

# Best Practices in Social Media

Summary of Findings from the Sixth Annual Comprehensive Study of Social Media Use by Schools, Colleges and Universities

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**mStoner**

**Huron**Education

# Overview of findings

Huron Education and mStoner partnered with CASE for the sixth year in a row to research the social media activities of educational institutions. Our 2010 inaugural study was one of the first studies of its kind. The overarching goal of this research is to create knowledge and resources to assist education professionals as they assess and implement social media strategies for communication and engagement.

Some of the questions we hoped it would answer include:

- How do professionals in education incorporate social media into their marketing and communication strategies, initiatives, and campaigns, especially fundraising campaigns?
- What are their goals for social media?
- Which social media sites and tools are in use in the education sector and which are most successful?
- What are current best practices?
- How is social media being used in fundraising and crowdsourcing?
- What does the near future look like for social media in education?

We conducted an online survey among a random selection of 28,000 CASE members in the US and abroad. We received 918 responses across all types of institutions – a testament to the interest in this topic.

We are just beginning to mine the data from this sixth round of research and will be releasing a full white paper later in the year. If you're interested in receiving this white paper, please email [mstoner@mstoner.com](mailto:mstoner@mstoner.com).

For any questions about the study please contact:

Jennifer Mack  
Huron Consulting Group  
312-880-5779  
[jlmack@huronconsultinggroup.com](mailto:jlmack@huronconsultinggroup.com)

Thanks for your interest.

<b>Q1 Which types of social media do you (your unit) use? Please select all that apply.</b>	
Total	894
Facebook (create/manage communities within Facebook)	92%
Twitter	81%
LinkedIn (create/manage communities within LinkedIn or manage university page in LinkedIn)	76%
YouTube	67%
Instagram	55%
Flickr	34%
Blogs	28%
Google+	27%
Pinterest	23%
An institutional website that is an aggregator of social media channels	22%
Social communities provided by vendors (such as iModules, etc.)	15%
Vimeo	14%
Tumblr	10%
Vine	7%
A community created in-house by someone at your institution (create/manage in-house communities)	6%
Other	6%
SnapChat	5%
YikYak	5%
WhatsApp	3%
None of the above	2%

<b>Q2 Which of the following are true of your unit, to the best of your knowledge? Please select all that apply.</b>	
Total	666
We have checked that the social media channels we are using align with the populations we are trying to reach	76%
We adhere to a plan for how frequently we will post on social media	63%
We have a clear and useful statement of the goals we want to accomplish through social media	47%
We have a clear and useful statement about the voice we are aiming for in social media	44%
We adhere to a plan for what time of day we will post on social media	33%

<b>Q3 How frequently do you post to Blogs? Please select the answer that best applies.</b>	
Total	233
More than once per day	6%
Once per weekday	9%
A few times per week	28%
A few times per month or less	57%

**Q3 How frequently do you post to Facebook? Please select the answer that best applies.**

Total	741
More than once per day	24%
Once per weekday	25%
A few times per week	38%
A few times per month or less	12%

**Q3 How frequently do you post to LinkedIn? Please select the answer that best applies.**

Total	605
More than once per day	1%
Once per weekday	5%
A few times per week	26%
A few times per month or less	67%

**Q3 How frequently do you post to a community created in-house by someone at your institution? Please select the answer that best applies.**

Total	46
More than once per day	-
Once per weekday	7%
A few times per week	26%
A few times per month or less	67%

**Q3 How frequently do you post to an institutional website that is an aggregator of social media channels? Please select the answer that best applies.**

Total	165
More than once per day	24%
Once per weekday	13%
A few times per week	26%
A few times per month or less	38%

**Q3 How frequently do you post to Flickr? Please select the answer that best applies.**

Total	278
More than once per day	0%
Once per weekday	2%
A few times per week	17%
A few times per month or less	81%

**Q3 How frequently do you post to social communities provided by vendors (such as iModules, etc.)? Please select the answer that best applies.**

Total	106
More than once per day	12%
Once per weekday	7%
A few times per week	26%
A few times per month or less	55%

