



B
E
N
C
H

MARKS 2017

M+R
Turn it up to 11

ONE FOR THE MONEY, TWO FOR THE SHOW, THREE TO GET READY...

The internet is raucous, and hectic, and noisy. Every day, nonprofits compete for attention with countless voices in an epic battle of the bands, on impossibly crowded stages ranging from web browsers to mobile devices to email inboxes to social media feeds.

If you want to be heard, you gotta get loud. So for this, our 11th Benchmarks Study, there was really only one choice: turn it up to 11.

This year's Benchmarks Study turns the volume way, WAY up. We've included more data from more supporter contacts in more media from more participating nonprofits in more sectors than ever before. Websites. Fundraising. Email. Advertising. Social media. More.

Our goal is to help you follow the beat that is driving results for nonprofits online. That means high notes like increasing audience sizes and growing online revenue. And it includes some numbers that might give you the blues, like lower email response rates. This is the background music playing behind every online engagement — and unless you understand it, you'll have a tough time breaking through.

We simply can't help you explore this mosh pit of metrics alone — so allow us to take a moment to applaud the 133 nonprofits who participated in this Study. They tackle the world's most critical crises and

inspire incredible change across a broad and diverse range of issues.

And as if saving the planet, serving humanity, and building a better future weren't enough, they also made time to generously share their results to help make the data in this Study as comprehensive and reliable as possible.

For those who help Benchmarks rock: we salute you.

Now, meet The Benchmarks Band:

Jonathan Benton, Theresa Bugeaud, and Sarah Vanderbilt: *Data and Keyboards*

Will Valverde: *Lyrics*

Liz Ertner and Amy Peyrot: *Backup Vocals*

Emily Giorgione and Laura Klavon: *Album Design, Stylists*

Bobby Burch and Michael King: *Engineers*

Sally Brzozowski, Karen Hopper, Sam Lichtman, Ben Page-Gil: *Soundcheck*

Lucy Midelfort: *Talent Management, Participant Outreach*

Madeline Stanionis: *Bandleader*

And a huge shout out to our partners at the Nonprofit Technology Network (NTEN) for supporting the Study, helping recruit participants, and working year-round to help nonprofits innovate and excel.

And thank you for the work you do, the causes you fight for, and the people you help. We hope this Benchmarks Study answers your burning questions and gives you the tools to go out and keep rockin'.

Ready?

Go, cat, go.

ABOUT M+R

M+R is 130 smart people who help nonprofits achieve real, lasting change. We mobilize supporters, raise money, and move the media, the public, and decision-makers. We only work with clients we believe in. We take risks. We work hard. We're leaders, we're organizers, and we don't stop until we win. Also, we like puns and dancing.

www.mrss.com

ABOUT NTEN: THE NONPROFIT TECHNOLOGY NETWORK

NTEN is a community transforming technology into social change. We aspire to a world where all nonprofit organizations skillfully and confidently use technology to meet community needs and fulfill their missions. We connect our members to each other, provide professional development opportunities, educate our constituency on issues of technology use in nonprofits, and spearhead groundbreaking research, advocacy, and education on technology issues affecting our entire community.

www.nten.org

The full Benchmarks Study is available to explore online and download for free at mrbenchmarks.com. For more information about the report, please contact M+R at benchmarks@mrss.com.

© 2017 M+R



SET LIST



THE SCORE: INSIGHTS + ANALYSIS

- 7 What's Going On: Key Findings
- 8 Paid in Full: Digital Ad Spending in 2016
- 12 Rumours: Who Really Sees You on Facebook
- 14 Born to Run: The Impact of the Election
- 15 Greatest Hits: Sector by Sector
 - 16 Cultural
 - 17 Education
 - 18 Environmental
 - 19 Health
 - 20 Hunger/Poverty
 - 21 International
 - 22 Public Media
 - 23 Rights
 - 24 Wildlife/Animal Welfare

MY AIM IS TRUE: THE DATA

- 27 The Blueprint: How to Use This Data
- 28 Fundraising
- 38 Email
 - 39 Overall Email Metrics
 - 43 Fundraising
 - 46 Advocacy
 - 48 Newsletter
- 50 Website
- 54 Social Media

AFTERMATH: APPENDIX AND LINER NOTES

- 63 Thriller: Benchmarks Study Methodology
- 64 Talking Book: Glossary
- 66 Who Are You: Participants
- 71 Bonus Track: Email Metrics Summary



**THE SCORE: INSIGHTS
+ ANALYSIS**

WHAT'S GOING ON: KEY FINDINGS

And you thought the beat slowed down

Power to the people

Get on up, get into it, get involved

— Public Enemy

It's not your imagination: things are speeding up.

The drumbeat of online marketing, advocacy, and fundraising gets faster and faster. Our supporters are hearing from nonprofits — and their peers, partners, competitors, colleagues, and frenemies — more and more often and in more and more places. Social media platforms that were novelties just a couple of years ago have taken center stage, and are now essential to reaching vast audiences.

Everywhere we turn, we see larger audiences and increased volume:

- Traffic to nonprofit websites grew by about 4% over 2015 totals — modest growth that nonetheless means millions of additional site visits.
- Nonprofit email lists grew by 10% in 2016, building on 16% growth the previous year.
- Email volume grew as well, with nonprofits sending 10% more messages per subscriber in 2016 than in 2015. On average, a subscriber could expect to receive 69 separate email messages from a single nonprofit in 2016.
- Nonprofit social media audiences also increased. On Facebook, 23% growth. On Twitter, 50% growth. And on Instagram, a whopping 101% growth, with nonprofits doubling their audiences in a single year.
- Nonprofits in our Study also invested more in digital ads, increasing ad spending (including paid search, display, and social media advertising) by 69%. [See page 8 for more on that.](#)

So nonprofits are working hard to make sure their message gets heard. But are supporters listening?

- Overall online revenue grew by 14% over 2015 totals, with monthly giving growing at a rate of 23%.
- Web conversion rate — the percentage of website visitors who completed a gift — was up by about 8%.
- Email accounted for 26% of all online revenue in 2016, but most *individual* email metrics went down. Open rates declined by 7% overall, for an average just under 15%.
- Response rates for advocacy messages declined by 17%, to 1.6%.
- For fundraising messages, the response rate was just 0.05% — a drop of 8% from 2015. That means that a nonprofit had to land 2,000 fundraising emails in inboxes in order to generate a single donation.
- For every 1,000 fundraising email messages delivered, nonprofits raised \$36.

In a broad sense, the overall trend is that nonprofits are reaching more people more frequently in more places, and in return they're seeing increases in revenue.

But the truth is that technology, tastes, and audiences change, and change is not uniform. For many nonprofits, online programs are relatively mature. They're essential, and still growing, but perhaps aren't seeing the dramatic advances they once did. These nonprofits might increasingly turn to new platforms and nuanced strategies — like digital advertising and website optimization — to make the most of their online programs.

But **all** nonprofits share one truth: ch-ch-changes. And the information in this Study will help you turn and face the strange.

All of the numbers and trends we just walked through are industry-wide averages. They include data from nonprofits of every size and issue area. If you really want to know how you measure up, you should look within your own sector. Key findings by sector [start on page 15](#) — and when looking at the charts, [pay special attention to your sector and group size](#).

And then, do your best to keep up with the accelerating rhythm. Find ways to make your online messaging — on your homepage, your Insta, your email, your ads — work together and harmonize. And, hardest of all, make the time to listen — to the data, to your supporters, to the never-ending drumbeat of our lives online.

PAID IN FULL: DIGITAL AD SPENDING IN 2016

I get good advice from the advertising world

— The Clash

You can't keep playing the same old tunes if you want to stay at the top of the charts. Your nonprofit needs to actively seek out new audiences and test different messages. For many nonprofits, digital advertising is the answer.

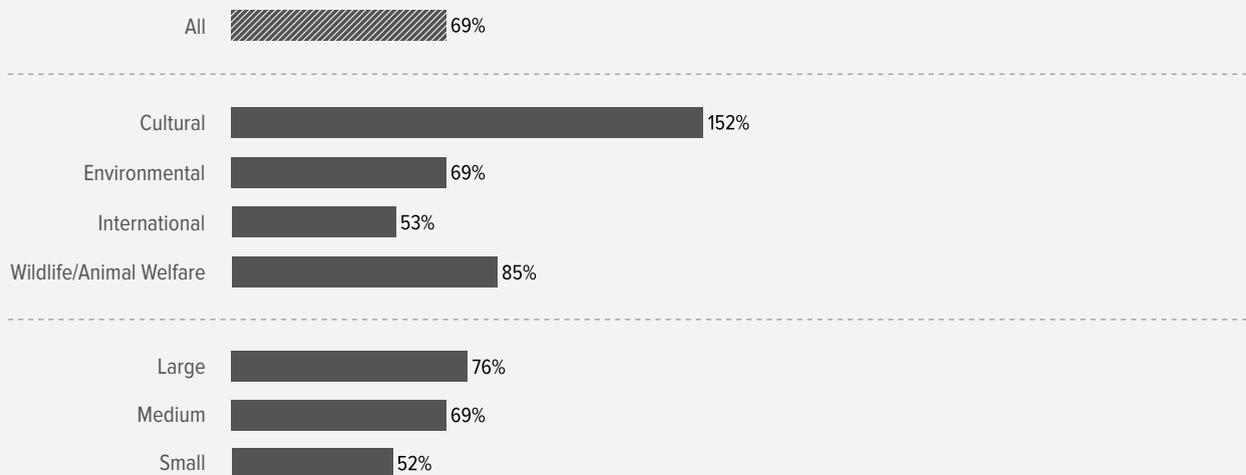
Out of the 133 participants in our Study, 100 reported that they spent money on digital ads in 2016. And overall, the dollars spent on digital ads grew by 69% — but there were wide differences between nonprofits in different sectors and of different sizes. **SEE FIGURE 1**

Participants in the Cultural sector more than doubled the dollars they spent on digital ads from the previous year, while International nonprofits increased ad spending by a more modest 53%.

We hear you asking “why?” — and the truth is the data we have simply can't answer questions like this. It could be a shift in budget priorities, a reaction to changes in ROI, or something else entirely. The only explanations we could give would be based on pure speculation — and we would do anything for love of data, but we won't do that.

FIGURE 1

% CHANGE 2015-2016 IN INVESTMENT IN DIGITAL ADVERTISING



Interestingly, Medium and Small nonprofits significantly increased their investment in digital ads. As paid promotion becomes an increasingly important piece of the online marketing puzzle, it's not just the giant national nonprofits getting in on the game.

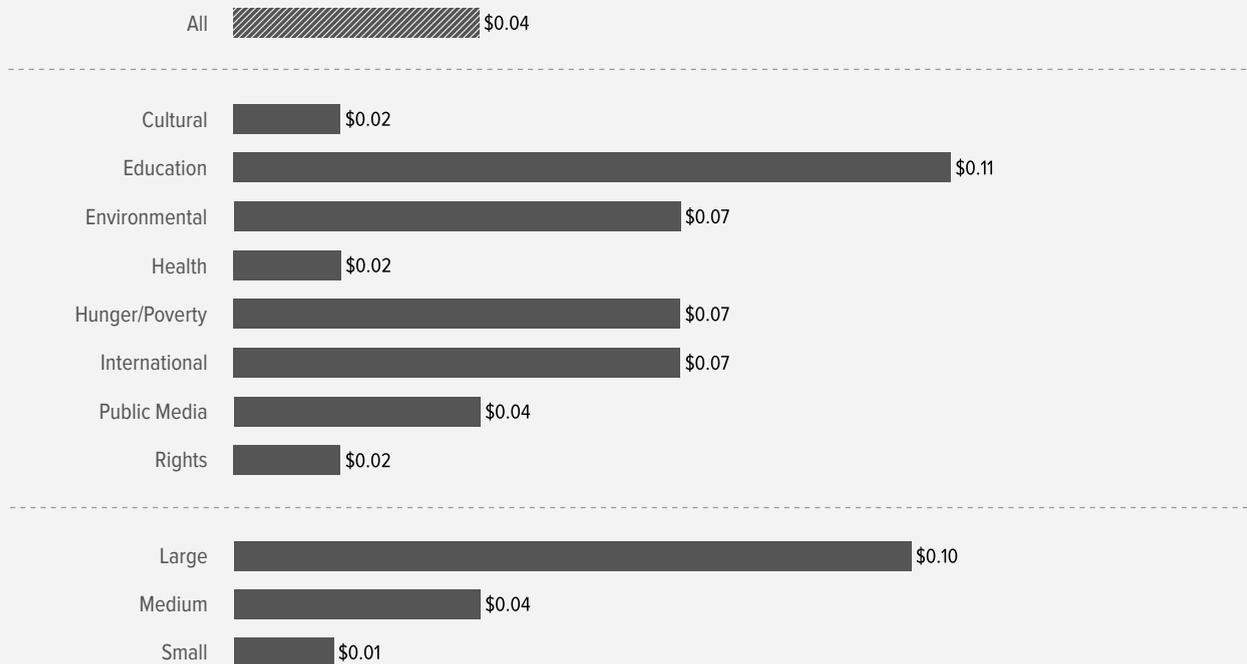
On the next page, there's a chart that shows how much nonprofits invested in digital ads relative to total online revenue. It's a bit tricky, and folks have been tripped up by this data in the past. **To make sure you won't get fooled again, we want to make this crystal clear: this chart does NOT describe return on investment. SEE FIGURE 2**

Once again, because we know it's tempting to think otherwise: this chart does NOT say that nonprofits are spending 4 cents to raise a dollar online. **Instead, it shows that for every dollar nonprofits raised online, they spent 4 cents on digital ads.** This is about how much money nonprofits are budgeting for ads, rather than ROI.

Let's put it in real terms. A nonprofit that raised \$1,000,000 online — from *all* sources combined — devoted, on average, \$40,000 on digital advertising last year. Education nonprofits in our Study invested the largest amount as a percentage of online revenue. An Education nonprofit with online revenue of \$1,000,000 would have spent \$110,000 on digital ads.

FIGURE 2

INVESTMENT IN DIGITAL ADVERTISING DIVIDED BY TOTAL ONLINE REVENUE



A nonprofit that saw online revenue of \$1m spent an average of \$40,000 on digital advertising.

Some of those ads might have had a positive ROI, some were simply for branding and had no attributable revenue (more on that in a moment). Find your closest peers in the chart above, and you'll have a ballpark sense of how much your nonprofit would need to spend on digital ads to keep up.

We know how much nonprofits spent on digital ads — now let's look at where that money went. We've broken out digital advertising budgets in two ways. First, we looked at the advertising goal: what the ads are meant to accomplish. Second, we looked at the platforms where nonprofits are paying to promote their message. **SEE FIGURE 3**

FIGURE 3

SHARE OF DIGITAL ADVERTISING BUDGET BY INVESTMENT TYPE

GOALS

New Donor Acquisition	46%
Branding	23%
Lead Generation	18%
Existing Supporter Conversion	14%

Nearly half of all digital advertising dollars were spent trying to acquire new donors, with an additional 14% seeking to convert existing supporters. In other words, 60% of ad spending was intended to drive traffic to online donation pages.

Another 18% of dollars spent were for lead generation — often, this means promoting petitions, interactive engagements (think quizzes or surveys), and other devices meant to get new supporters to opt in to email or provide their phone number.

The remainder — almost a quarter of total advertising spends — went to branding. This could be tied to educational efforts, promoting a special project, campaign, or exhibition, or simply raising awareness of an issue or nonprofit.

As for where these ads are shown: nearly half of ad dollars were spent on display ads (banners and the like); search accounted for about a third of spending; and nonprofits devoted about a quarter of advertising budgets to social media ads (including

PLATFORMS

Display Ads	45%
Search Ads	32%
Social Media Ads	23%

promoted posts and direct ad buys on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.).

How much to spend on digital ads, where to display those ads, and whether they are meant for donor conversion, list growth, visibility, or something else... these are tough questions that will depend on your specific needs and goals. But every nonprofit needs to keep seeking new audiences, new stages, and new songs to sing — and digital ads are increasingly a part of that repertoire.

RUMOURS: WHO REALLY SEES YOU ON FACEBOOK?

Digital witnesses

What's the point of even sleeping?

If I can't show it, if you can't see me

What's the point of doing anything?

— St. Vincent

If you're responsible for your nonprofit's social media, you probably know about how many Facebook fans you have. (If not, go check real quick. Are you back? Okay good let's keep going.)

Your fan count is the simplest way to know how many people see the messages, calls to action, photos, invitations, appeals, and news you post. Or it would be, if that number weren't hugely misleading.

You probably already know this song: when you post content on Facebook, not all of your fans see it. Facebook's ever-mysterious algorithms limit that reach, and by a lot more than many people realize.

On average, a nonprofit will reach just 8% of its fans with a post that isn't promoted.

We know. It hurts.

You can pay to increase that reach, of course, and that kind of paid promotion can be an effective part of your social media and digital advertising strategy.

But the truth is, resources are limited and nonprofits do not pay to boost the vast majority of their posts. Only about 3% of posts by our participants had paid reach.

But there's good news, too! A lot folks who *do* see your posts aren't your fans (yet). As their friends engage with your content — especially when they click “Share” — it pops up in their Newsfeeds.

In fact, 45% of Facebook users who saw a given post were not already fans of the nonprofit.

So most of the people who follow you don't see your Facebook posts, and about half the people who *do* see your posts don't follow you on Facebook. Nonprofits need a better metric than number of fans that more accurately reflects how many users you can expect to reach. So we came up with one.

Enter the Earned Reach Average (ERA): the average number of people who see a given post for every Facebook fan you have.

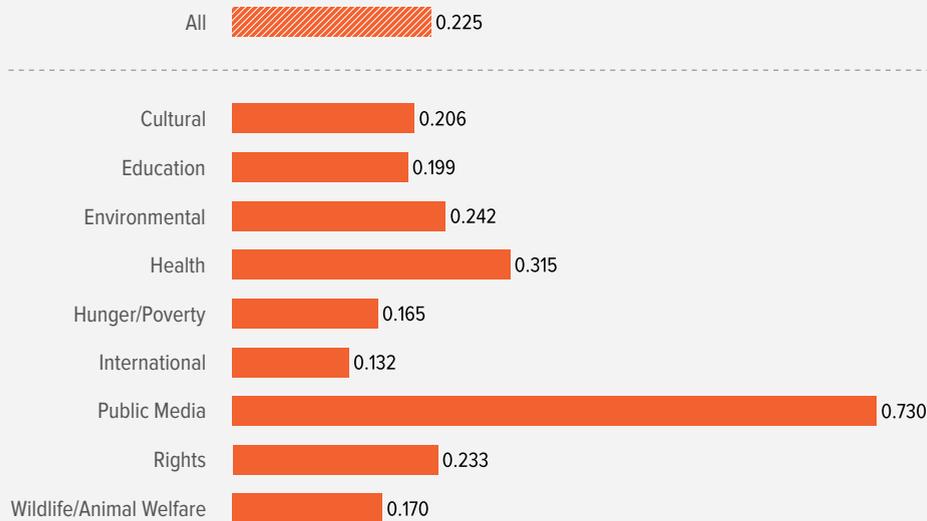
SEE FIGURE 4

Overall, the ERA for our participants is .225. For every 1,000 Facebook fans a nonprofit has, their next post will reach about 225 people. So if you're a completely average organization (we know you're not, 🔥) with 60,000 fans, a given post will be seen by about 13,500 people ($60 \times .225 = 13.5$).

It's worth noting that Public Media nonprofits are an outlier here, with an ERA of .730. There's no single explanation for this — it's likely a combination of the nature of their mission, a greater likelihood of posting trending content, or higher-quality engagement from fans (i.e. more Likes and Shares).

FIGURE 4

EARNED REACH AVERAGE (ERA)



And that may just be the most important lesson here. It's good to have fans, the more the merrier. But so much of your Facebook reach comes down to engagement, shares, and being seen by audiences beyond your existing fanbase. If you want to be seen on Facebook, the nature and quality of your content are just as important as the number of Likes you have.

BORN TO RUN: THE IMPACT OF THE ELECTION

*Like a small boat
On the ocean
Sending big waves
Into motion*

— Rachel Platten

One of the first questions we asked when we'd compiled our massive treasure trove of data from participants was: how did the long, intense, contentious, painful election that dominated 2016 affect nonprofit engagement — especially fundraising?

The question is not whether the election *results* had an impact — it's been widely reported that some nonprofits saw a major spike in giving after the election, and we've seen this impact in our own work.

What we are most interested in is whether groups that engaged in electoral activities — directly supporting candidates, pushing ballot measures, conducting voter registration and mobilization, that sort of thing — experienced different results during the months leading up to the election.

The basic hypothesis: a presidential election takes up so much of our collective attention that it crowds out everything else. Nonprofits that engage in electoral work will have an easier time connecting with supporters — they'll see fast growth and better results. By the same token, nonprofits that are

entirely apolitical might have a harder time attracting attention and, by extension, donations.

The idea sounds nice. It resonates. It seems intuitive. Our data says it's wrong.

Or more precisely, we were not able to detect a correlation between engaging in electoral work and differences in fundraising results in 2016.

Twenty-one participants in our Study (16% of the total) said they participated in electoral work, across a range of issues. They did not see better year-over-year revenue growth compared to the rest of our participants. Their email lists and web traffic didn't grow at a faster rate than non-electoral groups. They didn't record higher email open, click, or response rates, or donation page completion rates, or average gifts. Nothin'.

About the only statistically relevant difference our data showed was that nonprofits that participated in electoral work received a far larger percentage of total revenue from email (52%, compared to 26% for nonprofits that did not engage in electoral work).

Bottom line: while some nonprofits certainly saw big election-year swings and sudden swells of support, you should be skeptical about attributing your results to the influence of the lead-up to November 8.

With 2018 and 2020 coming up swiftly (if not as soon as we'd like), nonprofits who plan on doing electoral work shouldn't expect their jobs to get any easier. And apolitical nonprofits shouldn't give in to despair, even if they feel like they're in danger of being drowned out by election-year noise.

GREATEST HITS: SECTOR BY SECTOR

*Whether I'm right or whether I'm wrong
Whether I find a place in this world or never
belong
I gotta be me, I've gotta be me
What else can I be but what I am*

— Sammy Davis, Jr.

For most of this Study, we take the broadest possible view, combining data from our full participant pool and putting it right at the top of the charts. It's the best way to feel the pulse of the industry as a whole, and to track the underlying beat that drives the relationship between nonprofits and supporters online.

