How Strong is Your Social Net?

Overview of National Findings and Greater New Orleans Area results

Prepared for:

The Arts Council of New Orleans

and The University of New Orleans Graduate Program in Arts Administration
How Strong Is Your Social Net?

Acknowledgements

- The How Strong Is Your Social Net? Study is conducted annually by Trudel | MacPherson Arts Consultants in partnership with Sen Associates
  - Trudel | MacPherson Arts Consulting (www.trudelmacpherson.com) specializes in arts engagement and works to help organizations be more effective and stand out from the crowd. The consultancy's main focus areas are brand development and marketing outreach, using multiple online and traditional communications channels, constituency engagement, event management and peer learning opportunities.
How Strong Is Your Social Net?

Acknowledgements

- Trudel | MacPherson researchers worked with the Arts Council of New Orleans and the University of New Orleans Graduate Program in Arts Administration to compare national findings with those of a group of 24 Greater New Orleans arts organizations and presented findings and conducted a *Strengthening Your Social Net* workshop in February 2012 at the University of New Orleans.

- The researchers extend thanks to all the greater New Orleans area arts groups which participated in the study; Gene Meneray, Director of the Arts Business Program at the New Orleans Arts Council; Harmon Greenblatt, Director, and Tony Miccoci, Assistant Director of the University of New Orleans Graduate Program in Arts Administration.
About the How Strong Is Your Social Net? Study

- **Background**
  - No *comprehensive studies* exist about adoption and use of digital media in arts organizations.
  - Digital media are changing the *experience of the arts* and the definition of the audience.
About this project (continued)

- **Research Scope**
  - National: invited groups in all 50 states, responses received from groups in 45
  - More than 1,600 respondents
  - Arts organizations of all types and sizes
  - The surveys were collected between December of 2010 and September 2011
  - National baseline gathered by invitation (47 arts conveners total)
About this project (continued)

- Research Goals
  - Provide a **broad snapshot** of the state of digital communications in the arts
  - Provide **deep insights** into attitudes and trends
  - Create an **online resource** to measure digital media usage and attitudes in the arts on an **ongoing** basis
The good news

- The **panic is over**!
- **Adoption** of digital media is **on the rise**, but more importantly, so is experimentation
- **Budgets** and **geography** are not a constraint
- Respondents are reporting that they are achieving **results**
Still a ways to go in some areas

- There is still a tendency to treat digital media as one-way communication
  - Most arts groups are resource challenged
  - There is good measurement of basic metrics, but uneven measurement of interaction
  - Over half of national respondents have not changed anything based on audience feedback
  - Most respondents are still “blanketing”
Still a ways to go in some areas (continued)

- Digital communications are still not integrated into an overall communications strategy
  - Still treated by many as an outlier, seen as being about the technology
- Quality control for digital media is uneven
- No consistent assignment of responsibility or ownership
About the respondents

- 1,601 respondents nationwide
- From 840 towns, cities, or parts of major metro areas
- Almost 50% are organizations with operating budgets under $500k
- Most respondents are directly responsible for digital and social media in their organizations
Where respondents are located
About the respondents: type of arts group

- Multidisciplinary...
- Other
- Theater
- Music
- Visual art
- Dance
- Film/video

0% - 25% - 50%
About the respondents
(Greater New Orleans Area)

- 24 respondents in four arts discipline categories
  - Theater 8
  - Visual art 6
  - Multidisciplinary arts presenter 5
  - Other 3
  - Music and Dance 1 of each

- Budget size similar to national profile
  - Largest budget category: Under $500k (15 groups or 68%)
What channels are they using? (National)

- **Email**: Constantly
- **Facebook**: Often
- **Website components**: Often
- **YouTube**: Sometimes
- **Twitter**: Sometimes
- **Wikipedia**: Rarely
- **Flickr**: Rarely
- **LinkedIn**: Don't use
What channels are used? (Greater New Orleans Area)

- New Orleans groups track closely to national profile in channels used, except:
  - Less frequent use of social components of websites 57.8% vs. 72% nationally
  - Less frequent use of YouTube 62% vs. 72% nationally
How’s this working out? (National)

