

**“People Follow People”:
The Key to a Successful YouTube Strategy for Museums**

Dixie Clough
November 30, 2011

Nearly everyone is online. In 2010, that meant 79 percent of Americans and 69 percent of Europeans—a number that is increasing every year.¹ Furthermore, video makes up 32 percent of all global consumer internet traffic and is expected to exceed 90 percent by 2013.² The global audience for online video currently is estimated to total 250 million. By 2013, the number of Internet users who regularly access online video could quadruple and reach 1 billion.³ This is why it is so important for museums to know how to incorporate YouTube and video into their messaging, something that not one museum in America appears to be doing well. The first step to using a social network properly is to understand it.

Let's start with a YouTube quiz. *What* is all the way across the sky? Do you know the comment question of the day? If I'm going to a YTF concert, or the ISA Festival, or if I'm going to VidCon to see NigaHiga IRL, do you know what I mean? Honey badger? Project4Awesome? Best Crew? DFTBA? If you don't know what I'm talking about, then you don't know YouTube. Not really. You may have seen every cute kitten video ever posted, but kitten videos are not the core of YouTube—community is. It is the YouTube community that has created all of these inside jokes and shorthand for saying things like “In Real Life” and “Don't Forget To Be Awesome,” which is the slogan for Nerdfighteria—one of the most active groups on YouTube. This YouTube community is what any museum needs to tap into if they want to have a meaningful impact online.

Three friends who wanted to create a new and easy way to share videos online created YouTube in 2005. Less than a year after the official site launched, they already had 100 million videos views per day and 65,000 new video uploads per day. In October 2006, Google purchased

¹ Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff, *Groundswell: winning in a world transformed by social technologies* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2011), 10.

² Michael Strangelove, *Watching YouTube: extraordinary videos by original people* (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2010), 10.

³ Strangelove, *Watching YouTube*, 187.

YouTube for \$1.65 billion dollars and in the years since, YouTube has grown at an exponential rate. Today it is available in 25 countries and 43 languages, has 48 hours of video uploaded every minute, and over 3 billion views a day. YouTube has incorporated advertisements, corporate channels, rentals, live streaming, and 3D and HD viewing. In fact, YouTube now boasts more HD content than any other online site with 10% of its videos available in HD.⁴

YouTube is consistently in the top ten most visited websites globally.⁵ There are over 800 million unique visitors to YouTube each month, 70 percent of which come from outside the United States. It has a stranglehold on the entry point of most online videos, with almost 40 percent of videos streamed on the web coming from YouTube.⁶ All other video streaming sites share the remaining 60 percent between them. Today such large audiences are rare. Presently, the largest networks enjoy only a 6 to 1 percent share of the American television audience, increasing the lure of the YouTube audience.⁷ It is also becoming clear that television and movie viewing is dramatically shifting to the Internet where viewers can watch it on-demand.⁸

Not only a place to catch up on television, YouTube has begun to concentrate on rolling out new features to increase its value as a social network. Now when users log in they can see content related to their social network (subscriptions and friends) and past viewing behavior (recommended videos), rather than the general most viewed content. YouTube's public relations materials indicate that future changes are designed to retain visitors, to strengthen the website's stickiness, and entice users to log in and build relationships with the website.⁹ This is the aspect of YouTube that museums should be concentrating on.

⁴ YouTube, 2011, *Press Timeline*, http://www.youtube.com/t/press_timeline (November 2011).

⁵ Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2009), 2.

⁶ Janet Wasko and Mary Erikson, "The Political Economy of YouTube," in *The YouTube Reader*, ed. Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau (Stockholm, Sweden: Logotipas, 2009), 376.

⁷ Strangelove, *Watching YouTube*, 168.

⁸ Strangelove, *Watching YouTube*, 170.

⁹ Burgess and Green, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, 104.

A survey of Internet users conducted by the Australian Museum found that 43% of online users watch videos (the highest use percentage of all social networking activities).¹⁰ The next highest activities were “read customer ratings/reviews” at 37%, “use a social network site” at 34%, and “participate in a discussion board” at 32%. Only 27% read blogs and 16% listen to podcasts. This indicates that video components of museum’s online presence should be a top priority. When asked to finish the sentence, “If the Museum were a Web site, one of the respondents said, “For a younger audience it is crucial to break up the factual information, and present it in an interactive, appealing and creative way.” This also applies to the videos museums release—they should be creative and fun to watch, with the knowledge broken up into manageable pieces. Overall, respondents thought that museums could use social spaces to promote the museum’s work in a fun and lighthearted way. As Kaplan and Haelein say in their paper on social media practices, “Nobody is interested in speaking to a boring person.” The first step is to listen to your customers as the Australian Museum has done and find out what they find interesting, enjoyable, and valuable.¹¹ By understanding whom those online community members are, what they care about, and what they are saying, museums can reach out and touch their audience in strikingly effective ways that are simply not possible by any other means.¹²

Social “technographic” profiles of online users show that young men and women, as to be expected, are more technologically active than older generations, but older adults are still represented pretty highly in many aspects of online interaction. Almost 100% of men and women, aged 18-27, are online. The most common type of interaction they participate in are

¹⁰ Lynda Kelly and Angelina Russo, “From Ladders of Participation To Networks Of Participation: Social Media and Museum Audiences,” *Museums and the Web 2008*, April 9-12, 2008, Accessed on November 25, 2011, http://www.archimuse.com/mw2008/papers/kelly_l/kelly_l.html.

¹¹ Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Haenlein, “Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media,” *Business Horizons* 53 (2010): 66, accessed November 25, 2011, doi: 10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003.

¹² L. Johnson, H. Withey, R. Smith, A. Levine, and K. Haywood, (2010), *The 2010 Horizon Report: Museum Edition*, Austin, Texas: The New Media Consortium, 14.

watching (89%) and joining networks (82%), also known as Spectators and Joiners.¹³ About half of them are Conversationalists and Critics, meaning they post to forums and join online conversations, and they also rate material online. Only 5-7% of them are inactive online. About 40-50% of them are creators, meaning they are putting original content online, blogs, videos, etc. Older Boomers, those aged 52-62, are most likely to be Spectators (59%) and 40% are also Joiners.¹⁴ They also join the ranks of Critics (23%) and Conversationalists (12%) and only 10% of them are Creators. Surprisingly, 5% of seniors, those aged 63 and above, are Creators, 49% are Spectators, and 32% are Joiners. This points out that even though young people lead the ranks in interacting online, at least half of the older generations are also pretty active online, especially in activities like reading articles and blogs and watching videos. They shouldn't be counted out of the museum's online audience.