But it's not always the most useful way to measure your own program. Hip hop artists don't have to concern themselves with what's getting radio play on the country stations, and public media nonprofits aren't affected by global catastrophes in the same way as those that focus on international aid and development.

So, along with the topline numbers, we encourage you to identify the sector that most closely matches your nonprofit's mission and pay special attention to those results. Wherever possible, we've broken out key metrics by sector (as well as by email list) in our charts.*

Those sectors include Cultural, Education, Environmental, Health, Hunger/Poverty, International, Public Media, Rights, and Wildlife/Animal Welfare. The next few pages take a closer look at the greatest hits and deep cuts from each sector, highlighting the most unique and important results.

*If you don't see your sector represented on a chart, it's because we didn't have enough data from participants to produce a reliable average. Bummer! The best way to solve this issue is to sign up to participate in next year's Benchmarks Study — and encourage your peer organizations to do the same. Email us at benchmarks@mrss.com, or visit mrbenchmarks.com to learn more.

SECTOR SPOTLIGHT: CULTURAL

*Watch me clinging to the beat
I had to fight to make it mine*

— Culture Club

The numbers that matter most to you will depend on your nonprofit's goals, resources, challenges, and your role within your organization. This section includes the metrics in which Cultural nonprofits saw substantially different performance than their peers, but we encourage you to review the full set of charts.

- Monthly giving accounted for just 2% of the total revenue for this sector, well below the industry average of 16%.
-
- ### Cultural Sector Participants
- Brooklyn Public Library
 - Central Park Conservancy
 - Free Arts for Abused Children of Arizona
 - Friends of the Smithsonian
 - Historic Grant Avenue
 - MASSCreative
 - National Museum of the American Indian
 - National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Email list size increased by 21% for Cultural nonprofits, twice the 10% average among nonprofits overall.
 - This growth was supported in part by a 2.7% website visitor email signup rate. Cultural nonprofits were the only sector to perform measurably better than the overall 1.1% signup rate.
 - Cultural nonprofits had the largest Twitter and Instagram audiences relative to email list size. For every 1,000 email subscribers, Cultural nonprofits had 438 Twitter followers (overall average: 141) and 69 Instagram followers (overall average: 39).
 - Cultural nonprofits increased their digital ad spend by 152% over 2015 totals.
 - On the fundraising side, Cultural nonprofits experienced the best email response rate of any sector: 0.09% compared to the 0.05% overall average.

SECTOR SPOTLIGHT: EDUCATION

If you didn't go back to school this year

You're really not groovy

— Otis Redding

The numbers that matter most to you will depend on your nonprofit's goals, resources, challenges, and your role within your organization. This section includes the metrics in which Education nonprofits saw substantially different performance than their peers, but we encourage you to review the full set of charts.

- Email accounted for just 8% of online revenue for nonprofits in the Education sector, compared to the overall average of 26%.
- Education nonprofits had by far the greatest growth in the number of gifts: a 33% increase over 2015 totals.
- Overall, nonprofits in our Study received \$1.19 in revenue per website visitor. Education nonprofits fell short of this total, raising just \$0.46 per website visitor.
- Education nonprofits invested the largest budget in digital advertising relative to overall online revenue. For every dollar raised online from any source, Education orgs spent 11 cents on digital ads. For more on digital ad budgets (and why this is NOT a measure of return-on-investment), [see page 8](#).

Education Sector Participants

50CAN

Afterschool Alliance

America's Promise Alliance

College Possible

Educators for Excellence

Perkins School for the Blind

SECTOR SPOTLIGHT: ENVIRONMENTAL

*Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you got
'til it's gone*

— Joni Mitchell

The numbers that matter most to you will depend on your nonprofit's goals, resources, challenges, and your role within your organization. This section includes the metrics in which Environmental nonprofits saw substantially different performance than their peers, but we encourage you to review the full set of charts.

- Environmental nonprofits sent more emails than those in any other sector: 86 messages per subscriber, compared to 69 messages for nonprofits overall.
- They sent the most fundraising messages in 2016 (35, compared to the overall average of 24), and the most advocacy messages (26, compared to 20 average).
- Overall online revenue grew by 15% from 2015 for Environmental nonprofits. This was driven by an increase in one-time giving of 14%, and a larger increase in monthly giving of 24%.
- Environmental nonprofits had one of the lowest web conversion rates in our Study. Just 0.8% of website visitors completed a gift – but this number represented 35.6% growth, the fastest growth of any sector.

Environmental Sector Participants

Alliance for the Great Lakes
Australian Conservation Foundation
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Conservation Colorado
Conservation International
Earthjustice
EcoViva
Environmental Working Group
Food & Water Watch
Friends of the Earth
Galapagos Conservancy
Gulf Restoration Network
League of Conservation Voters
Michigan League of Conservation Voters
National Audubon Society
National Geographic Society
National Parks Conservation Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nature Conservancy of Canada
New York League of Conservation Voters
Oceana
Oil Change International
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Rainforest Action Network
Sierra Club
Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation
The Nature Conservancy
The Wilderness Society
TransForm
Union of Concerned Scientists
Washington Trails Association
Waterkeeper Alliance

SECTOR SPOTLIGHT: HEALTH

I hate to see it all hurt so bad

But maybe I wouldn't have worked this hard

If you were healthy and it weren't so bad

— Drake

The numbers that matter most to you will depend on your nonprofit's goals, resources, challenges, and your role within your organization. This section includes the metrics in which Health nonprofits saw substantially different performance than their peers, but we encourage you to review the full set of charts.

- Health nonprofits were the only sector to end 2016 with smaller email lists than they began. List size shrank by 4%.
- The decrease in list size was sparked by unusually high churn (21.6%) and the highest email unsubscribe rate in our Study (0.26%, compared to the overall average of 0.16%).
- Health nonprofits also had the lowest email volume. They sent 1.5 messages per subscriber per month, compared to the 5.0 messages per subscriber per month overall average.
- Health nonprofits raised just 3% of online revenue via email; the overall average was 26% of revenue from email.
- Health nonprofits also had the lowest share of revenue from monthly giving. Sustainer giving accounted for just 1% of all online revenue, despite an unusually high average monthly gift of \$41.

- Health nonprofits received \$3.66 per website visitor. This was the highest of any sector, driven in part by a web visitor conversion rate of 2.5%—double the overall average.

Health Sector Participants

American Cancer Society

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

American Heart Association

American Lung Association

Boston Children's Hospital

Canuck Place Children's Hospice

Center for Science in the Public Interest

ChangeLab Solutions

Children's Hospital Los Angeles

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE)

Free to Breathe

Health in Harmony

Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (Advocacy)

National Jewish Health

National Kidney Foundation

Parkinson Canada

St. Baldrick's Foundation

SECTOR SPOTLIGHT: HUNGER/POVERTY

Everybody needs a place to rest

Everybody wants to have a home

Don't make no difference what nobody says

Ain't nobody like to be alone

— Bruce Springsteen

The numbers that matter most to you will depend on your nonprofit's goals, resources, challenges, and your role within your organization. This section includes the metrics in which Hunger/Poverty nonprofits saw substantially different performance than their peers, but we encourage you to review the full set of charts.

- Nonprofits in the Hunger/Poverty sector experienced below-average fundraising email response rates: 0.04% compared to the overall average of 0.05%.
- Low response rates were largely connected to a particularly low email click-through rate of just 0.26% (the overall average was 0.38%).
- Donation page completion rate for this sector was high, 22% compared to the overall average of 17%. So while supporters who clicked on a fundraising message were more likely to give, email recipients were less likely to click through in the first place, leading to a lower response rate.
- Hunger/Poverty nonprofits experienced rapid growth in revenue from monthly giving, which increased by 37% over 2015 totals.

- One-time giving for this sector grew by just 2%, though online revenue grew by 12% overall.

Hunger/Poverty Sector Participants

AARP Foundation

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

CFED

Covenant House International

Feeding America

SeaShare

SECTOR SPOTLIGHT: INTERNATIONAL

*How can you just leave me standing
Alone in a world that's so cold?*

— Prince

The numbers that matter most to you will depend on your nonprofit's goals, resources, challenges, and your role within your organization. This section includes the metrics in which International nonprofits saw substantially different performance than their peers, but we encourage you to review the full set of charts.

- Online revenue for International nonprofits declined by 12% from 2015 totals (with the number of gifts down by 7%).
- The decline in revenue followed 45% growth in the previous year. Giving to International nonprofits is often driven by high-profile humanitarian crises, which can create substantial year-over-year volatility in revenue.
- Revenue from one-time giving for this sector dropped by 18% from 2015, while monthly giving increased by 20%.
- International nonprofits had the lowest email open rate of any sector: 10%, compared to the overall average of 15%.
- Advocacy email metrics were also on the low end among Study participants. Advocacy messaging from International nonprofits had click-through

rates of just 1.0% (compared to 1.9% among all participants), completion rates of just 64%, and response rates of just 0.6% (compared to the overall average of 1.6%).

International Sector Participants

American Red Cross
Bread for the World
CARE USA
CMMB
Concern Worldwide, US
FINCA International, Inc.
International Medical Corps
Ipas
Mercy Corps
Operation Smile
Oxfam America
Pathfinder International
Project HOPE
Results for Development
UNHCR Canada
USA for UNHCR
World Bicycle Relief
World Food Program USA

SECTOR SPOTLIGHT: PUBLIC MEDIA

*Radio is a sound salvation
Radio is cleaning up the nation*

— Elvis Costello

The numbers that matter most to you will depend on your nonprofit's goals, resources, challenges, and your role within your organization. This section includes the metrics in which Public Media nonprofits saw substantially different performance than their peers, but we encourage you to review the full set of charts.

- Public Media organizations generated 31% of their online revenue from monthly giving, nearly double the overall average of 16% .
- Web visitors per month to Public Media nonprofits grew by 16.3%, far beyond the overall trend of 3.6% growth.
- And the hits keep coming. Public Media organizations also had the highest Facebook Earned Reach Average by far. An average post for Public Media nonprofits received .730 views per Facebook fan, more than double the next-closest sector, and triple the average of .225 overall. [See page 12](#) for more on how we calculate ERA, and why this metric matters.

NOTE: The Public Media sector comprises the smallest sample size in our Study. We only include sector-specific numbers when we have enough underlying data to produce reliable averages, which

means Public Media breakouts are not available for many of our charts.

Public Media nonprofits reading this: you can help. Join next year's Benchmarks Study (email us at benchmarks@mrss.com) to embiggen our sample size! The more Public Media participation pledges we get now, the sooner we can stop this recruitment drive. Thank you!

Public Media Sector Participants

KQED

Louisville Public Media

New England Public Radio

St. Louis Public Radio

SECTOR SPOTLIGHT: RIGHTS

Get up, stand up, stand up for your rights

Get up, stand up, don't give up the fight

— Bob Marley

The numbers that matter most to you will depend on your nonprofit's goals, resources, challenges, and your role within your organization. This section includes the metrics in which Rights nonprofits saw substantially different performance than their peers, but we encourage you to review the full set of charts.

- Rights nonprofits (along with the Cultural sector) experienced the highest rate of email list growth, at 21%.
- They also experienced the highest growth in online revenue at 35%, building on 44% growth in 2015.
- Revenue from monthly giving was up a considerable 51% for Rights groups — and one-time revenue was up by (an also considerable) 23%.
- Email accounted for 44% of all online revenue for Rights nonprofits in 2016, compared to an overall average of 26%. However, the 12% growth in email revenue from the previous year was a bit below the overall average.
- Rights groups generated the lowest revenue per thousand emails delivered: \$15. On the bright side,

this number grew faster than other sectors last year, and was up 20% from 2015 levels.

- Web visits per month were down by 22% for Rights groups in 2016, in stark contrast to the 3.6% increase in visits for nonprofits overall.

Rights Sector Participants

All Out

Communications Workers of America

GLAD

Innocence Project

International Center for Research on Women

Jobs with Justice

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

National Partnership for Women & Families

National Women's Law Center

Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Planned Parenthood Action Fund

Population Connection

Presente.org

SECTOR SPOTLIGHT: WILDLIFE/ANIMAL WELFARE

*I'm an animal, I'm an animal
I'm an animal with good reason in mind*

— Sly and the Family Stone

The numbers that matter most to you will depend on your nonprofit's goals, resources, challenges, and your role within your organization. This section includes the metrics in which Wildlife/Animal Welfare nonprofits saw substantially different performance than their peers, but we encourage you to review the full set of charts.

- Wildlife/Animal Welfare nonprofits experienced just 5% email revenue growth in 2016, lower than all other sectors. Overall revenue growth was slightly above the overall average at 16%.
- Despite lower-than-average growth, email still accounted for 42% of all online revenue for Wildlife/Animal Welfare nonprofits, well above the 26% overall average.
- Wildlife/Animal Welfare nonprofits generated \$32 per thousand emails delivered, a 25% decline from 2015.
- Wildlife/Animal Welfare nonprofits had Facebook fan bases that were roughly the same size as their email lists. Nonprofits in this sector had 976 Facebook fans for every 1,000 email subscribers, compared to the 428 fans per 1,000 subscribers average overall.

- Wildlife/Animal Welfare organizations are the most prolific social communicators. They communicate more frequently on Facebook and Twitter than all other sectors: 1.7 Facebook posts per day (compared to 1.4 overall), and 5.8 tweets per day (compared to 3.7 overall).

Wildlife/Animal Welfare Sector Participants

British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA)

Best Friends Animal Society

Defenders of Wildlife

Endangered Species Coalition

Humane Society Legislative Fund

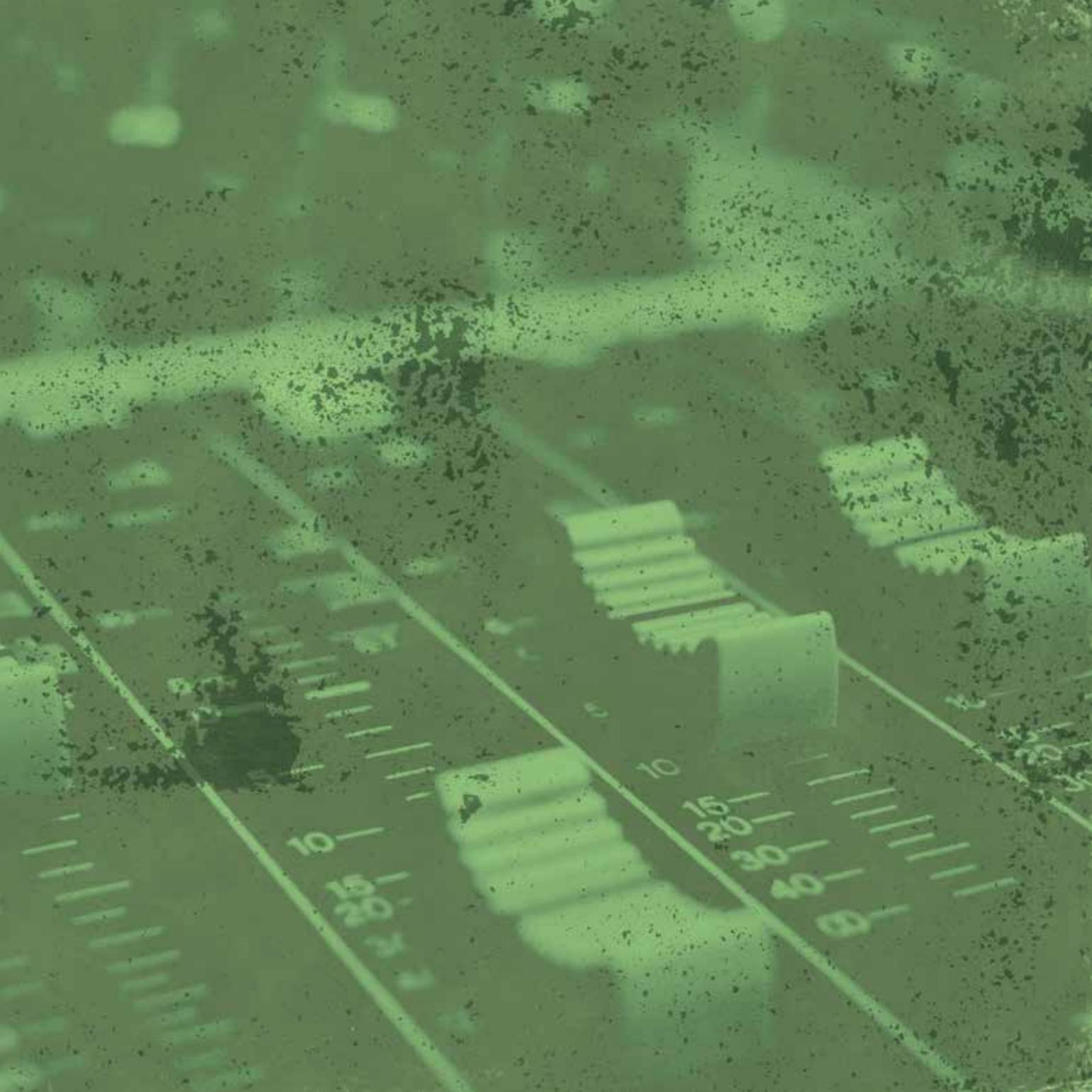
International Fund for Animal Welfare

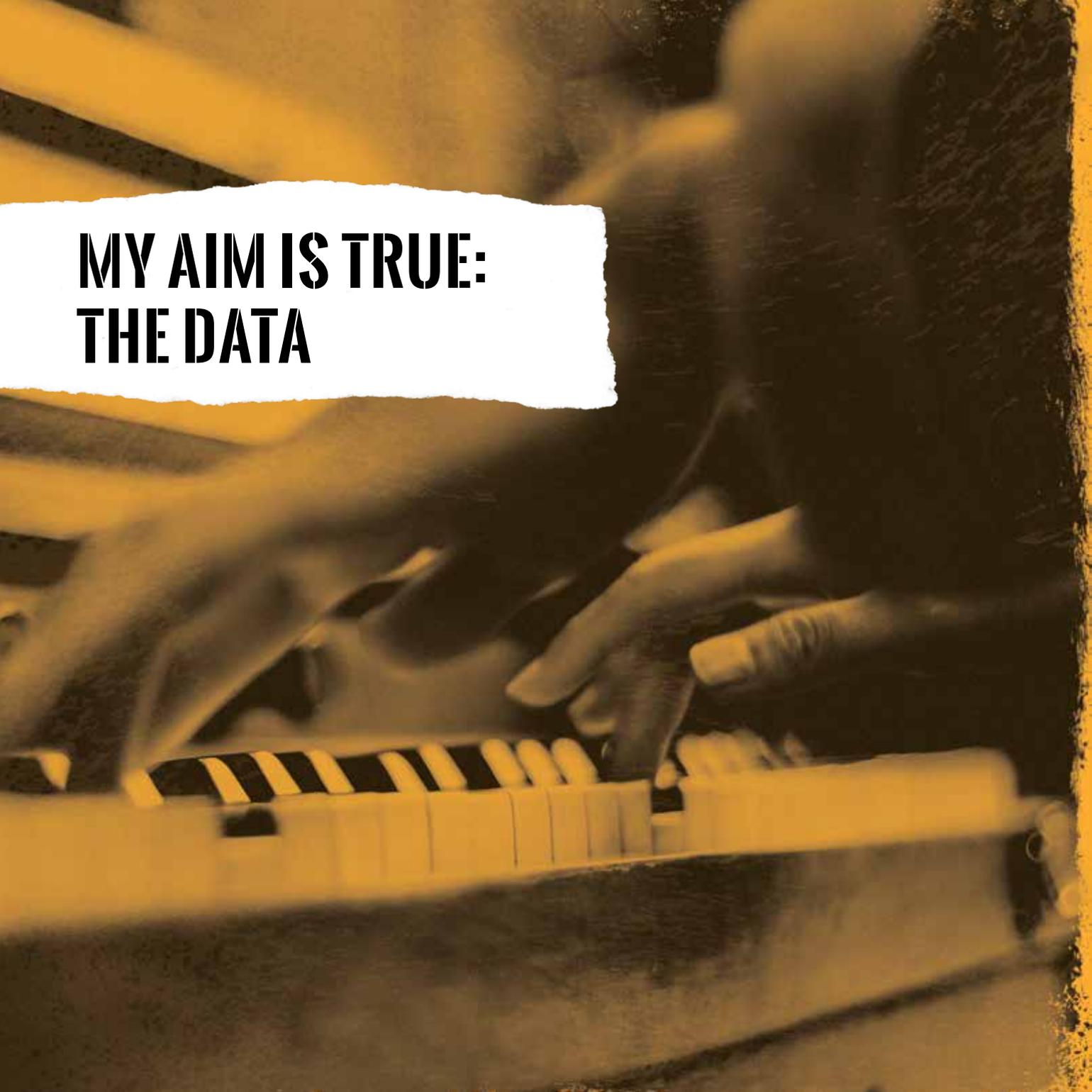
Morris Animal Foundation

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

The Humane Society of the United States

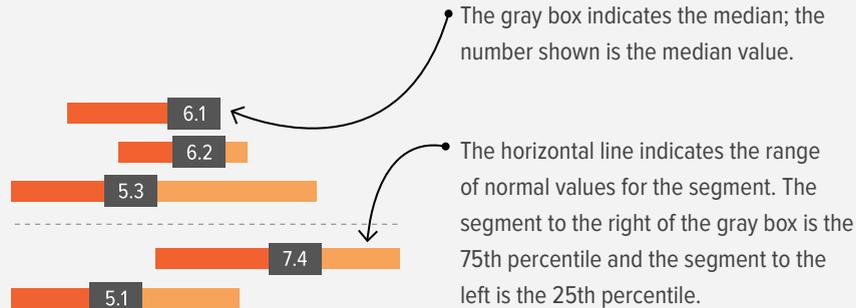
Wildlife Conservation Society



A close-up, low-angle shot of hands typing on a typewriter keyboard. The lighting is warm and golden, creating a vintage atmosphere. The focus is on the keys and the fingers. A white, torn-paper graphic overlay is positioned in the upper left quadrant, containing the text "MY AIM IS TRUE: THE DATA" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

**MY AIM IS TRUE:
THE DATA**

HOW TO READ THE CHARTS



THE BLUEPRINT: HOW TO USE THIS DATA

Look out honey, 'cause I'm using technology

— Iggy Pop

In case it's not clear yet, you should know: we love numbers. One number we are especially fond of is 133 — that's how many wonderful, rockin', totally groovy nonprofits contributed data to this year's Benchmarks Study.

This is the biggest and most diverse panel of participants we've ever included in Benchmarks, which means we have the deepest dataset ever for email fundraising and advocacy, web traffic, social media, paid advertising, and more.

