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Carole Hennessy

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How the use of Social Media as a Public Relations
Tactic has aided Animal Rescue Organisations
in raising awareness of their cause

CAROLIE HENNESSY

M.A. (Hons.) in Public Relations with New Media

2013



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Instiúid Teicneolaíochta Chorcaí
Cork Institute of Technology

**How the use of Social Media as a Public Relations Tactic has
aided Animal Rescue Organisations in raising awareness of
their cause**

Carole Hennessy

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Cork Institute of Technology
For the degree of:

**Master's Degree (M.A.) in
Public Relations with New Media**

Supervised by Emmett Coffey

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of

Master's Degree (M.A.) in Public Relations with New Media

is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for assessment for any academic purpose other than in partial fulfilment for that stated above.

Signed.....

Date.....

ABSTRACT

This study aims to contribute to the understanding of the non-profit sector, in particular animal welfare organisations and how social media can be used as a Public Relations tactic which in turn enables them to raise awareness of their cause.

A qualitative research design was deemed the most suitable by the researcher. Semi-structured interviews and a content analysis in the form of a netnographic analysis of the chosen non-profit organisations Facebook pages were used to collect the primary data. Interviewees were chosen on the basis they had knowledge, experience and exposure in their area.

Research findings indicate that social media is an important tool in the arsenal of a non-profit organisations Public Relations effort. The researcher discovered it is not necessarily the biggest organisations that use social media the most effectively.

The research concludes that while there are some disadvantages regarding non-profit organisations use of social media. These prove insignificant when weighed against the advantages. Social media and in particular a Facebook platform lends itself to non-profits in extending their reach, which enables them to fundraise and therefore continue on with their mission.

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Finally, to my classmates, thank you for making this year an unforgettable experience. It was a pleasure to know you all, and I know I have made some very good friends for life.

Abbreviations

CIPR – Chartered Institute of Public Relations

PR – Public Relations

PRII –Public Relations Institute of Ireland

Cork DAWG – Cork Dog Action Welfare Group

Staffie – Staffordshire Bull Terrier

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to explore how the use of social media as a Public Relations tactic has aided animal rescue organisations in raising awareness of their cause. The non-profit organisations play a crucial role in Ireland's social and economic life. They are extremely diverse ranging from small community groups to large national organisations.

The idea of asking for help for animals is not a new thing. Even in the pre-internet era, organisations sent out their pleas for help by mail, telephone and of course word of mouth, in an effort to find volunteers, foster homes and adopters. What is the big deal with social media that makes it so different from posting to the organisations website or sending out a press release?

What sets social media apart from other forms of media is how it got its name in the first place, the social element. The journey a message takes through a social network can begin with a single Facebook update, Twitter tweet, or YouTube video upload. From the perspective of the organisation making a post, it really isn't all that different from publishing something on a website.

However, for those reading the message, it is a completely different matter. They are not passive readers, but to a certain extent they are active supporters who participate in social media for the sole purpose of keeping up with the people and causes they have an interest in, and because information-sharing is the currency of social media, people are there to let other people know what they are doing and thinking and also what they believe in. Someone who believes in you and the message you are delivering will make sure to re-broadcast it to their own subscribers, who may also do the same in turn.

A person who volunteers at a shelter may also be active online around various other interests, because a love of animals is something that cuts across all economic, racial, social, gender and age lines, any message that is shared with any group of people is likely to target a large number of potential supporters for your particular cause and this includes many who would otherwise never hear about your organisation or the work that it does. This is how a message is spread, in an ever-expanding series of concentric circles of communication that can, sometimes in the space of a single night, reach tens or sometimes even hundreds of thousands of individuals. What this means is that

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animal welfare organisations can use social media to increase, fundraising, volunteerism, adoptions and their public profile.

From its very inception, social media has attracted small groups of rescuers and volunteers. Many would have initially started by using the precursors of social media i.e. Message boards, forums and email lists. Today all types of animal welfare organisations use social media, from the small local rescue groups in the largest animal welfare organisations in the world and everything in between. Social media has become a tool that allows groups to communicate with their many volunteers, donors, supporters and foster carers at little or no cost to the organisation, and if it's done well it can spread and amplify the message in a way that no paid media can ever accomplish.

This thesis uses a mix of PR professionals and non-profit representatives to gain an insight into their online engagement. The interviewees were chosen based on their expertise in their particular area.

1.1 Research Objectives

Online public relations is still a relatively new area within the public relations discipline. The purpose of the study is to ascertain if social media can aid animal welfare organisations raise awareness of their cause. The research objectives are:

1. To ascertain if social media can aid animal welfare organisations raise awareness of their cause.
2. Explore the advantages of the use of social media by a non-profit organisation.
3. Explore the importance of two-way communication by non-profit organisations.
4. Analysis of how social media can help to enhance non-profit organisations reputation.

1.2 Thesis Structure

The structure of this thesis adheres to the guidelines as outlined by the academic institution

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter explores previous studies and theories that have contributed to the overall understanding of the research for this study. This chapter will focus on key themes related to public relations, social media, communication models, campaign planning, traditional vs new media and reputation management. This will help to provide a framework for later chapters.

Chapter Three: Research Methodologies

The research methodology chapter will outline the research methods undertaken by the researcher for this thesis. It provides a justification for the research methods chosen.

Chapter Four: Findings

This chapter uses knowledge gained from the primary and secondary research. The data will be presented under themed headings.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusions

Discussion: This chapter will present the researcher's interpretation, analysis and discussion of the data collected and presented in the findings chapter. The findings will be carefully examined in the context of the literature review chapter.

Conclusion: this chapter concludes the project and summarises major conclusions from the thesis.

1.3 Context Review

In this section of the thesis, the researcher will give the reader an overview of the non-profit organisations that formed the basis of this study.

1.3.1 Dogs Trust Ireland

Dogs Trust Ireland is currently Ireland's largest dog welfare charity. Their Centre in Finglas, Dublin opened its doors in 2009 and since that date has saved the lives of over 4,500 dogs and puppies. Their main objective is to rescue as many dogs from the pound system and to rehome them to the best possible home they can find.

