of integration between existing tools.

The subsequent section proposes multiple strategies to address the issues that emerged from this research.

"Any time a new piece of technology comes out, we have an opportunity to associate it with the movement. When we miss those opportunities, it's a real shame."

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

FROM STRATEGY TO TOOLS ADOPTION: RECOMMENDATIONS TO FILL THE GAPS

Why don't social change groups, especially those with smaller budgets, have the online tools and resources they need? It's not for lack of trying. Millions of dollars have been poured into nonprofit technology projects in the past 10 years. Some have flopped completely, and some have succeeded in solving a specific piece of the online technology puzzle. These efforts have led to some significant accomplishments, such as training and capacity building for particular communities, providing commercial software at heavily discounted prices, or live convenings that build communities of practice around host of technology issues.

Despite these successes, many organizations still struggle, some severely.

We believe there is no single solution for overcoming all of the technology obstacles outlined in this report. Rather, the sector requires a comprehensive, interrelated approach that helps organizations develop smart strategies, and effectively implement technologies that support those strategies.

dotOrganize offers the following conclusions and recommendations in the hope of encouraging dialogue, innovation, and allied efforts among our peers and colleagues. In addition, in the coming year, dotOrganize plans to undertake specific projects that fulfill some of the recommendations identified.[7]

[7] See http://www.dotorganize.net/projects

Define Best Practices for Online Organizing

As a first step, defining and cultivating a body of knowledge that individual organizations can draw on will strengthen sector-wide capacity to develop and implement appropriate online technology strategies.

Conclusions

- **The practice of using online tools to support on- and offline organizing efforts requires continuous adaptation to changing political and technology environments.** The sector requires an organized set of technology-neutral case studies, best practices, success stories, and performance benchmarks to jumpstart new efforts and build upon existing work. Because "online organizing" is such a new medium, the body of knowledge about successful strategies is limited. Few social change agents have enough time, resources or staff to develop strategies that embrace the Web's full potential. As such, success is often still defined by building big lists and raising money from those lists, not necessarily by winning campaigns, or achieving program objectives

Recommendations

- **Initiate a formal study of how we define success with online organizing tools.** The sector could benefit greatly from a study that works with 20-50 different organizations and analyzes the relationship between their organizing activities online, and how those translate (or do not) into real-world impact. How can online tools be made more accessible and useful to groups? How are organizational goals and tactics impacted by the adoption of new tools, and how can this impact be shaped in constructive ways? Careful attention should be paid to selecting a diverse sample of organizations in terms of budget, issue focus, constituency served and geographic location. There are myriad movement- and capacity-building organizations well positioned to fulfill this kind of study, and the resulting knowledge would give us all a better sense of what's working, what's not, and where to target future efforts.

- **Assemble live convenings and meetings, which address the fundamental strategic questions that online organizers face.** How can we move beyond fundraising and armchair activism to leverage the grassroots potential of the Internet? Has technology itself shifted our goals? How can we, as a sector, both question and leverage technology's impact on organizing? These in-person gatherings could occur stand-alone or as tracks of existing non-profit technology events, and they should encourage questions, problem solving, and looking to the horizon, as opposed to repeating success stories that may not be applicable to all organizing contexts.

  Some exciting and worthwhile gatherings are already taking place, which focus on tools development, training, and awareness building. In addition, the sector needs a space where the question of *strategy* is central. Before the tools are made, and before the organizers are trained on how to use them, we need to examine what we're doing and why.

- **Develop a peer-to-peer support and knowledge management infrastructure for organizers.** Setting up an online community for the intervals between these live convenings would enable organizers to collaborate, share best practices, and provide mentoring opportunities for newer organizers.

Enhance Strategic Support and Information Resources

Clear organizational objectives drive smart online strategies. In order to support these objectives with appropriate technology solutions, organizations need to understand what's possible, and they need access to "technology integrators" who specialize in aligning organizational goals with available options.