Even better, this supergroup of nonprofit participants allowed us to break out our key metrics by sector and list size.

Results and trends can vary widely based on sector and size — keep that in mind as you review the

findings, and pay special attention to the numbers that match your closest peers. If you happened to skip past it, you can find key findings for each sector [beginning on page 15](#).

Not sure where you fit in? [See page 63](#) for details on methodology, including size breakdowns, and [page 66](#) for a complete list of participants by sector.

As you explore the data in this Study, you'll likely find some places where your nonprofit's results exceed the averages, and some where they fall short. Don't freak out. Comparing your results to your peers is a great way to identify opportunities to grow and experiment — but the health of your program isn't determined by any single data point.

One final note before we hit the charts: do not compare the data included in this year's Benchmarks Study with prior editions. Because our pool of participants changes year to year (getting bigger and better and more splendid each time), the underlying data is not comparable. And in any case, we've collected 2015 and 2016 data from this year's participants, and have included year-over-year comparisons wherever possible.

And when you ask them, “How much should we give?”

Ooh, they only answer More! more! more! y’all

— Creedence Clearwater Revival

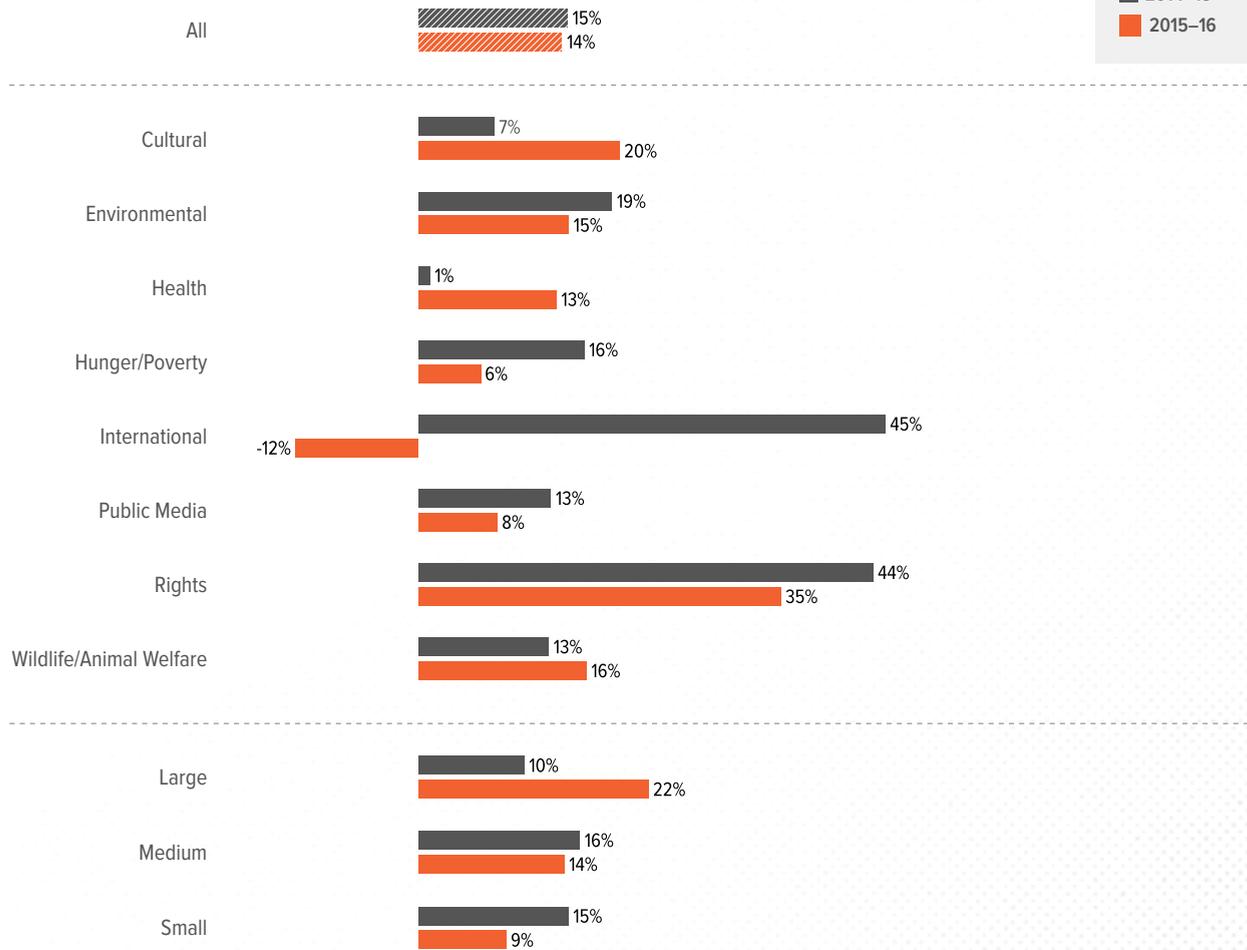
FUNDRAISING

KEY NOTES + MAJOR FINDINGS

- 1. Overall online revenue increased by 14% in 2016**, similar to the 15% growth participants measured in 2015. International nonprofits composed the only sector to see a drop in online revenue in 2016 — a year-over-year decline of 12% (for more on this, see the International sector spotlight on [page 21](#)).
- 2. Revenue from monthly giving grew by 23%**, compared to 13% growth for one-time giving. Monthly revenue growth outpaced the growth in one-time gift revenue for every sector except Public Media, which saw a decline in monthly revenue. **Monthly giving accounted for 16% of all online revenue in 2016.**
- 3. Email messaging accounted for 26% of all online revenue.** The 15% increase in email revenue closely tracked the 14% growth in online revenue overall.
- 4. The average revenue raised per 1,000 fundraising messages delivered was \$36.** This represents a modest (2.6%) decline from 2015 — but the relatively stable overall number obscures substantial variation between sectors. Rights nonprofits saw a 20% increase in this metric, while the Wildlife/Animal Welfare sector experienced a 25% decrease. As always, pay special attention to groups of your size and in your sector when reviewing the charts.

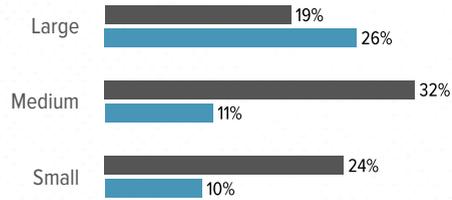
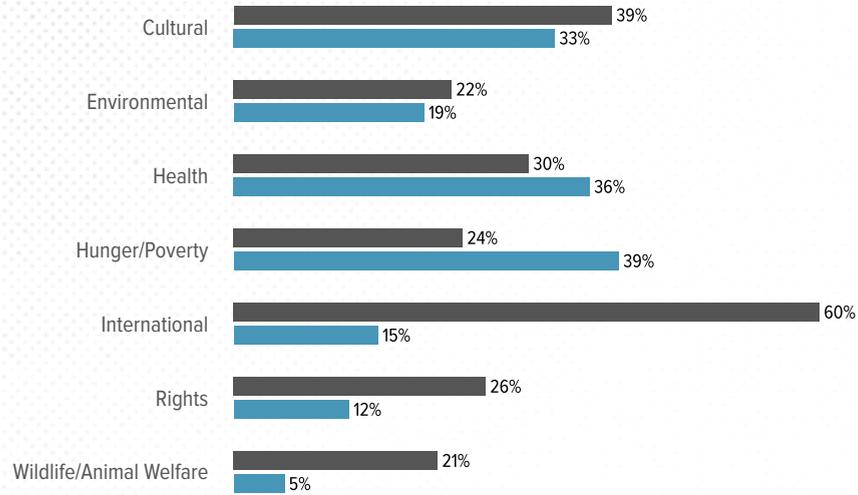
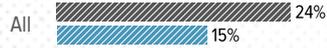
CHANGE IN ONLINE REVENUE

■ 2014–15
■ 2015–16



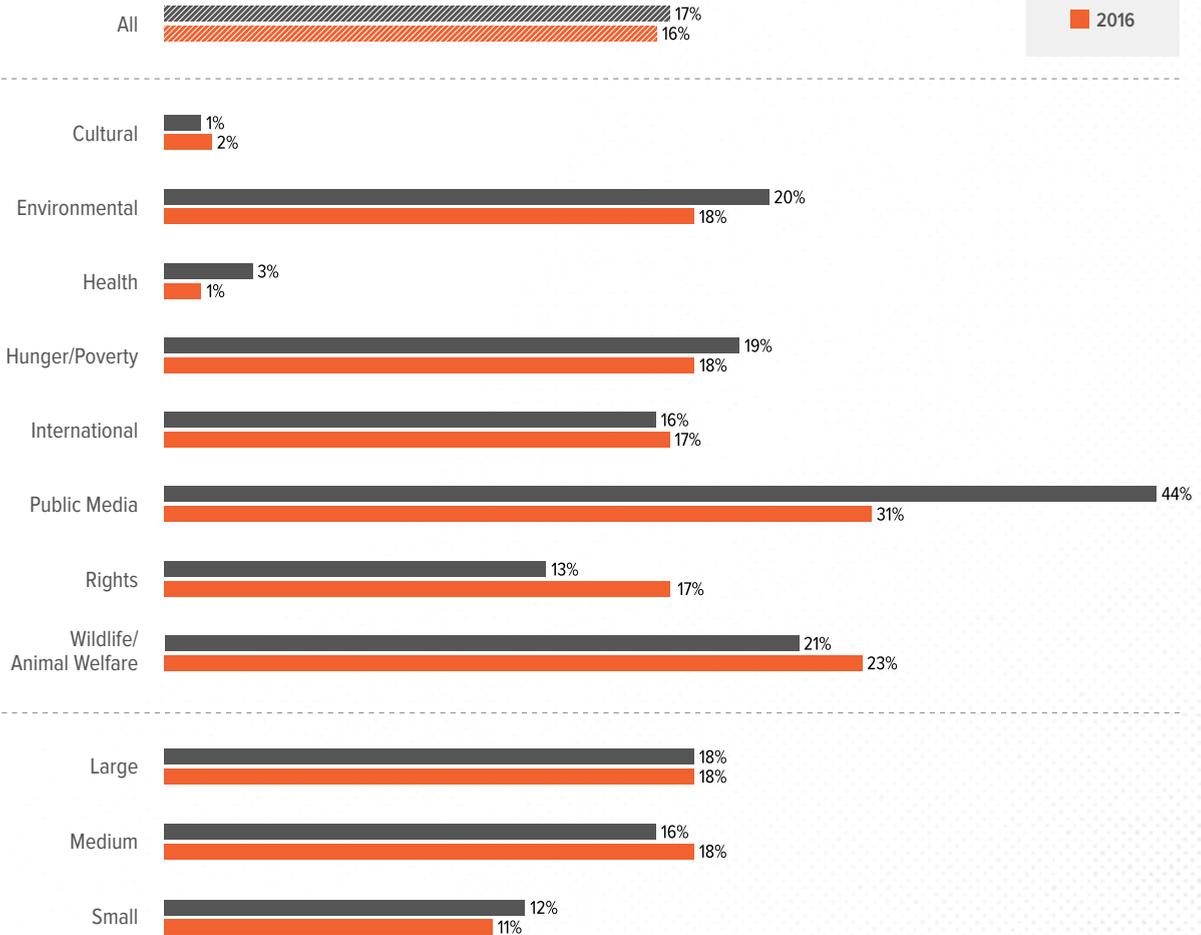
CHANGE IN EMAIL REVENUE

■ 2014-15
■ 2015-16

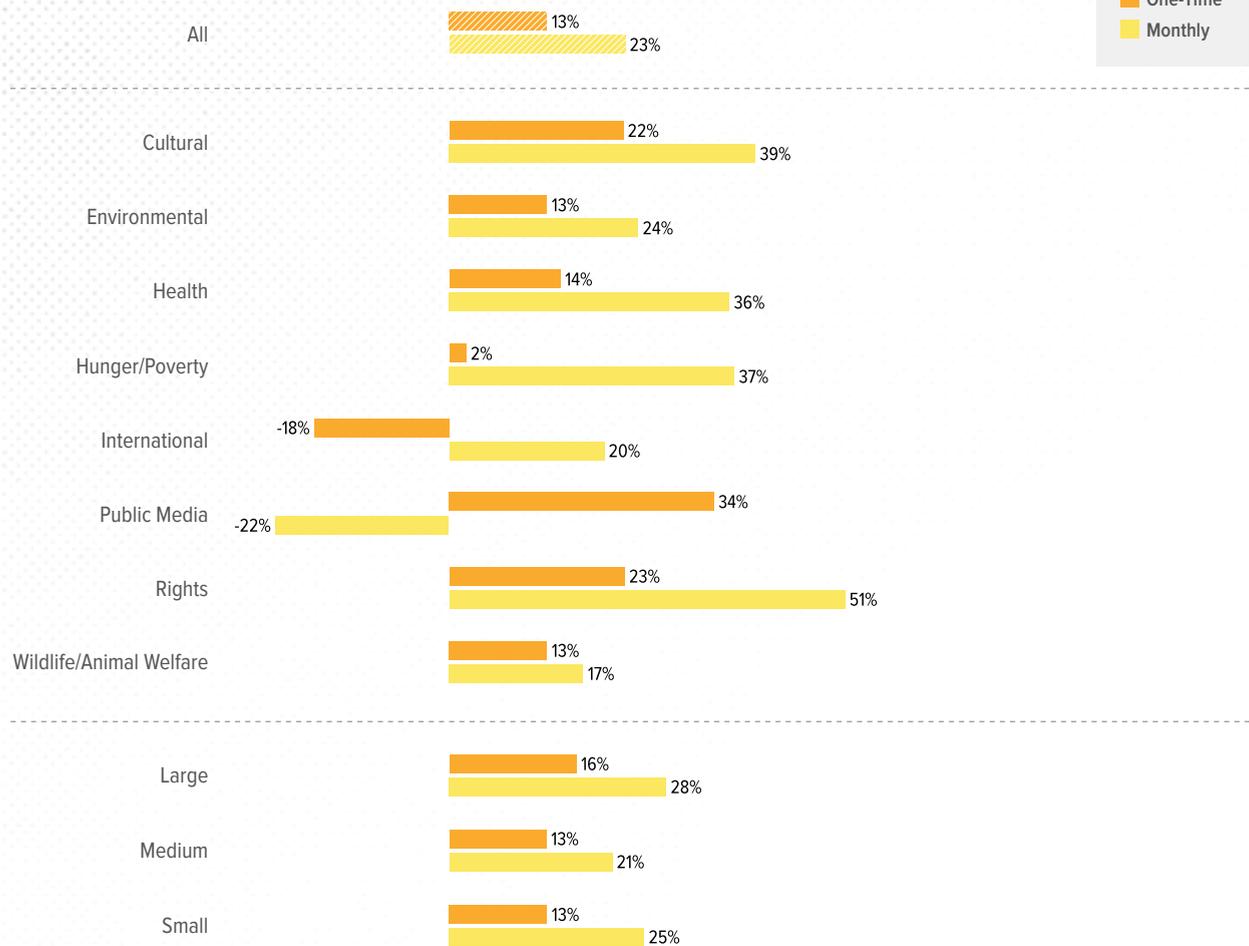


MONTHLY GIVING AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ONLINE REVENUE

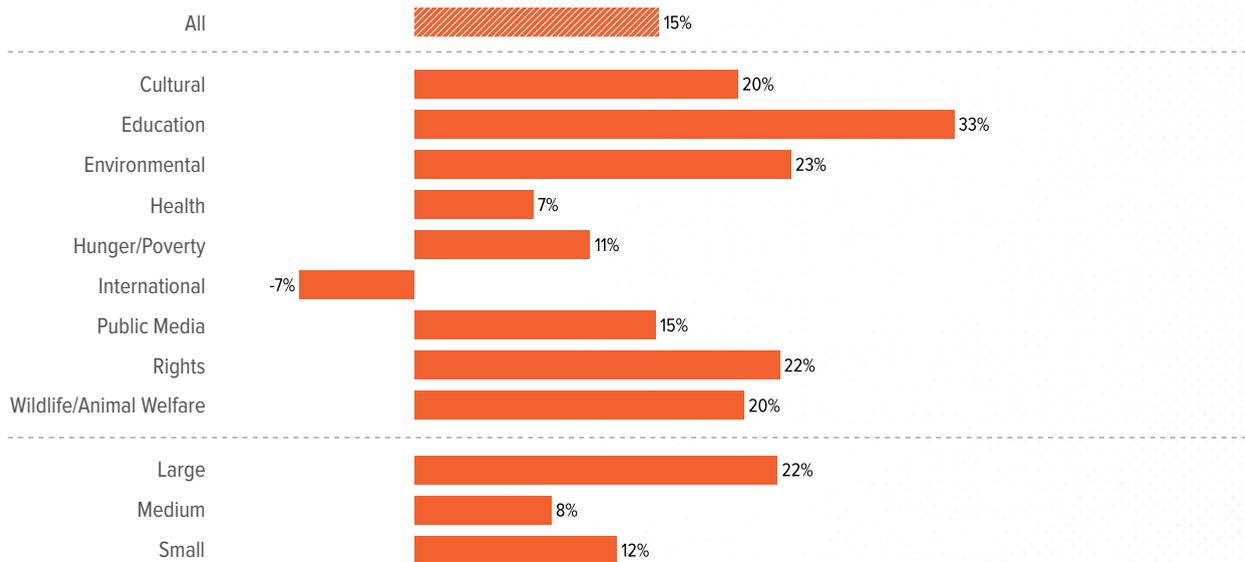
■ 2015
■ 2016



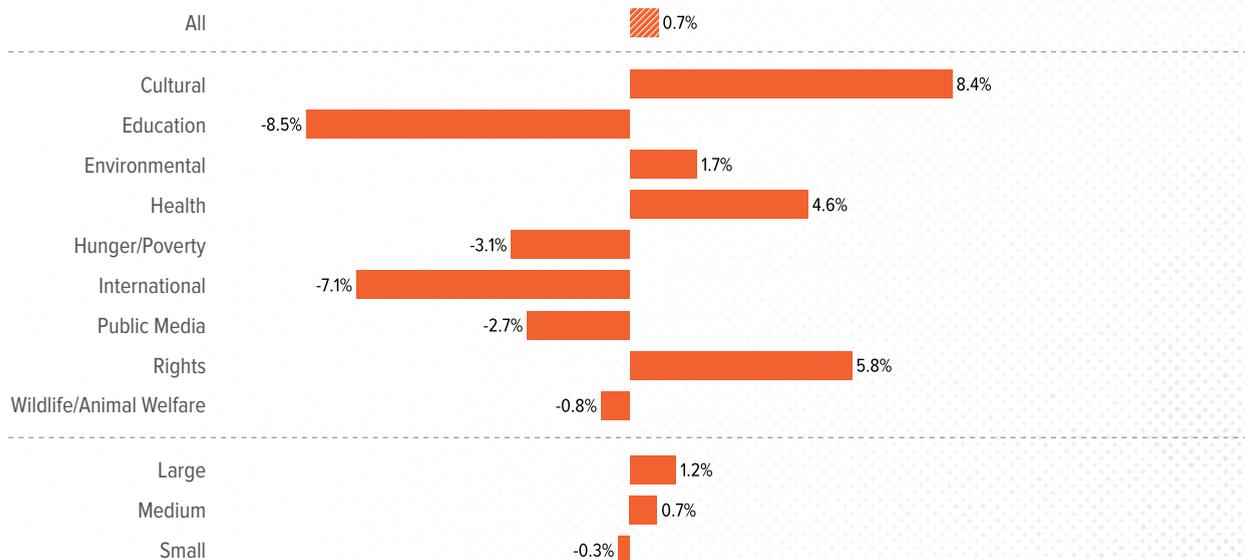
CHANGE IN ONLINE REVENUE BY TYPE FROM 2015 TO 2016



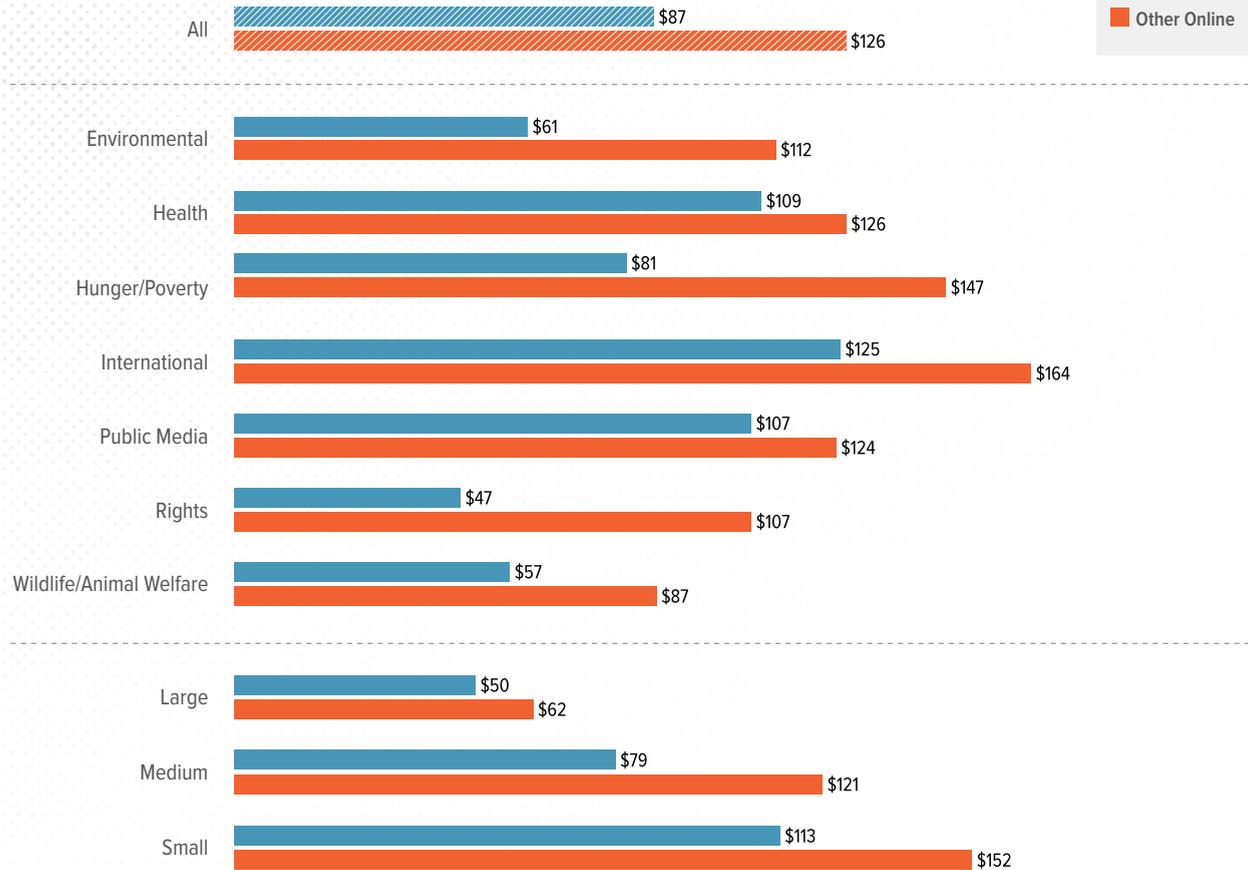
CHANGE IN NUMBER OF ONLINE GIFTS FROM 2015 TO 2016



