
Donations in Today's Age

How Social Media and Mobile Donations are Changing the Way we Give

Ryan Hines • Patricia Erickson • Lorilee Bell • Danielle Sanchez
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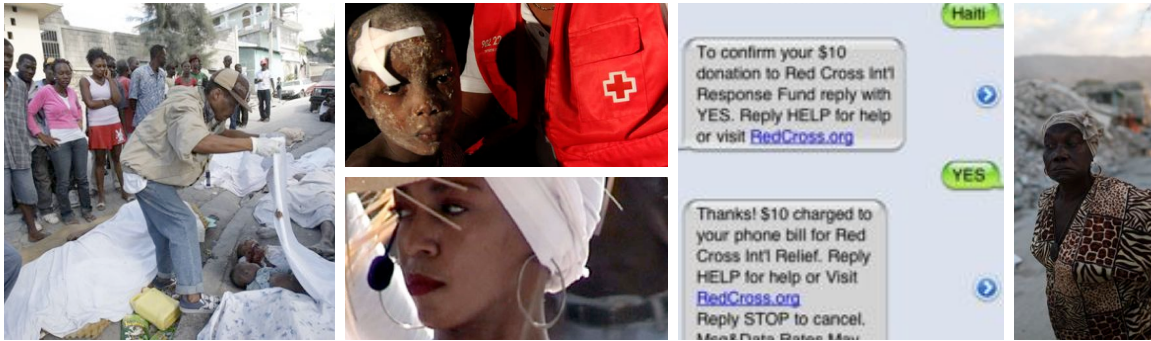
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Why Study Mobile-Giving?

The purpose behind this research study.



On January 12, 2010 an earthquake struck Léogâne, Haiti with a 7.0 magnitude.

After a devastating earthquake destroyed the lives and land of Haitians, people from all over the world began donating, totaling to over \$200,000. Did the facilitation of social media play a role in this large donation amount? We conducted research to learn how many people used mobile devices and social media to donate. Largely, it was because of the ease-of-use.

We created three objectives...

- How many people are aware of this method of donation?
- What perceptions do people have about using social media as a way to donate?
- What kinds of behaviors do people have toward this new tool? Are they using social media donate, or sticking to traditional methods?

METHODOLOGY

We conducted our research through three individual interviews. Debra was the first person interviewed. Debra, a teacher of 20 years, is 45 years old and teaches 5th grade. Her interview took place at noon on Sunday, March 21 and the interview last approximately three and a half minutes. Haylee was the second person interviewed. Haylee, a Radiology Tech student at HCC, is 21 years old and works at Baby's R Us. Her interview took place at 8:30 p.m. on Monday, March 22 and the interview lastly approximately three and a half minutes. Yee Tar was the third and final person interviewed. He is 56 years old and is a server at Capital Grille. His interview took place at 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 23 and the interview lastly approximately five and a half minutes.

There were a couple different technologies used to conduct these interviews. First, www.audacity.com was used to record the interviews from a laptop. Then, www.box.net was used to upload the recorded interviews so we were able to put the interviews on our blogs.

RESULTS

Awareness

Social media and mobile devices are well-known tools. Our participants explained how they used different social media sites and their mobile devices. One participant mentioned that she pays late bills by using her mobile phone.

- “I find that the process of donating thru media such as through FaceBook, MySpace, or through texting to be more convenient, less intrusive, and more efficient.” – Zee
- “Yes I would donate, using social media is convenient, but it's not the only means of donating to a cause.” – Haylee
- “I used my cell phone and I would absolutely use it again.” – Debra

Perceptions of Social Media

The image of social media and mobile devices is convenience. The common theme among our participants is that social media is an easier and faster payment tool.

- “I don't know -- I didn't think about it at the time. It was an impulse and there were fewer steps involved. I didn't have to get up, get a check book and look for a stamp. You know.” – Yee Tar
- “It feels less like someone's asking you for a handout than for a hand-up.” – Yee Tar
- “It's a huge convenience to be able to use my cell phone, since I always have my cell phone with me.” – Debra

Behaviors Toward Social Media

Social media is a more common use of payment for donations. “A total of 234 million people age 13 and older in the U.S. used mobile devices by the end of Q4 2009 (Burns).” All of our participants used either a social media website or their cell phone to donate.