Conclusions

- **Many low-cost tools exist for organizers, but they don't know where to look or how best to choose from available options.** Understanding technology possibilities is a first and crucial step toward technology empowerment. This includes access to raw information, as well as information and support to weigh various options to determine what best meets their needs.
- **"Integrator" networks need strengthening.** In his thoughtful essay, *Three Pillars of Social Source*, Gideon Rosenblatt uses the term "integrator" to refer to those individuals who "…specialize in listening to client needs and matching these needs with the right mix of technology and strategy…"[7] **Integrators understand both organizing and technology, and they have strong processes in place to integrate the two effectively**. Their skills enable them to help users define their objectives, understand the options, and wade through potential solutions.

  Ultimately, integrators develop online strategies that are effective, technologically sound, aligned with an organizational budget, and sustainable. Unfortunately, not enough integrators exist in the field. Consequently, this work falls on software developers and technology service providers, who specialize in providing tools, not consulting services. The result is a tremendous amount of frustration on both sides – organizers don't have access to technology-neutral strategic guidance, and technology providers must provide a level of support beyond their service offerings, which they (often admittedly) do not have the expertise to provide well.

Recommendations

- **Develop an online resource hub for the organizing sector.** Providing a searchable database of tools, costs, recommendations, user ratings, and a repository of user-generated best practices and implementation guidelines will aid organizers in understanding what's available, what works, and how to choose the best technology options to suit their objectives.[8]
- **Develop an online searchable database of potential integrators.** This online Integrator Directory could work much like the SPIN Project's, Communications Consulting Directory, which lists individuals and organizations offering media relations services to grassroots and nonprofit groups. While some encouraging attempts have been made to centralize this kind of information in the technology sector, the results are often not very helpful to non-tech savvy organizers. In order for a resource like this to be useful for its intended audience, we must diligently identify user needs, pay careful attention to user interface design, and present relevant information in an accessible way.
- **Research the potential of "automated integrators," akin to NPower's Web-based Tech Atlas, which guides nonprofits through a technology planning process.** An automated integrator could guide organizers through an online strategic planning process, and then instantly provide recommendations based on the information provided. This tool could be especially useful for organizations that cannot afford individual consulting services.

[7] Rosenblatt, G. (2005). Three Pillars of Social Source: Connecting the Nonprofit Technology Sector. See http://www.movementasnetwork.org

[8] See http://www.dotorganize.net/projects

Provide Robust, Flexible, Documented, and Sustainable Software for Social Change

Once an online strategy is defined, the right tool will make or break that strategy. At the same time, a groundbreaking tool can often drive the strategy in ways previously unimagined by organizers. Appropriate, reliable, accessible tools rest at the heart of what's possible.

Conclusions

- Organizers do not request any sort of universal "killer app" or mention one runaway toolset. And no two organizations express exactly the same need. We are witnessing a sector that is far too nimble and specialized for a "one-size fits all" solution, or even for a "one-stop shop." **Social change organizers needs are too varied to render any single tool suite a viable sector-wide solution.**

  As one organizer put it, "We have no way of combining all of our needs into one package. [We need] customizable integration – at an affordable price!"

- **In the nonprofit technology sector, in particular, software applications intended to be everything to everyone often fail.** They either don't work well, rely too heavily on highly specialized technical support, cost too much to maintain, or cannot implement feature enhancements in a timely manner because their technical infrastructure doesn't allow this easily. New trends in commercial software development are moving away from tightly integrated, monolithic applications toward a model of interconnected applications, which share a unified interface. A great example of this is Salesforce.com's AppExchange, in which additional applications can be added, a la carte, to Salesforce's core platform offerings (depending on each organization's unique business/program needs). This might also be a viable direction for nonprofit technology developers to consider.

- **"Ecosystems" of software and software modules that share data and build on each other's strengths, rather than stand-alone applications that seek to be all things to all organizations, are most likely to succeed.** This enables organizations to invest incrementally in software, as their budgets and technology capacity allow, without creating the data silos and vendor lock-in that inhibit future growth and innovation.

- **Program and operational staff need more opportunities to articulate what they need from Web applications, and to influence how these tools aid their daily workflow.** This increases the tool's effectiveness, and also forefronts cultural and political conditions that can be overlooked by developers, such as multilingual access, or assuring that sensitive membership data is protected from surveillance under the U.S. Patriot Act.