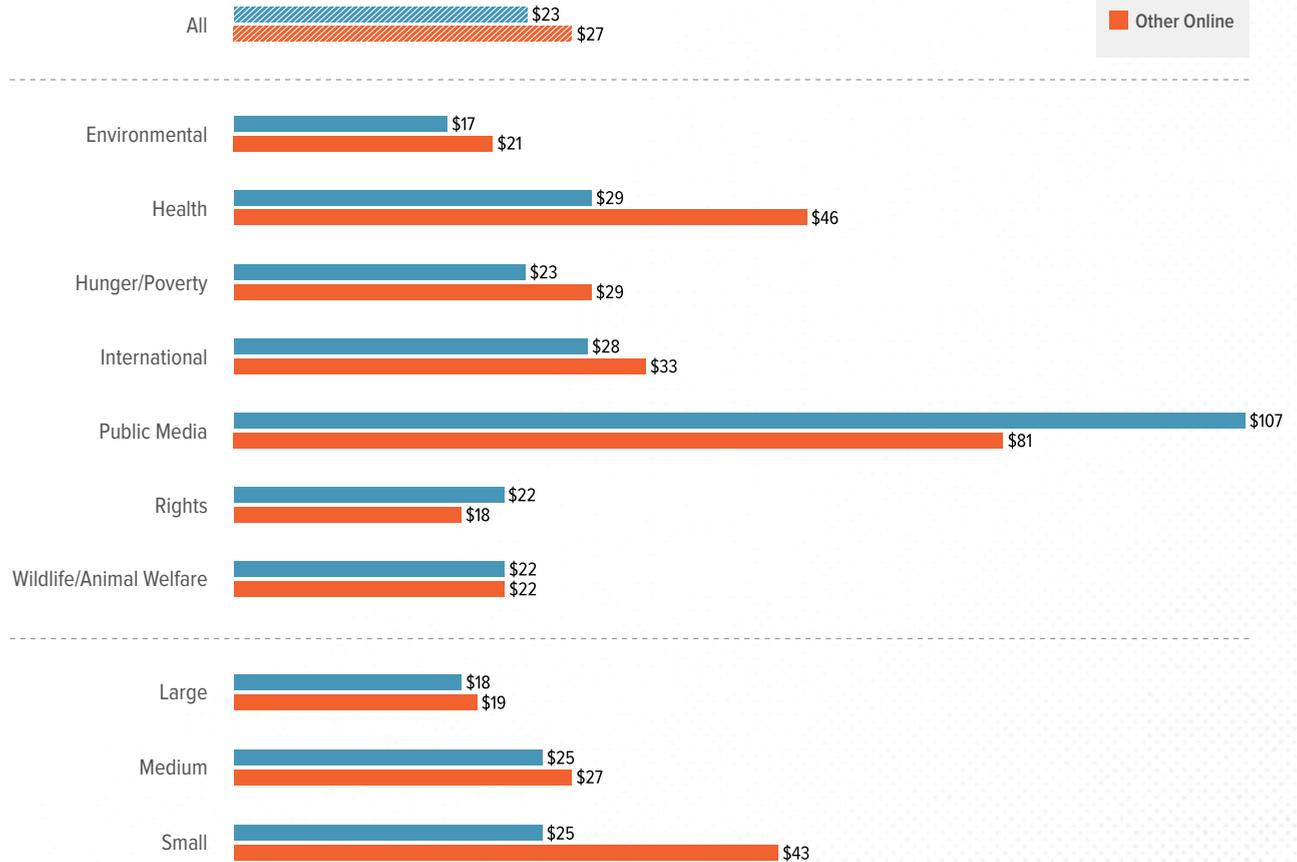
CHANGE IN AVERAGE ONLINE GIFT SIZE FROM 2015 TO 2016



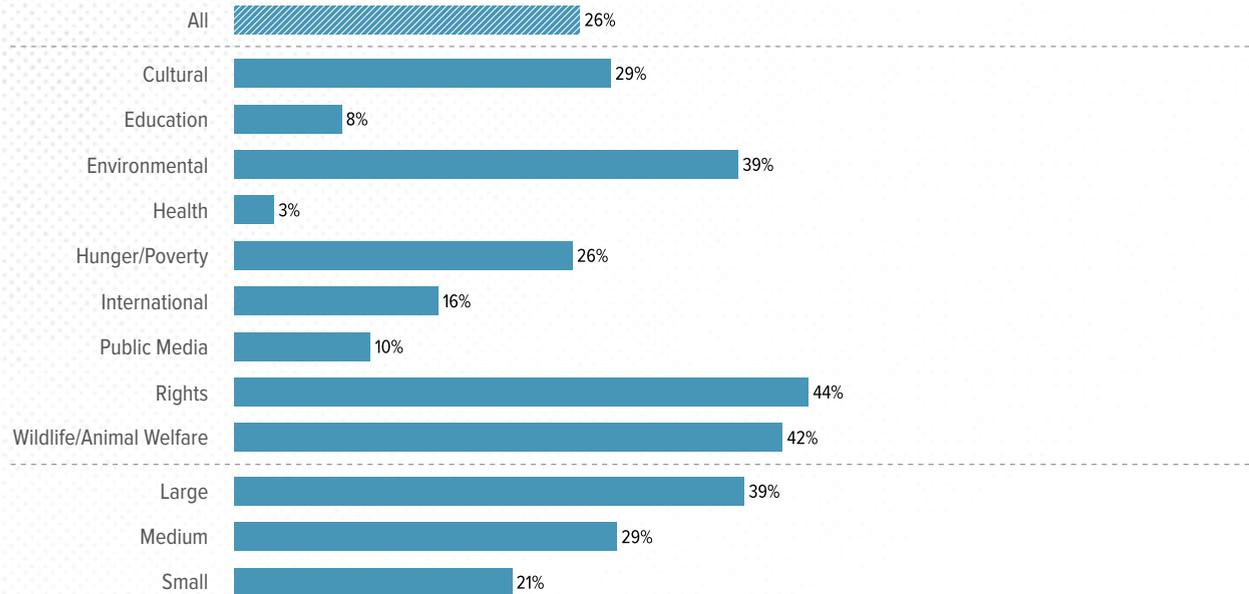
AVERAGE ONE-TIME GIFT



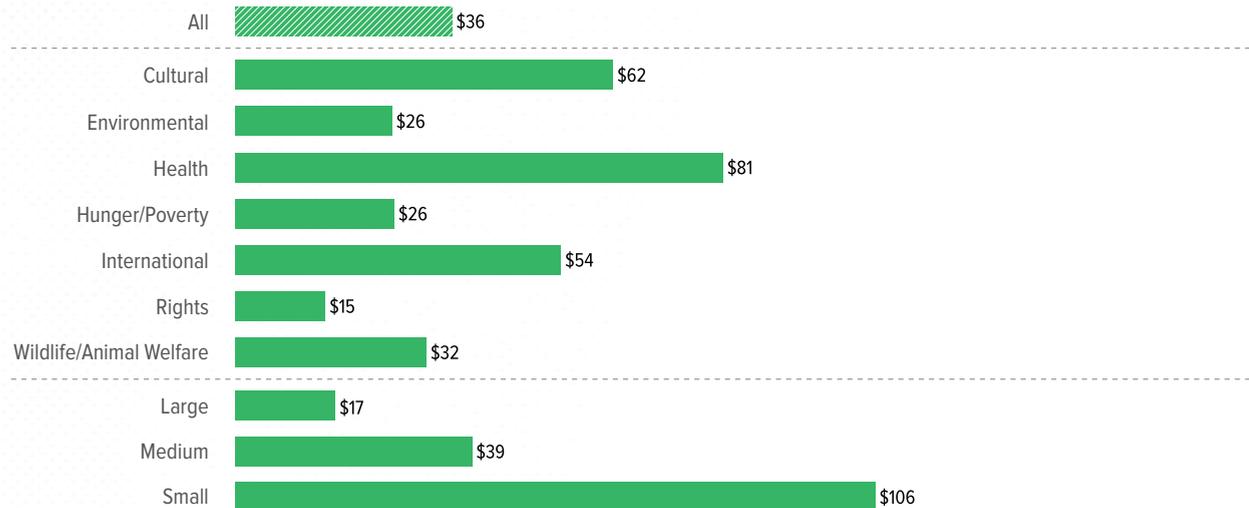
AVERAGE MONTHLY GIFT



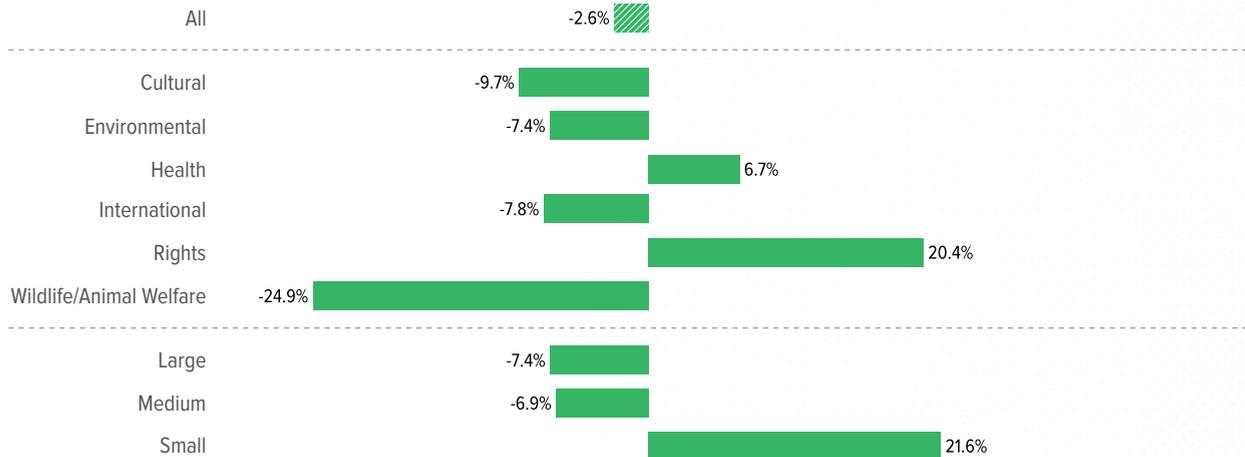
SHARE OF ONLINE REVENUE FROM EMAIL



EMAIL REVENUE PER 1,000 FUNDRAISING EMAILS DELIVERED



CHANGE IN REVENUE PER 1,000 FUNDRAISING EMAILS DELIVERED FROM 2015 TO 2016



Fundraising Email: An email that only asks for a donation, as opposed to an email newsletter, which might ask for a donation and include other links. For the purposes of this Study, fundraising email only includes one-time donation asks; it does not include monthly gift asks. Fundraising email rates were calculated from all fundraising emails, regardless of whether the email went to the full file, a random sample of the file, or a targeted portion of the file.

Oh, you've got the future in your hand

Signed, sealed, delivered, I'm yours

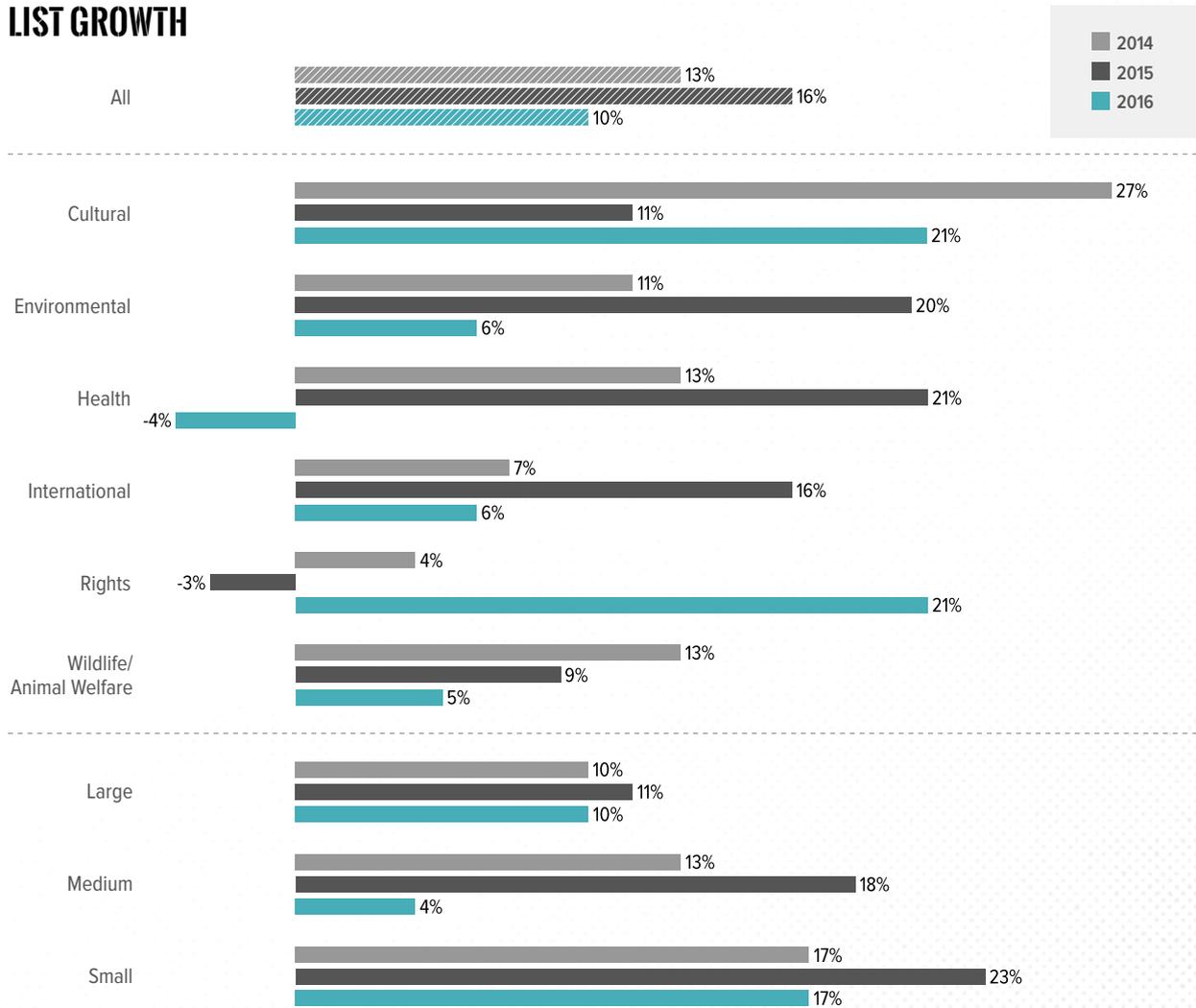
— Stevie Wonder

EMAIL MESSAGING

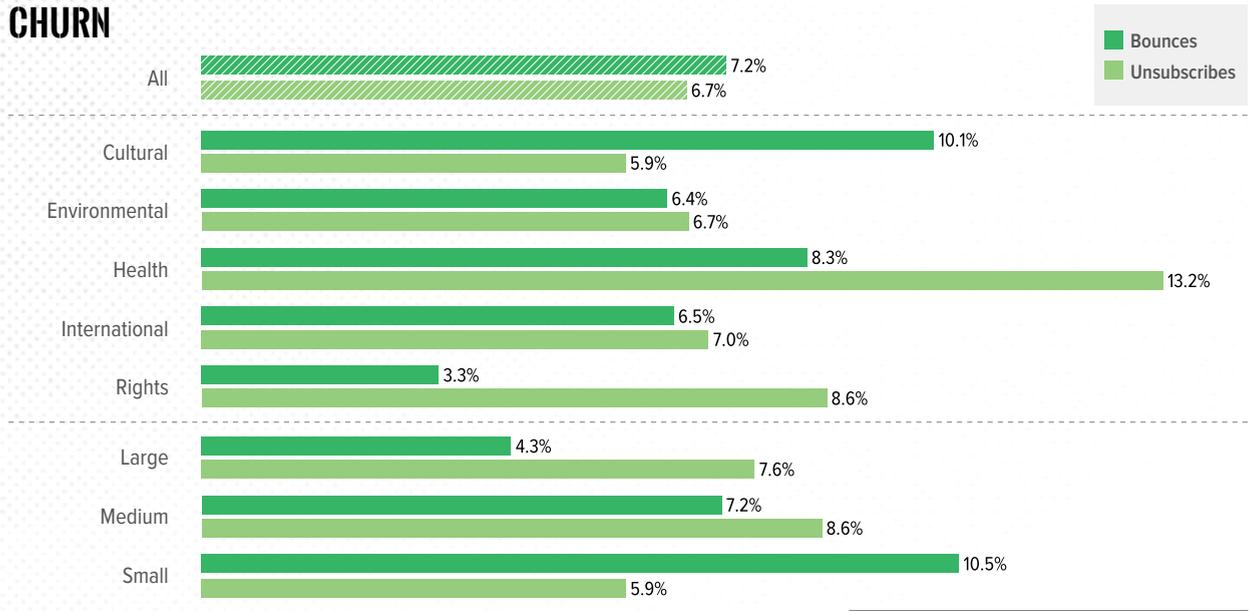
KEY NOTES + MAJOR FINDINGS

- 1. Email list size for Study participants grew** by 10% in 2016. This growth was slower than the 16% seen in 2015. Health nonprofits composed the only sector that saw a decline in 2016 ([see page 19](#) for more).
- 2. Nonprofits sent more email** in 2016 than in 2015: a 10% increase in messages per year per subscriber. On average, nonprofits sent 24 fundraising email messages per subscriber in 2016, along with 20 advocacy messages and 11 newsletters.
- 3. Response rates for advocacy email declined**, dropping 17% from 2015 levels to 1.60%. This coincided with drops in open rate (down 13%, to 13%) as well as click-through rates (down 21%, to 1.9%).
- 4. Fundraising email response rates experienced a small decline**, dropping 8% to 0.05%. In other words, nonprofits received one donation for every 2,000 fundraising messages sent. Fundraising email open rates fell by 7% to 13%, while click-through rates dropped by 14% to 0.38%.
- 5. Page completion rates held relatively steady** for both advocacy and fundraising messaging, at 74% and 17% respectively.

LIST GROWTH

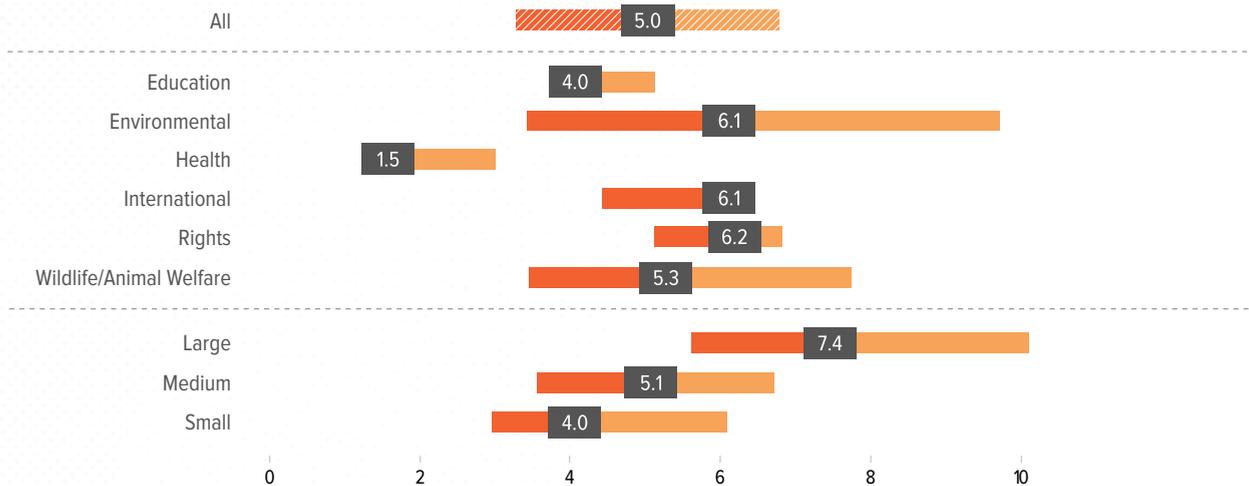


CHURN

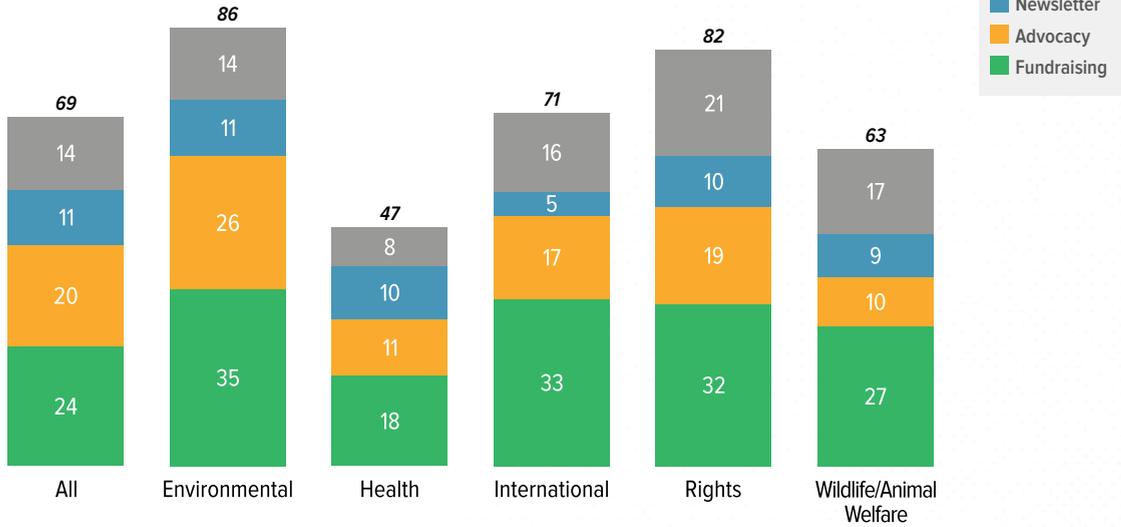


List Churn: Calculated as the number of subscribers who became unreachable in a 12-month period divided by the sum of the number of deliverable email addresses at the end of that period plus the number of subscribers who became unreachable during that period.

