

2012

Benchmarks Extra: Facebook

An Analysis of Facebook Metrics for Nonprofit Organizations

AUTHORED BY:



Acknowledgments

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Most notably, we offer enormous thanks to our nonprofit study partners who provided their data for this study. These are organizations that continue to inspire us and challenge us with their cutting-edge social media work. Without them, this study would not have been possible.

ABOUT M+R STRATEGIC SERVICES

M+R is dedicated to helping our clients advance their missions in order to bring about positive change. We do this by helping organizations and campaigns we believe in develop smart and effective strategies, hone their messages, mobilize their members, build grassroots support, raise money, and communicate effectively with the media, the public, and decision-makers, both online and off.

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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

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This report is available for free download online at www.e-benchmarksstudy.com

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Introduction

The 2012 eNonprofit Benchmarks Study looked at data from 44 nonprofit organizations and analyzed trends in fundraising, advocacy, email list size, text messaging, and social media. You can download the Benchmarks study for free at www.e-benchmarksstudy.com.

Now, with this *Benchmarks Extra*, we're taking a deeper dive into the data to provide more metrics for nonprofit engagement on Facebook.

This *Benchmarks Extra* relies on data from 37 participating organizations, each of whom used Facebook's new Insights analytics tool to provide us with their results. Our dataset for this report runs from July, 2011 – when Facebook first rolled out new Insights and changed its definitions and metrics – through December, 2011.

Last year's *Benchmarks Extra* study broke out organizations with small, medium, and large Facebook fan page sizes. This year however, because organizations with smaller Facebook followings were under-represented among our study partners, we excluded this type of analysis. We also focused this year's report on many of the new metrics from Facebook that were not available last year.

If you have a copy of the 2011 *Benchmarks Extra* report, we ask that you do not compare the numbers found there with the numbers reported on here. Because that report uses a different data set, from a different group of nonprofits than are represented in the current study, the numbers will not be comparable. Additionally, last year's report used the old Facebook Insights tool, while this year's report uses the new Insights – another reason why the two years are not comparable side-by-side.

These findings and our associated recommendations are meant to help your nonprofit organization develop meaningful standards and measurements for your own Facebook efforts.

