

Public Abstract

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Graduation Term:SP 2011

Department:Communication

Degree:PhD

Title:Nonprofits And New Media: How Do NPOs And Their Employees Adopt And Use New Media To Communicate With And Influence Their Community?

This study looks at how new media technologies are adopted by nonprofit organizations (NPOs) and their employees. Using qualitative interviews, the study explores how new media are incorporated into NPO work and how such adoption allows the organizations and their staff to have greater influence on their community by serving an agenda setting function in society. Overall, participants in this study find that there are many positive outcomes of new media adoption, such as increased efficiencies, a greater connection with the NPO community, and the ability to see immediate results from using new media for activities such as posting to social networking sites. Participants also mentioned the downsides of new media adoption that include a faster pace of work, the expectation to be available 24/7, and increased sloppy work. The majority of participants see new media as tools that enable NPOs to serve a news producing function in society. The findings of this study present both theoretical and practical implications. The practical implications include insight into how new media adoption is successful for NPOs. NPOs that are strategic in having specific staff members oversee and implement new media uses find the greatest success. The theoretical implications impact both diffusion of innovations theory and agenda setting theory. The study looks at adoption practices of new media and marks how these practices are currently unfolding in a time of rapid new media adoption activity within NPOs. This study also suggests a new way of interpreting agenda setting theory to include all news producers (such as nonprofits that produce mediated messages through new media) as we apply the theory in scholarly study.