- “I decided to text. It was an impulse and the phone was right next to me.” – Yee Tar
- “I used Zoo World, which is an application on Facebook. Yes, I would use it again.” – Haylee
- “By using my cell phone, I felt safe and secure.” – Debra

CONCLUSION

Social media and mobile devices have been rapidly growing fields over the past couple of years. Like any other entity, non-profit organizations are seeking ways of integrating these platforms into their campaign goals. With the example of the catastrophe in Haiti, the Red Cross achieved great success in reaching donation goals by utilizing mobile-giving. This study has shown that the primary reason for mobile-giving is convenience; it is easy for people to contribute. Furthermore, they feel that their donation is being used effectively and efficiently. They trust the Red Cross and they trust that their mobile donation will be used appropriately. This form of donating – as well as bill-paying – will likely increase in the coming years.

Appendices

Interview Guide and Transcripts



Social media and mobile phones make donating easy.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

- OBJECTIVE: How many people are aware of this donation method?
 - Question: Describe what it's like to use social media as your method to donate.
- OBJECTIVE: What perceptions do people have about using social media as a way to donate?
 - Question: If mobile texting was not available for donations and you had to mail or drop off your money, would you still donate? If yes, would you still donate the same amount?
- OBJECTIVE: What kinds of behaviors do people have toward this new tool? Are they using social media donate, or sticking to traditional methods?
 - Question: What social media tool did you use and would you use it again to donate money to a cause?
 - Question: Do you pay any of your bills by phone?
 - Question: Have you donated to any other causes, organizations or charities? If yes, which ones and how?
 - Question: Did you text a donation to Haiti relief? If so, how do you know that money was used effectively? Do you care?

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT #1: Yee Tar

1. *Lorilee*: What social media tool did you use and would you use it again to donate money to a cause?

- *Yee Tar*: I decided to text. It was an impulse and the phone was right next to me. Yes, I might use it again.

2. *Lorilee*: Describe what it's like to donate money using social media as your tool...

- *Yee Tar*: I find that the process of donating thru media such as through FaceBook, Myspace, or thru texting to be more convenient, less intrusive, and more efficient. It feels less like someone's asking you for a handout than for a hand-up.

3. *Lorilee*: If mobile texting was not available for donations and you had to mail or drop off your money would you still donate? and would you donate the same amount?

- *Yee Tar*: I don't know - I didn't think about it at the time. It was an impulse and there were fewer steps involved. I didn't have to get up, get a check book, and look for a stamp. You know. It was a small amount, but, I guess those small amounts add up. Whether I'd donate more, I guess, would depend on my circumstance. I mean, I'm finding things to be a lot more tight this year than last. I couldn't Lorilee that right now.

4. *Lorilee*: So, is the economy effecting how much you donate

- *Yee Tar*: Yes

5. *Lorilee*: Do you pay any of your bills by phone?

- *Yee Tar*: I pay by phone when I'm too late to pay online. With things being as tight as they are this year, I found myself paying later and later. When the payment's due that day, I'll give the company a call and make arrangements as best I can to try and avoid any fees.

6. *Lorilee*: Have you donated to any other causes, organizations or charities? If so, which ones and how?

- *Yee Tar*: I have, but not often. If you want to call having someone come up to you and ask for money as a cause or charity, then, yes. Maybe I should've asked for a receipt at the time. I donate thru work, having a dollar taken out each week thru my paycheck. It's called Darden Dimes. That one's geared toward employees of the company who need assistance. At work, we also help one family a year by painting their place in one day, and at Xmas this past year, we had teams helping individual families thru donating clothing and toys on a wish list that each family submitted. Right now we're doing a promotion for a wine that's made exclusive to our company. The wine costs \$75, and for each bottle sold, we donate \$25 towards Share Our Strength, which helps end childhood hunger in America. The last program we did, which was in 2007, we had a promotion selling a \$1000 Luxury Martini. At the time there were 27 Capital Grilles. As a company we sold 270 of those martinis which raised \$135,000 for Share Our Strength. I've also taken clothing I no longer needed to the Goodwill.