The organisation also offers a national neutering campaign which offers low cost neutering for dogs whose owners are in receipt of means tested Social Welfare payments. To date the organisation has neutered over 80,000 dogs through this initiative.

Dogs Trust Ireland also runs an education programme offering free curriculum linked workshops to primary schools in Leinster, Munster and the South East. The focus of these workshops is teaching five to twelve year olds the importance of responsible dog ownership. The children also get the

opportunity to meet the resident team dogs. In 2012 Dogs Trust Ireland visited 36,650 children. They also advise the Government on any matters concerning dog ownership.

1.3.2 Cork Dog Action Welfare Group

Cork Dawg is an organisation founded and run mostly by a network of volunteers who are concerned with the welfare of abandoned abused and ill-treated dogs in Cork. Through their collective experience the organisation aims to improve the lives of Cork's dogs and endeavours to educate the public on dog welfare and ownership.

The organisation principally rescues strays, takes dogs from the local pound and for families who no longer want or can keep their dog, they have a surrender policy. Due to the recession the shelter is always full to capacity which puts a huge strain on the resources of the organisation. This has led to a waiting list being in place for those who need to surrender their dogs.

Cork Dawg, due to the pressure of numbers, could not survive without their network of volunteer fosters, who enable them to rescue more dogs than their shelter could cope with.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature_Review

2. Introduction

As part of this thesis a review was undertaken of existing academic literature. This chapter will provide an overview of the literature that will help the reader with insight into the current theoretical debate on this subject matter. The researcher will also gain a greater knowledge of this topic and will focus on areas such as public relations, non-profit public relations, public relations and New Media, public relations campaigns, Social Media and non-profit organisations.

2.1 Public Relations

It is necessary to give the reader a brief introduction as to what constitutes public relations (PR) in order for the reader to fully understand and appreciate this dissertation. There is no universal definition of PR, though many have attempted to pin it down, to date there are in excess of 2,000 definitions of PR. In 1976, Dr Rex F. Harlow, collected definitions written between 1900s and 1976. He attempted to define PR and not what it does. From his collection of 472 definitions, he produced a definition that includes both the conceptual and operational elements, contains overall goals, processes and tasks of PR and positions the profession firmly within the organisation, as a management role (Tench & Yeomans, 2009, p. 4). However, most practitioners found it long winded and subsequent researchers have attempted to shorten and simplify the definition.

Cutlip et al (1999, p. 6) define PR as a “management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relations between an organisation and the publics on whom its success and failure depends”. Some academics have focused only on the narrow aspects of PR in their definitions. For example, Grunig and Hunt (1984, p. 6) used short explanations such as ‘communication management’ and ‘organisational communication’. Kitchen (1997, as cited in Tench & Yeomans, p. 5) is just as brief with his definition, suggesting that PR can be defined as “communication with various publics”. He goes on to argue, however, that PR is an important management function and does have a strategic role to play.

The definition which is put forward by the Institute of Public Relations (IPR) in 1987 states that “Public Relations is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and understanding between the organisation and its publics”.

(Theaker, 2012, p. 5).

According to Caywood,

“Public Relations is the profitable integration of an organisation’s new and continuing relationship with stakeholders, including customers, by managing all communications contacts with the organisation, which creates and protects the brand and reputation of the organisation”. (Caywood, 2012, p. 3)

Oeckl, A (1964) defines PR as “Working with the public, working for the public, working in the public” (and he continues with “working means the intended, planned, and continuous effort to build mutual understanding and trust and to care about it”. Oeckl, A, 1964 as cited in Heath, 2005, p. 586)). Bentele (1998) described PR as:

“The Management of information and communication processes between organisations on the one side and their internal and external environments (publics) on the other side. PR serves the functions of information, communication, persuasion, image building, continuous building of trust, management of conflicts, and the generation of a social consensus”. (As cited in Sriramesh & Verecic, 2003, chap 5)

Almost every definition mentions communication and focuses on ‘ideal’ communications practices: two-way communications and building positive relationships between organisations and their publics. Some mention the strategic importance to organisations and recognise its influence on reputation (Hutton, 1999; H Grunig and Grunig 2000). Cutlip et al. (2000, p. 6) combine both of these aspects and suggest: “Public relations is the management function that both establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and its publics”

2.2 Campaign Planning

‘Public relations practice is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics’ (Gregory, 2000, p. 14)

One of the most important parts of any organisations PR effort is the PR campaign. Planned or managed communication is frequently mentioned as a defining characteristic of the discipline. According to Gregory (2000) planning focuses effort by eliminating unnecessary work. It helps improve effectiveness by only working on the agreed objectives from the outset. Planning helps to encourage the long-term view, this requires the planner to look to the organisation's future needs, preparing it for change and helping manage future risks. It also helps to demonstrate value for money.

Similarly Watson, O'Cadhla and Ni Dhurcain wrote extensively on campaign planning in their book *Campaigns and How to Win Them*. They suggested that there are four main decisions that need to be made in the campaign planning process. This begins with the vision, without which decisions tend to be made with little consideration towards the long-term effects: The aims and objectives of the organisation need to be decided on and documented from the outset. The strategy which best suits the cause needs to be deciphered and identified and the action plan which enables the organisation to plan all activities and events which means that resources can be easily allocated (Watson, Ni Dhurcain, & O'Cadhla, 1997)

While planning will not make a poorly conceived programme successful in achieving its goals, it will make it more likely that the programme will be well conceived in the first place. By ensuring that the plan targets the right people, uses the right channels of communication and says the appropriate things at the right time, within the timescale and budget agreed, the foundations for a successful campaign are laid. (Tench & Yeomans, 2009)

PR is vital to the success of non-profit organisations. No matter how important your cause, the organisation should not expect that everyone will know about it. Proactive communications are essential to success. From building awareness and credibility to supporting fundraising efforts, a well-executed, strategic public relations programme can make the difference between success or failure. (GuideStar, 2005)

2.3 Models of Communication

Today PR is practised through the four models of communication as developed by Grunig and Hunt in 1984. In their influential book, *Managing Public Relations*, they outline the four models which are ; press agency/press model; the public information model; the two-way asymmetrical model; and the two-way symmetrical model.