  Giving a stronger voice to staff reverses the familiar trend of well-intentioned coders driving software creation that staff must shoehorn into their day-to-day activities. This recommendation is not intended to inhibit the creativity of progressive software developers, but rather to initiate stronger feedback loops between those using the software and those building it.

Recommendations

- **dotOrganize plans to facilitate a Tools Lab, which encourages interoperability between software applications relevant to the social change sector.** This project aims to augment the functionality of current tools by integrating them with other compatible tools. This kind of integration decreases redundancy and promotes more flexible ecosystems of applications and services.

  An example of this concept in action is the promising integration of the Salesforce.com (a powerful Constituent Relationship Management tool offering free licenses to nonprofits) with the open source content management system Plone. ONE/Northwest, which supports Pacific Northwest environmental organizations, currently leads this development effort. With Plone, users can create interactive websites to engage their communities. However, they need Salesforce.com to effectively track, manage, and develop the relationships built through those Websites. The communication and tracking power provided by integrating these two applications is unprecedented in the nonprofit social change sector.

- **Design a strategy for increasing data standardization amongst diverse nonprofit technology service providers.** In order for two applications to "talk" to one another, as we're proposing in the section, we need to develop accepted standards for synchronizing, migrating, or updating data between applications. To facilitate seamless integration between two different applications, data fields need to be standardized. Otherwise, each integration is unique and requires custom coding and maintenance.

  Data standardization is notoriously difficult in all areas of software development. However, it is also essential to promoting interoperability between software applications. Aspiration is addressing this problem as two distinct sets of challenges–a technology challenge that accompanies data formats and Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), as well as a procedural challenge that involves sorting through intellectual property and privacy issues. While these challenges are considerable, the motivations to address and overcome them are equally substantial, from the promise of shared and open legislative databases for campaigning organizations, to the visualization potential of easy-to-use geographic information system (GIS) services that could render nonprofit data in new and compelling ways.

Support Adoption of On-Demand Software

The on-demand model affords organizers access to tools hosted online by Application Service Providers (ASPs). In the nonprofit sector, where organizations rarely have in-house technical staff or resources for an independent technology consultant, this model can be of great value.

Conclusions

- **The emergence of on-demand tools like Salesforce.com (CRM), Democracy in Action (communication and advocacy tools), or even Gmail (email) provides opportunities for organizations to transfer the burden of technical support to the Application Service Provider.** Rather than maintaining in-house servers or constantly upgrading infrastructure to support the latest software releases, users access online applications via a web browser. Many commercial software providers, including Microsoft and Adobe, are rapidly moving toward online editions of their applications, while many new products are exclusively on-demand.

- **On-demand software also carries certain privacy risks.** The business models of many on-demand, "free" commercial tools such as Google, Hotmail, or YouTube, include automatic agreements to give up copyright or privacy rights. Data hosted by ASPs can be subject to governmental scrutiny, which becomes an issue of pressing concern for organizations tracking politically sensitive information. While recognizing the potential benefits of on-demand services, we must also seek to further understand the risks.

Recommendations

- **Develop a series of on-demand case studies and cost assessments that elucidate the advantages and disadvantages of this model.** Cost assessments should compare fees for accessing on-demand tools as compared to purchasing software. These analyses would need to factor the costs of internal IT staff, upgrades, and equipment into the real fees associated with one-time software purchases.
- **Conduct privacy and risk assessments of on-demand software.** Organizers working in politically sensitive areas, such as immigration or human rights, need concrete information on who may be able to access their data and under what circumstances. The technical support sector can assist social change organizations with this issue by providing data security risk assessments and recommendations for on-demand vendors who can accommodate different levels of need around privacy and confidentiality.

Prioritize Documentation, Ongoing Support, and Training

Successful implementation of new tools requires the provision of adequate documentation, user-appropriate training, and ongoing methods for technical support.