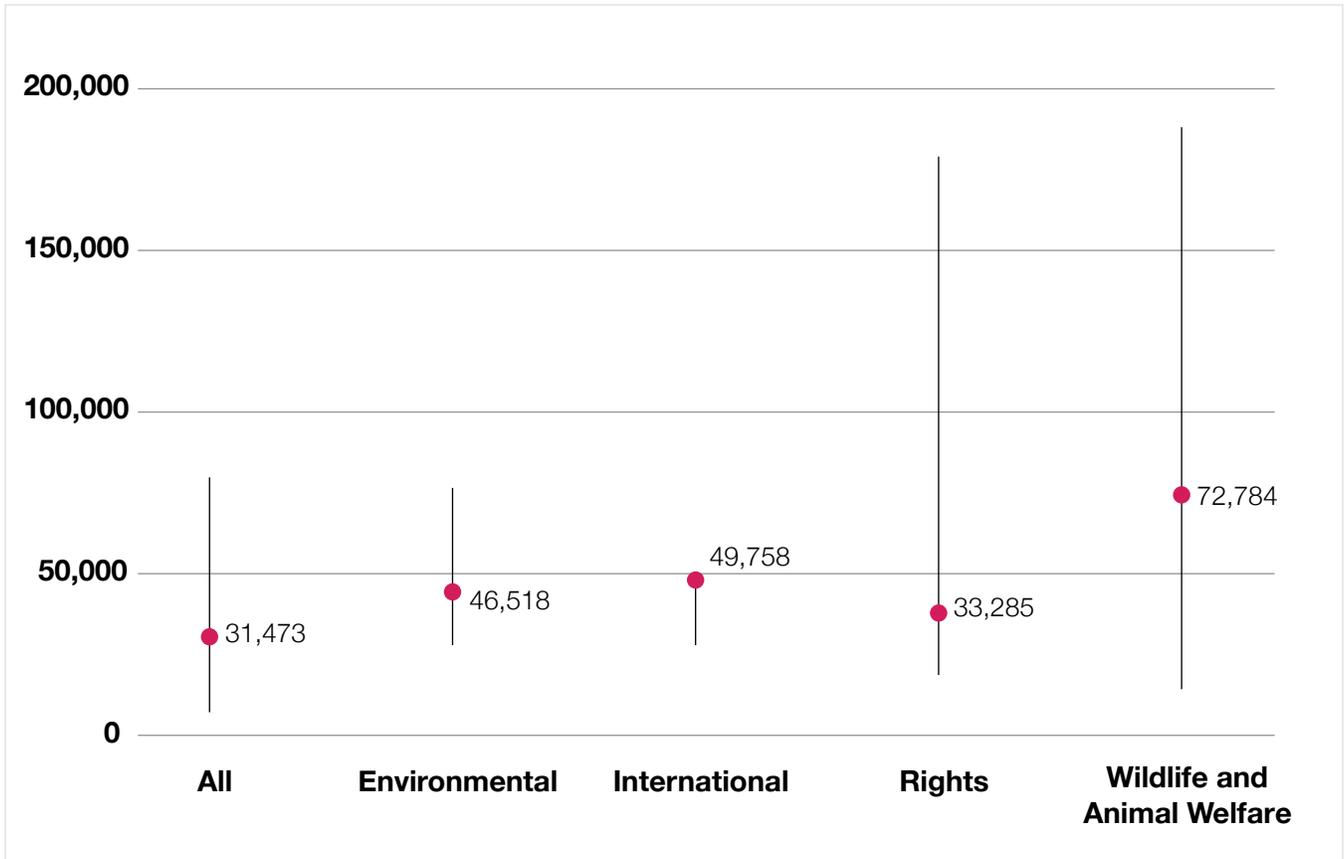
Key Findings

- The average nonprofit in our study had 31,473 Facebook fan page users, representing 103 fan page users per 1,000 email subscribers.
- In 2011, monthly fan page churn – the rate at which followers become unreachable in a month – was low, at 0.5%.
- On a given day, nonprofits involved in this study reached an average of 197 unique users per 1,000 Facebook fan page users, meaning 197 people – fans or not – came across content associated with the nonprofit’s page.
- On average, viral activity accounted for 32% of a fan page’s overall daily total reach – that means nearly a third of people saw an organization’s content because a friend created a story about the fan page.
- For every 1,000 Facebook fan page users, the average nonprofit had 22 People Talking About This in a given week.
- Across all sectors, the typical study participant’s fan page had 6 Daily Page Engaged Users for every 1,000 fan page users.

In the following pages, we’ll provide detailed explanation on these and other metrics – and tell you what it all means for your own Facebook page. You can also check out the Glossary on pg. 11 for the definitions of unfamiliar terms.

Fan Page Audiences

TOTAL FAN PAGE USERS

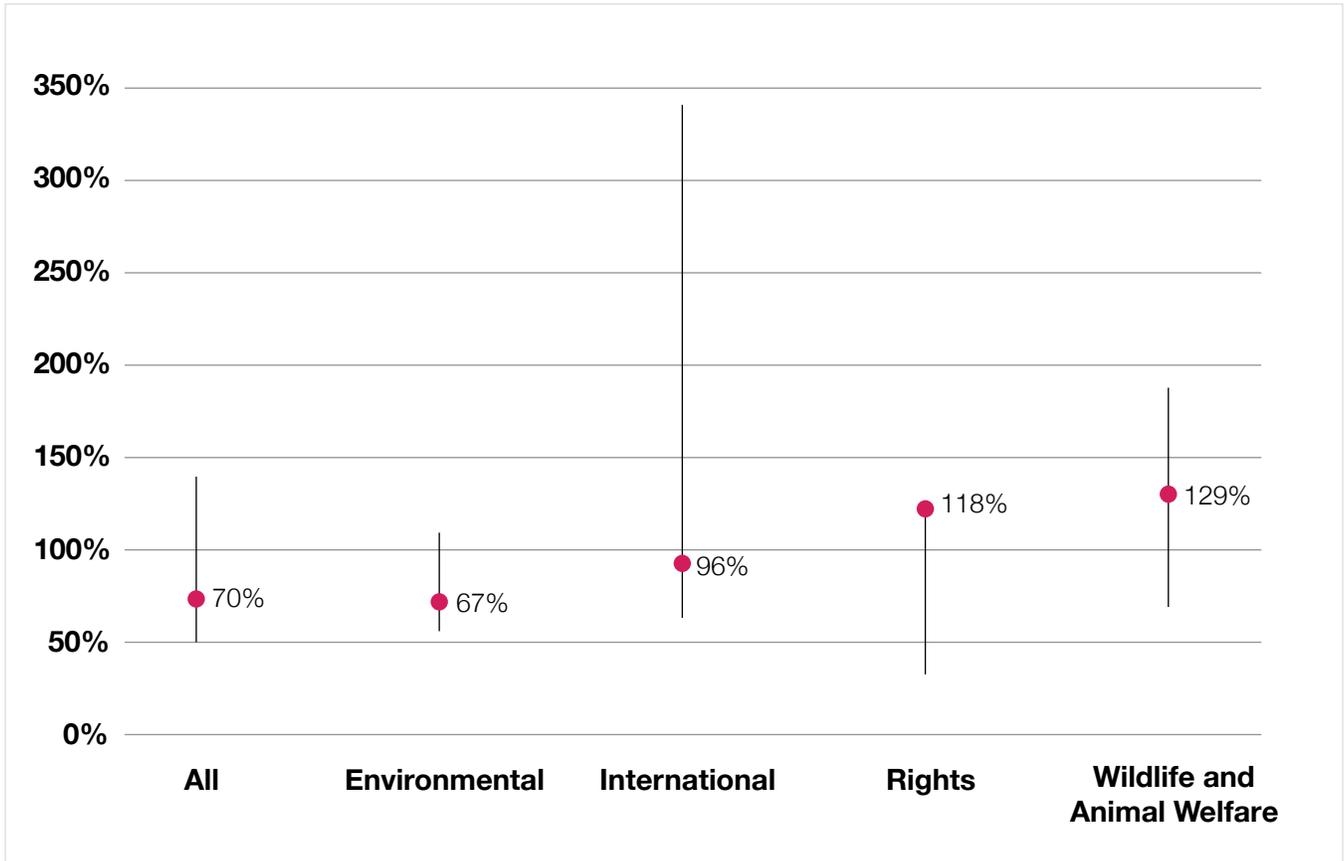


The median nonprofit fan page in this study had 31,473 fan page users (people who like an organization’s fan page). Wildlife and animal welfare groups had the largest fan page audiences.

In the 2012 eNonprofit Benchmarks Study, we found that nonprofits on average have 103 Facebook fan page users per 1,000 email subscribers. This proportion is biggest for the Rights sector, which has a median of 144 users per 1,000 email subscribers.

But remember, it’s not all about the number of people who like your fan page. Crafting strategies to engage your audience is critical. And in the coming pages, we’ll offer some benchmarks for measuring that engagement.

