Digital Fundraising: A Tale of Two Systems

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Jeff Regen, VP of Membership Marketing & Development Services, WETA
Susannah Winslow, Membership Director, KLRU

August 11, 2016
How does your station think about digital fundraising - on your website and by email?

This...
It’s a nice supplement to other revenue streams
It can be managed like most legacy fundraising activities
It hasn’t proven it’s worth significant investment
It’s unpredictable and risky

Or this...
It has big upside potential for adding new members
It can cut fundraising costs
It doesn’t operate at all like legacy fundraising activities
It involves experimentation - but not much risk
What’s wrong with this picture?
*Membership ROI by Source: 2006-2014 (PBS study of station operating expenses vs. revenue)

For more information, please visit the Station Management Center
System membership investment by source: 2006-2014 (PBS study of station operating expenses, in millions)

For more information, please visit the Station Management Center
Stations getting double- and triple-digit online fundraising growth share 3 beliefs:

1. People who engage with the station digitally (e-mail subscribers, website visitors, PBS prospects) have invited frequent conversations - which requires constant testing of messages and offers.

2. Segmenting and targeting matter as much as with any channel.

3. The low cost and high ROI of digital experimenting make it fairly low-risk for new member and sustainer acquisition.
Let’s ask two PBS digital leaders 2 questions:

1. How does your station approach digital fundraising differently than your other fundraising activities?

2. How do you put this thinking into action – and measure the results?
Susannah Winslow, KLRU

Membership Director
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KLRU digital fundraising

How does your station approach digital fundraising differently than your other fundraising activities?

**KLRU has a 2 fold approach to digital fundraising:**

1. How do we incorporate digital into all of our existing fundraising activities?

2. How do we leverage the digital platform to be innovative in our fundraising?
KLRU digital fundraising

How do you put this thinking into action – and measure the results?

1) Incorporating digital into other fundraising activities

OMNI-CHANNEL Fundraising
What: a donor-centric approach to fundraising that engages your supporters across multiple channels (on-air, online, mail, etc.)
How: ensure content across all channels is consistent in both messaging and branding

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KLRU digital fundraising

How do you put this thinking into action – and measure the results?

Monthly eRenewals redesigned with consistent branding and messaging of Renewal mail piece. First year results:

- averaged **330% monthly increase in revenue** over the previous year’s email renewals
- averaged **188% monthly increase in response** over the previous year’s email renewals
- averaged **10% monthly increase in revenue** over the previous year’s mail renewals
- averaged **6% monthly increase in response** over the previous year’s mail renewals
KLRU digital fundraising

How do you put this thinking into action – and measure the results?

2) Leveraging the digital platform for fundraising innovation

Experiment with a digital first strategy around campaigns

What:
- Giving days
- Peer-2-Peer
- email marketing
- social media marketing

Why:
- Engage supporters where they already are
- Results driven adaptability
- Acquire new donors: Giving Days attract new donors, as does P2P

How:
- Segmentation
- A/B Testing
- Frequency
- Website Visibility
- Mobile Friendliness
- UTM codes

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KLRU digital fundraising

How do you put this thinking into action – and measure the results?

Shape the Future of #YourKLRU: 5 Day Online Giving Drive incorporating Giving Day strategy with P2P fundraising, email marketing & social media.

$87,200 raised online (almost 70% drive total)

- 60% via email
- 10% via P2P
- 5% via website visibility
- 4% via website lightbox
- 1% via social media
- Other 20% unknown
And how does WETA think about these 2 questions:

1. How does your station approach digital fundraising differently than your other fundraising activities?

2. How do you put this thinking into action – and measure the results?
WETA: Principles focused on producing the highest ROI guide our investment in digital

1. More is more (and “you’re annoying donors / audience less than you think”)
2. Make it easy
3. Start with simple messaging formula and test / innovate
4. Segmentation helps
5. Invest now: Passport (for TV) and the growth of digital
1. “More is more” - email