A survey of museums conducted in 2010 on the current social media practices by museums found that though most museums (90%) are involved in some way with social media, most are using it as a one-way conversation tools and almost a half of them are unsatisfied with their current efforts.¹⁵ However, according to the survey, there does seem to be some evidence to suggest that museums are trying to increase their use of social media for more two-way and multi-way communication strategies. Fifty percent of respondents answered that they believed their current efforts were "somewhat successful" and 29% responded that their current social media efforts were "successful" or "very successful." Those who think they are successful tend to use social media for in a conversational way than efforts than respondents with less social media success. In general American museums using social media believe that it is important to

¹³ Li and Bernoff, *Groundswell*, 46.

¹⁴ Li and Bernoff, *Groundswell*, 53.

¹⁵ Adrienne Fletcher, "Museums and Social Media," *Curator's Corner* blog, March 26, 2010, Accessed November 27, 2011, <http://gmoa.blogspot.com/2010/03/museums-and-social-media.html>.

do so and that using social media is improving the speed of communication with the public. Facebook is seen as most effective with Twitter in second place, which is represented in the number of museums that have a Facebook page and those that have a Twitter account.

One of the first pioneers of the social media effort was the Brooklyn Museum—a museum that is still considered to be at the forefront of the museum social media field. They have tried nearly every social media site that exists—blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Foursquare, Posse, MySpace, and most recently Meetup.com. According to one blogger, Richard McManus, many of these applications are infrequently updated and he suggests that perhaps the Brooklyn Museum is overstretched.¹⁶ Shelly Bernstein replied to McManus' post explaining that it was important for them to experiment with different media in order to figure out what would work. In fact, the Brooklyn Museum plans to retire its My Space account and is also trying to retire its Tumblr account. She also explained that their strategy is to stay personal, stay away from marketing, update when they have something specific to say and keep the noise to a minimum. She notes that “this is a very different strategy from other museums” and is what makes them different from the rest. In a *New York Times* article about Social Media in museums, she stated, “It’s less about technology and more about what the visitor can bring to the equation. In the end, we want people to feel ownership of this museum. We ask them to tell us what they think. They can give us a bad review; when we make a mistake they can come to our rescue. We want to engage with our community.”¹⁷

One of the ways the Brooklyn Museum interacts with the community is their virtual membership called 1stfans, in which members take part in monthly face-to-face events with

¹⁶ Richard MacManus, “Social Media Case Study: Brooklyn Museum,” *Read, Write, Web*, September 5, 2011, accessed November 25, 2011, http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/social_media_case_study_brooklyn_museum.php.

¹⁷ Carol Vogel, “The Spirit of Sharing,” *New York Times*, March 16, 2011, accessed November 25, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/17/arts/design/museums-pursue-engagement-with-social-media.html?pagewanted=all>.

museum staff and other museum members at Target First Saturdays. Until 2010, they also had access to an exclusive, online relationship with the museum via social-networking sites like Facebook, Flickr and Twitter, but due to the lack of response on these sites, the Brooklyn Museum retired the 1stfans presence on these sites and moved everything to Meetup.com. In the process, Shelley wrote a detailed blog post about the decision making sure that members understood the reasons behind the move.¹⁸

The Brooklyn Museum is a fearless museum when it comes to social media and makes sure to understand what aspects of their strategy work and changes them when they don't. So it is a mystery to me why they haven't done something to their YouTube channel to make it more successful.¹⁹ They have just over two thousand fans and very little interaction on their videos (though there is a lot of feminist bashing on the feminism talks). They do have a small series of "Off the Wall" talks about art that have one host, but it is still very stilted and not engaging.²⁰ They probably don't know that there is a way to use YouTube as a social media site, otherwise, out of any museum, they would be the ones to experiment.

Nonprofits, especially museums, have begun to load videos onto YouTube, but their efforts have yielded minimal results. Most of the museum YouTube projects that have been celebrated in the museum field have been contests. Perhaps the most successful was the Guggenheim's YouTube Play project where people around the world vied for a place in the museum's video-art Biennial. The Guggenheim received 23,358 submissions from 91 countries

¹⁸ Shelley Bernstein, "1stfans: Shifting Focus and Moving to Meetup.com," *Brooklyn Museum* blog, November 3, 2010, accessed November 27, 2011, <http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/community/blogosphere/2010/11/03/1stfans-shifting-focus-and-moving-to-meetupcom/>.

¹⁹ Brooklyn Museum, (2011) Brooklyn Museum, [YouTube channel] retrieved November 27, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/user/BrooklynMuseum>.

²⁰ Brooklyn Museum, (2007) "Off The Wall: The Mellow Pad by Stuart Davis," [video] retrieved November 27, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/user/BrooklynMuseum#p/c/B22441A3BC1C98B3/0/snTurVPWI1c>.

and more than 24 million views on YouTube.²¹ Other famous projects were the national anthem singing contest put on by the National Museum of American History in which the winner was able to sing both at the museum and a baseball game, and the Museum of Science and Industry's contest to live in the museum for a month. However, though the museum has contestants send in a video entry to the competition, the winners write a blog about their experiences, they do not vlog about them. Most of the footage on YouTube of the winners is from visitors, not the organization. This is a huge missed opportunity for the museum to actually show people what is happening, instead of telling them. In her blog post, "Self-Expression Is Overrated," Nina Simon points out that few social media users are creators—people who write blog posts, upload photos onto Flickr, or share videos on YouTube—but many museums are "fixated" on creators.²² They want people to create videos for them, or create an exhibit on their own, when, in fact, most fans of museums would prefer to watch and perhaps comment, but not create.