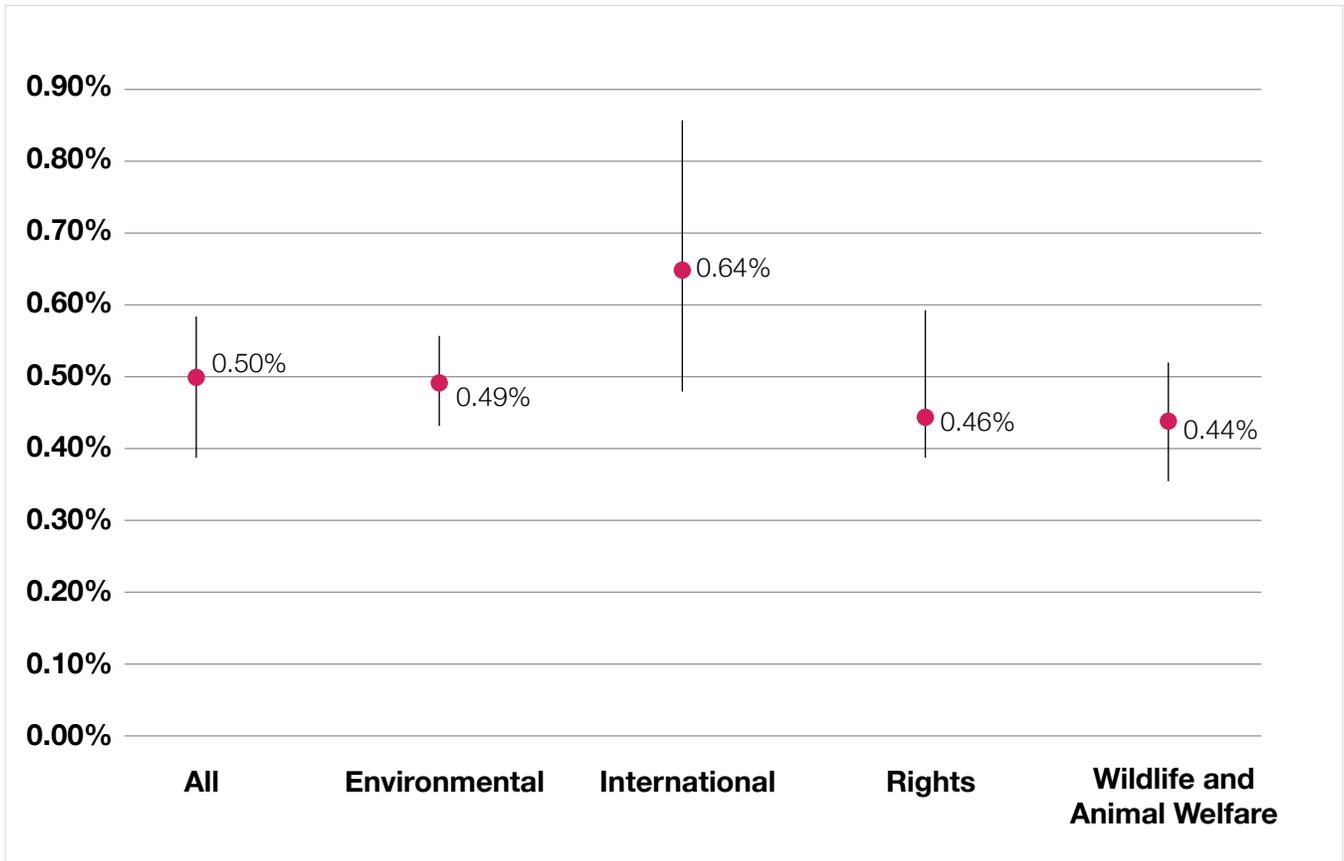
ANNUAL FAN PAGE GROWTH RATE



Between 2010 and 2011, the median growth rate for nonprofit fan page audiences was 70%. Wildlife and animal welfare groups had the strongest median growth rate, at 129% in just one year.

Looking to increase your page's growth rate? One sure-fire way to get more people to like your page is to run a "like drive." Check out M+R Research Labs to pick up some tips: <http://labs.mrss.com/how-to-rock-your-facebook-like-drive/>

MONTHLY FAN PAGE CHURN



Monthly churn represents the rate at which fan page users opt out of receiving communications or updates from a fan page in a given month. Users can opt out by “unliking” the page or “unsubscribing” from updates by selecting “Hide all by [organization’s page]” from posts in their News Feed. Even though they no longer see updates from the page, users that “unsubscribe” are still counted as fan page users since they still like the page.