<b>Q3 How frequently do you post to Twitter? Please select the answer that best applies.</b>	
Total	647
More than once per day	44%
Once per weekday	17%
A few times per week	27%
A few times per month or less	13%

<b>Q3 How frequently do you post to YouTube? Please select the answer that best applies.</b>	
Total	522
More than once per day	1%
Once per weekday	2%
A few times per week	11%
A few times per month or less	86%

<b>Q3 How frequently do you post to Instagram? Please select the answer that best applies.</b>	
Total	432
More than once per day	6%
Once per weekday	14%
A few times per week	44%
A few times per month or less	36%

<b>Q3 How frequently do you post to Google+? Please select the answer that best applies.</b>	
Total	218
More than once per day	4%
Once per weekday	7%
A few times per week	24%
A few times per month or less	65%

<b>Q3 How frequently do you post to Pinterest? Please select the answer that best applies.</b>	
Total	178
More than once per day	2%
Once per weekday	2%
A few times per week	16%
A few times per month or less	80%

<b>Q3 How frequently do you post to Tumblr? Please select the answer that best applies.</b>	
Total	73
More than once per day	3%
Once per weekday	5%
A few times per week	33%
A few times per month or less	59%

<b>Q3 How frequently do you post to Vine? Please select the answer that best applies.</b>	
Total	49
More than once per day	-
Once per weekday	2%
A few times per week	4%
A few times per month or less	94%

<b>Q3 How frequently do you post to Vimeo? Please select the answer that best applies.</b>	
Total	114
More than once per day	-
Once per weekday	2%
A few times per week	11%
A few times per month or less	88%

<b>Q3 How frequently do you post to WhatsApp? Please select the answer that best applies.</b>	
Total	22
More than once per day	41%
Once per weekday	5%
A few times per week	14%
A few times per month or less	41%

<b>Q3 How frequently do you post to SnapChat? Please select the answer that best applies.</b>	
Total	36
More than once per day	8%
Once per weekday	6%
A few times per week	31%
A few times per month or less	56%

<b>Q3 How frequently do you post to YikYak? Please select the answer that best applies.</b>	
Total	37
More than once per day	-
Once per weekday	3%
A few times per week	14%
A few times per month or less	84%

<b>Q3 How frequently do you post to other social media? Please select the answer that best applies.</b>	
Total	40
More than once per day	5%
Once per weekday	5%
A few times per week	30%
A few times per month or less	60%

**Q4 Of the content your unit posts now, what percentage is...? Please allocate 100 points among the following to indicate the relative weight of each media type.**

[Mean of points allocated is shown.]

Total	694
Images (photos, gifs)	45
Text	43
Video	12

**Q5 Of the content your unit posted three years ago, what percentage was...? Please allocate 100 points among the following to indicate the relative weight of each media type.**

[Mean of points allocated is shown.]

Total	694
Text	65
Images (photos, gifs)	30
Video	6

**Q6 What third-party software or service do you use to derive social media data? Please select all that apply.**

Total	663
Free software platforms (Facebook Insights, Twitter Analytics, etc.)	54%
Hootsuite	43%
Other	12%
Sprout Social	8%
Meltwater	8%
Vocus	3%
Radian6	2%
Social mention	2%
Argyle Social	0%
None of the above	18%

**Q7 Does your institution assign scores to individual alumni or donors to indicate their level of engagement with your institution?**

Of the 688 responses, 264 (38%) were "I don't know." Figures below exclude these responses.

Total	424
Alumni only	5%
Donors only	4%
Both alumni and donors, using the same scoring	19%
Both alumni and donors, using different scoring	6%
Neither alumni nor donors	66%

**Q8 Which metrics are a part of the engagement score for alumni? Please allocate 100 points among the following to indicate the relative weight of each in your engagement score.**

[Mean of points allocated is shown.]