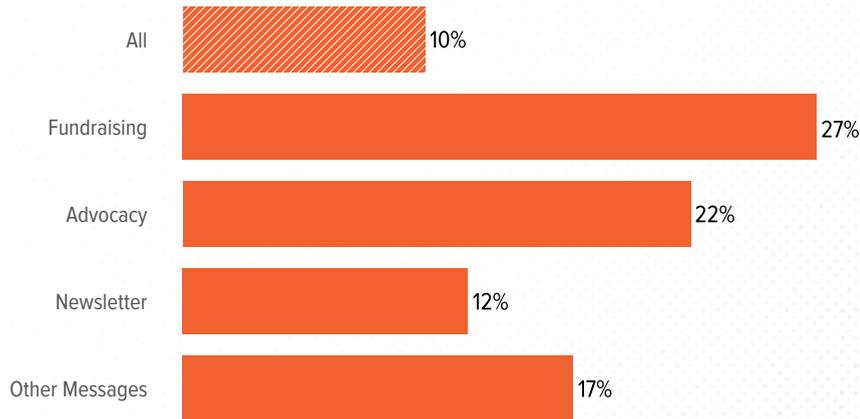
MESSAGES PER SUBSCRIBER PER MONTH



MESSAGES PER SUBSCRIBER PER YEAR



CHANGE IN MESSAGES PER SUBSCRIBER 2015-2016

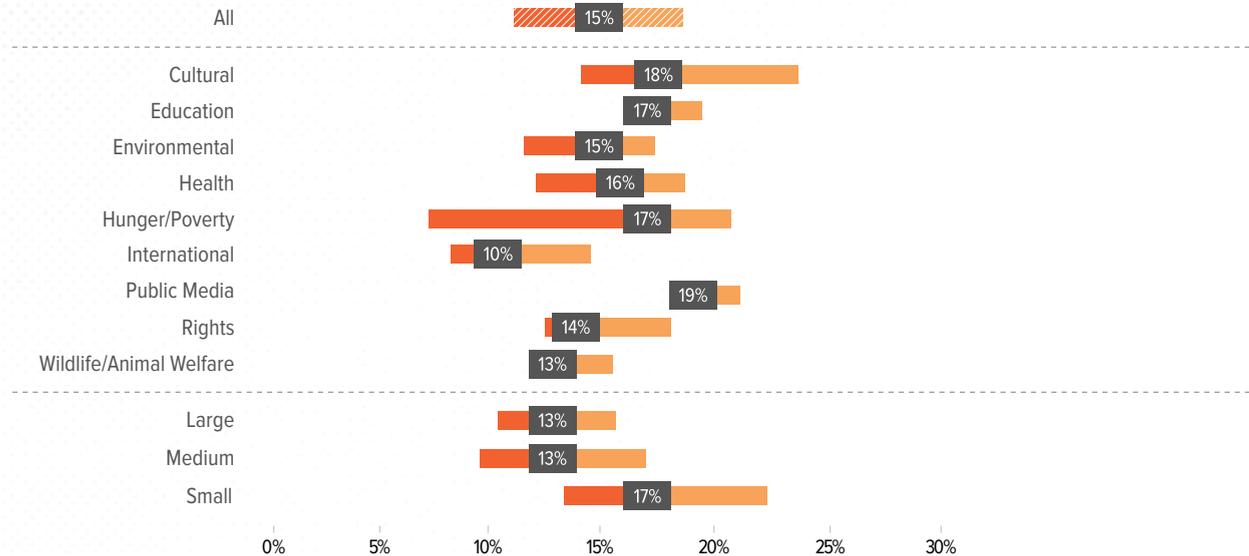


EMAIL RATES BY MESSAGE TYPE

	Open Rate	Click-Through Rate	Page Completion Rate	Response Rate	Unsubscribe Rate
All	15% (-7%)	—	—	—	0.16% (-20%)
Fundraising	13% (-7%)	0.38% (-14%)	17% (+1%)	0.05% (-8%)	0.16% (-26%)
Advocacy	13% (-13%)	1.9% (-21%)	74% (-1%)	1.6% (-17%)	0.13% (-23%)
Newsletter	14% (-9%)	1.5% (-17%)	—	—	0.13% (-16%)

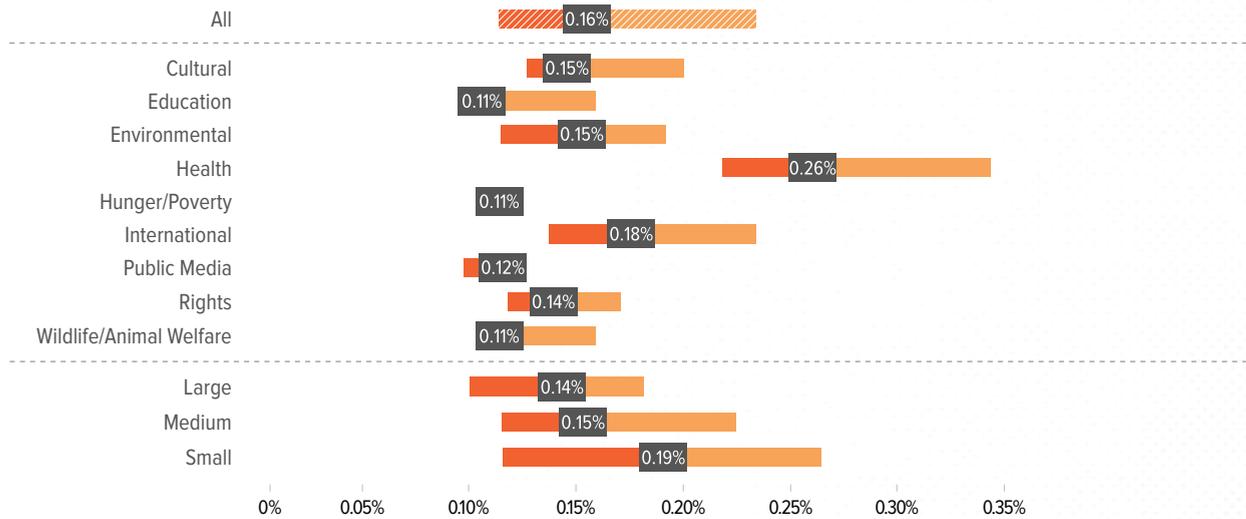
The numbers in parentheses represent the percentage change in rate since 2015.

ALL OPEN RATES

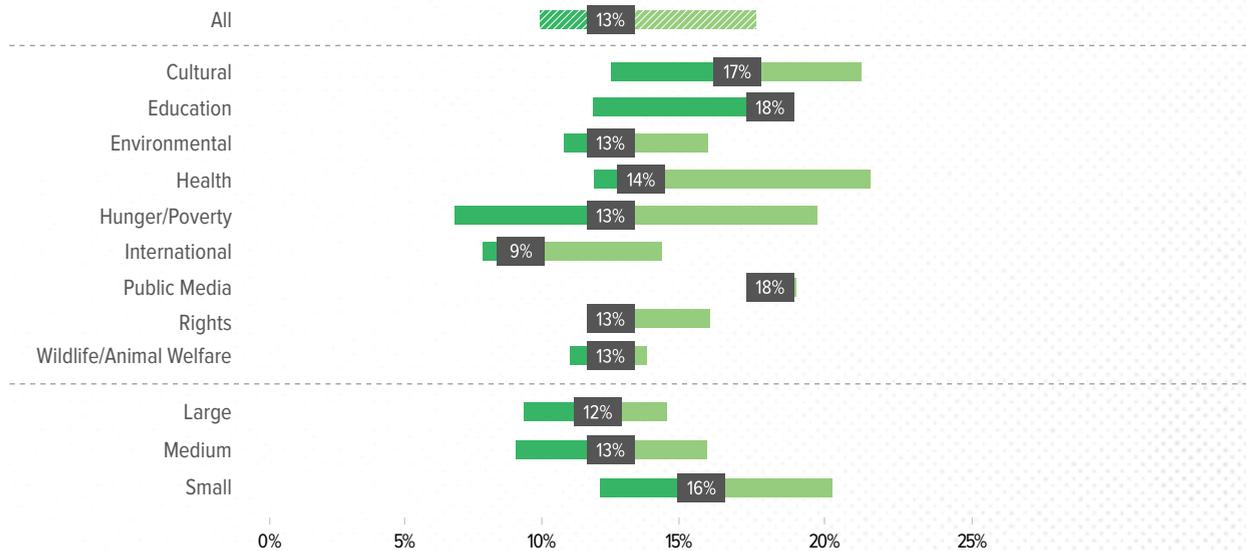


Open Rate: Calculated as the number email messages opened divided by the number of delivered emails. Email messages that bounce are not included.

ALL UNSUBSCRIBE RATES

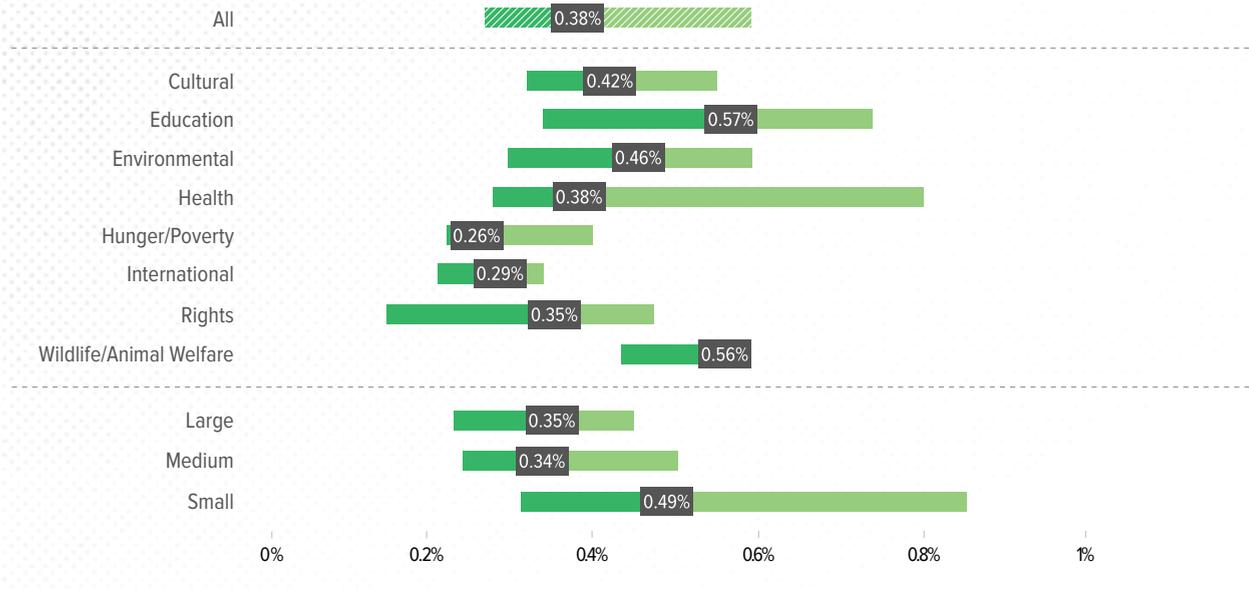


FUNDRAISING OPEN RATES



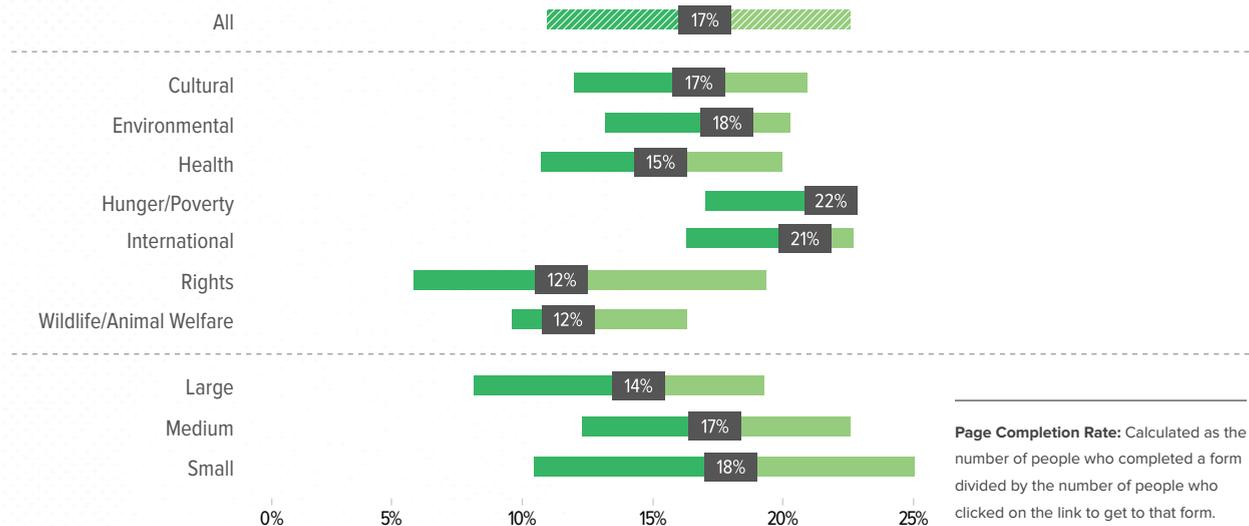
Unsubscribe Rate: Calculated as the number of individuals who unsubscribed in response to an email message divided by the number of delivered emails.

FUNDRAISING CLICK-THROUGH RATES



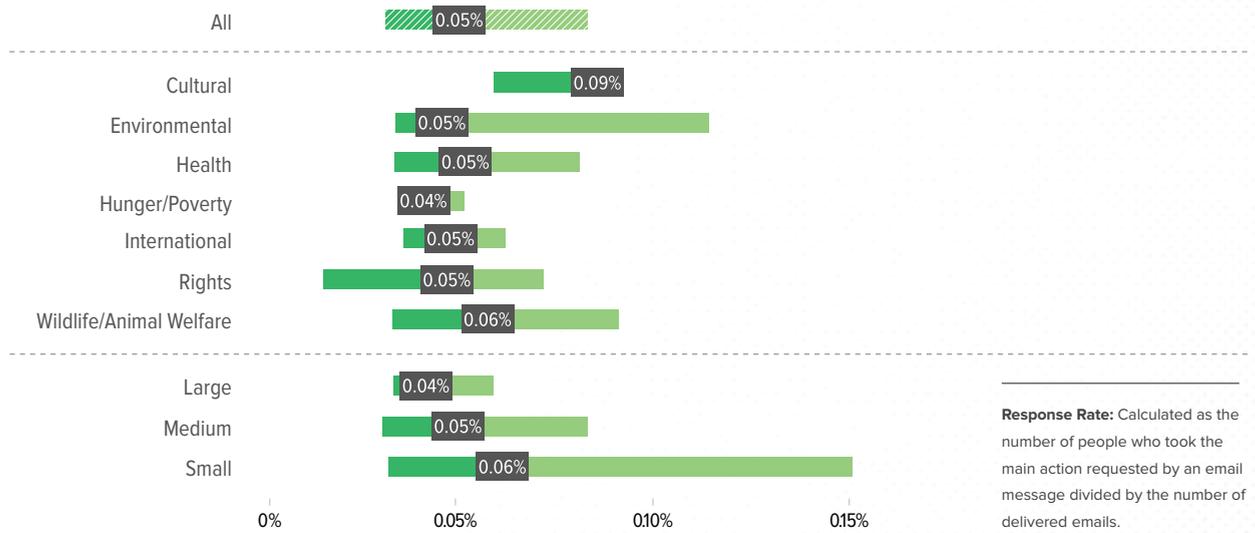
Click-Through Rate: Calculated as the number of people who clicked on any trackable link in an email message divided by the number of delivered emails.

FUNDRAISING PAGE COMPLETION RATES

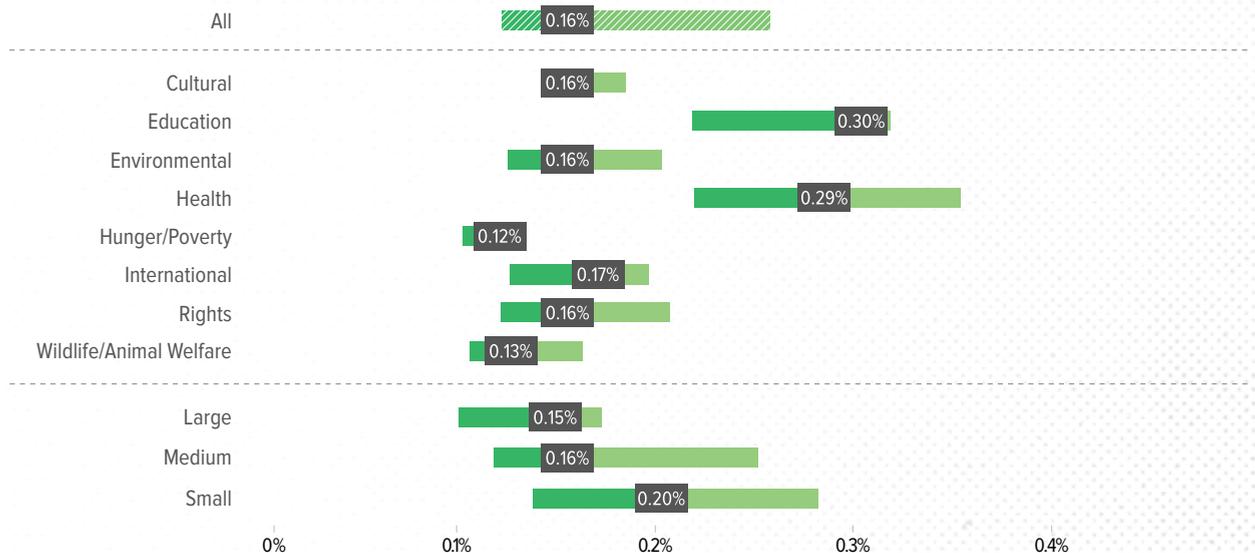


Page Completion Rate: Calculated as the number of people who completed a form divided by the number of people who clicked on the link to get to that form.