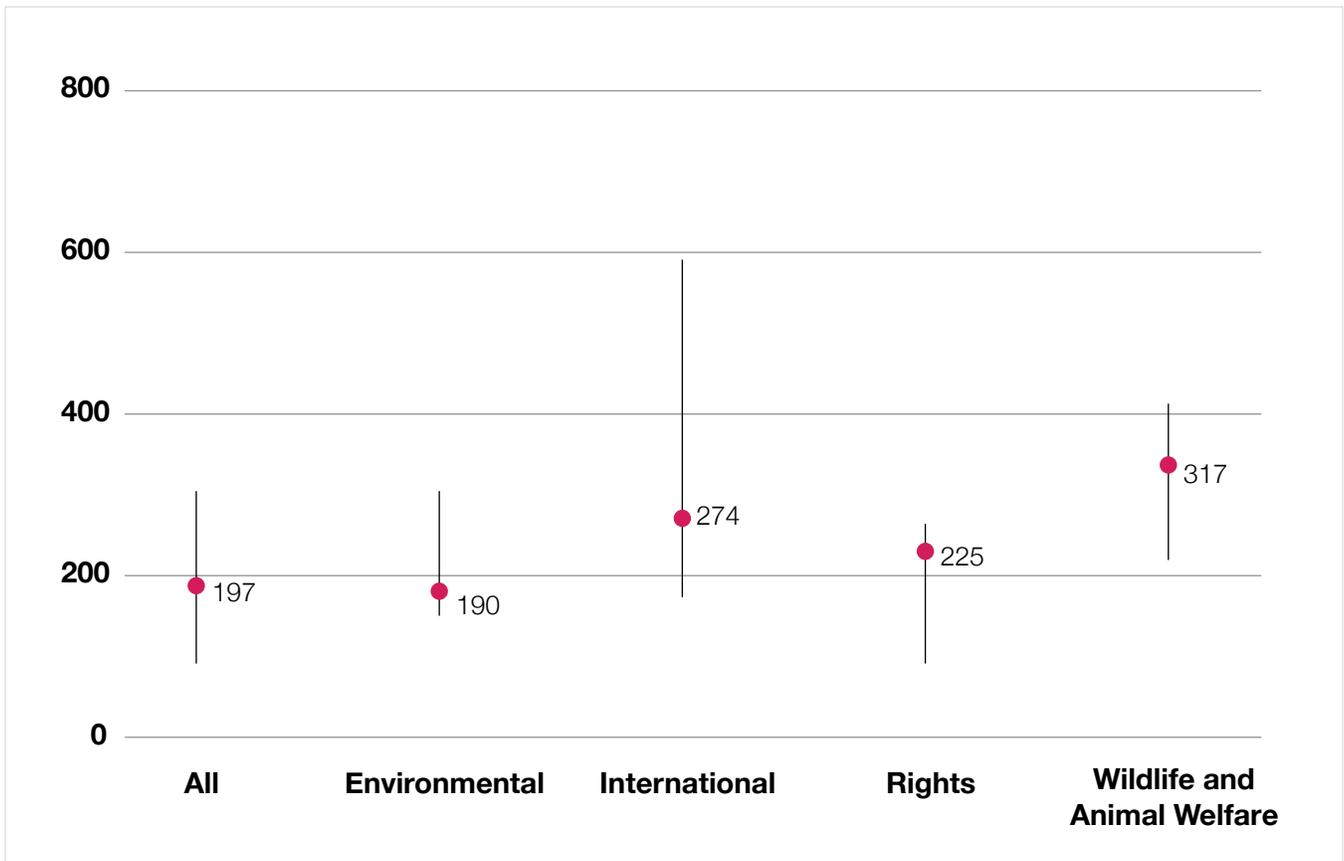
In 2011, an average of 0.5% of fan page users “unliked” an organization’s page in a given month. We also found that larger fan pages tended to have lower monthly churn rates.

The takeaway here is that churn is normal and fairly low, so don’t fret if people are “unliking” or “unsubscribing” from your page! The key is to worry less about them and concentrate more on producing engaging content for the people who do want to hear from you.

If you do find that your monthly churn is higher than the normal ranges represented here, it is worth evaluating your posting strategy. Perhaps you’re posting too often, keeping an inconsistent schedule, or providing content that isn’t appealing to your audience. The reason – and remedy – will vary for every organization, so just make sure you take time to examine and adjust your strategy based on your own metrics.