2.3.1 Press Agency Model

The press agency/publicity model and the public information model rely on one-way dissemination of information. (Smith R. D., 2009). As stated in Tench and Yeomans (2009) press agency involves no dialogue with the intended audience and the main objective is to put forward one particular view of the world through the media and other channels (Tench and Yeomans, 2009). The press agent attempts to attract public notice more than to build public understanding (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1999). "Press agency/publicity "emphasises the generation of media coverage of an organisation of individual by any means necessary, including deception and trickery)" (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995). This model was predominant in the late 1800s, and publicist P.T. Barnum who claimed that there is "a sucker born every minute" seems like a particularly appropriate critique of media gatekeepers of his era. They believed that there was no such thing as bad publicity and practitioners of this particular model used publicity stunts of all kinds to generate "ink". (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995).

2.3.2 Public Information Model

Public information is also closely related to press agency in that the flow of information is strictly one way, but differs in that the truth is essential. Some would suggest that this is the model that is most often practised by non-profit agencies (Grunig, 1992). The information has to be accurate, true and specific with the main aim being to inform rather than persuade (Tench & Yeomans, 2009).

2.3.3 Two-way Asymmetrical Model

The next model is the two-way asymmetrical model. In order to "engineer consent" the communicator gathers information from target publics in an effort to devise an effective media and message strategy. Edward Bernays was credited with this innovation in the 1920s. (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995). It is this method that is the most widely practised today and the reasoning behind it is to try to change the behaviour and attitudes of the audience but not the behaviour of the organisation (Theaker, 2012). However, while the information gathering from publics makes the organisational method two-way, communicators might use such feedback from publics to persuade or even manipulate them into compliance with the organisation's objectives. This, according to Grunig, makes this method unethical. (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

2.3.4 Two-way Symmetrical Model

Sometimes seen as the “ideal” model of PR which describes a level of equality of communication not often found in real life, where each party is willing to alter their behaviour to accommodate the needs of the other (Theaker, 2012). This two-way symmetrical model emerged in the late 20th century, and Arthur W. Page, former vice president of public relations for AT&T, was one of the early practitioners of the model which combines sophisticated research with a symmetrical worldview, as captured in the quotation:

“All business in a democratic country begins with public permission and exists by public approval” (Broom and Dozier, 1990 as cited in Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 1995)

Following a further study carried out by Grunig, while the two-way symmetrical communication was a source of excellent PR, in practice a mix of asymmetric and symmetric approaches is often used (Tench & Yeomans, 2009). This model is not without its critics who have argued that it is “an idealistic model which misrepresents the reality of the communications process in reality, where vested interests dictate the nature of PR in practice and rarely encourage a truly balanced communications process “. (L’Etang, 1996, as cited in Tench & Yeomans, 2009)

2.3.5 Peer-To-Peer Public Relations

Online media give non-profit organisations new options for practicing public relations which lead to more of a peer-to-peer view of the communications process. This means that there is now potential for more balance in the communication process, which makes peer-to-peer technology a useful metaphor for online public relations. These online technologies of everyday public relations are now allowing the practice of effective public relations more room to move from a one-way targeting of a message to more of a two-way conversation (Kelleher, 2007).

If effective communication is defined as a process that requires some sort of feedback, it could be argued that all communication is two-way. However, Grunig and Hunts first models of public relations, the publicity, press agency model and the public information models as previously discussed are considered primarily one-way approaches to public relations. According to Kelleher (2007, p. 45) “The two-way models that follow are distinguished based on symmetry, or balance, in the directional flow of influence between and organisation and its publics.”

Using two-way symmetrical PR means that the non-profit organisation takes the interests of its publics into careful consideration. This form of interactive communication greatly enhances the organisation's ability to practice symmetrical public relations. This should lead to dialogue between the non-profit organisation and its publics, however, while all dialogue might involve two-way communication, not all two-way communication is dialogue. Organisations communicating online should let people get in touch to ask questions and voice concerns. As Kent and Taylor (1988) put it, response is a major part of what is known as the Dialogic loop and the content of the response is also critical for relationship building (Kent and Taylor, 1988 as cited in Kelleher, 2007, p. 50). This Dialogic communication means not just getting people engaged in a back-and-forth conversation, but also keeping them engaged. According to Searls and Weinberger (2001) the best people in PR are not necessarily PR 'Types', they understand they are not censors, they are their organisation's best conversationalists (Kelleher, 2007, p. 52).

2.4 PR and Non-Profit Organisations

The non-profit sector is the sum of private, voluntary and non-profit organisations and associations. It describes a set of organisations and activities next to the institutional complexities of government, state and public sector on one hand and the for profit or business sector on the other. This is sometimes referred to as the "third sector". It is a sector which has gained more prominence in the fields of welfare provision, education, community development, international relations, the environment and arts and culture. (Anheier, 2005)

The main aim of the non-profit organisation is to help solve societal issues in addition to or even replacing entirely, any help from the state. Their revenue stream may come from government grants but in the main it is from public and private monetary donations. (Augusto, Goncalves, & Goncalves, 2013)

Non-profit organisations approach PR programmes with diverse tactics, but the promotion of public service and building public trust are common to all (Cutlip, Centre and Broom, 2000). The main aim of non-profit PR is to enable them to gain public acceptance of their organisation's mission. Non-profit organisations develop channels of communication with all those the organisation aims to serve. This, in turn, helps to create a climate favourable to fundraising. (Cutlip et al, 1999). Non-profit PR helps to "support development and maintenance of public policy", "inform and motivate" volunteers and employees all of which is essential to the survival of the organisation. (Cutlip & Center, 2013, p. 404)

Similarly, according to Gunning (2003, pp. 254-258) PR for non-profit organisations involves primarily three areas: "Building awareness and credibility for the charity. Promoting the overall image of the charity and promoting the product brand". Caywood (2012) states that it is:

"through the process of communications and public relations that an organisation systematically identifies the audiences for its various messages and ensures those messages are conveyed and reinforced in an effective way. Communications is integral to an organisation's strategic plan and deserves special focus." (Caywood, 2012, p. 481)