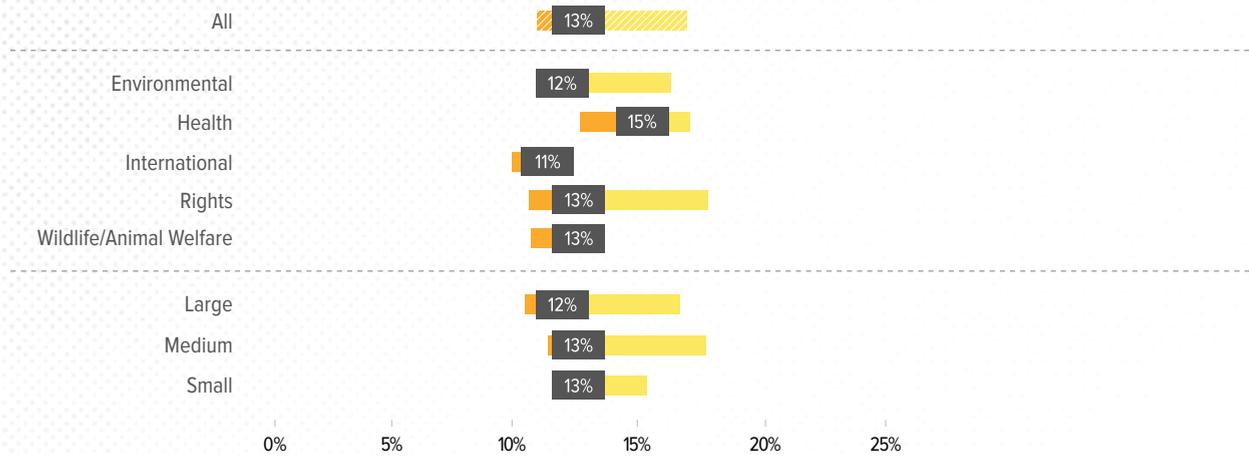
FUNDRAISING RESPONSE RATES



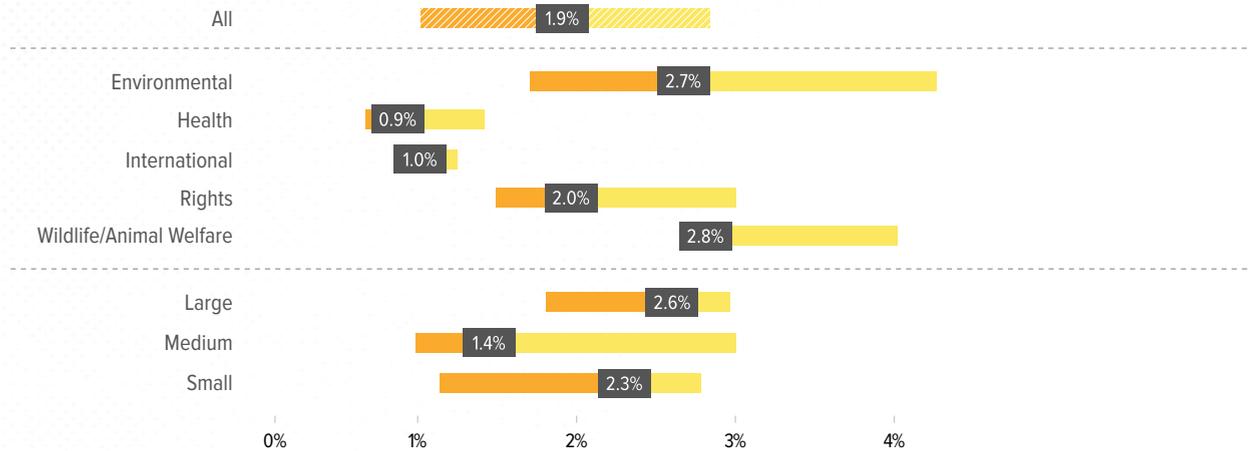
FUNDRAISING UNSUBSCRIBE RATES



ADVOCACY OPEN RATES

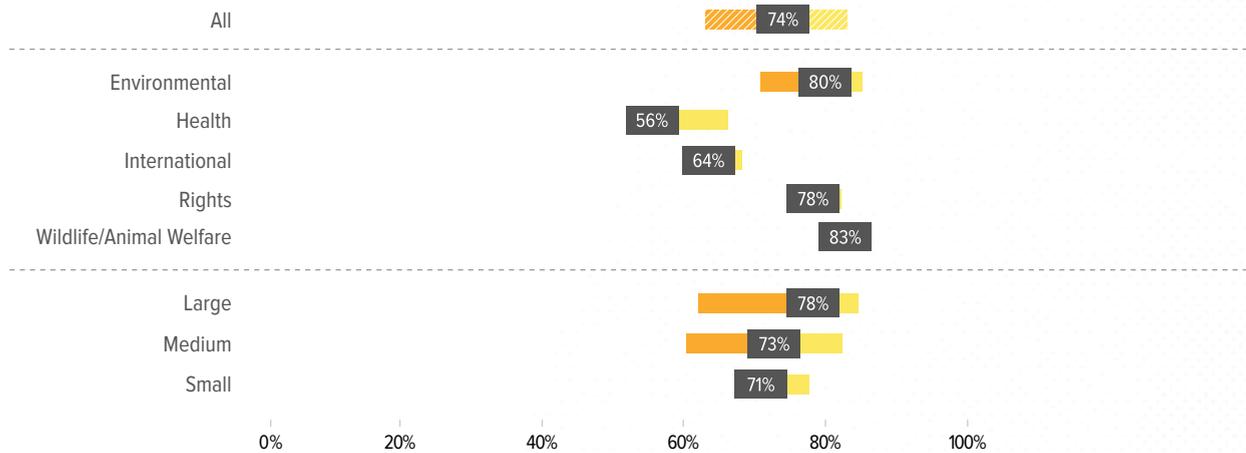


ADVOCACY CLICK-THROUGH RATES

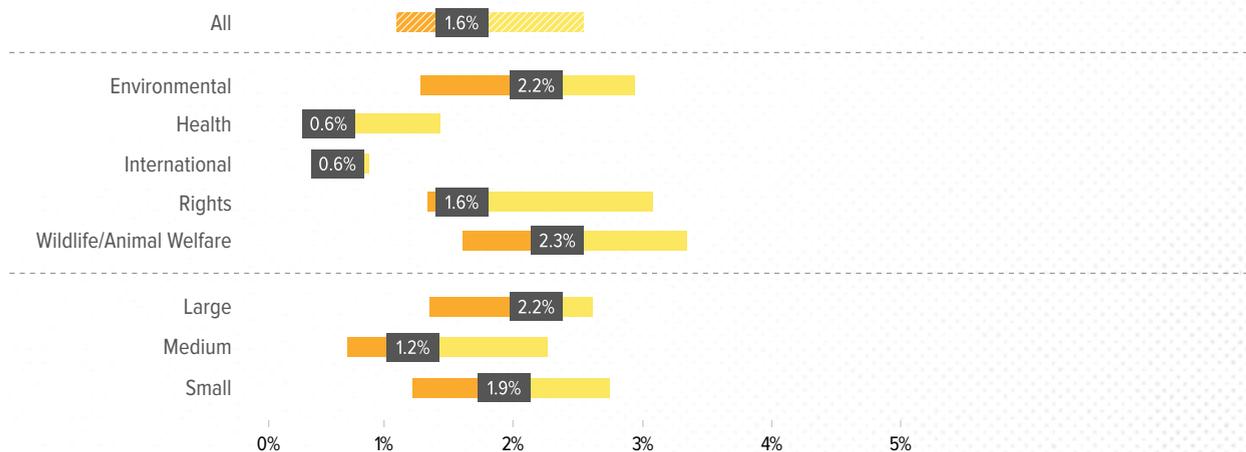


Advocacy Email: An email that asks recipients to sign an online petition, send an email to a decision-maker, or take a similar online action. For the purposes of this Study, advocacy email does not include higher-bar actions like making a phone call or attending an event, largely because tracking offline response is inconsistent across organizations. Advocacy email rates were calculated from advocacy emails with a simple action sent to either the full file or a random sample of the full file.

ADVOCACY PAGE COMPLETION RATES

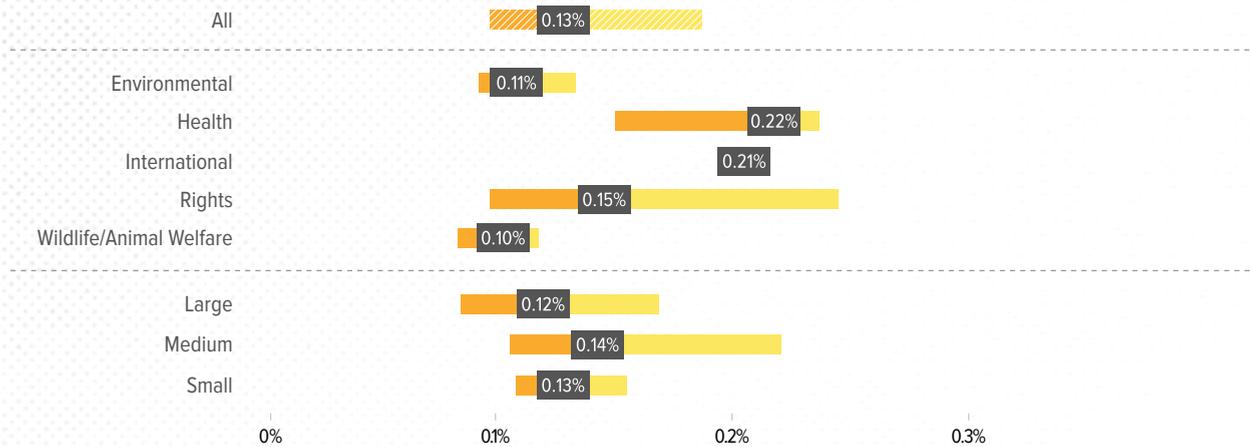


ADVOCACY RESPONSE RATES

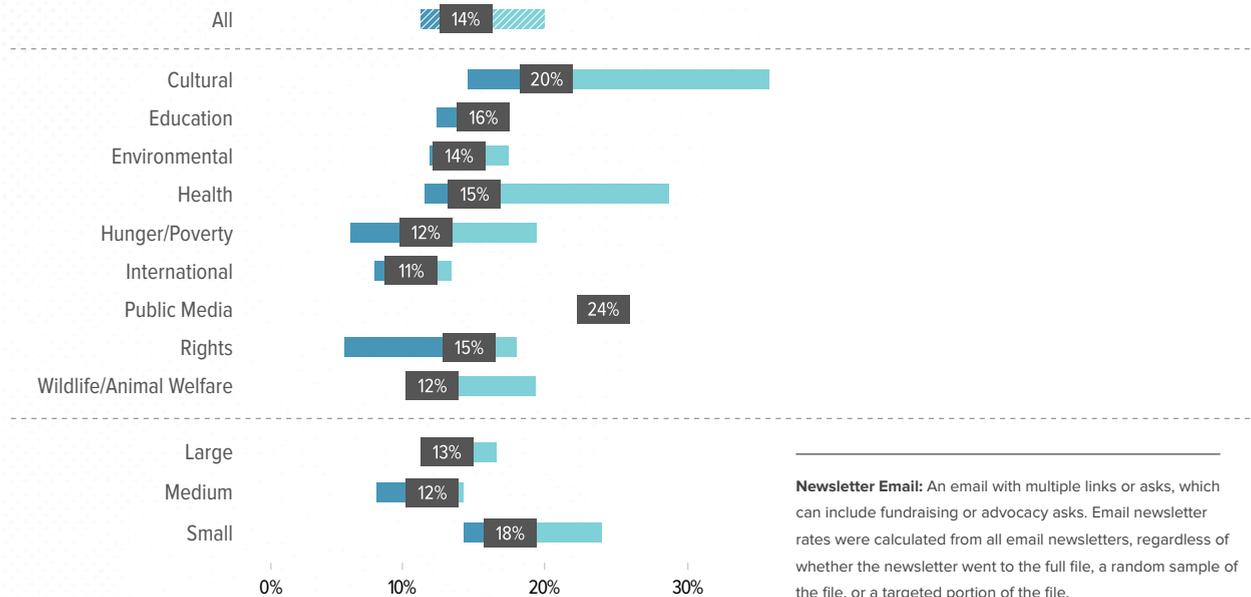


Response Rate: Calculated as the number of people who took the main action requested by an email message divided by the number of delivered emails. We only calculated response rates in this Study for fundraising emails and for advocacy emails with simple asks, such as signing a petition or sending an email to a decision maker.

ADVOCACY UNSUBSCRIBE RATES

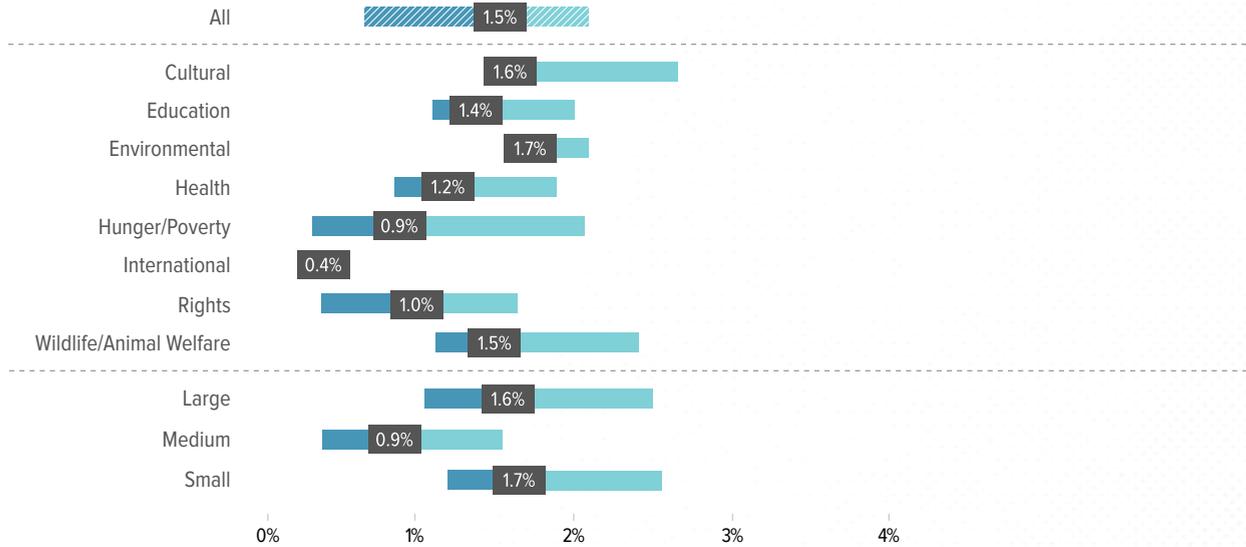


NEWSLETTER OPEN RATES

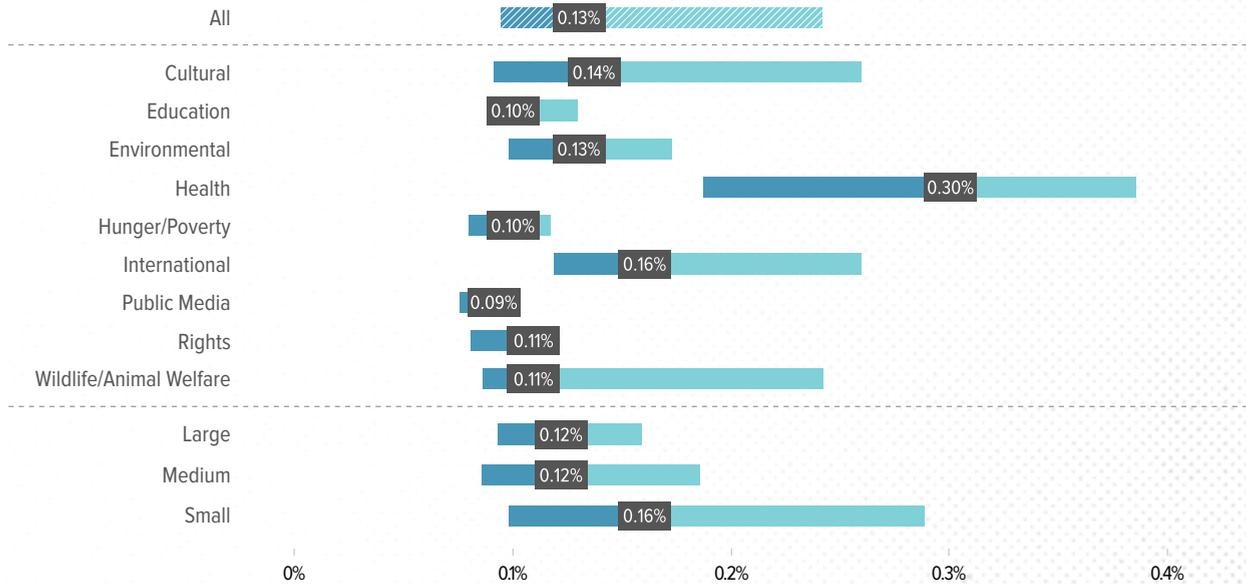


Newsletter Email: An email with multiple links or asks, which can include fundraising or advocacy asks. Email newsletter rates were calculated from all email newsletters, regardless of whether the newsletter went to the full file, a random sample of the file, or a targeted portion of the file.

NEWSLETTER CLICK-THROUGH RATES



NEWSLETTER UNSUBSCRIBE RATES



*Now I give it all it takes
Now people on the Internet
A new life for the intellect*

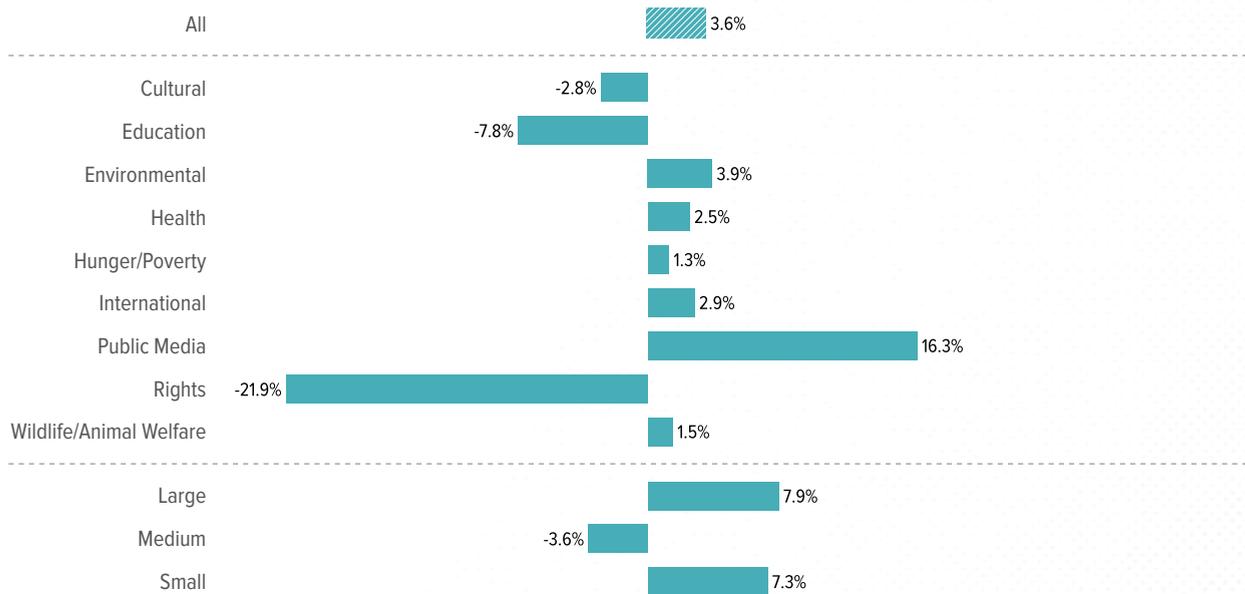
— M.I.A.

WEBSITE

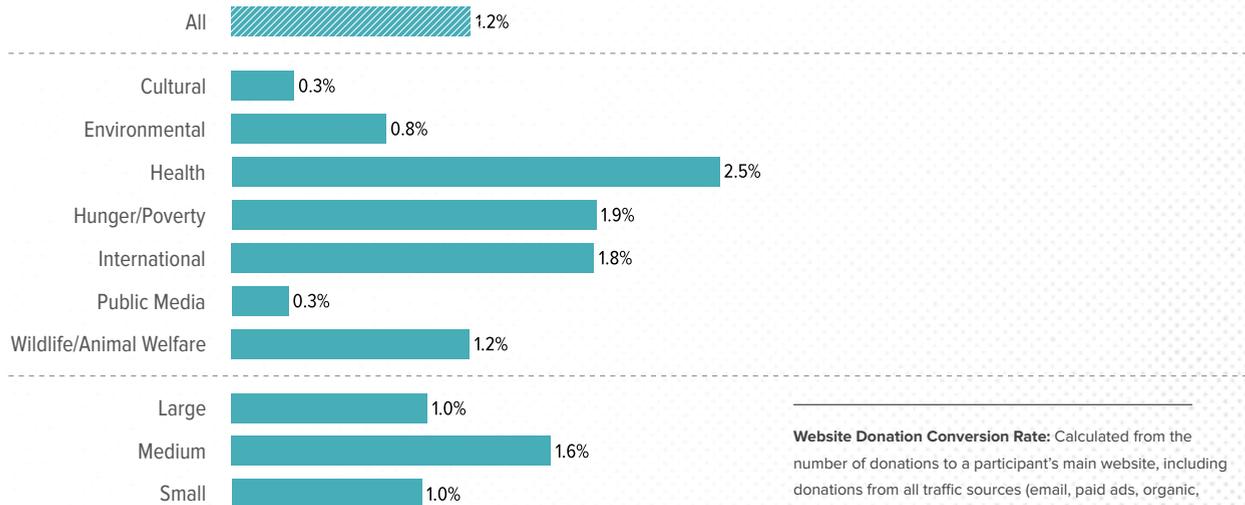
KEY NOTES + MAJOR FINDINGS

- 1. Website visitors per month increased 3.6% in 2016.** Public Media nonprofits experienced the largest spike in traffic, with 16.3% more visitors per month than in the previous years. Rights groups, in contrast, saw a substantial decrease in traffic, with a 21.9% drop in this metric.
- 2. On average, 1.2% of website visitors made a donation** — an 8.3% increase from 2015.
- 3. On average, 1.1% of website visitors joined the nonprofit's email list.**
- 4. Nonprofits raised \$1.19 per website visitor in 2016.** The International and Health sectors far outpaced this average, at \$2.53 and \$3.66 per visitor, respectively. The Education and Rights sectors were on the low end, each receiving \$0.46 per website visitor.

CHANGE IN NUMBER OF WEBSITE VISITORS PER MONTH FROM 2015 TO 2016

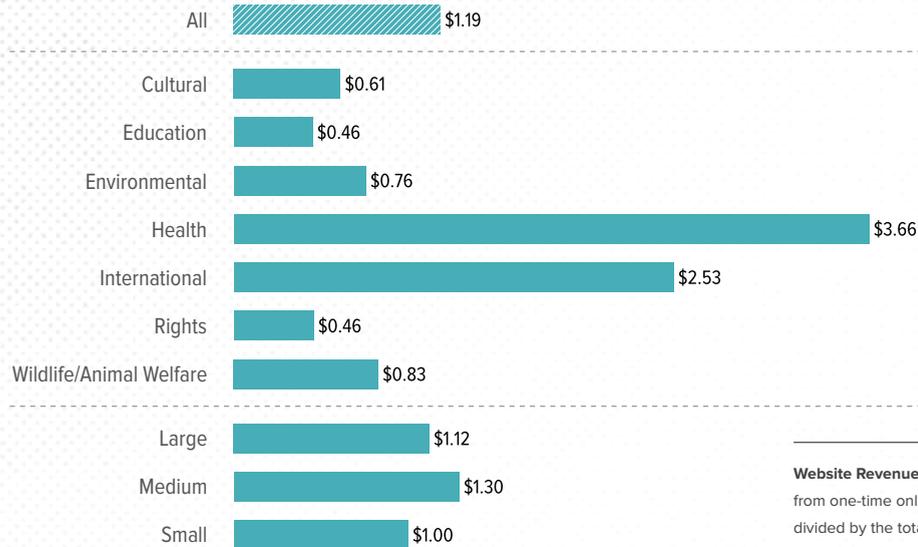


WEBSITE DONATION CONVERSION RATE



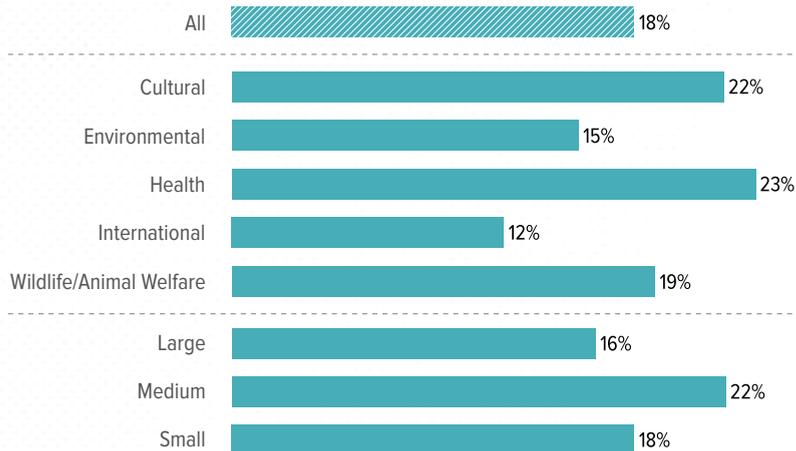
Website Donation Conversion Rate: Calculated from the number of donations to a participant's main website, including donations from all traffic sources (email, paid ads, organic, search, etc), divided by the number of unique website visitors.