Reach and Engagement

DAILY TOTAL REACH PER 1,000 FAN PAGE USERS

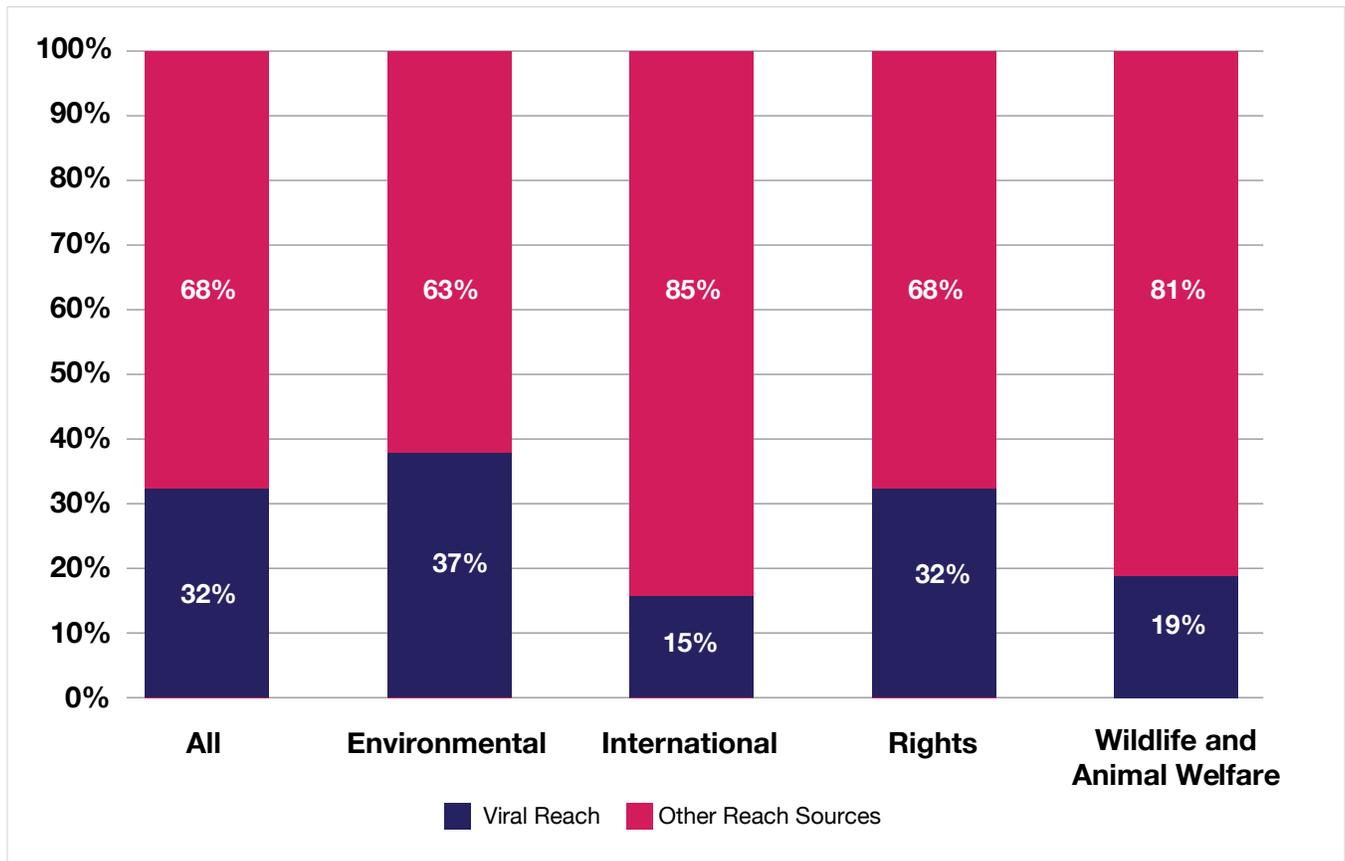


On a given day, nonprofits involved in this study reached an average of 197 unique users per 1,000 fan page users. *Reach* represents the unique number of people who have been exposed to any content associated with the fan page.

There is a lot of variation among fan pages for this measure – some international groups, for example, are reaching close to 600 people per 1,000 fan page users each day! But for the average nonprofit participant in our study, their posts connected with the equivalent of just under 20% of their fan page audience. We say *equivalent* because a lot of the people an organization reaches are not necessarily fans of the page – they are exposed to a nonprofit’s content through viral sources (friends sharing content, for example).

Once again – it’s not about the number of likes your page has, but rather what you do with them. If your fan page is one-third the size of another group’s page, but has three times the reach percentage, your message is reaching just as many people.

REACH BY SOURCE



On average, viral activity accounted for 32% of a fan page’s overall daily total reach. This indicates that about a third of people exposed to an organization’s content saw that content because a friend created a story about the fan page (e.g., by sharing an organization’s post on his or her own timeline). Environmental groups had the highest percentage of viral reach at 37%, while International groups had the lowest percentage of viral reach at 15%.

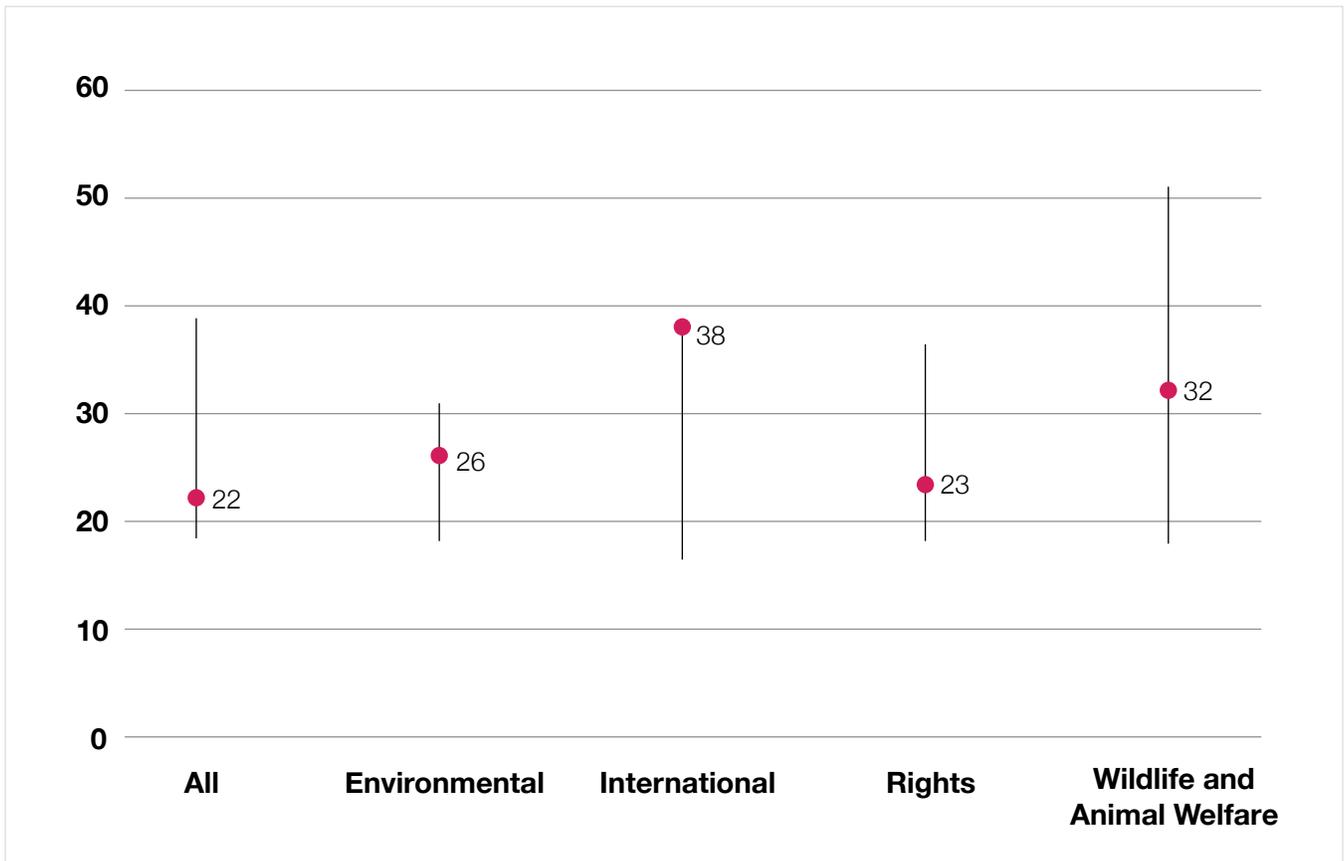
Other Reach Sources include people seeing a page’s content directly in their News Feed or Ticker, on the fan page itself, or via Facebook Ads and Sponsored Stories that point to the fan page.