- More is more, but only send more if performance is strong
- CYE: 14 solicitation emails Nov 25-Dec 31 including:
  - 4 emails Dec 26-30
  - 3 emails on Dec 31
- FYE: 6 solicitation emails
- Classical FM drives: ~3-4 emails over 9 days
- TV drives: ~1-2 emails emphasizing match, goal and end-of-drive deadline
- CYE Results:
  - $165k from 14 emails; more than $60k from 3 emails on Dec. 31
  - Unsubscribe rate increased from 0.16% across FY16 to 0.21% in December, BUT 43% of all annual email revenue is in CYE campaign
“More is more” – website and lightboxes

- December #1
- August 2015 TV pledge: A/B test on weta.org in which 50% of visitors were shown a lightbox and other half were not

→75% increase in revenue, only 7% increase in bounce rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Conversion Rate</th>
<th>Initial Revenue</th>
<th>Bounce Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Lightbox</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
<td>$9,988</td>
<td>20.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lightbox</td>
<td>2.21%</td>
<td>$17,500</td>
<td>22.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>+70.00%</td>
<td>+75.21%</td>
<td>+7.07%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“More is more” – Omnichannel approach

For major fundraising periods:

Ideally integrated messaging and timing across emails, website, mail, telemarketing, TV and radio, other digital channels, events, etc. – or whatever is realistic / possible
2. “Make it easy”

- Clean, simple, straightforward donation form – among highest ROI changes to make
  - Moving soon to combined one-time / sustainer form that promotes EFT
- Strong website promotion – prominent donate button(s), “support us” options
- Lightbox during CYE, FYE and pledge drives
3. Start with simple messaging...

- Straight-forward, institutional
- Goal
- Deadline / urgency
- Matches are great

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Jeff, we need your help—urgently.

We are in the last few hours of our fiscal year, but even with a strong showing from our loyal supporters the past few days we are still running short of our goal. Fortunately, if we receive your gift before the clock strikes midnight tonight, it will still be matched dollar for dollar, up to $40,000, from a group of generous WETA supporters.

We need each and every member to step up right now so that we can raise the last $12,972 towards our match goal and meet our fiscal year-end budget. Please make your favorite programs possible in the months ahead with a generous donation today and have your gift DOUBLED.

The amount we raise will help determine our programming plans for the year ahead. We are counting on the commitment of our closest friends to help us raise these remaining funds.

If you've already made your fiscal year-end contribution, thank you. But if you haven't, please extend your commitment to WETA by making your fiscal year-end gift right now.

On behalf of all of us here at WETA, thank you for supporting your community broadcaster.

With thanks for your support.
...start with simple messaging...

For TV stations, Passport may be most effective solicitation for prospects and lapsed → Do lots of variants, re-sends and leverage new shows / features.

Subject: Jeff, your WETA Passport is now available on Roku

Dear Jeff,

I've got great news! WETA Passport—an on-demand service that allows you to watch your favorite shows whenever and wherever you want—is now available on Roku, as well as your computer, tablet, smartphone, Apple TV and Fire TV!

Available to current members, WETA Passport is an on-demand video service that allows you to watch your favorite shows whenever and wherever you want streaming straight to your Roku. Renew now, and get access to our massive catalog of your favorite national and local public television shows.

With WETA Passport, our newest member benefit, you can see past episodes of your MASTERPIECE favorites from Endeavour and Inspector Lewis to Downton Abbey and Grantchester. You can see hundreds of hours of The Great British Baking Show, Antiques Roadshow, The Greeks, Supernature, NOVA and so many more. Through WETA Passport, you'll have access to stream tens of thousands of hours of your favorite national and local public television shows straight to your Roku and other devices.

So please, take two minutes to renew your WETA membership right now as a monthly sustainer. As a WETA sustainer, there's no need for renewal reminders and your membership will always be current. Your benefits include our monthly WETA Magazine, special offers and ticket opportunities throughout the year, and of course, ongoing access to WETA Passport.

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...and test / experiment

- “Out of wrapper” test (actually a “try”)
- Best performing fundraising email ever (and 1 of 3 emails on Dec. 31)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject Line</th>
<th>Open Rate</th>
<th>$ Raised (One-Time)</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/31/15</td>
<td>FWD: Update? Tonight’s deadline and matching gift</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>$27,045</td>
<td>.18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Test lightboxes and other channels, too

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Conversion Rate</th>
<th>Immediate Revenue</th>
<th># of Gifts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/16-12/23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>8.92%</td>
<td>$32,172</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual</td>
<td>6.08%</td>
<td>$17,714</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

→ Rolled out with traditional lightbox Dec. 26-31

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Some tests don’t work – but good learnings!