When not hosting contests, museums tend to use YouTube like it's PBS or the History Channel. The clips are backed by generic piano music, and the videos contain stilted interviews. There is never one person you can build a relationship with, and worse, there is only a one-way conversation. If you type "museum" in the search bar, the only video on the first page of results that comes from an official museum site is an interview with MGMT (a boy band) on the Guggenheim channel.²³ If you then filter the results for top-viewed videos, there are only two official museum videos on the first page of results—"The Known Universe" a video uploaded by

²¹ Vogel, "The Spirit of Sharing."

²² Nina Simon, "Self-Expression is Overrated; Better Constraints Make Better Participatory Experiences," *Museum 2.0* blog, March 16, 2009, accessed November 25, 2011, [http://museومتtwo.blogspot.com/2009/03/self-expression-is-over-rated-better.html](http://museومتwo.blogspot.com/2009/03/self-expression-is-over-rated-better.html).

²³ Guggenheim (2011) *MGMT at the Guggenheim Museum Nov 10 and 11, 2011* [Video] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iSUEU-CF1g>.

the American Museum of Natural History in 2009, which has received over 9 million views²⁴ and the other uploaded earlier this year by the National Firearms Museum about an air rifle used by Lewis and Clark and has almost 2.5 million views.²⁵ The comments on the rifle video are very interested in how the gun worked, and one thing to note is that The National Firearms Museum has answered some of the questions in the comments and even directed someone to their museum. They are beginning to join the conversations on YouTube, which is more than most museums do. The other museum related video on the first page of most-viewed results is one with over 6 million views loaded by ASTC earlier in 2011. It is a demonstration of levitating fields that has everyone in the comments asking where their flying cars are.²⁶ Once again filter the results to show the top-rated videos and you get the AMNH Universe video, the ATSC levitation video, and a video of a science talk hosted by Neil DeGrasse-Tyson at AMNH loaded in September 2010, on Life, the Universe and Everything with just over 42,000 views.²⁷ Most of the comments focus on the fact that Neil DeGrasse-Tyson is their favorite scientist.

If you go to the YouTube channels of two of the largest and most famous museums in the United States, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Smithsonian, they are both creating similar videos. The Met has conversations with curators that appear to be podcasts they converted to video using still pictures. They also have documentary style videos that show the restoration of rooms and the preparation of exhibits. These videos contain voice-overs while the museum staff does their work. Most of their videos have less than 10,000 views and less than 50

²⁴ American Museum of Natural History (2011) *The Known Universe by AMNH* [Video] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17jymDn0W6U>

²⁵ National Firearms Museum (2011) *Girandoni air rifle as used by Lewis and Clark. A National Firearms Museum Treasure Gun*. [Video] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pqFyKh-rUI>.

²⁶ Association of Science and Technology Centers (2011) *Quantum Levitation* [Video] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ws6AAhTw7RA>.

²⁷ American Museum of Natural History (2011) *SciCafe: Life the Universe and Everything with Neil deGrasse Tyson* [Video] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4KRZQQ_eICo.

comments. The channel itself has fewer than 5,000 subscribers.²⁸ For the Met, that has over 500,000 fans on Facebook and tens of thousands of members, this showing on YouTube is dismal.

If you switch over to the Smithsonian, you instantly encounter a huge problem because almost every entity within the Smithsonian has their own YouTube channel, from SITES to the Zoo to the SmithsonianTV Channel and, of course, many of the museums—it's very difficult to find the main Smithsonian channel (especially when one of the subchannels is called Smithsonian Channel). On each one of these channels you encounter even less subscribers than on The Met's YouTube account. The highest subscribed account is that of the Smithsonian Channel, but even it has fewer than 4,000 subscribers, and most of their videos have less than 500 views, often less than 200, and most have less than 30 comments.²⁹ Even the zoo, home of cute, fluffy animals—YouTube's bread and butter—has less than 2,000 subscribers and only half of the videos have over ten thousand views.³⁰ The main channel, called Smithsonian Videos, does much the same as The Met, except slightly better.³¹ Instead of podcasts with picture overlay, the Smithsonian has video of the scientists and curators speaking and doing their job. However, the interviews are rather stilted and would be better served on a learning channel on TV instead of YouTube. They also have more spontaneous videos of events at the Smithsonian, like the Folkways Festival or concerts, but there is no interlocking link that gets people to come back again and again to the channel. This is what museums are not understanding about YouTube. Yes, museums can load videos and people will stumble across them and watch, but

²⁸ Metropolitan Museum of Art. (2011) MetMuseum [YouTube channel] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/user/metmuseum>.

²⁹ Smithsonian Institution (2011) Smithsonian Channel [YouTube channel] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/user/smithsonianchannel?blend=3&ob=5>.

³⁰ Smithsonian Institution (2011) Smithsonian's National Zoo [YouTube channel] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/user/SmithsonianNZIP>.

³¹ Smithsonian Institution (2011) Smithsonian Videos [YouTube channel] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/user/SmithsonianVideos>.

what museums should be aiming for is to become a top-subscribed channel and to build a loyal audience. This is how they will stand out from the thousands of videos posted daily on YouTube and this is how they can get people excited about their museum and what they do.

There are hundreds of hours of video posted a day that are demanding viewers' attention. It is nearly impossible to get noticed among the plethora of videos available, especially if the content is uninspiring. Museums are treating YouTube like it's another form of television—a one-way conversation from the museum to those watching the videos. It is important to become a part of the YouTube community because only 1 percent of online audiences do most of the interacting, the remaining 99 percent only interact occasionally or never.³² It is that 1 percent that museums need to tap into. Though other viewers may watch your videos occasionally if they become viral, it is only a loyal community of fans that the museum will be able to galvanize into action when needed. If a museum can join the YouTube community, they are almost guaranteed hundreds of thousands of views per video, but it requires the museum to have a conversation with both users that upload videos and the audience the simply watch the videos.

Seventy-nine percent of YouTube videos are estimated to be user-generated content.³³ And of those user-generated videos, the most commented on, liked and most discussed are vlogs, making up nearly 40 percent of the “Most Discussed” videos—the videos with the most comments.³⁴ Vlogs are video-blogs, a style in which one or two people talk directly to the camera, using jump shot cuts and sometimes editing to make it appear that he or she is having a conversation with himself or herself. These vlogs can be a discussion of current events in the news or a recap of the person's day. Often vloggers incorporate comedy sketches into their

³² Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau, “Introduction,” in *The YouTube Reader*, ed. Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau (Stockholm, Sweden: Logotipas, 2009), 12.