Conclusions

- **Even the best online organizing tools endure short-lived success if delivered without adequate documentation, reliable technical support, or a means for accommodating ongoing feature enhancements.** Building cost-effective and relevant online tools is only the first step in the change process. Code lockdowns, in which a group of developers work to quickly build specific tools relevant to social change organizers, often deliver inspiring results. However, by nature, they concentrate on functionality, while leaving documentation and ongoing support to chance. The result is often a great idea with little lasting benefit to organizers.
- **In theory, everyone agrees that training is essential to the upkeep and progress of an organization. However, resource and time restrictions often make training a low organizational priority.** Social change organizations need to invest in training staff to understand technology, and must recognize this commitment to staff buy-in as part of the "true cost of ownership." As technology becomes increasingly central to the inner workings of an organization, quality training becomes even more essential.

Recommendations

- **Social change oriented software projects need to be approached with a full adoption path in mind.** This means prioritizing documentation, training structures, and ongoing support in addition to feature development.

- **Develop user-appropriate training structures, with supporting documentation.** Although this may seem like an obvious statement, this principle is all too often ignored. Affordable trainings should be imparted to organizations in digestible formats, with supporting documentation for ongoing research and assistance. Aspiration, which has developed a comprehensive set of e-advocacy trainings, is a great example of this recommendation in action. The Progressive Technology Project also provides effective training and capacity-building support to grassroots, community-led organizations.

Aggregate and Share Information on Technology Costs

Social change organizations and technology vendors need to find common ground in terms of pricing for software and services. Organizations require access to accurate information on what's possible, and what they can reasonably expect to pay considering their budgetary constraints.

Conclusions

- **There is a knowledge gap within the social change sector concerning the market realities of software development and services.** Users tend to expect technology vendors to provide around the clock support and intensive customization at below market value. This expectation makes it extremely difficult for vendors to serve these organizations at their price point.
- **Users need a more accurate framework for understanding what they should expect to pay for services.** Providing an accurate pricing framework will also decrease the chance of vendors overcharging organizations for inadequate services.

Recommendations

- **Initiate an online *Consumer's Report* for technology services,** which aggregates user-generated case studies, in addition to providing industry standard pricing guidelines. This online resource could provide a valuable baseline for organizers to understand what is and is not possible within their budget constraints.

Increase Offerings to the Full Spectrum of Social Change Groups — Support the Eternally Under-resourced

Many organizations simply don't have the money to invest in online tools, period. Yet, these organizations still need technology support. As a sector, we need to create funding and service strategies that deliver technology to under-resourced and volunteer-run organizations.

Conclusions

- **35% of survey respondents report allocating less than $500 for software and online tools each year, and a vast majority allocate between $500 and $5,000 annually.** Because many nonprofits operate on relatively fixed budgets, this reality is not likely to change. As a group, their contributions to the social change sector are incalculable, and their struggles with adequate funding should not limit their access to reliable technology solutions.

- **Moreover, volunteer-run groups, who do not possess nonprofit tax status, are some of the most influential and potentially effective contributors to progressive social change.** These groups are often not formally organized, and they don't possess a solid, centralized infrastructure. Yet, they arguably play a key role in cultivating a broad-based movement for progressive values. They are organizing with their neighbors, in their communities, and they require support as much as foundation-sponsored organizations.
- Because technology providers committed to offering low-cost services tend to work on slim profit margins, they do not have the extra people-power to fully service all of the underresourced groups in the sector. For example, low-cost technology vendors are the least able to issue free support contracts, even if they'd like to.

Recommendations

- For years, many foundations and capacity building organizations have tried to address a shared question: "How can we provide adequate technology support to those groups with the greatest need?" The authors of this report do not claim to have the answers to this very complex problem.

  Rather, we hope to forefront that this issue still warrants considerable attention, and highlight the kind of support organizers need. (Please see *Findings Analysis* for more information.)

  While there are some great technology support services out there for nonprofits, many groups still experience a lack of adequate access, especially those groups outside the professionalized nonprofit sector. As one organizer puts it, "We used to talk about the digital divide. Now we talk about the organizational divide between groups with different levels of resources."

  As a sector, we need to develop new and innovative ways of approaching this ongoing issue. This may include strategizing about creative financial possibilities, multi-agency partnerships, and incentives that encourage providers to allocate resources toward this population.

NEXT STEPS:

UPCOMING PROJECTS & CONTINUED DISCUSSION

UPCOMING DOTORGANIZE PROJECTS

The previous section identifies strategies designed to help organizers better achieve the promise of new technologies.