• Election-focused email test → Roll-out as focus in email, mail, other channels?
• Email bombed (only 11 gifts and <$1k) → No roll-out!

Dear Jeff,

In a year of so much election noise, unbiased, in-depth reporting and thoughtful commentary from multiple perspectives is more important than ever.

WETA produces the PBS NewsHour and Washington Week With Gwen Ifill for our community and our country. And with extensive coverage planned for the Republican and Democratic National Conventions over the next three weeks, we are facing steep election-year increases in expenses.

To continue delivering the best election coverage and quality programming available, please help WETA raise $20,000 by midnight Thursday.

In our current polarized political and media environment, we believe it’s vital to discuss the impact of this critical election with an understanding of its historical context, and to provide a forum for civil discourse around the many complex issues in this election cycle.

If you care as much about quality election coverage as I do, please donate now to help WETA meet our $20,000 goal by midnight Thursday.
4. Segmentation helps

- Basic segmentation:
  - Active members
  - Lapsed members (sometimes combine with active)
  - Prospect

- Tweak copy by audience; track which offers work with each audience (e.g., Passport for prospect and lapsed)

- Advanced segmentation often not yet worth it for most

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Lapsed donor version

**Subject:** GET YOUR WETA PASSPORT — FREE AVAIL. ON ROKU

Dear Jeff,

I've got great news! WETA Passport—an on-demand service shows whenever and wherever you want—is now available tablet, smartphone, Apple TV and Fire TV!

Available to current members, WETA Passport is an on-demand video service that allows you to watch your favorite shows whenever and wherever you want streaming straight to your Roku. **Renew now, and get access to our massive catalog of your favorite national and local public television shows.**

With WETA Passport, our newest member benefit, you can see past episodes of your MASTERPIECE favorites from Endeavour and Inspector Lewis to Downton Abbey and Grantchester. You can see hundreds of hours of The Great British Baking Show, Antiques Roadshow, The Greeks, Supertwist, NOVA and so many more. Through WETA Passport, you'll have access to stream tens of thousands of hours of your favorite national and local public television shows straight to your Roku and other devices.

**Make your contribution of $5 or more per month, or a one-time gift of $80, and start enjoying WETA Passport right now!**

We are thrilled to be able to offer this great new member benefit. So don’t wait—explore all the best that public broadcasting has to offer by making a generous donation.

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Prospect version

**Subject:** Heather, your WETA Passport is now available on Roku

Dear Heather,

I've got great news! WETA Passport—an on-demand service shows whenever and wherever you want—is now available tablet, smartphone, Apple TV and Fire TV!

With WETA Passport, our newest member benefit, you can see past episodes of your MASTERPIECE favorites from Endeavour and Inspector Lewis to Downton Abbey and Grantchester. You can see hundreds of hours of The Great British Baking Show, Antiques Roadshow, The Greeks, Supertwist, NOVA and so many more. Through WETA Passport, you'll have access to stream tens of thousands of hours of your favorite national and local public television shows straight to your Roku and other devices.

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We are thrilled to be able to offer this great new member benefit. So don’t wait—explore all the best that public broadcasting has to offer by making a generous donation.
5. Invest now – Passport (for TV) and the growth of digital

- Why invest:
  - Digital is growing (unlike most other fundraising channels)
    - Digital % of pledge is growing
  - For TV: Passport has dramatically accelerated this growth (~4800 new and reactivated donors since 12/15/15, 59% sustainer) – most coming in online

- How invest:
  - Identify key obstacles and how to overcome them
  - Just start – don’t over-think it or over-invest
  - Re-use and re-send emails, lightboxes, tools that work
  - Risk is low!

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• How do leading fundraising stations differ from lagging stations?
• How does ROI for digital fundraising compare to other channels?
• How does station digital ROI compare to digital investment?
• What are the 5 obstacles to digital fundraising growth?
• What did a system-wide analysis reveal about trends in digital fundraising?

Coming soon from PBS
Speaker information

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