³³ Strangelove, *Watching YouTube*, 10.

³⁴ Burgess and Green, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, 53.

videos or footage of their experiences. To build an online presence as a vlogger requires time, patience, and persistence.³⁵ However, if the material is interesting enough and the creator has the right connections (i.e. popular YouTube friends), their rise to the top of the most subscribed list can be meteoric. Freddie Wong, a YouTuber who produces and directs short action films with cool special effects, started uploading videos in 2009 and gained over a million subscribers in less than a year—currently he has over 2.5 million subscribers.³⁶ Perhaps the most famous YouTuber is RayWilliamJohnson, who twice a week releases a comedy critique of the top viral videos of the week. He started uploading in 2009 and just this year knocked NigaHiga, the longtime most-subscribed YouTuber, out of the top subscribed spot with over 5 million subscribers.³⁷ Ray then created a channel where he releases original songs with animated music videos, which took less than a month to become one of the most subscribed channels, and is currently at number 19 with over 1.6 million subscribers.³⁸

These are just a couple examples of most popular YouTubers. Each one is unique, but their videos are funny, entertaining, and most of all, they ask the audience to participate. NigaHiga's viewers are encouraged to ask him to be something in his next video, like "Dear Ryan, can you be a makeup guru?" or "Dear Ryan, can you be extreme?" He then incorporates his response videos into his regular line up of sketch comedy. RayWilliamJohnson's comments make no sense to someone who hasn't seen the video because what Ray has done is encourage viewers to send in a video response that contains a question to ask the viewers. He then picks one of the question videos and near the end of every video shows the video as the "comment question

³⁵ Burgess and Green, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, 74.

³⁶ Wong, Freddie (2011) FreddieW [YouTube channel] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/user/freddiew>.

³⁷ Ray William Johnson (2011) RayWilliamJohnson [YouTube channel] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/user/RayWilliamJohnson?blend=1&ob=4>.

³⁸ Ray William Johnson (2011) YourFavoriteMartian [YouTube channel] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/user/Yourfavoritemartian>.

of the day”. Most of the comments on his videos are of people trying to write a creative answer to the questions so they can be featured at the very end of the video when Ray reminds viewers what the last question was and then displays a screen shot of five to eight answers. It’s fun for viewers to see their answers on the video and it means that Ray gets tens of thousands of comments on every one of his videos. Furthermore, if you go to one of the videos he reviews, you will find hundreds of comments referring to Ray’s video. The same cross over effect will occur with videos of YouTubers that everyone knows are friends in real life. For instance, NigaHiga now lives with three other YouTubers and they often appear in each other’s films. The latest NigaHiga video is a fake sales pitch for a “Hard and Black Realistic But Not Real Gun.”³⁹ One of his housemates, Dominic, released a video on the same day about something entirely different, but it featured a fake gun.⁴⁰ The top-favorited comment on his video? “Look it’s a Hard and Black Realistic But Not Real Gun.”

Many comments on famous YouTubers’ videos repeat the funniest lines of the video or comment on another funny moment, however, when the content of the video is more educational, the comments tend to follow suit. Some of the most educational videos are created by the VlogBrothers—two brothers, Hank and John, who live in different states and started posting videos on YouTube to keep up with each other’s lives.⁴¹ Their videos discuss things like the new NASA telescope, the French Revolution, the national debt, the upcoming legislation that might censor the Internet and *The Great Gatsby*. They also do more silly things like talk about the best Zombie stories ever made or talk about giraffe sex (which is really weird). The comments on their videos follow suit, with people leaving thoughtful comments about the subject of the day or

³⁹ NigaHiga (2011) *Hard and Black Realistic But Not Real Gun* [Video] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=477q4Gn53tI>.

⁴⁰ Dominic Show (2011) *Justin Beiber Haunts My Dreams* [Video] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qRuc7Iu4Y>.

⁴¹ John Green and Hank Green (2011) VlogBrothers [YouTube channel] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/user/vlogbrothers>.

having respectful debates or conversations with each other using the @reply method. On their less serious videos, the comments are full of inside jokes and counts of how many times Hank pushed up his glasses or what John's hair looks like. This proves that it is possible for museums to get viewers to leave thoughtful comments on videos that show their mission is working, even if they use humor to get their message across.

When it comes to museum videos, barely any of them have comments, thoughtful or otherwise. Nina Simon wrote a blog about the lack of interaction at *It Is What It Is*, an exhibition meant to create dialogue about the Iraq War.⁴² In Nina's opinion, *It Is What It Is* was not designed with sufficient structure to support dialogue. "It doesn't clearly welcome people in or bridge the social barriers that keep us from naturally talking to strangers...*It Is What It Is* and other unstructured platforms just plunk down the people and hope for dialogue." This is the way museums use YouTube—they plunk a video down in cyberspace and don't ask for comments. The social barrier of starting a conversation with a faceless museum is too high. They don't make it clear that interaction is wanted, but perhaps, too, they don't realize that YouTube is a place where people love to comment and debate or just argue with strangers. In the comments of the blog post, Andrea Bandelli wrote that none of the videos about the exhibit had any comments. Nina replied, "Against the standards of YouTube, these view counts are too low for many comments." This may be true for museum videos and other videos uploaded with no following and no obvious interactive element, but I have been to videos just minutes after they uploaded and there have been 50 or more comments already—granted these videos were uploaded by popular YouTube stars, but to me, this comment (and the unsuccessful YouTube channel of the Brooklyn Museum) shows that even the most "current" museum minds aren't aware of the

⁴² Nina Simon, "'It Is What It Is,' and the challenges of Dialogue-Focused Exhibits," *Museum 2.0* blog, August 13, 2009, accessed November 25, 2011, <http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2009/08/it-is-what-it-is-and-challenges-of.html>.

possibilities of a successful YouTube channel.