WEBSITE REVENUE PER VISITOR

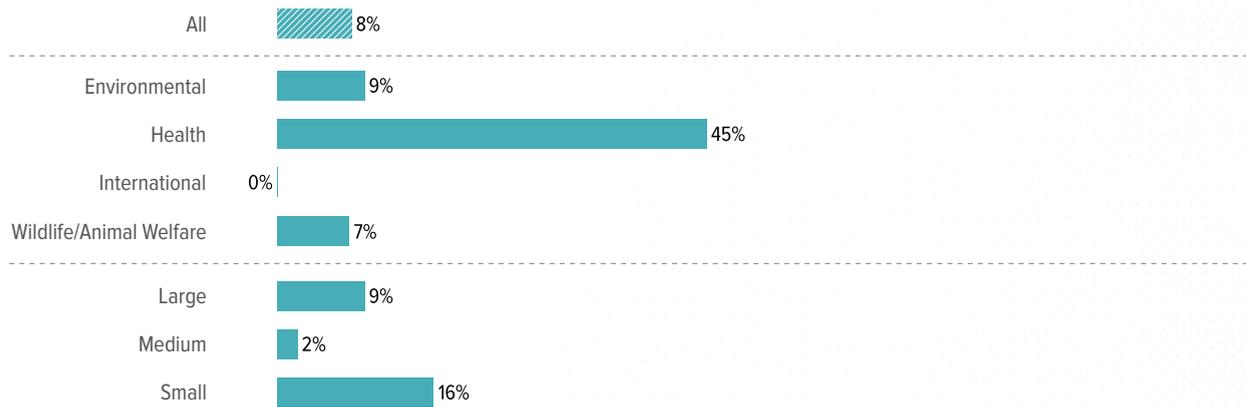


Website Revenue Per Visitor: Calculated as the total revenue from one-time online gifts, plus the value of initial monthly gifts, divided by the total number of website visitors for the year. Depending on retention, the long-term value of monthly gifts may be substantially higher.

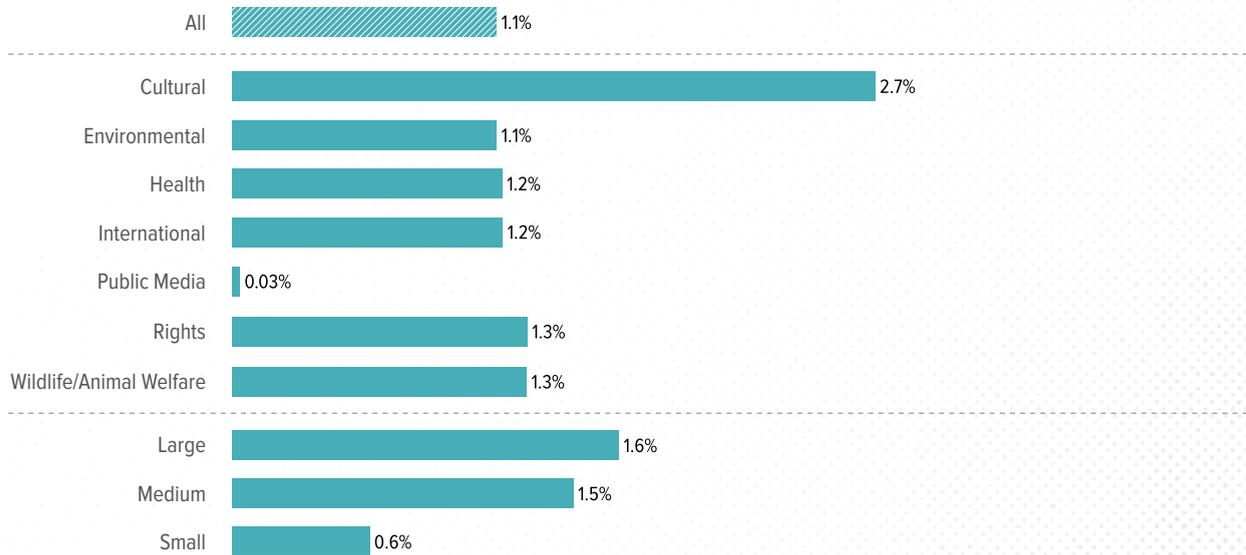
WEBSITE MAIN DONATION PAGE CONVERSION RATE



CHANGE IN WEBSITE MAIN DONATION PAGE CONVERSION RATE



EMAIL SIGN UP RATE



Email Sign Up Rate: Calculated as the number of new joins who signed up on your website divided by total visitors to your website.

*I, want it,
Myspace in your space
Facebook is that new place
Dip, divin' socializing,
I'll be out in cyberspace*

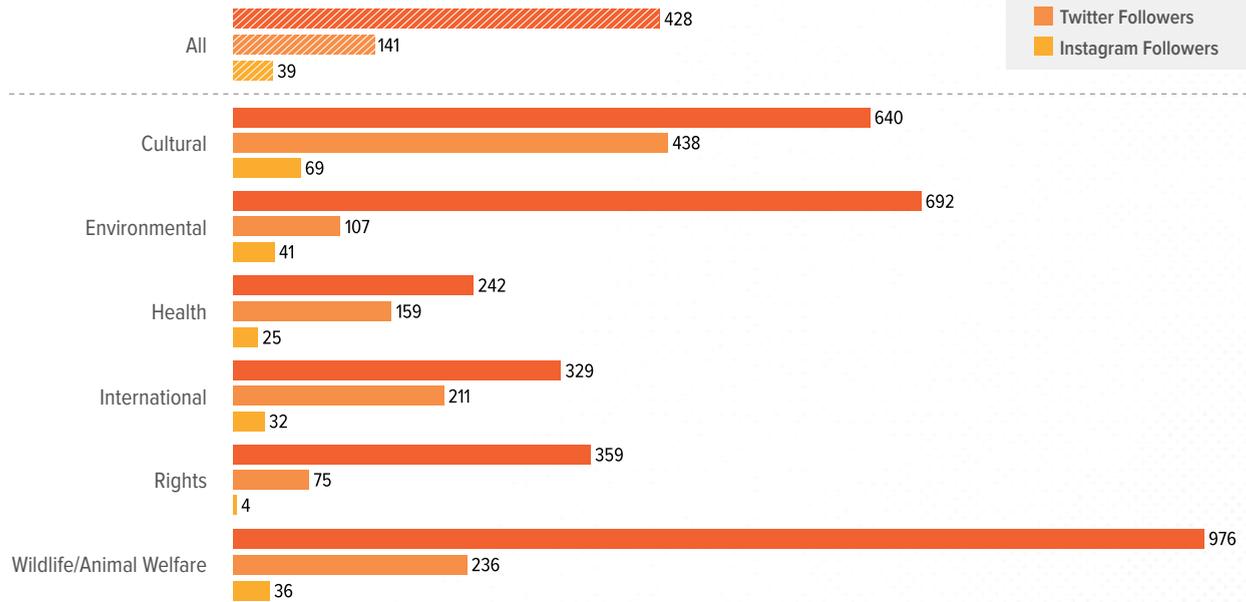
— Black Eyed Peas

SOCIAL MEDIA

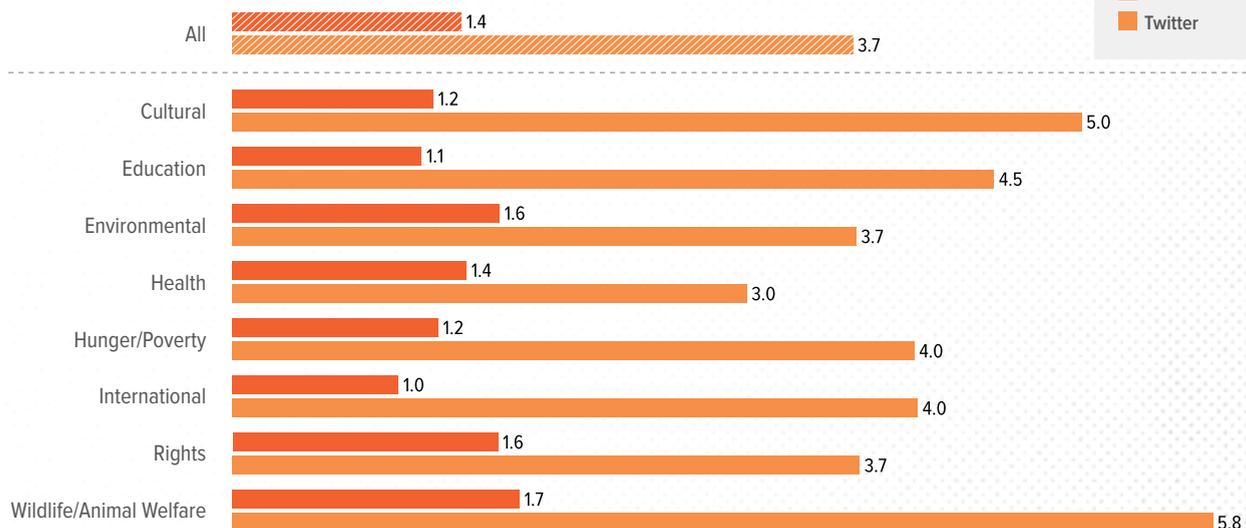
KEY NOTES + MAJOR FINDINGS

- 1. For every 1,000 email subscribers, the average organization has 428 Facebook fans, 141 Twitter followers, and 39 Instagram followers.**
- 2. Nonprofit Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram audiences experienced impressive growth in 2016.** The number of Facebook fans grew by 23% over 2015; Twitter followers by 50%; and Instagram followers by 101%.
- 3. Organizations posted to Facebook an average of 1.4 times per day and tweeted an average of 3.7 times per day.** Wildlife/Animal Welfare nonprofits were the most prolific on both platforms.
- 4. Facebook engagement was substantially higher than Twitter engagement.** On Facebook, 4.6% of users who saw a post engaged in some way, while only 1.3% of Twitter audiences did the same.
- 5. Nonprofits paid to increase reach for 2.7% of their Facebook posts in 2016.**
- 6. Just 8% of a nonprofit's Facebook fans viewed an average post. See page 12** for more on Facebook audience and reach.

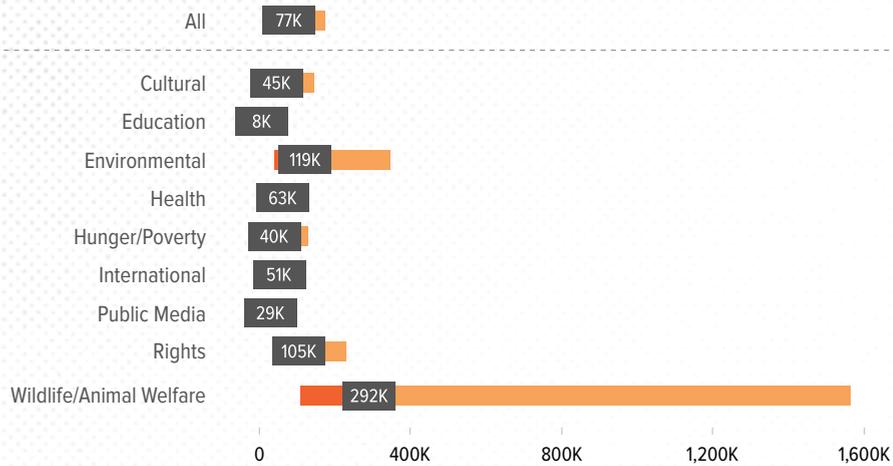
FOR EVERY 1,000 EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS, NONPROFITS HAVE



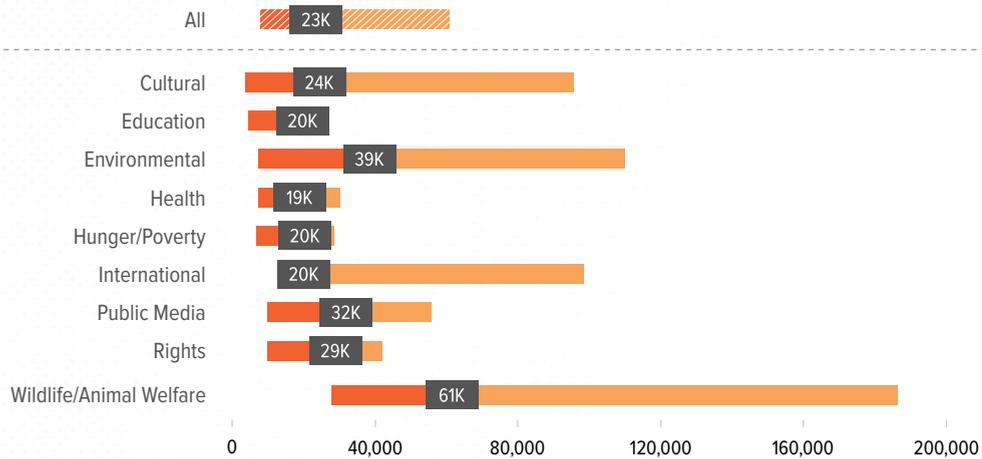
POSTS PER DAY



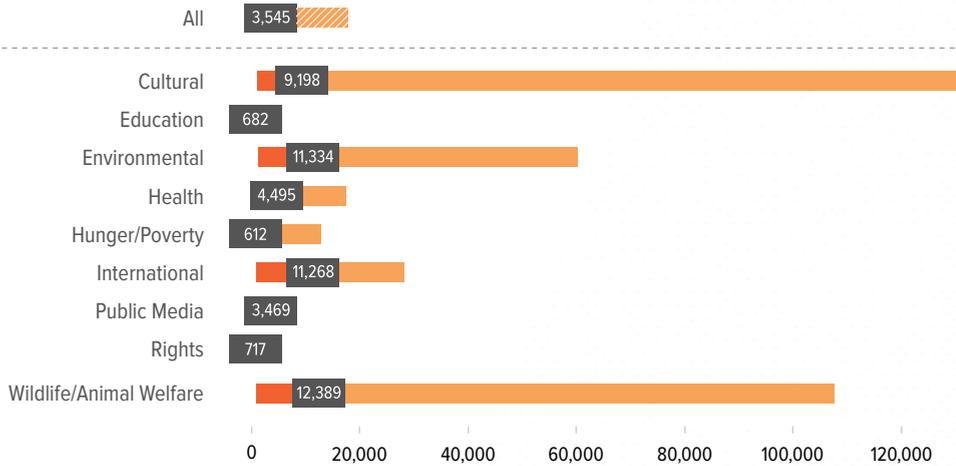
AVERAGE NUMBER OF FACEBOOK FANS



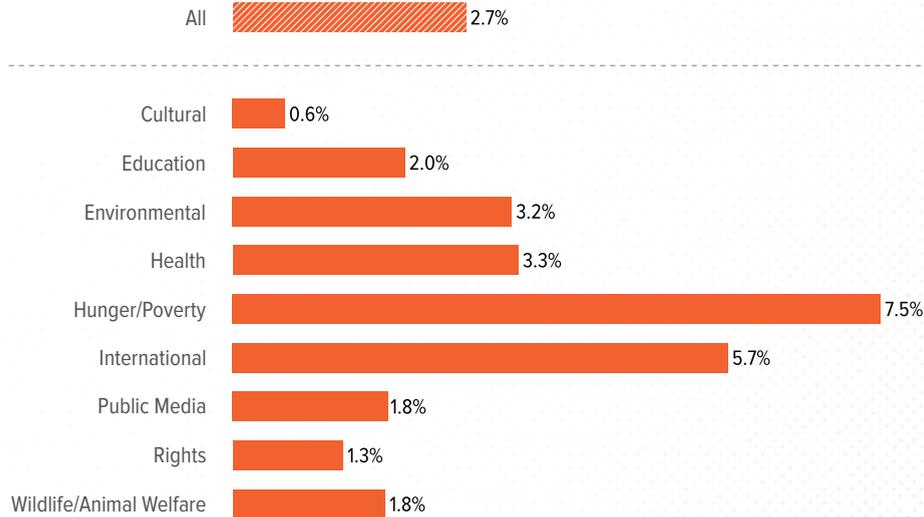
AVERAGE NUMBER OF TWITTER FOLLOWERS



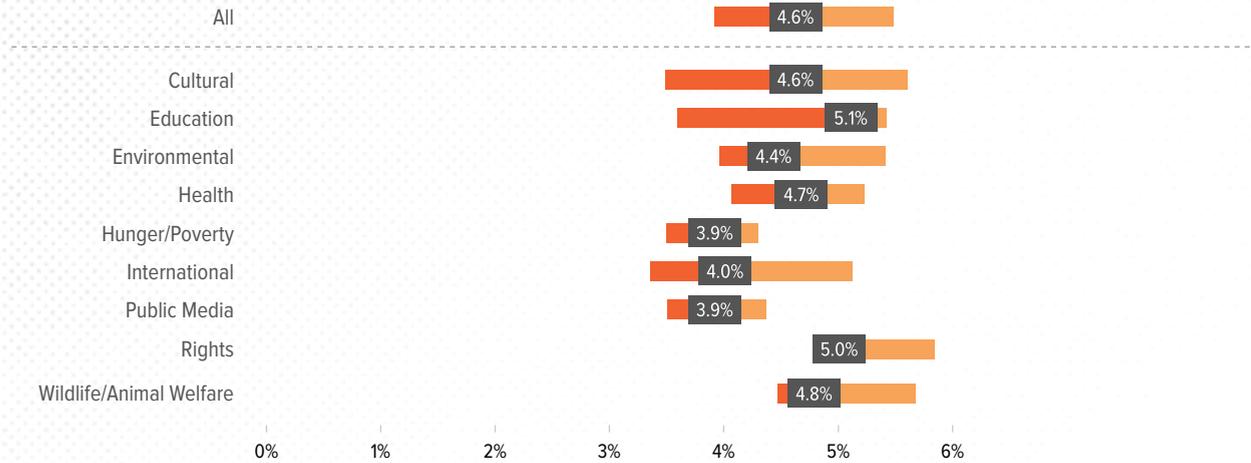
AVERAGE NUMBER OF INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS



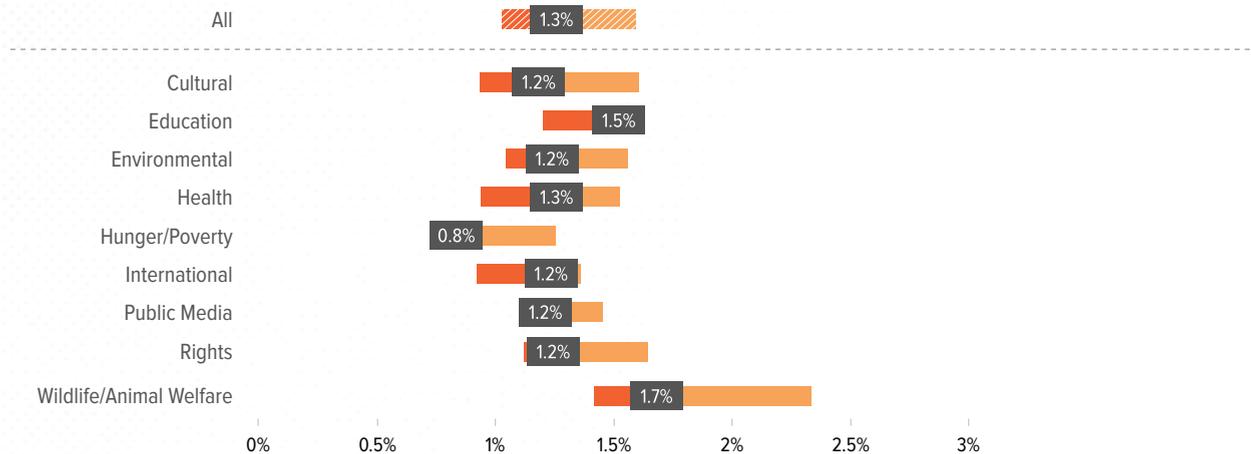
PERCENT OF FACEBOOK POSTS THAT HAD PAID REACH



FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT RATES

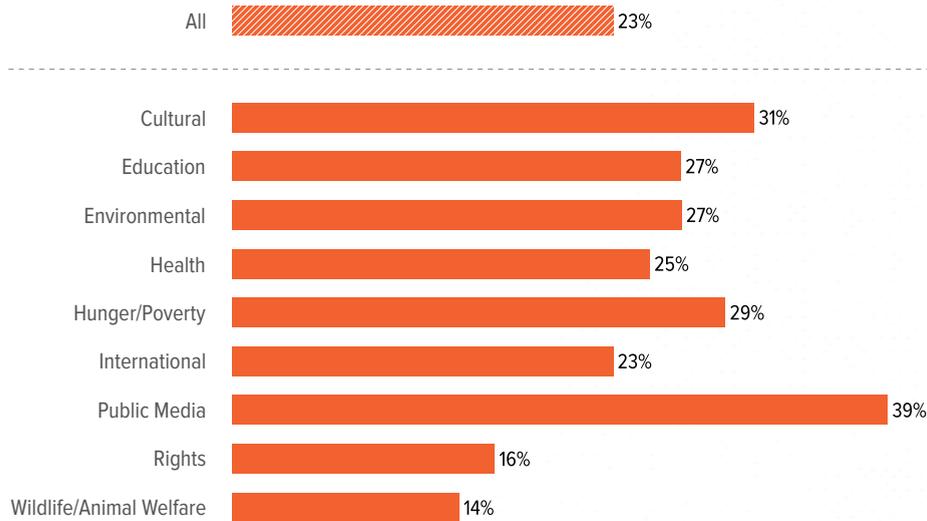


TWITTER ENGAGEMENT RATES

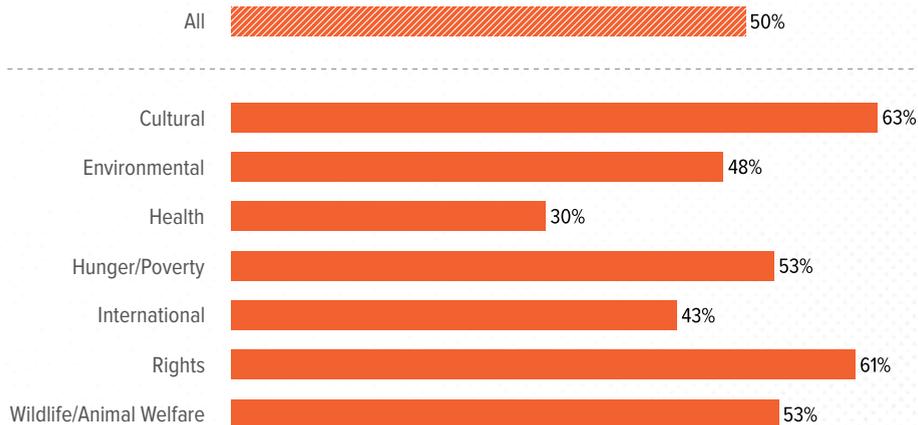


Engagement Rate: The percentage of users reached by a post who click to like, share, comment, etc.