According to Theaker "Non profits who are by their very nature dependent on the goodwill and understanding of publics beyond the beneficiaries themselves, often do not understand the issues faced unless they are clearly and simply explained." (Theaker, 2012, pp. 387-408)

People will not usually buy a brand they are unfamiliar with. This also runs true for non-profit organisations, where customers are unlikely to donate to an organisation they know nothing about. Communication is the channel through which a non-profit organisation can expose any issues they advocate about and it is the medium that keeps all those in touch with the organisation. "Communication is capable of increasing the salience of an issue in the view of the public, policymakers, or both, and influencing legislative action." (McHale, 2004, p. 5)

Communication is also used to thank all who support a non-profit organisation with the hope that they will continue to do so. "Stakeholders who feel appreciated will be ready and willing when you need their help". (Carlson & Donohoe, 2010, chap. 13)

Carlson and Donohoe (2010) also point out that the most effective and efficient method a non-profit organisation can reach its stakeholders is through personal communication. There are many free opportunities for the non-profit organisation to use free publicity.

The use of the internet for philanthropic purposes is a new, innovative way of giving, which involves the use of technology (Cheng & Mohamed, 2010). ePhilanthropy enables organisations to "cultivate and steward relationships, communicate and invite advocacy for their cause, and solicit contributions online" (Hart et al, 2005, p. 2). Furthermore it enables non-profit organisations to "reach, inform, and engage potential donors, many of which may be beyond the reach of normal communication and fundraising channels alone" (Hart et al, 2005, p. 2)

2.5 Non-profit PR in the Recession

All non-profit organisations face an uncertain future and this is now more evident than ever during the present time. Yue (2011) argues that PR during a recession is not only vital for making the organisation heard but is essential for building relationships with stakeholders and for informing them “where the organisation stands and what its plans are” (Bridgespan, 2009).

The recession has led to many issues for charities. Chief among these is falling donations. With increased costs charities are looking at ways to both increase donations and cut costs. The recession has also altered donors’ perceptions and expectations of charities, and communication with them has to take this into account in order to ensure that donors continue as supporters. (Goodey, 2010)

In an effort to maintain stability, the non-profit organisation should not spend large amounts on advertising and should utilise the many free PR tools available online. In harsh economic times, communication is key and using social media is the best method for keeping in touch with your stakeholders. In an article in *The Washington Post*, Gergen and Chatterji (2009) highlighted that non-profit organisations are communicating with their stakeholders more frequently during a recession.

2.6. Traditional vs New Media

Traditional or mass media until recently comprised newspapers, television, films and the internet. However, defining mass media is no longer so straightforward. The continuing emergence of digital communication technology is changing the way we now view mass media.

Internet based social media tools such as blogs, podcasts and social networks are now giving a voice to the millions of publics and consumers. While mainstream media still continues to play an important role in the dissemination of information, even these traditional channels are being influenced by more and more online conversations. “Anyone can, quite economically, set up a website or blog, or tweet, or use a range of social media. Once they have done so their communication is available worldwide.” (Morris & Goldsworthy, 2012, pp. 144-145)

The very term “new media” appears to escape its very definition. It is a way of organising a cloud of technology, skills and processes that change so very quickly that it is impossible to fully define just what those tools and processes are. Perhaps the term “new media” is more apt to describe the network of networks that overwrites traditional relationships in exchange for new ones. In many

ways, traditional media outlets now rely on new media sources for data and information. (Socha & Eber-Schmid, 2012)

Though new media has not replaced the more traditional communication technologies available in the workplace, the digital continues to push out the analogue. As these and newer media spread, an increasing proportion of organisational models, operations, and transactions are purely electronic (Kang & Norton) the rapid spread of new media has also significantly increased the ability of non-profit organisations to communicate with their clients as well as their regulators, volunteers, the media and the public in general (Waters, 2002). Through the use of strategically targeted content, organisations and, in particular, non-profit organisations can mobilise their stakeholders, build meaningful relationships, and ultimately foster increased accountability and public trust. (Sexton, Guo, & Brown, 2007) Online non-profit/stakeholder interactions have effectively become more ubiquitous, multifaceted and critical to organisational performance (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

This new age of communication has welcomed a revolution in PR which not only involves the way we communicate, but the very nature of communication itself. According to Philips and Young, (2009, p. 6) "Anyone with access to a computer, an internet connection and basic literacy can make his or her voice heard to a global audience, and in many different ways". New media has transformed old media, through the communication focus from a decidedly asymmetrical style of broadcast, to that which is essentially an exchange between individuals which may include a greater degree of symmetry. This then leads us on to the next section which is an exploration of social media and how it enables non-profit organisations to disseminate their message to a wide audience.

2.7 Social Media

"Social media is, quite simply, anything that uses the internet to facilitate conversations. It allows people the opportunity to broadcast their thoughts, opinions, and expertise on a global scale. In many cases, these voices are as influential as many of the most widely renowned journalists and industry experts". (Solis & Breakenridge, 2009, p. xvii)

The last number of years has seen a fundamental shift towards user-driven technologies such as blogs, social networks and video sharing platforms. Collectively these social technologies have enabled a revolution in user-generated content, global community and the publishing of consumer opinion, which is now uniformly tagged as social media. This movement is now dominating the way the

internet is utilised, and the leading platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Flickr and now Twitter have moved into the mainstream. (Smith T.)

According to the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) "Social media is the term commonly given to Internet and mobile-based channels and tools that allow users to interact with each other and share opinions and content. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks and encouraging participation and engagement". Similarly, the Public Relations Institute of Ireland defines social media as "the technology used to enable an individual reach a worldwide audience in an instant."(PRII)

Previously, the practice of PR meant interaction with their audiences was strictly through one-way communication. The use of social media now lends itself toward reaching larger numbers of publics and allowing them greater involvement in comparison to traditional methods. The audience is no longer a passive receiver of content (Theaker, 2012). This has led to the case that the consumer in effect becomes the publisher (Howley, 2010). Social media allows the audience search for information and respond immediately using social media platforms. According to O'Leary et al, (2011) "participating in the social media sphere also requires you to shift your marketing message mindset from one-way messages to interactive conversations." (O' Leary, Sheehan, & Lentz, 2011, p. xiv).