Museums sometimes try to make viral videos to get on the most viewed list, but it is more important for museums to join the list of channels that are “Most Subscribed” rather than the ones most watched because although the most subscribed YouTubers are not the most viewed channels or videos on YouTube—that distinction goes to corporate channels and viral videos—none of the most viewed videos are the ones in the most discussed list. Most of the views are coming from people who want to watch, not participate. One of the most common most-watched videos are from television shows, but while television content may draw people to YouTube to re-watch a good clip or watch something they missed, traditional media content doesn’t invite conversational and inter-creative participation.⁴³ Without participation, there is no chance the viewers would feel like they are part of a community that would go out of its way to help the creator of the videos.

For a small, but growing, proportion of users, YouTube is a social network site. Unlike sites such as Facebook, where social networking is based on personal profiles and “friending”, in YouTube the video content is the main communication method and the indicator of social clustering.⁴⁴ It takes good content, and a great personality to build a successful YouTube channel. Lange, a YouTube scholar, calls these videos “videos of affinity” because they allow more personalized contacts and interaction that gives the feeling of being connected to a person who shares mutual beliefs or interests.⁴⁵ People follow people—not companies. As Jennifer Aaker and Andy Smith say in their book, *The Dragonfly Effect*, “Put a name and a face and a few

⁴³ Burgess and Green, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, 54.

⁴⁴ Burgess and Green, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, pg 58.

⁴⁵ Patricia Lange, “Videos of Affinity on YouTube,” in *The YouTube Reader*, ed. Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau (Stockholm, Sweden: Logotipas, 2009), 83.

personal facts behind your cause, and you will see increased engagement.”⁴⁶ Or as Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff say in their book, *Groundswell*, “Never forget that the groundswell is about person-to-person activity. This means you as a person must be ready to connect to people you haven’t met, customers of yours.”⁴⁷ No one is moved to get into a conversation with a faceless company. It would be like talking to an idea or a building. You need to put an actual person in front of the company. That person has to be the face, the voice, and the personality of the company in social media, otherwise viewer interaction is going to be sporadic, minimal, and uninspired. In all social media it is important to add a humanizing factor. Shel Israel, a Twitter expert, states that every corporate Twitter success story has involved accounts that integrate a personal factor into business conversation.⁴⁸ This personal factor really plays into social networking. Museums are excited when they get 20 or so comments on Facebook posts, but YouTube stars are getting hundreds of comments on Facebook posts. It’s because the viewers feel like they know them and they know they are talking to an actual person.

However, it takes more than just a great and popular personality for a channel to be successful. Otherwise, Oprah⁴⁹ and Ellen⁵⁰ would have the most successful channels on YouTube. Instead they aren’t even in the top 50 subscribed channels and most of their videos have less than 100,000 views. In fact, when Oprah first joined YouTube, she made the mistake of believing her TV presence would translate to popularity on YouTube. She did not understand the YouTube culture and viewers ended up objecting to the channel’s “one-way conversation” approach and they voiced concerns that the addition of mainstream media into YouTube meant

⁴⁶ Jennifer Aaker and Andy Smith, *The Dragonfly Effect: Quick, Effective, and Powerful Ways to Use Social Media to Drive Social Change* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 42.

⁴⁷ Li and Bernoff, *Groundswell*, 280.

⁴⁸ Shel Israel, *Twitterville: How Businesses Can Thrive in the New Global Neighborhoods* (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2009), 261.

⁴⁹ Oprah (2011) Oprah [YouTube channel] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/user/OPRAH?blend=1&ob=4>.

⁵⁰ Ellen DeGeneres (2011) The Ellen Show [YouTube channel] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheEllenShow?feature=chclk>.

the beginning of corporate “colonization”, making “authentic” YouTube participation less visible and less valued.⁵¹ Perhaps one of the biggest YouTube faux pas the Oprah YouTube channel committed was that for a time, it did not allow unmoderated comments—deleting negative comments and censoring what was posted. Authenticity is central to the culture of YouTube and is a matter of great concern to viewers.⁵² Many prominent YouTubers are reluctant to moderate or ban comments because that kind of control is counter to the openness of YouTube.⁵³ Oprah’s channel has also never progressed beyond clips that are simply an extension of her television show, never directly engaging any of the people of the YouTube community.⁵⁴ There has to be some form of interaction with the audience and the audience *has* to be able to freely comment on the videos. Otherwise, the censorship is going to turn viewers off and lead to an outcry against the channel.

Lynda Kelley and Angelina Russo note in their study on Internet users that, “When social media such as blogs, podcasts and wikis are used by museums, they provoke the systems of authority and custodianship which museums have, over history, tried to establish.”⁵⁵ The younger members of the museum community are more likely to embrace this open communication model because we’ve grown up with the internet and expect to have free and open access to almost all information. This movement for openness and conversational relationships between institutions and the public is not going to go away just because those used to another way of working want it to. The idea that museums should open themselves up for not only good comments, but also the bad is foreign to many in the field, but this is the way of

⁵¹ Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, “The Entrepreneurial Vlogger: Participatory Culture Beyond the Professional-Amateur Divide,” in *The YouTube Reader*, ed. Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau (Stockholm, Sweden: Logotipas, 2009), 101.

⁵² Strangelove, *Watching YouTube*, 186.

⁵³ Burgess and Green, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, 96.

⁵⁴ Burgess and Green, “The Entrepreneurial Vlogger: Participatory Culture Beyond the Professional-Amateur Divide,” in *The YouTube Reader*, 103.

⁵⁵ Lynda Kelly and Angelina Russo, “From Ladders of Participation To Networks Of Participation.”

YouTube and really of the entire Internet. Everyone knows that “trolls” (those who leave incendiary comments on videos just to start fights or be negative) exist on YouTube and give him or her the lack of attention they deserve. As long as museums address the legitimate bad comments in a timely and conciliatory manner, there is nothing to be afraid of.

Besides allowing unfettered comments, other important activities for a YouTube channel to take part in is subscribing to other channels, participating in discussions in the YouTube community, making videos that draw on other YouTube stars’ characters and material, leaving comments, or simply watching. Success requires more than just posting and watching, it requires direct, ongoing participation within the community.⁵⁶ Vlog entries often respond to other vlogs, carrying out discussions across YouTube and also directly address comments left on previous entries. Corporate channels rarely do these things. And, in fact, campaigns have missed opportunities where they think of the Internet as just another place to put their TV ads.⁵⁷ The biggest exception is when Old Spice created a YouTube campaign in which their popular commercial character, the “manly man”, responded to Twitter and YouTube comments in character.⁵⁸ Although short-lived, it was highly popular and garnered great responses on YouTube.