In addition, dotOrganize aims to launch some specific projects in the coming year to address the needs outlined in this report. For a further description of these efforts, please see:

http://www.dotorganize.net

THE CONVERSATION CONTINUES ONLINE!

A Website that includes additional information and vehicles for community feedback and engagement accompanies this report.

The research and conclusions presented in this report are not meant to be exhaustive, but are intended to catalyze further discussion and participation. We are counting on the broader community to deepen the information and analysis presented.

We wholeheartedly welcome your comments, challenges, and insight! Please provide your feedback at:

http://www.dotorganize.net/report

TECHNICAL DEFINITIONS

Application: Software that employs the capabilities of a computer directly to a task that the user wishes to perform. This is contrasted with system software, which integrates a computer's various capabilities, but typically does not directly apply them in the performance of tasks that benefit the user.

Application Service Provider: A vendor who provides Web-based services to customers over the Internet. Through ASPs, the complexities and costs of software can be cut down. In addition, placing the onus on the ASP to maintain up-to-date services eliminates issues of upgrading.

Barcoding: A machine-readable code printed on a surface. Barcodes can be read by optical scanners called barcode readers, or scanned from an image by special software. Barcodes are widely used to implement Auto ID Data Capture (AIDC) systems that improve the speed and accuracy of computer data entry.

CRM: In the commercial sector, CRM stands for Customer Relationship Management. For the social change sector, the term Constituent Relationship Management is often used. CRM supports an organization to better manage and track their constituents through the introduction of reliable systems, processes, and procedures.

GIS Mapping: Geographical Information System (GIS) is a system for creating, storing, analyzing, and managing spatial data and associated attributes. In the strictest sense, it is a computer system capable of integrating, storing, editing, analyzing, sharing, and displaying geographically referenced information. For example, many organizers use GIS mapping as a canvassing tool to overlay census data on a map, providing block-by-block information about potential voters.

On-Demand Software: The term "on-demand" refers to a service that can rapidly respond to customers needs by providing ongoing feature enhancements to the online application, as opposed to issuing major software upgrades every couple of years that customers must install or repurchase. On-demand applications are accessed entirely online, and typically paid for via a subscription service.

Online: Information or applications accessible through the Internet.

Podcast: A podcast is an audio file delivered online via an RSS feed.

RSS (Really Simple Syndication): Developed by Netscape in 1999, RSS is a syndication format popular for aggregating updates to blogs, the latest news from Web sites, podcasts, and other media. RSS has also stood for "Rich Site Summary" and "RDF Site Summary."

SMS Blasts: Technology that enables users to send a single text messages to multiple recipients.

SMS/Text Messaging: A service that sends short messages (also known as text messages) between mobile phones, other handheld devices, and even landline telephones.

Web 2.0: The term "Web 2.0" is actually a marketing phrase popularized by O'Reilly Media. It is used to describe any number of emerging trends in Web-based technology and services, which generates a lot of disagreement about its exact meaning. O'Reilly used the term to indicate a second generation of services available on the Web allowing people to collaborate and share information

online. In contrast to the "first generation," Web 2.0 gives users an experience closer to desktop applications than to traditional static Web pages. Web 2.0 applications also move away from single-source publication and toward group participation in the creation of documents. Flickr, Writely, Del.icio.us, 43Things, YouTube, and Platial are considered typical examples of Web 2.0-style products.

Wiki: A type of Website or software that allows users to easily add, remove, or otherwise edit and change available content. This ease of interaction and operation makes a wiki an effective tool for collaborative authoring. The best-known example of this technology in action is Wikipedia, an online, collaborative encyclopedia.

APPENDICES

Analyses in this report are based on several data sets. The following report appendices are available online at: http://www.dotorganize.net/apps

- **List of Organizers Interviewed:** Participant list from interviews with 20 organizations focusing on organizational metrics, technological capacity and requirements, approaches to strategic communications, and database needs.
- **Survey Instruments and Complete Results:** The 34-question dotOrganize survey instrument and responses, including all open-ended comments.
- **Online Directory of Organizing Tools and Resources:** A dynamic and participatory online directory of tools and resources available to the organizing sector.