- Best results
- Major results
- Good results
- Some results
- No results

Categories:
- Building live participation
- Developing fan networks
- Fundraising
- Ticket sales

Percentage:
- 0%
- 25%
- 50%
How’s this working out?  
(Greater New Orleans Area)

- New Orleans groups’ results track closely to national profile, except:
  - A greater proportion of New Orleans groups (2 out of the 24) report digital and social media efforts “Have become mission critical” in all five categories of results, including “other”
  - Success with fundraising: 73.7% of New Orleans groups reported Some, Good, Major or Mission-critical fundraising results (vs. 63.8% nationally)
Internal attitudes toward digital media (National)

- Less than 1/3 reported getting into (or struggling with) digital media as a result of pressure
  - 30% said “our audience expects it of us”
  - Approximately 1/4 driven by peer or competitor pressure
  - Just under 1/4 daunted by the technical aspects
New Orleans groups are more excited about using it but less secure about how they’re doing

- A greater proportion say they’re excited about using it: 73.7% vs. 65.2% nationally
- but a greater proportion say they’re driven by peer pressure: 36.8% vs. 23.5% nationally
- And no New Orleans group thought they were very effective overall 13.3% did nationally
Internal perceptions of digital media
(Greater New Orleans Area vs. National)

- A greater proportion report that audiences have been responding to digital and social media outreach: 94.8% vs. 87.7% nationally.

- But management seems to be more skeptical. A greater percentage say that “management thinks digital and social media are overpromising and under-delivering”: 31.7% vs. 19.1% nationally.
Staff capacity to manage digital and social media

- Nationally almost half of respondents feel that their staff does not have the time, ability, and/or willingness to properly engage:
  - 27% thought so somewhat, 10% thought so, 6% strongly 43% overall
  - New Orleans groups report feeling the staffing crunch even more 52.6% overall
Website management
(Greater New Orleans Area vs. National)

- Just over half of both national and New Orleans respondents manage their websites through “internal, proprietary or custom-built solutions”
- Only a small number nationally use open source systems (10%). Remarkably, 31.6% of New Orleans groups do!
Mobile platforms
(Greater New Orleans Area vs. National)

- Groups are extending users' experience through the use of mobile platforms, including:
  - Social mapping tools 35.7% vs. 38.8% nationally
  - Interactive experiences (contests or games) 14.3% vs. 21.3% nationally
- In New Orleans there is much higher use of text messaging: 28.6% vs. 15% nationally
What is communicated
(Greater New Orleans Area vs. National)

- Social media is being used to increase attendance and enhance the experience
  - Subscription/membership packages
    35.3% vs. 51.7% nationally
  - Last minute ticket deals
    66.7% vs. 71% nationally
  - Providing background on programming
    82.4% vs. 77.3% nationally
Ways to measure
(Greater New Orleans Area vs. National)

- Groups are measuring online activity and social engagement by tracking:
  - Website analytics  52.9% vs. 74.3% nationally
  - Coded offers  5.9% vs. 24.5% nationally
  - Fan activity in online communities  11.8% vs. 25% nationally
  - Email response tracking  53% vs. 65%. nationally
  - Staff time spent  6% (1 group) vs. 20.8% nationally
Are digital and social media delivering on their promise?

- Digital and social media efforts represent a significant return on our investment
  - Nationally 70% agreed or agreed somewhat, 11.5% agreed strongly
  - Among New Orleans respondents 68.4% agreed or agreed somewhat, 15.8% agreed strongly
Conclusions

- The next hurdle: Integration
- Develop confidence to experiment and present what you know
- Don’t take on interaction unless you can deliver
- Consider what is measured and why
- Quality is more valuable than quantity, find the influencers
- Set clear social media usage policy
- Cede control to gain influence
What’s next

- Visit our website to learn more or to get in touch (trudelmacpherson.com)
- Follow us on Twitter (@smartaboutart)
Resources

- Beth’s Blog  www.bethkanter.org/
- CultureTrack  www.laplacacohen.com//culturetrack/
- You’ve Cott Mail  mysite.verizon.net/vze1k115/id2.html
- ARTSblog Americans for the Arts  blog.artsusa.org/
- ArtsJournal.com  ArtsJournal.com