Other than censoring its audience, another problem with the current corporate social media strategy is that large companies have Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other social applications, but those applications are scattered and uncoordinated.⁵⁹ YouTube stars are able to make a big impact because all of their applications feature them speaking to their fans and all of the messages are coordinated and in one voice. Sometimes they will put out a call for extras for

⁵⁶ Burgess and Green, “The Entrepreneurial Vlogger: Participatory Culture Beyond the Professional-Amateur Divide,” in *The YouTube Reader*, 105.

⁵⁷ Aaker and Smith, *The Dragonfly Effect*, 84.

⁵⁸ Old Spice (2011) Old Spice [YouTube channel] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/user/OldSpice>.

⁵⁹ Li and Bernoff, *Groundswell*, 261-2.

one of their videos over Twitter or announce a meet and greet that you won't see unless you follow them on Twitter, or they'll let you know on Facebook that a new video is going to be posted later that day so you know to go check YouTube. They'll often have moments on Twitter in which they use an hour or so to take questions from fans or just talk to them. Sometimes they'll create a live streaming show to do the same in video format on the web. YouTubers are distinctly aware that putting messages out on other social media will drive traffic to other branches of their online presence. They are also aware that talking to their viewers personally is what makes viewers that much more loyal. It is these loyal viewers that buy tickets to see them in concert or buy their t-shirts, posters, and other merchandise.

Building a relationship with viewers is key. Organizations can't just appear and ask for money or help. They have to establish trust with viewers first to make any appeals credible and meaningful to people.⁶⁰ As stated previously, it will take some time to create a following on YouTube, but as it is happening it is important to engage the followers you do have, which will in turn build your following. Try to gain social capital by linking to vlogs and commenting on videos, working with different people on multiple channels, and treating everyone as equals. These are the things that will create trust and reciprocity and make the relationships meaningful and resilient.⁶¹ You should also do things like introduce and connect people to one another, facilitate authentic conversations that are meaningful to the other person, and share resources, links, and information.⁶² Keep this ratio in mind—30 percent of the posts on social media should be about the individual and organization, and 70 percent of the posts should be about sharing, applauding, and linking to the work of others.⁶³ All of this sharing and relationship building in

⁶⁰ Beth Kanter and Allison Fine *The Networked NonProfit: Connecting With Social Media to Drive Change* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 146.

⁶¹ Kanter and Fine, *The Networked NonProfit*, 33.

⁶² Kanter and Fine, *The Networked NonProfit*, 36.

⁶³ Kanter and Fine, *The Networked NonProfit*, 52.

the beginning and throughout your time on YouTube and other social media networks will come back to you in the future. Once people have had a positive experience with an organization, they are much more likely to act as an ambassador on behalf of the cause.⁶⁴

When a channel has a loyal following and a reason to do so, it is possible to ask the viewers to do things to help you—something called crowdsourcing. Crowdsourcing can be classified into four categories: collective intelligence, crowd creation, crowd voting, or crowd funding.⁶⁵ Perhaps the best crowdsourcers on YouTube right now are the VlogBrothers. They have less than 1 million subscribers, but they are perhaps the two most influential YouTubers in the YouTube community. They started VidCon, a conference for YouTubers to get together and learn from each other and to just meet in real life (IRL). They also started Project4Awesome in which YouTubers pick a charity and on one day they all post videos about that charity and encourage their viewers to donate money. Last year, they incorporated a live streaming show and a raffle with prizes from famous YouTubers and raised over \$100,000. On top of all of this and their new social networking site, InYourPants, which encourages crowdsourced research, and their various other YouTube channels, they have also created a community called Nerdfighteria in which it is cool to be interested in learning. The slogan for Nerdfighteria is Don't Forget to Be Awesome (DFTBA), and their mission is to "Decrease World Suck". There is a DFTBA store in which Nerdfighter music and t-shirts and posters are sold and a "bank" funded by Nerdfighters that is used to loan money to Kiva projects and pay for other charitable deeds like sending a plane full of supplies to Haiti after the earthquake. The Vlogbrothers are the ultimate example of YouTubers building social capital and using their viewers to complete tasks, whether that is researching where the hidden library of Ivan the Terrible is, or raising money for charity.

⁶⁴ Tom Watson, *Causewired: Plugging In, Getting Involved, Changing the World* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 176.

⁶⁵ Kanter and Fine, *The Networked NonProfit*, 107-8.

There are many options for what a museum can ask from the crowd, but regardless of what the ask is, it is important to keep in mind the your ask should highly focused, specific, and actionable. It should also be as simple as possible because behavior change occurs when the behavior is easy to do.⁶⁶ Though you can ask for crowd interaction in a number of ways, the thing that is most on the top of museum's minds is the potential to raise money online. However, not many organizations have had much success doing so. Two attempts at online fundraising with entirely different results were conducted by the Museum of Science in Boston and the Louvre in France. The Museum of Science in Boston is using the museum's Facebook page and a fundraising app, Fundrazr, to raise \$2,500 towards renovation of its planetarium.⁶⁷ They offer a few incentives to donors, like VIP events, free passes and other bonuses to those who sponsor seats in the Planetarium. Over one year after starting the campaign they are still only halfway to their goal. The other example of online fundraising done by the Louvre was a rousing success. In 2010, the Louvre needed one million euros to buy a painting for its collection. They began their online campaign on November 13, 2010, and reached their goal December 20, 2010. They received over 5,000 donations from France, Belgium, Spain, and the United States. Contributions ranged from one euro to 40,000 euros with the average donation at around 150 euros. French companies and foundations also gave money.⁶⁸ Perhaps the key to the Louvre's success was the scandal of the Louvre opening up to online fundraising—they got a lot of press in France. They also have a larger fan base than the Boston Museum of Science and had a more concrete goal and a deadline. It is often suggested that organizations set distinct timelines for raising the money and it is best for that timeline to be relatively short in order to build urgency in potential donors. The

⁶⁶ Aaker and Smith, *The Dragonfly Effect*, 114.