In this digitally connected world, it is now increasingly important that social media and social networking skills are integrated into PR and communication programs (PRII, 2010). According to O'Leary, social media is having a major impact on business and according to Solis (2010) social media is embedded in conversations between peoples and peers, regardless of the technology that facilitates them, and every day these conversations take place across blogs, networks, forums, micro media and online groups. In addition, Solis notes that since the introduction of social media and every new social tool introduced, some companies are listening while there are many who aren't even paying attention,.

2.7.1 Advantages of using Social Media

According to Convio (2010) social media is a "low-cost, effective marketing channel that allows you to empower your supporters to share your organization's mission and achievements". It also makes it easier for potential supporters and donors to discover your organisation. Some of the benefits of utilizing social media include:

- Building awareness of the organisations mission by driving traffic to their website and social media properties.
- Growing the organisation's influence by cost-effectively acquiring new supporters, donors and volunteers.
- Harnessing the passion of the organisation's active supporters by empowering them to promote the organisation's various programs.

2.7.2 Social Networking

"A social network, trusted network, virtual community, e-community, or online community is a group of people who interact through newsletters, blogs, comments, telephone, email and instant messages, and who use text, audio, photographs, and video for social, professional, and educational purposes. The social network's goal is to build trust in a given community". (Safko, 2010, p. 24)

Social networking is a web-based interaction that is highly accessible and potentially powerful. Kaplan and Haenlein describe it as a "group of internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010 as cited in Theaker, 2012). It is the opportunity to exchange information and ideas that provide non-profits with an avenue to influence and, more importantly, listen to their publics wherever they are online (Theaker, 2012)

According to Safko (2010) the sites that fall under the umbrella of social networking have rapidly and completely changed the way that people now interact, particularly with regard to personal and professional relationships. Now that there is a tool that has the capability to reach millions of people who are in one place, at one time and all with common interests who are clamouring to use it, it is imperative that the PR practitioner needs to understand it and how best to use it.

Because social media sites have developed as a result of social network expansion (Kim et al, 2010), they connect people through interests and affiliations, providing them with an easy accessible setting for online interaction. Beal and Strauss (2008) claim however, that only honesty, disclosure and transparency will be tolerated in the social media realm. Accordingly, users will not tolerate exploitative spin, manipulation and control. Therefore, organisations and practitioners using social media need to tread carefully. The use of social media has become imperative in modern business

implementation. The technological advancements and power shift to a user control that require interaction are one of the main reasons for its significance. Jeffrey W. Hazelett Kodak Chief Marketing Officer, believes that his company's social media success is due to their active interaction in two-way communication with their customers, which then helps them to learn how best to serve their needs and in turn creates a relationship. (Hazelett, J.W as cited in Topper, 2009).

There are an increasing number of platforms available which will suit different people. This enables the individual to connect with others using these devices and is an essential part of web 2.0 and its online strategy (Rutledge, 2008). The rise in popularity of social networks, particularly Facebook, facilitates non-profit organisations by enabling them to reach a much larger audience. This would not have been possible through the use of traditional media.

2.7.3 Facebook

More than 70% of the population now uses social networks in one form or another and this number is growing daily. It is now said that one in nine people on Earth have a Facebook account, and if it was a country, it would by now be the third largest country after China and India (CIPR, 2012).

The Facebook platform enables organisations, particularly non-profit organisations to build communities. It gives them the ability to engage with their fans. The more engagement an organisation creates via its Page, the more its message will spread through the Fans' social graphs. Therefore, a brand page with 10,000 fans can theoretically reach 1.2 million people through engagement on its page according to the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR, 2012).

2.8 Reputation Management

Reputation is one of an organisation's greatest assets, and therefore it is vitally important to monitor what is said online. Breakenridge (2008, p. 4) acknowledges that the responsibility of the PR professional is to persistently communicate with facts, accuracy and integrity on behalf of their clients.

CIPR (2009) state:

“Integrity is key to the ethical treatment of social media, and requires practitioners to be transparent through their engagement online. They should realise that reputation is holistic

and members should ensure that the services they provide are costed and accounted for in a manner that conforms to accepted business practice and ethics.”

This point is also supported by Solis (2008) who states that the core factor is to guarantee transparency when participating online during the entire process, as practitioners are consistently contributing to the personality and awareness of the brand they represent.

A good reputation is of particular importance to a non-profit organisation and helps support fulfillment of its mission. According to Christianson & Hermann (2013) a good reputation can help attract donors and contributors; inspire members of your community to volunteer their time and talents among others. They also state “When difficulties arise, a good reputation can also serve as a retaining wall that affords your non-profit the ‘benefit of the doubt’.” (Christianson & Hermann, 2013)

2.9 Chapter conclusion

It was the overall aim of this chapter to examine the concept of social media as a tool for PR. The purpose of this chapter was to help the reader to gain an academic and professional understanding of the core areas which comprise this concept. This chapter provides the most current and meaningful literature related to PR and social media.

As the researcher has noted social media is now and will continue to become an integral part of the PR function and has forever changed the landscape of the profession, and with the creation of new sites and the growing popularity of current sites such as Facebook, means that the PR professional should have social media as part of their marketing and PR strategy.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3. Introduction

This chapter will look at the research methods used to carry out this research project. Research starts with a problem. The researcher must feel a need, then he collects data of facts, analyses these data critically, and finally reaches a decision based on actual evidence. It involves original work, instead of hearsay or mere exercise of personal opinion and involves a general desire to satisfy a need (Ariola, 2006). It expands boundaries to discover answers to unanswered questions, thus creating valuable information. This chapter begins with defining what research is, and examining the two approaches to research (qualitative and quantitative). The methodology selection will be outlined, (the qualitative research paradigm), the use of interviews will be analyzed, and the chapter will focus on analysing in detail the methods the researcher has selected in the study and justifying the selection chosen.