Creating content that is engaging to your audience – content that generates likes, comments, views, and shares – will increase both your viral reach and your reach from other sources. Read on to learn about key engagement metrics that can inform your posting strategy.

When an HRC supporter comments on a post, that activity appears in her friends’ news feeds. Those friends are included in HRC’s viral reach.



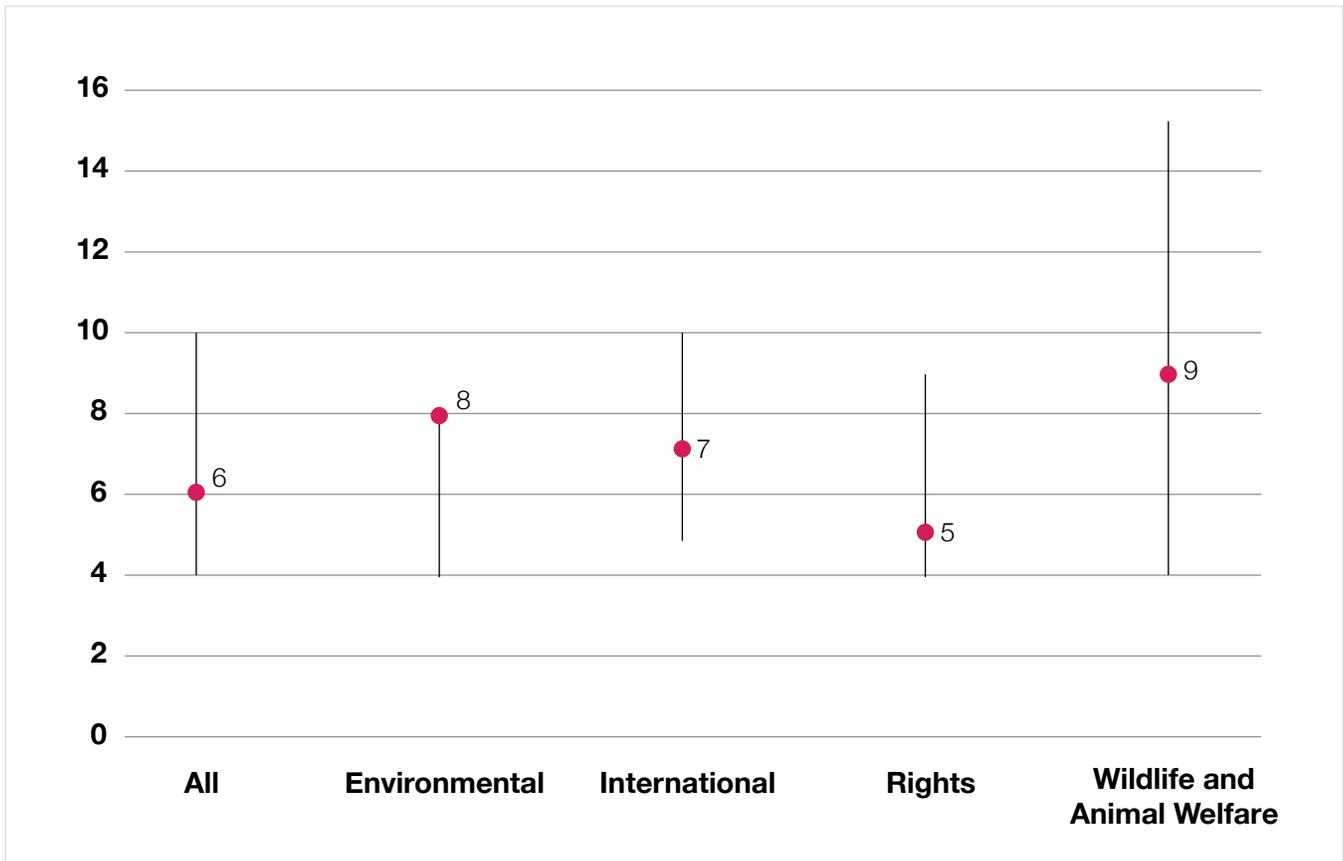
WEEKLY PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT THIS PER 1,000 FAN PAGE USERS



People Talking About This is Facebook’s term for the unique number of people who have created a story about a given fan page in the last seven days. (There is a more detailed explanation of “creating a story” in the Glossary on pg. 11). Overall, pages had about 22 *People Talking About This* per 1,000 fan page users.

People Talking About This was a new metric that Facebook unveiled in 2011 to help administrators evaluate the quality of a page, not just its size. *People Talking About This* is a fairly broad measurement of how involved people are with your fan page – a barometer that can show you the general health of your fan page. More detailed measurements such as *Daily Page Engaged Users* or *Daily Action Rate* influence your *People Talking About This*, so we advise you to prioritize improving those metrics, which we will talk about next.