⁶⁷ Boston Museum of Science, "Fundrazr Facebook app," Boston Museum of Science Facebook Page, accessed November 27, 2011, http://www.facebook.com/museumofscience?sk=app_18015191938.

⁶⁸ Doreen Carvajal, "5,000 Donors Help Louvre Buy a Painting," *New York Times*, December 17, 2010, accessed November 25, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/18/world/europe/18iht-louvre18.html>.

Boston Museum of Science's ask is relatively impersonal and does not speak of any urgency. Can they really not raise the small amount of \$2,500 in any other way? That's what I wondered and it's probably on the mind of other potential donors as well.

The failure of the Boston Museum of Science is the most common story of museum online fundraising, which is why most museum fundraisers have written off social media fundraising. Nina Simon wrote a blog post on "Fundraising as a Participatory Practice," in which she wonders why fundraisers aren't in charge of social media since social media is all about building relationships, just like fundraising. One of the comments was from a man named Adam Burke wrote that though fundraisers are extremely interested in how to use social media as a relationship building tool, no one is sure how to monetize it. His museum had found return rates on online fundraising efforts of .1 to .5% and average gifts of less than \$20, whereas something like a direct mail campaign receives between 2 to 4% return and an average gift size of greater than \$175. Therefore, organizations use social media as a marketing tool that builds relationships with potential visitors, rather than a development tool to build relationship with potential donors.⁶⁹ Another blog, this one by Colleen Dilen, wonders the same as Nina—why fundraisers aren't making better use of social media—also received a similar response, this one from a woman named Caroline Hendrix. She said that over the past years she has encountered a lot of interest in monetizing social media, however, as museums have failed to "crack the code" of online fundraising, the conversation has decreased. She continues on to say that social media as the recession fundraising tool has been "disproven" and the "point" of it all is not to make money, therefore the social media responsibility should be with marketing/PR people.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Nina Simon, "Fundraising as Participatory Practice: Myths, Realities, Possibilities," *Museum 2.0* blog, September 13, 2011, accessed November 25, 2011, <http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2011/09/fundraising-as-participatory-practice.html>.

⁷⁰ Colleen Dilen, "Social Media and Museum Fundraising: 3 Easy Ways to Jump Start the Relationship," *Colleen Dilen* blog, April 26, 2011, Accessed November 25, 2011, <http://colleendilen.com/2011/04/26/social-media-and-museum-fundraising-3-easy-ways-to-jump-start-the-relationship/>.

Estimates of online giving in the United States range from \$6 to \$8 billion.⁷¹ This is small in the overall scale of American philanthropy, but growing every year. In 2009, Blackbaud found that 7 percent of the total donations for seventy-five of the largest nonprofits in the country came in online.⁷² This is not a high percentage. Even when many popular YouTube stars asked their fans to donate to charity during the last Project4Awesome, barely over \$100,000 was raised. However, there have been huge success stories. Perhaps the most famous example is the Obama campaign, which raised \$639 million and although his campaign did raise some money from well-connected fundraisers, the majority of the money was raised through the Internet.⁷³ After the Haitian earthquake, the American Red Cross reported raising \$22 million by text message in a week and a later study reported that 37% of donors gave money online or by text message.⁷⁴ Just this week Wikipedia raised \$1 million dollars through online donations (a caveat is needed, \$500,000 of that was from one person).⁷⁵ All of these examples show that large amounts of money can be raised through micro-donations, much of it online, as long as the campaigns can properly harness the power of crowdsourcing.

One of the main problems campaigns need to overcome is the need for transparency. It is often observed by fundraisers that the Baby Boomers and younger generations asked to make contributions expect two things: personal involvement and results.⁷⁶ Donors also want to know how their money is going to be used.⁷⁷ One great example of transparency in the progress of a campaign are the project pages on GlobalGiving.com, which feature profiles of donors, a Google

⁷¹ Watson, *Causewired*, 148.

⁷² Kanter and Fine, *The Networked NonProfit*, 138.

⁷³ Aaker and Smith, *The Dragonfly Effect*, 44.

⁷⁴ Kanter and Fine, *The Networked NonProfit*, 138.

⁷⁵ Jimmy Wales, *From Wikipedia Founder Jimmy Wales*,

https://wikimediafoundation.org/w/index.php?title=L11_1118_combo10/en/US&utm_source=B11_1120_If_PA10_4_US&utm_medium=sitenotice&utm_campaign=C11_1120_10s&language=en&uselang=en&country=US&referrer=http%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FMain_Page (November 2011).

⁷⁶ Watson, *Causewired*, 19.

⁷⁷ Watson, *Causewired*, 155.

map showing the area affected by the earthquake, updates from the field, and a widget that bloggers and members of social networks can add to their pages to spur donations.⁷⁸ The campaign should also be very clear where the money is going, even if that money is going to something like utilities. Giving updates on the progress of a project funded by online donors is a great way to continue to build trust and show donors that their money was put to good use. Josh Sundquist, a winner of YouTube's NextUp contest, did this recently as a follow up to his Project4Awesome charity.⁷⁹ His viewers raised \$10,000 to buy a seizure dog for a girl in need and this month he posted a video with the girl thanking his viewers with her dog and explaining how the seizure dog has changed her life. The comments on this video are all about how great it is that she got her dog, how cute she is, and how big the dog is. Some viewers who weren't subscribed when the last Project4Awesome occurred are able to see how donating really does change someone's life, preparing them for this year's Project4Awesome.

Fundraising online is not all that different from raising money the traditional way. As Betsy Harman, a fundraising specialist says, "It's still all about building relationships, telling your story, and taking potential donors through the process of cultivation, stewardship, and solicitation."⁸⁰ It is important to treat the potential online donors as you would any potential donor. This requires communicating more than soliciting and learning what is important to them as individuals. Nonprofits typically reserve such levels of high treatment for high-value donors and prospects because it is expensive and resource-intensive.⁸¹ However, online, it can be as easy as polling them on how they'd like to help the museum or giving them an option of projects

⁷⁸ Watson, *Causewired*, 155.

⁷⁹ Josh Sundquist (2011) *Project For Awesome Update: Taylor has her Puppy* [Video] Retrieved November 20, 2011, from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBX47h2CE_g.

⁸⁰ Kanter and Fine, *The Networked NonProfit*, 139.