Total	111
Giving	34
Participation in in-person events	13
Other	12
Volunteering in-person	10
Participation in mentoring, internship, or employment programs	7
Social media engagement	5
Alumni sharing of thought leadership and expertise	5
Engaging in recruiting prospective students	5
Participation in virtual events or online activities	4
Survey data on satisfaction	2
Volunteering online	2
Staff evaluations of satisfaction	1

**Q8 Which metrics are a part of the engagement score for donors? Please allocate 100 points among the following to indicate the relative weight of each in your engagement score.**

[Mean of points allocated is shown.]

Total	105
Giving	46
Other	14
Participation in in-person events	11
Volunteering in-person	8
Participation in mentoring, internship, or employment programs	5
Engaging in recruiting prospective students	4
Alumni sharing of thought leadership and expertise	4
Social media engagement	3
Participation in virtual events or online activities	3
Survey data on satisfaction	1
Volunteering online	1
Staff evaluations of satisfaction	1

**Q10 How would you rate the overall success of your unit's use of social media, in terms of achieving its goals?**

Total	662
Not at all successful	2%
Not very successful	13%
Somewhat successful	58%
Very successful	23%
A model for successful use of social media	3%



**Q11 How has your institution attempted to measure whether these social media efforts are successful? Please select all that apply.**

Total	654
Number of active "friends," "followers," "connections," or number of comments	89%
Number of "click-throughs" to a website or microsite	75%
Anecdotal feedback	55%
Registration for an event	43%
Completion of a form	15%
Through another method	13%
Updates to a CRM system	9%
Discussions on a bulletin board	8%
I don't know	6%

**Q12 Has your unit used one or more social media channels as part of a broader, planned campaign to achieve a specific goal?**

Total	655
Yes	70%
No	30%

**Q13 Does your institution use social media channels for donor stewardship purposes or to communicate with current donors?**

Of the 645 responses, 125 (19%) were "I don't know." Figures below exclude these responses.

Total	520
Yes	62%
No	38%

**Q14 Does your institution use social media channels to raise money from donors?**

Of the 654 responses, 103 (16%) were "I don't know." Figures below exclude these responses.

Total	551
Yes	57%
No	43%

**Q15 Approximately how much money did your institution raise through social media channels in FY14?**

Of the 314 responses, 186 (59%) were "I don't know." Figures below exclude these responses.

Total	128
Up to \$5,000	44%
\$5,001 - \$10,000	20%
\$10,001 - \$50,000	16%
\$50,001 - \$100,000	8%
\$100,001 - \$500,000	9%
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	2%
\$1,000,001 or more	2%

**Q16 Approximately what percentage of the total funds your institution raised in FY14 was raised through social media channels?**

Of the 313 responses, 196 (63%) were "I don't know." Figures below exclude these responses.

Total	117
Up to 5%	83%
6% to 10%	11%
11% to 20%	5%
21% to 49%	-
50% or more	1%

**Q17 Which of the following fundraising tools or approaches are you currently using? Please select all that apply.**

Total	649
Day(s) of giving	42%
None of the above	41%
Strong use of social media ambassadors (alumni or others who are recruited to help promote our social initiatives)	22%
Student engagement philanthropy month	19%
Crowdsourcing/microfunding/Kickstarter-style fundraising	15%
Facebook direct giving button	8%

**Q18 Approximately how much money did your institution raise through Day(s) of Giving in FY14?**

Of the 273 responses, 129 (47%) were "I don't know." Figures below exclude these responses.

Total	144
Up to \$5,000	28%
\$5,001 - \$10,000	11%
\$10,001 - \$50,000	24%
\$50,001 - \$100,000	12%
\$100,001 - \$500,000	17%
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	1%
\$1,000,001 or more	7%

**Q19 How would you rate the overall success of your unit's Day(s) of Giving, in terms of achieving its goals?**

Total	255
Not at all successful	4%
Not very successful	14%
Somewhat successful	56%
Very successful	24%
A model for successful use of social media	4%

**Q20 How many projects was your unit seeking to fund with crowdsourcing/microfunding/Kickstarter-style fundraising?**

Total	95
1-5	73%
6-10	11%
More than 10	16%

**Q21 Approximately how much money were you aiming to raise per crowdsourcing/microfunding/Kickstarter-style fundraising project?**

Of the 98 responses, 46 (47%) were "I don't know." Figures below exclude these responses.