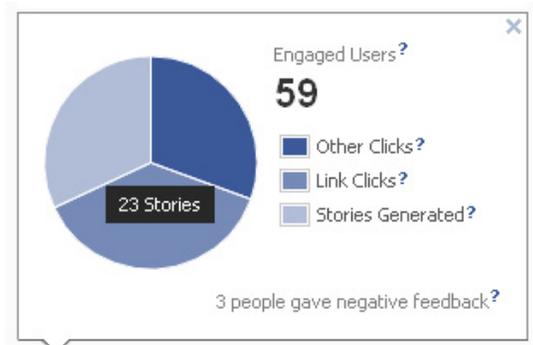
DAILY PAGE ENGAGED USERS PER 1,000 FAN PAGE USERS



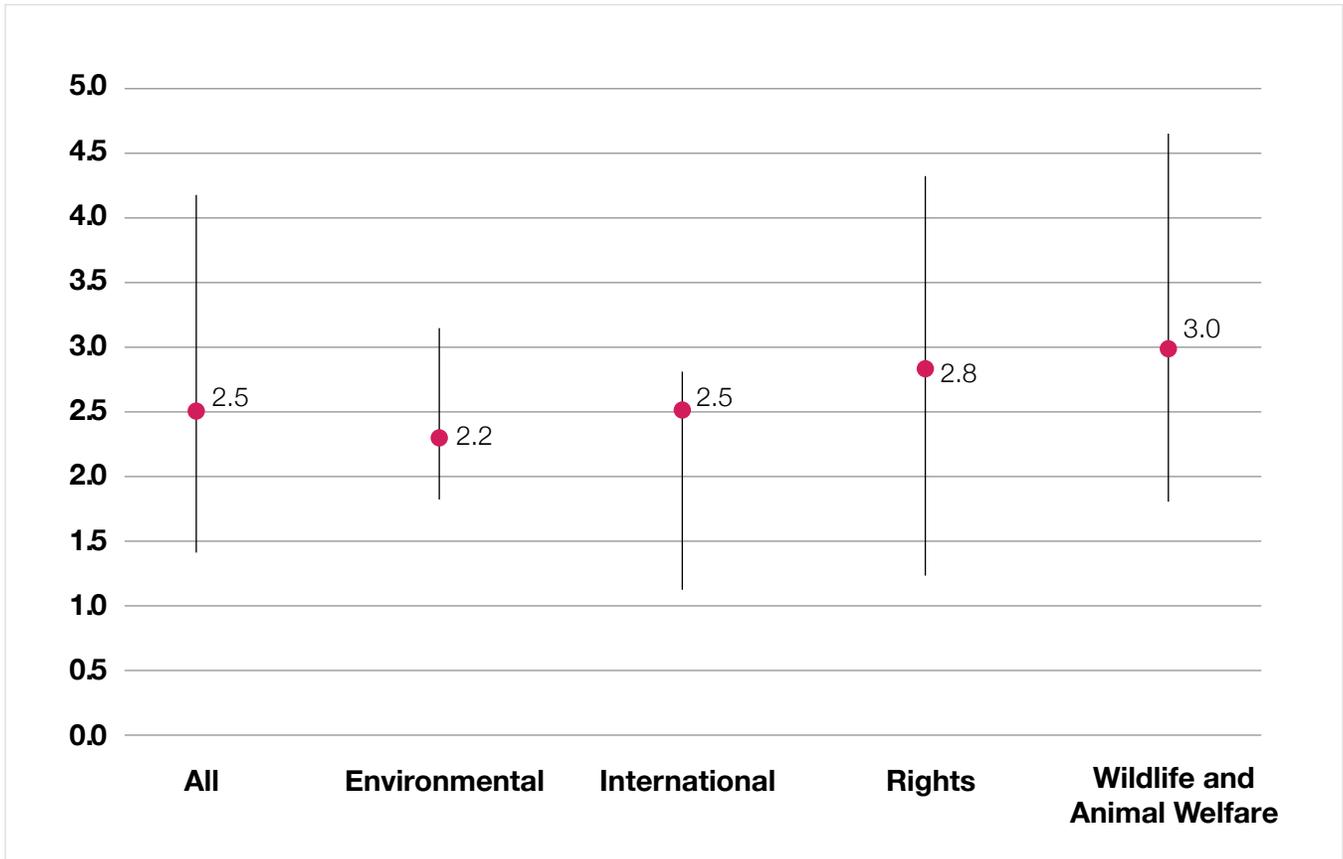
For every 1,000 people that like a nonprofit’s fan page, 6 people will interact with a post from that organization each day. (For examples of engagements counted in this metric, see the Glossary on pg. 11.) The wildlife and animal welfare sector really shines in this area, with a median of 9 Daily Page Engaged Users for every 1,000 fans. Cute animal photos are likely a contributing factor!

Just 6 Daily Page Engaged Users per 1,000 fan page users might seem like a low number, but don’t forget that your page’s reach may only find the equivalent of 20% of your fan page audience. Of this 20%, people can read posts without interacting, and they can also technically be reached without actually seeing the content. Daily Page Engaged Users is a great metric to work on improving, since it offers a good gauge of how interactive your posts truly are.

As you can see, Facebook’s report shows that this post created 23 stories from likes and comments, but a total of 59 people engaged with the post – some just followed the link or clicked elsewhere.