⁸¹ Watson, *Causewired*, 148-9.

to fund. Museums should also still use simple compelling messages, create a sense of urgency, spread out the giving over time, give donor recognition, and use storytelling.⁸²

One thing that is different online, is that museums should embrace free agents. Free agents are individuals working outside of organizations to organize, mobilize, raise funds, and communicate with constituents.⁸³ Moving from online to in-person is what cements the cause.⁸⁴ And one of the ways to move from online to in-person is by using free agents. These well-connected, passionate people can organize fundraising events in their own towns to create meaningful face-to-face interaction among potential donors and bring in more money for the cause. Obama was able to rally free agents to do different tasks like sign up for an Obama campaign event, volunteer to travel to primary states and knock on doors, or make telephone calls with a database tool that provided both a script and a valid phone number for each bit of outreach. They could also do something as simple as download a widget for their website that broadcast news stories about the Obama campaign or scrolled his biography.⁸⁵ The way his campaign used these motivated individuals was one of the keys to his success. Another movement that successfully uses free agents is the Twestival in which Twitter users join together globally to raise money for different charities. Twitter users create their own events in their respective cities to raise the money. The events tend to be dinners and concerts and this year they raised over \$500,000.⁸⁶ It can be scary for organizations to trust outsiders to pass on their message and act as independent spokespeople, but people are already doing this every day. If a person goes to your museum and loves an exhibit, they are likely to tell friends and family about it and urge them to go see the exhibit as well. The opposite advice is given if a person has a bad

⁸² Kanter and Fine, *The Networked NonProfit*, 146-7.

⁸³ Kanter and Fine, *The Networked NonProfit*, 15.

⁸⁴ Watson, *Causewired*, 170.

⁸⁵ Watson, *Causewired*, 106.

⁸⁶ Twitter, 2011, Twestival Impact, <http://www.twestival.com/stats-scoreboard> (November 2011).

experience. Now that there are things like Twitter and Facebook, those experiences are magnified and the word goes out to more people. I have seen videos on YouTube that talk about how amazing certain museums are. It is all about tapping into those people who love the museum and using them and their enthusiasm to your best advantage. If a museum does decide to do something more radical like a Twestival type of fundraiser then those people can be given guidelines and agree to abide by those guidelines. It works for political campaigns, and Twestival, why won't it work for museums? Just because it's risky doesn't mean it is impossible.

Another aspect of online fundraising that needs to be addressed is the incorporation of all the different social media into one campaign. Using social media channels alone for fundraising is not as effective as making them a part of a multi-channel strategy that includes traditional fundraising techniques, including email, and face-to-face events.⁸⁷ Luckily, YouTube has never functioned as a closed system, from the beginning it has provided tools to embed content on other websites like blogs.⁸⁸ According to YouTube, nearly 17 million people have connected their YouTube account to at least one other social service, like Twitter, Facebook, or Buzz and over 12 million are auto-sharing with at least one social network—this means that over 150 years of YouTube videos are watched everyday on Facebook (a number that is increasing 2.5 times a year) and every minute more than 500 Tweets contain YouTube links (a number that is tripling every year). Of these tweets, an average of six people click through to the video from each tweet.⁸⁹ In coordinating social media in a campaign, it is important to understand that different people have their preferred social media platforms. Some people prefer Facebook, some prefer Twitter, and some prefer other networks. Therefore, it helps to mix up the media that you use and

⁸⁷ Kanter and Fine, *The Networked NonProfit*, 140.

⁸⁸ Burgess and Green, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, 66.

⁸⁹ YouTube, 2011, *Press Statistics*, http://www.youtube.com/t/press_statistics (accessed November 2011).

coordinate your efforts to drive people to the place that enables them to act.⁹⁰ It also important to understand what type of people use which network. For instance, Twitter users are more likely to be Creators (people who participate in social media through blogs and vlogs), and Critics (people who post reviews on websites) and Joiners (people who join different networks) compared with typical online consumers.⁹¹ These are the people most likely to spread your message and probably the most likely to be free agents. Try to target your messages accordingly.

Crowdsourcing can be a powerful way for museums to reach goals and simultaneously connect with fans. Once a group comes together around a cause, they are wired for mass communication and action.⁹² First, though, the museum has to create that loyal and involved fan-base to crowdsource from. This is where YouTube is key. YouTube is the one social network where the mission of the museum can be shared in a fun, humorous, interactive way that entertains people and keeps them coming back for more. Everyday in the United States 115 new nonprofits are created.⁹³ In order to stand out from the crowd an organization needs to show its impact on the world and to do so it needs people to listen. Putting a face to an organization humanizes it and draws people in. “People follow people” is perhaps the most important message to remember and it is also what makes YouTube different from other social networks. On Facebook you might get liked because someone thinks you are a great organization, or because they visited your museum, but on YouTube, they aren’t going to follow you because they like your museum, they are going to follow you because they like the content you are uploading. Based on the most followed channels on YouTube, that content needs a constant spokesperson that viewers can connect with. Beth Kanter, a social media expert, suggests that measuring the

⁹⁰ Aaker and Smith, *The Dragonfly Effect*, 97.

⁹¹ Li and Bernoff, *Groundswell*, 200.

⁹² Watson, *Causewired*, 37.

⁹³ Watson, *Causewired*, 142.

return on investment (ROI) of social media requires replacing the word “investment” with words like “insight” and “impact”.⁹⁴ To measure social media successes in the early stages, organizations need to measure intangibles such as conversations and relationships.⁹⁵ If measured that way, most museum social media efforts are not living up to their potential, but if they can tap into the loyal communities on YouTube, museums can turn that all around. A success on YouTube can very easily translate into more success on other social networking sites and eventually, by connecting with a wide-reaching audience of fans they will, in turn, reach out to help the museum.

⁹⁴ Beth Kanter, “The ROI of Social Media,” in *Internet Management for NonProfits: Strategies, Tools and Trade Secret*, ed. Ted Hart, Steve MacLaughlin, James M. Greenfield, and Philip H. Geier, Jr (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 3.

⁹⁵ Kanter, “The ROI of Social Media,” in *Internet Management for NonProfits: Strategies, Tools and Trade Secret*, 6.

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