Total	52
Up to \$5,000	31%
\$5,001 - \$10,000	33%
\$10,001 - \$50,000	23%
\$50,001 - \$100,000	8%
\$100,001 - \$500,000	2%
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	-
\$1,000,001 or more	4%

**Q22 Approximately how much money did your institution raise through crowdsourcing/microfunding/Kickstarter-style fundraising in FY14?**

Of the 97 responses, 55 (57%) were "I don't know." Figures below exclude these responses.

Total	42
Up to \$5,000	31%
\$5,001 - \$10,000	19%
\$10,001 - \$50,000	29%
\$50,001 - \$100,000	14%
\$100,001 - \$500,000	5%
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	-
\$1,000,001 or more	2%

**Q23 How would you rate the overall success of your unit's crowdsourcing/microfunding/Kickstarter-style fundraising, in terms of achieving its goals?**

Total	90
Not at all successful	3%
Not very successful	10%
Somewhat successful	66%
Very successful	19%
A model for successful use of social media	2%

**Q24 To your knowledge, how much crowdsourcing/microfunding/Kickstarter-style fundraising activity is being conducted independently of your unit (for example, by faculty members from their own research centers)?**

Of the 93 responses, 33 (35%) were "I don't know." Figures below exclude these responses.

Total	60
There is some crowdsourcing being conducted independently of our unit	63%
There is no crowdsourcing being conducted independently of our unit to my knowledge	28%
Our institution has a policy against crowdsourcing independently of our unit	5%
There is a great deal of crowdsourcing being conducted independently of our unit	3%

**Q25 Does the leader of your institution (president, head, etc.) use social media in his/her professional role? Please select all that apply.**

Of the 645 responses, 76 (12%) were "I don't know" or 286 (44%) "No." Figures below exclude these responses.

Total	645
Yes, on Twitter	26%
Yes, on a blog	13%
Yes, on Facebook	13%
Yes, on LinkedIn	10%
Yes, through another channel	4%

**Q26 How has your institution attempted to measure whether the leader's social media efforts are successful? Please select all that apply.**

Total	280
Number of active "friends," "followers," "connections," or number of comments	32%
Anecdotal feedback	23%
Number of "click-throughs" to a website or microsite	14%
Registration for an event	6%
Through another method	3%
Discussions on a bulletin board	2%
Completion of a form	1%
Updates to a CRM system	1%
I don't know	61%

**Q27 Where is your institution located?**

Total	645
United States and Canada	83%
Europe	11%
Asia Pacific	3%
Other	2%
Latin America	1%

<b>Q28 At what type of institution do you work? (Asked of those outside US and Canada)</b>	
Total	108
Higher education/university	81%
Elementary/primary/secondary/high school	14%
Special focus institution (e.g. stand-alone business school, medical school, etc.)	4%
Other (please specify)	1%
Further education/community college	-

<b>Q29 At what type of institution do you work? (Asked of those in US or Canada)</b>	
Total	537
Doctoral/research university	28%
Baccalaureate (four year) college	27%
Master's college or university	15%
Independent elementary/secondary school	15%
Associate's (two year) college	5%
Special focus institution (e.g. stand-alone law school, medical school)	3%
Other (please specify)	3%
Institutionally related foundation	2%
Independent alumni association	1%
System office	0%
Tribal college	-

<b>Q30 Is your institution...?</b>	
Total	642
Public	52%
Private	47%
Other (please specify)	1%

<b>Q31 How many students does your institution have? Please include ALL students, both full-time and part-time.</b>	
Total	641
Less than 1,000	17%
1,000 - 4,999	25%
5,000 - 9,999	12%
10,000 -14,999	10%
15,000 - 19,999	8%
20,000 or more	27%

**Q32 Which of the following describe your unit, that is, your immediate department or division?  
Please select all that apply.**

Total	644
Communications	46%
Alumni Relations	38%
Marketing	31%
Development (including Annual Fund)	31%
Advancement Services	17%
Other	7%
Enrollment management or Admissions	4%