DAILY ACTION RATE PER 1,000 FAN PAGE USERS



Daily Action Rate is calculated as the number of daily likes and comments on a page’s content divided by the number of Facebook users. Overall, nonprofits averaged 2.5 actions per 1,000 fan page users. While the wildlife and animal welfare sector tended to dominate many metrics in this study, it’s worth noting that their average Daily Action Rate of 3.0 is in line with the other sectors’ Daily Action Rates.

Daily Action Rate is a great way to get feedback on the content you’re putting on your Facebook page. Clicks don’t necessarily tell you if people like what you post, believe in your mission, or care about your organization. Comments and likes can do that...so they’re a good way to gauge if what you’re putting on your Facebook page is resonating with the people who “like” you.

Asking people to like a status is an effective way to generate likes and increase your Daily Action Rate.



League of Conservation Voters

Even after the Dept of Justice said it's illegal, Florida is continuing its campaign to keep 180,000 voters out of November's elections by accusing them of being "non-citizens." Civil rights groups are working hard to stop this voter purge, which will disproportionately affect young, minority, elderly, and lower-income voters. But this makes us nervous...

Hit LIKE to support those working to ensure all eligible voters maintain their right to vote!



Florida Defies U.S. Warning To Halt Voter Purge

www.huffingtonpost.com

Florida will defy a federal warning to stop purging people the state suspects aren't U.S. citizens from voter registration rolls.

Like · Comment · Share · 308 23 60 · Tuesday at 11:38am ·

Glossary

ACTION RATE

The number of daily likes and comments on a fan page's content divided by the number of fan page users.

CHURN, MONTHLY FAN PAGE

The number of users in the previous month plus the number of new users in the current month, minus total users in the current month, divided by the total number of users a fan page had in the previous month plus the number of new users in the current month. Or, as a formula: $(\text{Total users last month} + \text{new users this month} - \text{total users this month}) / (\text{Total users last month} + \text{new users this month})$.

ENGAGED USERS, DAILY

The number of unique users who engage with a page per day. Engagement includes all actions that create stories as well as all clicks on a page or a page's content. Activities associated with clicks include (but are not limited to) viewing photos or videos, clicking on links attached to posts, clicking on tags of pages or profiles in posts, and clicking other places on a post, such as the like count or time stamp.

FAN PAGE USERS

People who like a nonprofit Facebook fan page.

PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT THIS

The number of unique users who have created a story about a page.

REACH, OTHER

The number of unique users that either saw a page's content in their News Feed or Ticker, saw content on the fan page, or saw a Facebook Ad pointing to the fan page.

REACH, TOTAL WEEKLY

The number of unique users who have seen any content associated with a page in a 7-day period.

REACH, VIRAL

The number of unique users who saw content from a page via a story created by a friend.

STORY, CREATING A

A story is an action from a user that can show up in that user's friends' News Feeds. A user creates a story about a page by interacting with a page or a page's content in one of these ways:

- Liking a page
- Liking, commenting on, or sharing a page's content
- Tagging a page in a post or photo
- Responding to an event hosted by a page
- Answering a question posted by a page
- Checking in or recommending a place

UNLIKED

A user who unliked a fan page will not see a page's updates in their news feed and no longer count towards the total number of fan page users.

UNSUBSCRIBED

An unsubscribed user will not see a page's posts in their news feed, but still count towards the number of total fan page users.

Methodology

This *Benchmarks Extra* collected data about Facebook from 37 U.S.-based national nonprofit organizations.

The data for the study is based only on Facebook Insights from July 19, 2011 to December 31, 2011. Facebook updated its analytics tools in the mid-July, making full-year analysis nearly impossible.

The average given for a metric is the median. To calculate the benchmarks metrics reported in this study, we first calculated a metric for each group and then calculated the median across groups, so that no single group had more weight than any other.

The *Benchmarks Extra* study participants were segmented by sector as follows:

Environmental

- Appalachian Mountain Club www.outdoors.org
- Earthjustice www.earthjustice.org
- Food & Water Watch www.foodandwaterwatch.org
- Greenpeace USA www.greenpeace.org/usa/en/
- League of Conservation Voters www.lcv.org
- National Parks Conservation Association www.npca.org
- Oceana www.oceana.org
- Union of Concerned Scientists www.ucsusa.org

International

- CARE USA www.care.org
- GAVI Alliance www.gavialliance.org
- International Rescue Committee www.rescue.org
- Oxfam America www.oxfamamerica.org
- U.S. Fund for UNICEF www.unicefusa.org

Rights

- American Rights at Work www.americanrightsatwork.org
- Corporate Accountability International www.stopcorporateabuse.org
- Free Press www.freepress.net
- Human Rights Campaign www.hrc.org
- Human Rights Watch www.hrw.org
- Innocence Project www.innocenceproject.org
- NARAL Pro-Choice America www.ProChoiceAmerica.org
- Planned Parenthood Federation of America www.plannedparenthood.org
- Planned Parenthood Action Fund www.plannedparenthoodaction.org

Wildlife and Animal Welfare

- Defenders of Wildlife www.defenders.org
- The Humane Society of the United States www.humanesociety.org
- IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) www.ifaw.org
- National Wildlife Federation Action Fund www.nwfactionfund.org
- RedRover www.redrover.org
- San Diego Zoo Global www.sandiegozoo.org www.sandiegozooglobal.org
- Wildlife Conservation Society www.wcs.org

Other

- AARP www.earnedasay.org
- AARP Foundation www.aarp.org/aarp-foundation
- American Friends Service Committee www.afsc.org
- American Lung Association www.lung.org
- Common Cause www.commoncause.org
- Easter Seals www.easterseals.com
- Friends Committee on National Legislation www.fcnl.org
- Girls Inc. www.girlsinc.org
- St. Jude Children's Research Hospital www.stjude.org