7. *Lorilee*: Did you text a donation to Haiti? If so, how do you know that money was used effectively? Do you care?

- *Yee Tar*: I did text money. Whether it'll be used effectively, I don't know. Oftentimes you hear about money and goods being donated, of which just a small portion actually benefits the recipients. Some of it gets eaten up by administrative expenses; some of it gets sidetracked and skimmed off, wasted. How do you oversee the people running these programs? How do you track it all? Especially overseas? And in Third World Nations? I am not a fan of institutions and government bureaucracies in general. This small amount is not going to matter to me financially, but, in the big picture, many someone higher up can do some good with it.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT #2: Haylee

1. Lorilee: What social media tool did you use and would you use it again to donate money to a cause?
 - Haylee: I used zoo world which is an application on Facebook and yes I would use it again.
2. Lorilee: Describe what it's like to donate money using social media as your tool...
 - Haylee: I really don't feel any different using social media as my tool, going there, or writing a check.
3. Lorilee: If mobile texting was not available for donations and you had to mail or drop off your money would you still donate? and would you donate the same amount?
 - Haylee: Yes I would donate, using social media is convenient, but it's not the only means of donating to a cause. Actually, this is the first time that I used social media as my tool.
4. Lorilee: Do you pay any of your bills by phone?
 - Haylee: No, I always pay through my bank account
5. Lorilee: Have you donated to any other causes, organizations or charities? If so, which ones and how?
 - Haylee: Yes, I've donating to Katrina, St. Judes, The Spring, and The SPCA, either cash or check
6. Lorilee: Did you text a donation to Haiti? If so, how do you know that money was used effectively? Do you care?
 - Haylee: No, I used zoo world, I feel comfortable because the donation went to the Red Cross and I feel that they are a reliable charity and yes I care. I've donated money to a place in the world that I have never been too.
7. Lorilee: Since you stated that you used zoo world, did you get anything in return for using this application?
 - Haylee: Yes, I received an ultra rare Carribean flamingo to put in my zoo
8. Lorilee: Is that the only reason why you donated to Haiti?
 - Haylee: Of course not, I was going to anyways. It was just a nice added bonus

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT #3: Debra

1. *Lorilee:* What social media tool did you use and would you use it again to donate money to a cause?
 - *Debra:* I used my cell phone and I absolutely would use it again.

2. *Lorilee:* Describe what it's like to donate money using social media as your tool...
 - *Debra:* It's a huge convenience to be able to use my cell phone since I always have my cell phone with me, and I assume everyone else does. I think it provides an avenue of huge convenience to a goal... a goal of which getting the donation.

3. *Lorilee:* If mobile texting was not available for donations and you had to mail or drop off your money would you still donate? and would you donate the same amount?
 - *Debra:* Yes, I would still donate and I would donate the same amount. I would be waiting for the check to clear and waiting to find out what happens to my money, though. By using a cell phone, I felt safe and secure that my donation was getting to its destination immediately.

4. *Lorilee:* Do you pay any of your bills by phone?
 - *Debra:* No, I don't.

6. *Lorilee:* Have you donated to any other causes, organizations or charities? If so, which ones and how?
 - *Debra:* Yes, I do donate to several other causes, charities and organizations and I usually donate by check or through payroll deduction. I donate to The Spring, I donate to The United Way, I donate to The Children's Home, and to breast cancer.

7. *Lorilee:* Did you text a donation to Haiti? If so, how do you know that money was used effectively? Do you care?
 - *Debra:* I certainly hope it was used effectively, as much media production there was on it. I certainly hope it was used effectively and properly. Do I care? Yes, I care. I care where all my money goes and that it's used appropriately and to my wishes.