3.1 Research

“Research is a process, an activity in the search for knowledge through recognised methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation”. (Weirisma as cited in Ariola, 2006:2)

The purpose of this research is to attempt to ascertain whether or not the use of social media has aided animal rescue organisations in raising awareness of their cause. Research questions are formed in order to manage a project, to provide focus and to provide a framework for writing up the project (Punch, 2005). In order to do this a decision has to be made as to what choice of research will yield the best results. Research is a systematic investigation into the study of materials and other sources in order to establish facts and to draw new conclusions. According to Kuthari ((2004) “Research is an academic activity and as such the term should be used in a technical sense.” (Kothari, 2004:1).

In the Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, D. Slesinger and M. Stephenson defines research as:

“The manipulation of things, concepts of symbols for the purpose of generalising to extend, correct or verify knowledge, whether that knowledge aids in construction of theory or in the practice of an art” (Slesinger & Stephenson, 1930)

Therefore, research is, an original contribution to the existing stock of knowledge, the search for truth with the help of study, scrutiny, comparison and experiment. In short, research consists of the search for knowledge through an objective and logical method of finding solutions to a problem (Kothari, 2004, p. 1).

3.1.1 Research Methods and Design

As previously discussed the aim of this study is to explore Irish animal welfare non-profit organisations' management of social media as a PR tool. The research methodology used to carry out this study is required to be proficient in proving or disproving the following

That the use of social media is an important PR tool that can enable two-way communication for non-profit organisations.

An investigation of social media, in particular Facebook, in an applied setting, using Irish animal welfare non-profit organisations, must be capable of engaging in human online interaction and behaviour.

The selection of the decision between the quantitative and qualitative approach is the most important decision in deciding the research method. The decision will set the structure for the following study and its outline. This section will detail both qualitative and quantitative research methods and the decision as to which method the researcher feels is best suited to the research question.

3.1.2 Qualitative versus Quantitative Methods

There are two main approaches to research consisting of the qualitative and the quantitative approach. The choice between the methods chosen is dependant on the nature of the data that is being analysed.

Quantitative research can carry with it the aura of scientific respectability as it uses numbers and can then present findings in the form of graphs and tables. Quantitative research is a formal, objective, systematic process in which numerical data are used to obtain information about the world. This research method is used: to describe variables, to examine relationships among variables and to determine cause-and-effect interactions between variables (Burns & Groves, 2005, p. 23)

Qualitative research is a term that covers a variety of styles of social research, drawing on a variety of disciplines such as sociology, social anthropology and social psychology. It can be used as the basis for generating theories. Qualitative data is a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts. With qualitative data one can preserve the chronological flow, see precisely which events led to which consequences, and derive fruitful explanations. Qualitative research may be conducted in a variety of ways, many with long traditions behind them. As Smith (1992) observed, the term ethnography, field methods, qualitative inquiry, participant observation, case study, naturalistic methods, and responsive evaluation have become practically become synonymous with qualitative research.

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3.1.3 Qualitative and Quantitative Characteristics

Each research type has different elements associated with them. Quantitative research elements include statistics and questionnaires while the elements most frequently associated with qualitative research include interviews and case studies. The main ideas that guide qualitative research are quite different from those in quantitative research. According to (Flick, 2009, p. 14) "The essential features of qualitative research are the correct choice of appropriate methods and theories: the recognition and analysis of different perspectives: the researchers reflections on their research as part of the process of knowledge and the variety of approaches and methods".

Qualitative research is used when we want to understand definitions, analyse, describe and understand experiences and beliefs. It is used in order to develop an initial understanding of an issue. It is also used to understand different perspectives between groups and categories of people. As a research method it goes deeper into issues of interest and explores the nuances related to the problem at hand. Common data collection methods used in qualitative research are focus groups, in-depth interviews, uninterrupted observation, and ethnographic participation/observation.

Qualitative research is interpretive; therefore, the researcher must collect in-depth information in order to answer the research question. This method uses an emerging qualitative approach to the inquiry, whereby the collection of the data occurs in a natural setting which is sensitive to the people and places under study, and the data analysis is both inductive and deductive and includes the voices of the participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change. (Cresswell, 2013). It is for these reasons that this researcher has decided to do qualitative research as it is the method best suited to this study. Interpretivism is a paradigm which is used to gain insights through discovering meanings by improving our comprehension of the whole. Qualitative research is the methodology which refers to the rationale and the philosophical assumptions that underlie a particular study. This researcher found very little research done in this area from a PR perspective. Therefore, the researcher's intention is to gather the thoughts and experiences from those whose expertise would help to address the objectives of this thesis

3.2 Qualitative Research

3.2.1 Case Study

Merriam (1988) defines a case study as "an examination of a specific phenomenon, such as a program, an event, a process, an institution or a social group". (Merriam, 1988 as cited in Lichtman, 2010:111) The case study approach to research is a way of conducting mainly qualitative inquiry, commonly used when it is impossible to control all the variables that are of interest to the researcher. Merriam (1988) points out that the case study's unique strength is the ability to deal with a full variety of evidence, including documents, artefacts, interviews and observation. "How" and "Why" questions are the most suitable for a case study as the approach draws attention to what can be specific.

(Cassell & Symon, 2004, p. 323) states that a case study "is particularly suited to research questions which require detailed understanding of social or organisational processes because of the rich data collected in context."

According to (Cresswell, 2013, p. 100) "A case study is a good approach when the inquirer has clearly identifiable cases with boundaries and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the cases or a comparison of several cases." In the view of the researcher a more in-depth study of a few cases as opposed to many cases would result in a better outcome of the research question.

The researcher compared and contrasted two organisations in the same field. Both are non-profit organisations. One of them is a small organisation based solely in Cork, the other a much larger organisation based in Dublin and the UK. In this thesis, it is proposed to focus on the Dublin centre of the latter organisation.

Kinzey (1999) argues that it is hard to define non-profit organisations because a non-profit is not part of a public or private sphere because it actually operates somewhere in between. For the purposes of this study, non-profit will be defined as an organisation that promotes a public service objective and is not invested in monetary gain for profit. Kinzey (1999) also states that while a wealth of research has been done on public relations and non-profit organisations as a separate entities area of researching how non-profit organisations can utilise public relations strategies.