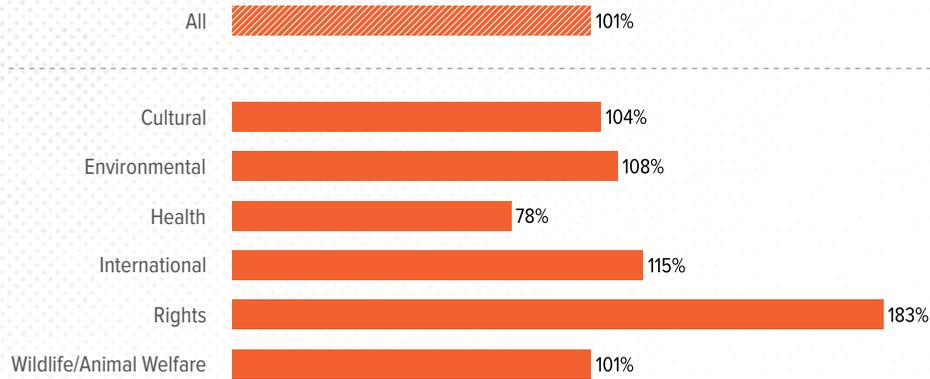
CHANGE IN NUMBER OF FACEBOOK FANS FROM 2015-2016



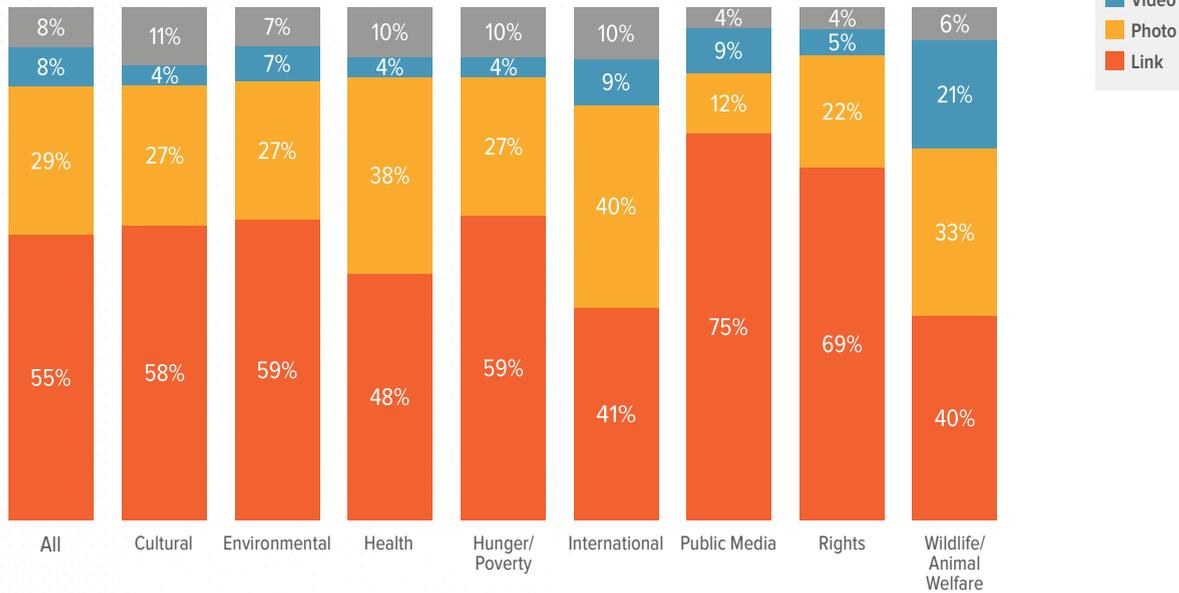
CHANGE IN NUMBER OF TWITTER FOLLOWERS FROM 2015-2016



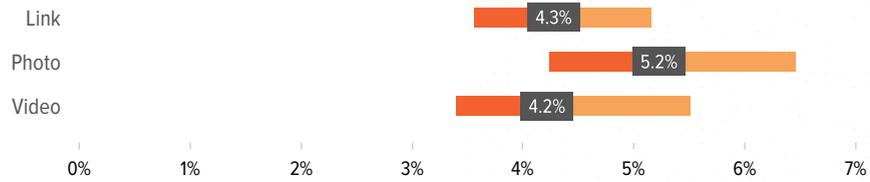
CHANGE IN NUMBER OF INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS FROM 2015-2016



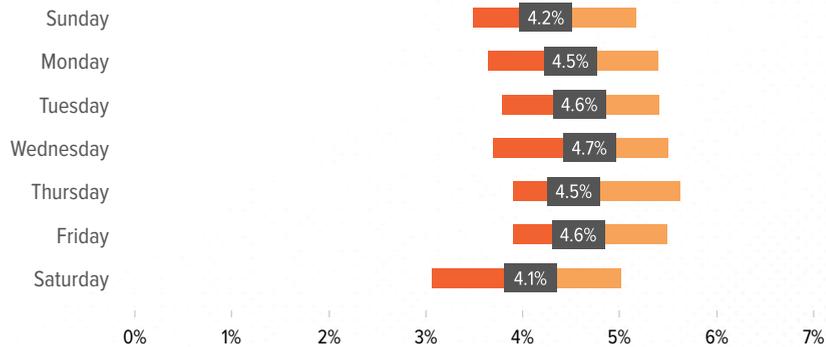
TYPES OF FACEBOOK POSTS



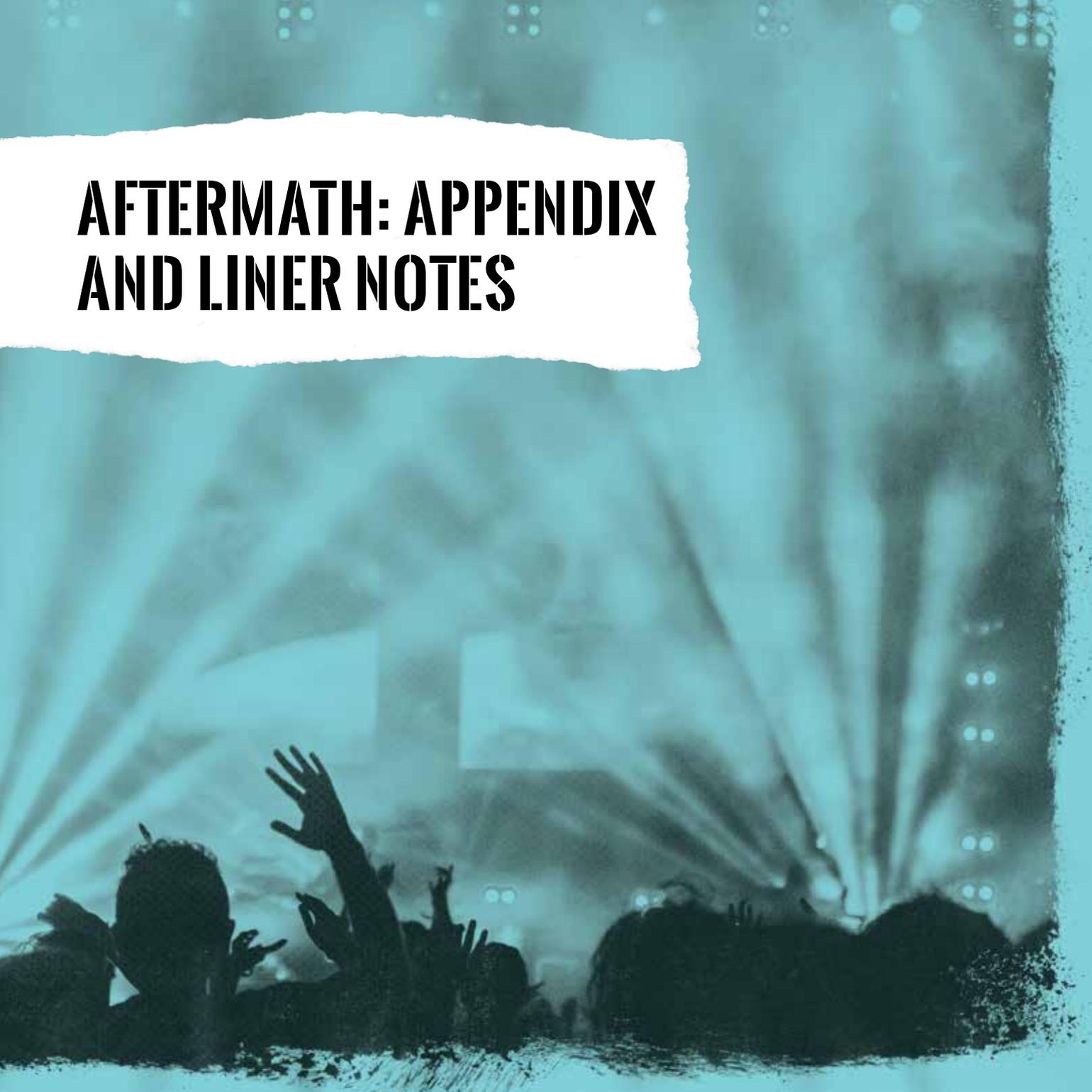
FACEBOOK POST ENGAGEMENT RATE BY TYPE OF MEDIA



FACEBOOK POST ENGAGEMENT RATE BY DAY OF THE WEEK



Engagement Rate: The percentage of users reached by a post who click to like, share, comment, etc.

A teal-tinted photograph of a concert scene. In the foreground, the silhouettes of several people are visible, with their arms raised in the air. The background is filled with bright, radiating stage lights that create a hazy, atmospheric effect. The overall mood is energetic and vibrant.

AFTERMATH: APPENDIX AND LINER NOTES

THRILLER: BENCHMARKS STUDY METHODOLOGY

Now that you've made it through all the numbers and analysis, it's time for the real headline act: the wonky details on how we arrived at all those numbers and analysis.

The 2017 M+R Benchmarks Study is a chorus of 133 nonprofits who each contributed their unique voice, talent, and gorgeous, wonderful data about email messaging, email list size, fundraising, online advocacy, web traffic, digital ads, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and more for the calendar year of 2016. We analyzed the results of almost 3.6 billion email messages sent to nearly 50 million list subscribers; more than \$535 million in online donations from over 8.3 million online gifts; and 7.2 million advocacy actions.

The average given for a metric is the median. To calculate the metrics reported in this Study, we first calculated a metric for each nonprofit and then calculated the median across nonprofits, so that no single group had more weight than any other. Each data point and average reported aggregates data from at least 3 Study participants. Not all Study participants reported data for every metric.

Study participants provided data about individual email messages sent in 2015 and 2016. They coded their individual email messages by type (advocacy, fundraising, newsletter, or other). Advocacy rates were calculated from email with a simple online advocacy action sent to the full file or a random sample of the full file. Fundraising rates were calculated from

one-time giving messages. Newsletter rates were calculated from all newsletter emails.

Calculating list churn for a year requires data snapshots at regular intervals over the course of the year. Looking at list size and new or lost email addresses only at the beginning and end of the year may not account for subscribers who join during the year and then unsubscribe or become undeliverable before the year ends. Study participants tracked the number of subscribers who became undeliverable each month to contribute to the list churn metric; 43 Study participants met this standard.

We want to emphasize that this Benchmarks Study represents, as Whitney would say, one moment in time. Our merry band of participating nonprofits varies from year to year, which means we cannot confidently compare findings in different years by placing two Studies side by side. At any point in this Study where we refer to results from past years, we are using historical data provided by this year's participants to make the comparison.

Email list size groups were determined by looking at the deliverable email list size at the end of 2016 and grouping nonprofit participants into three categories, as follows:

Small – Under 100,000; Medium – 100,000-500,000; and Large – Over 500,000.

Facebook Fan page and Twitter Follower size groups were determined by looking at the page size and number of followers at the end of 2016 and grouping nonprofit participants into three categories, as follows:

Small – Under 25,000; Medium – 25,000-100,000; and Large – Over 100,000.

TALKING BOOK: GLOSSARY

11: Well, it's one louder, isn't it? It's not ten. Where can you go from there? Where? Eleven. Exactly. One louder.

Advocacy Email: An email that asks recipients to sign an online petition, send an email to a decision-maker, or take a similar online action. For the purposes of this Study, advocacy email does not include higher-bar actions like making a phone call or attending an event, largely because tracking offline response is inconsistent across organizations. Advocacy email rates were calculated from advocacy emails with a simple action sent to either the full file or a random sample of the full file.

Click-Through Rate: Calculated as the number of people who clicked on any trackable link in an email message divided by the number of delivered emails. People who clicked multiple times in one email were only counted once. In other words, if a subscriber clicked on every link in a message 10 times, this was counted the same as if the subscriber had clicked once on a single link.

Earned Reach Average (ERA): The average number of Facebook users reached by a given post relative to the number of Facebook fans that nonprofit has. Expressed as a ratio per thousand fans (e.g. an ERA of .225 indicates that a nonprofit's average post will reach 225 Facebook users for every 1,000 fans who "like" that nonprofit).

Emails Delivered: Only the emails that were delivered, not including the emails that are considered inactive or emails that were sent and bounced.

"Delivered" email messages may land in a user's inbox, spam folder, promotions tab, or custom folder.

Email Sign Up Rate: Calculated as the number of new joins who signed up on your website divided by total visitors to your website.

Engagement Rate, Facebook: Any time someone clicks on your post somewhere (the like button, to comment, etc.), they're an engaged user. This metric counts how many people engage with your post as a percentage of people your post reached.

Engagement Rate, Twitter: This measures how many retweets, replies, likes, and clicks your tweet gets as a percentage of the impressions on the tweet.

Fans, Facebook: People who "like" a nonprofit's Facebook Fan page.

Followers, Twitter: People who subscribe to receive tweets from a nonprofit's Twitter account.

Followers, Instagram: People who subscribe to see posts from a nonprofit's Instagram account.

Full File: All of an organization's deliverable email addresses, not including unsubscribed email addresses or email addresses to which an organization no longer sends email messages.

Fundraising Email: An email that only asks for a donation, as opposed to an email newsletter, which might ask for a donation and include other links. For the purposes of this Study, fundraising email only includes one-time donation asks; it does not include monthly gift asks. Fundraising email rates were calculated from all fundraising emails, regardless of whether the email went to the full file, a random sample of the file, or a targeted portion of the file.

List Churn: Calculated as the number of subscribers who became unreachable in a 12-month period divided by the sum of the number of deliverable email addresses at the end of that period plus the number of subscribers who became unreachable during that period.

Monthly Gift: A donation where the donor signs up once to give on a regular schedule, typically by pledging a regular gift amount on a credit card each month. Also known as a sustaining gift.

Newsletter Email: An email with multiple links or asks, which can include fundraising or advocacy asks. Email newsletter rates were calculated from all email newsletters, regardless of whether the newsletter went to the full file, a random sample of the file, or a targeted portion of the file.

Open Rate: Calculated as the number email messages opened divided by the number of delivered emails. Email messages that bounce are not included.

Page Completion Rate: Calculated as the number of people who completed a form divided by the number of people who clicked on the link to get to that form. For the purposes of this Study, it was not always possible to use the number of people who clicked on a link to a specific form, so we used the number of unique clicks in the message.

Percentile: The percentage of observed values below the named data point. 25% of the observations are below the 25th percentile; 75% of the observations are below the 75th percentile. The values between the 25th percentile and the 75th percentile are the middle 50% of the observed values and represent the normal range of values.

Response Rate: Calculated as the number of people who took the main action requested by an email message divided by the number of delivered emails. We only calculated response rates in this Study for fundraising emails and for advocacy emails with simple asks, such as signing a petition or sending an email to a decision maker.

Unsubscribe Rate: Calculated as the number of individuals who unsubscribed in response to an email message divided by the number of delivered emails.

Up: What we're never gonna give you. See also: Run around and desert you.

Website Visitors Per Month: The average number of monthly unique visitors to a participant's main website.

Website Revenue Per Visitor: Calculated as the total revenue from one-time online gifts, plus the value of initial monthly gifts, divided by the total number of website visitors for the year. Depending on retention, the long-term value of monthly gifts may be substantially higher.

Website Donation Conversion Rate: Calculated from the number of donations to a participant's main website, including donations from all traffic sources (email, paid ads, organic, search, etc), divided by the number of unique website visitors.

Website Donation Page Conversion Rate: Calculated from the number of donations to a participant's main donation page, divided by the number of unique pageviews of that page. We included only unique pageviews for the one-time donation page, if a separate donation page existed for monthly gifts.

WHO ARE YOU: PARTICIPANTS BY SECTOR

Cultural

Brooklyn Public Library
Central Park Conservancy
Free Arts for Abused Children of Arizona
Friends of the Smithsonian
Historic Grant Avenue
MASSCreative
National Museum of the American Indian
National Trust for Historic Preservation

Education

50CAN
Afterschool Alliance
America's Promise Alliance
College Possible
Educators for Excellence
Perkins School for the Blind

Environmental

Alliance for the Great Lakes
Australian Conservation Foundation
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Conservation Colorado
Conservation International
Earthjustice
EcoViva
Environmental Working Group
Food & Water Watch
Friends of the Earth
Galapagos Conservancy
Gulf Restoration Network
League of Conservation Voters
Michigan League of Conservation Voters
National Audubon Society
National Geographic Society

National Parks Conservation Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nature Conservancy of Canada
New York League of Conservation Voters
Oceana
Oil Change International
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Rainforest Action Network
Sierra Club
Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation
The Nature Conservancy
The Wilderness Society
TransForm
Union of Concerned Scientists
Washington Trails Association
Waterkeeper Alliance

Health

American Cancer Society
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
Boston Children's Hospital
Canuck Place Children's Hospice
Center for Science in the Public Interest
ChangeLab Solutions
Children's Hospital Los Angeles
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE)
Free to Breathe
Health in Harmony
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (Advocacy)
National Jewish Health
National Kidney Foundation
Parkinson Canada
St. Baldrick's Foundation

Hunger/Poverty

AARP Foundation
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
CFED
Covenant House International
Feeding America
SeaShare

International

American Red Cross
Bread for the World
CARE USA
CMMB
Concern Worldwide, US
FINCA International, Inc.
International Medical Corps
Ipas
Mercy Corps
Operation Smile
Oxfam America
Pathfinder International
Project HOPE
Results for Development
UNHCR Canada
USA for UNHCR
World Bicycle Relief
World Food Program USA

Public Media

KQED
Louisville Public Media
New England Public Radio
St. Louis Public Radio

Rights

All Out
Communications Workers of America
GLAD
Innocence Project
International Center for Research on Women
Jobs with Justice

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Planned Parenthood Action Fund
Population Connection
Presente.org

Wildlife/Animal Welfare

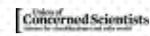
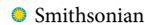
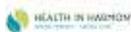
BC SPCA)
Best Friends Animal Society
Defenders of Wildlife
Endangered Species Coalition
Humane Society Legislative Fund
International Fund for Animal Welfare
Morris Animal Foundation
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
The Humane Society of the United States
Wildlife Conservation Society

Other

AARP
American Friends Service Committee
American Nurses Association
Boys and Girls Clubs of America
Camiakademi
Charity Navigator
Common Cause
Equal Justice US
Forward Together
Harlem RBI
Housing Action Illinois
Northern Virginia Family Service
People For the American Way
PeopleForBikes
RAINN
St. Joseph's Indian School
United Farm Workers
Vera Institute of Justice
Westchester Children's Association

WHO ARE YOU: PARTICIPANTS







Ibanez

2016 EMAIL METRICS

METRIC	Type of Message	All	Cultural	Education	Environmental	Health	Hunger/ Poverty	International	Public Media	Rights	Wildlife/ Animal Welfare
OPEN RATE	Advocacy	13%			12%	15%		11%		13%	13%
	Fundraising	13%	17%	18%	13%	14%	13%	9%	18%	13%	13%
	Newsletter	14%	20%	16%	14%	15%	12%	11%	24%	15%	12%
CLICK-THROUGH RATE	Advocacy	1.9%			2.7%	0.9%		1.0%		2.0%	2.8%
	Fundraising	0.38%	0.42%	0.57%	0.46%	0.38%	0.26%	0.29%		0.35%	0.56%
	Newsletter	1.5%	1.6%	1.4%	1.7%	1.2%	0.9%	0.4%		1.0%	1.5%
PAGE COMPLETION RATE	Advocacy	74%			80%	56%		64%		78%	83%
	Fundraising	17%	17%		18%	15%	22%	21%		12%	12%
RESPONSE RATE	Advocacy	1.6%			2.2%	0.6%		0.6%		1.6%	2.3%
	Fundraising	0.05%	0.09%		0.05%	0.05%	0.04%	0.05%		0.05%	0.06%
AVERAGE GIFT	One-Time	\$103	\$102	\$145	\$84	\$115	\$114	\$154	\$113	\$66	\$58
	Monthly	\$27	\$22	\$53	\$20	\$41	\$29	\$34	\$83	\$18	\$21

pet sounds: music to do data by

we asked our benchmarks study participants to share their favorite music to groove to while crunching digital stats.

the next time you're pulling data, slip on your headphones and enjoy the ultimate m+r chart party playlist: 2pac • adele

• against me! • arcade fire • ashanti + fat joe • awolnation

• band of horses • beastie boys • beyoncé • beyoncé

• beyoncé beyoncé beyoncé • blondie • bob marley •

bob schneider • bomba estereo • brian fallon • burning

down the house • cake • and eating it too • cosmic sea

• daft punk • david bowie • dead or alive • ed sheeran

• emancipator • eric prydz • data's more fun when you're listening to funky music • feist • fleetwood mac • go west

• hall and oates • hamilton • jay z • jimi hendrix • joey

bada\$\$ • josh ritter • kenny loggins • kraftwerk • kyte

• leslie odom, jr. • mary chapin carpenter • michael

jackson • motörhead • mozart • did you ever think you

would see motörhead next to mozart? • mumford and

sons • npr • we love that this playlist randomly includes

an entire public radio station • paul leonard-morgan •

pinegrove • prince • puccini • we are really sad that prince

and queen aren't next to each other. but that's the

alphabet i guess • queen • radiohead • if benchmarks

had a band it could be called ratiohead • rage against

the machine • ramones • ratatat • rihanna • robert

palmer • run the jewels • satin jackets • solange • star trek:

data song • st. vincent • the archies • the beatles • the clash



clan • see? we told you we had a diverse pool of participants. find the full playlist on spotify: <http://sptfy.com/y0z>

the xx • tkay maida • tommy tutone • wu-tang

stones • the tragically hip • the velvet underground

• the rolling



*Although we've come to the end of the road,
still I can't let go...*

Look inside for your infographic and a special surprise



*I like the way you are
The way you ain't
I like your honesty, integrity,
It levels me, so please don't ever change*

— Beyoncé