3.2.2 Sampling

According to Dr Catherine Dawson (2009) there are many different ways to choose a sample and the method used depends on the area of research, research methodology and preference of the researcher. There are two main types of sampling, accessibility sampling and purposive sampling. Accessibility sampling is the term for designs where this is the main consideration, however, there is a risk of bias and the design provides no means of assessing this bias (Greenfield, 1996)

There are three considerations that go into the purposeful sampling approach in qualitative research and these considerations will vary depending on the detailed approach. They are the decision as to whom to select as participants for the study, the specific type of sampling strategy, and the size of the sample to be studied (Cresswell, 2013). The purposeful sample is one that provides a clear criterion or rationale for the selection of participants, or places to observe, or events, that relate to the research question (Ezzy, 2002) It is essential that all participants have experience of the phenomenon being studied and all individuals need to have stories to tell about their lived experiences.

Cork Dog Action Welfare Group (Cork DAWG) was chosen as the researcher has an interest in the non-profit sector and has also undertaken work as both a volunteer and employee with the organisation. Dogs Trust Ireland was chosen as the researcher feels they differ insofar as they are a larger organisation with significant differences in budget which enables them to reach a larger target audience.

By choosing these two organisations the researcher feels she would be able to provide in-depth analysis and that the research question would be answered using both a small and large scale organisation.

3.2.3 The Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews have a flexible structure whereby questions are contained in an interview guide and then organised with a focus on the issues or topic areas to be covered and the lines of enquiry to be followed. The sequencing of questions does not have to be the same for each interviewee. The interview guide ensures the researcher collects similar types of data from all informants, this serves as a checklist of topics to be covered and a default wording and order of the questions, but the wording and order can be substantially modified based on the flow of the interview (Robson, 2011, p. 280)

This type of interview is most appropriate when the interviewer is also closely involved with the research process (e.g. when the researcher is also the interviewer). The choice of semi-structured interviews might seem appropriate because this method is particularly good at allowing the researcher to explore in depth the thoughts, feelings and reasoning of a particular group of people (Densecombe, 2007)

3.3 Netnography

Netnography is the online branch of Ethnography, which is a research strategy used to study the field of social science. "Ethnography is a qualitative design in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviours, beliefs and language of a culture-sharing group" (Harris, 1968 as cited in Cresswell, 2013:90).

The practice of netnography has evolved in conjunction and collaboration with technology and society, which has resulted in a 'virtual ethnography' (Hine, 2000). The terminology most commonly used to describe virtual ethnography however is netnography.

As previously stated netnography, which is an online division of ethnography, is used to understand online communities. This results in the researcher being able to investigate precise occurrences in which individuals gather to form a community.

Social Media netnography, which Moerdyck (2010) described as a groundbreaking research technique for discovering and applying insights from social media. It could be said that it is the latest tool that enables social media research. The rationale behind using netnography for social media is its ability to explore cybercultures and virtual communities and for this reason netnography is the choice of methodology for this thesis.

3.4. Procedure

3.4.1 Gaining Access

The researcher approached possible interviewees, a mixture of both PR professionals and non-profit representatives initially by email (see Appendix A). The email identified the purpose of the study and sought their involvement in terms of an either structured or semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with one PR professionals and three non-profit organisation representatives over a one week period. Prior to the interviews the interview guide was sent to each participant in order that they be prepared for the interview. Each interview was requested to sign a participant consent form (See Appendix B) which gave the researcher permission to use the information gathered in the interview and reproduce it as part of the research study. According to Daymon and Holloway (2011) informed consent had traditionally meant a one-off event prior to the start of the research, when information is given by the researcher and consent received from the participants. The researcher travelled to Dublin on the 23 July 2012 to interview Suzie Carley and Catherine Griffen. The researcher presented at Dogs Trust Irelands Headquarters, Finglas at 11.00 am. After a quick tour of the shelter the first interview with Suzie Carley was conducted at 11.30 a.m. And the interview with Catherine Griffen was conducted at 12.15 pm. The interview with Jill Carey took take place on 25 July 2013 over a cup of coffee at the Restaurant at Dunnes Stores Shopping Centre, Bandon Road. The interview with Claudia Cashman took place at her home on 28 July 2013.

3.4.2 Interview Guide

When participating in semi-structured interviews it is vital that the researcher avoids confusion, and or biased questions. According to Heath, et al (2009) an interview guide provides topics or subject areas about which the interviewer is free to explore, probe and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject, allowing for flexibility in conducting the interview. For the purpose of this study the researcher designed an interview guide (See Appendix C) that ensured similar information would be collected from each of the interviewees. It also made sure that the interviewees were asked relevant questions and that all data collected was useful towards the study.

3.4.3 The Interview

All interviews were recorded on a Zoom recorder provided by Cork Institute of Technology, the researcher also decided to use her own phone as a back up device. According to Bryman and Bell

(2007, chp. 18) the first thing which must be done after a tape-recorded interview is completed is to check the recording to make sure it was carried out properly. The researcher took some time following each interview to listen to the recording to check the quality of the data recorded during the interview. This ensured the data was valid and useful. Kvale (1996) states the quality of the interviews is decisive for later analysis, verification, and reporting of the interviews. The initial period after the interview is a critical time for reflection and elaboration: "it is a time of quality control to guarantee that the data obtained will be useful, reliable and valid" (Patton, 1987, p. 140).

3.4.4 Transcribing the interview

The next most important part of the interview process is the transcription of the data gathered. According to Daymon and Holloway (2011, p. 234) "the fullest and richest data are gained from transcribing interviews verbatim. This allows the researcher to become immersed in the data and become sensitive to the issues of importance. The researcher decided to transcribe one interview from each organisation so the reader can see the similarities of the data gathered from a PR professional and a non-profit representative. For full interview transcripts (See Appendix D).

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis of qualitative research means being able to come up with a conclusion based on the data gathered. According to Cresswell (1994), the researcher is expected to interpret the raw data and produce meaning out of it. The researcher felt that grounded theory is the most suitable method for qualitative data analysis. This theory was originally developed by two North American sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. It is Strauss and Corbins idea of grounded theory however which this researcher feels is best suited to this thesis. They say the grounded theory approach is one which looks systematically at qualitative data, such as transcripts of interviews or protocols of observations, aiming at the generation of theory. Therefore, the data analysis process of this study involved the transcribing and analysis of interview transcripts. From the analysis of the four interviews conducted, themes emerged which are discussed in the findings chapter.

The second method of data analysis as previously mentioned was netnography. This entailed the researcher capturing the communication between the online communities chosen for this study, and their publics. The researcher gathered data from postings on each of the two online communities over

a two week period, and looked for emerging patterns and themes. A time frame of two weeks was decided on as the volume of postings on each Facebook page was deemed to be too substantial. The researcher initially observed and described everything. However as time went on the researcher began to focus in on data relevant to the research. Some interactions were discarded e.g. Comments from fans of the organisation to the organisation studied which occasionally ran into hundreds.

analysis of the data was an iterative process of interpreting, deriving new questions and collecting new data, confirming and refining emerging interpretations. The research worked iteratively through the data in order to identify recurring themes and created an interpretation of both Dogs Trust Ireland and Cork DAWGs community culture. As research progressed, the researcher downloaded additional threads from the online forums.

3.5.1 Coding

According to Charmaz (2006) coding is nascent theory, in other words, once you have begun to code the data, you have begun to develop the theory. The analysis initially consists of coding and categorizing which then allows you to transform the data collected and reduce it in order to build categories, as the categories emerge, the theory evolves.

Upon completion of the data analysis, the researcher divided the netnographic analysis into two distinct categories. The first is the form of relationship management displayed by the postings, the second, the analysis of the publics/groups involved in each posting.

Original postings from each organisation is shaded in green, postings from fans is left unshaded. The inputs from the organisation is shaded in blue with postings from the organisation in response to fans shaded in orange, this shows an example of two-way symmetrical communication between the organisation and their fans. This gives the reader a visual representation of the interactions of each of the non-profit organisations analysed. (See Appendix G & H)

3.6 Reliability and Validity

3.6.1 Reliability

“Reliability is the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions” (Bell, 2005, p. 117)

The researcher used semi-structured interviews which meant that each participant was asked for the same or similar information depending on their background or position within the organisation. The impact of the interviewer and of the context means that consistency and objectivity are hard to achieve. The data collected are, to an extent, unique owing to the specific context and the specific individuals involved. This can have an adverse effect on reliability.

3.6.2 Validity

“Validity tells us whether an item measures or describes what it is suppose to measure of describe” (Ibid).

Therefore, if the research is unreliable, then it must also lack validity, and measuring the extent of validity can become increasingly involved (Ibid). In an effort to offset this, the researcher ensured that all participants were strategically chosen, and this helped to ensure that all data gathered was both reliable and valid.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues imply that the researcher has a responsibility to explain to all interviewees what the research is about and the reasons for interviewing them. The researcher should also inform the interviewees that they may withdraw from the interview and that any information gathered will be treated with strictest confidence. While the internet is still relatively new, however, internet usage has escalated with very few guidelines surrounding online privacy adopted. Issues surrounding online privacy have become internationally recognised and debated since the development of the internet

One growing ethical concern for researchers lies in the realm of Internet technology; fielding respondents and samples from sites, especially social networking sites. Doing this can raise issues of privacy and informed consent.

Four main ethical factors were identified when implementing netnographic research by Kozinets (2010, p. 156):

1. Whether online communities should be treated as public or private spaces
2. How to gain informed consent from online community members

3. The necessity of avoiding harm to online community members
4. How to portray data relating to netnographic research participants

One important issue surrounding the ethics of online research is the lack of evidence of correct personal information given by a voluntary participant in the study. Anyone participating in the study should be over the age of eighteen to be considered eligible.

Another important consideration towards those participating in the study is anonymity. Respect for the privacy of others is essential in undertaking research. Therefore, all participants in the study must give their consent in written form.

3.8 Chapter Conclusion

The approach the researcher selected and pursued, lends itself to the task of producing a thesis the researcher knows to be achievable with the time frame proscribed. This study considers the insights that have been provided by participants of the study in light of existing theory. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to develop their own ideas which reduces the possibility of bias. As a result there is both the opportunity to refine elements of the existing theory and the opportunity to attempt to add to the existing body of knowledge.

CHAPTER FOUR

Research Findings

4. Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings from the primary research data collected by the researcher. The function of this chapter is to present the findings gathered throughout the research process and in the following chapter analyse the information in a contextual framework. Data will be compared and likened to the information and theories discussed in the literature review chapter. The analysis of the data collected presents common themes and similar beliefs and attitudes shared amongst interviewees, and organised according to each primary research objective as mentioned in the introduction:

1. Exploration of how social media aids animal welfare organisations raise awareness of their cause
2. Advantages of the use social media by non-profit organisations
3. Exploration of the importance of two-way communication by non-profits
4. Analysis of how social media can help to enhance non-profit organisations reputation

The primary research was collected by means of face-to-face interviews and a content analysis in the form of a netnography of the Facebook pages of the chosen non-profits ie Dogs Trust Ireland and Cork Dog Action Welfare Group. The following is a list of the interviewees who contributed to the primary research, including their position in the organisation:

Suzie Carley – Marketing and Campaigns Officer

Catherine Griffen – Training and Behaviour advisor

Jill Carey – Director and Fundraising Manager

Claudia Cashman – Director and Social Media Manager

The following headings outline the general themes which were extracted from interviews which helped to develop the research findings:

4.1 Public Relations

Each interviewee was asked to outline what their understanding of PR is. Despite the fact that all interviewees do not have a traditional PR background, all of them agreed that it is about communicating and getting an organisations message out to its publics.

Suzie Carley defined PR as:

“A strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and its publics. We’re building a relationship with them, it’s a two-way communication process”.

Catherine Griffin defined PR as:

“A useful way to network within organisations especially within animal welfare groups, all aiming for the same goal, building relationships and communicating with our customers”.

Jill Carey defined PR as:

“My understanding of PR is that the organisation has to put itself out there, make sure you get the name of your organisation out there, so your customers are aware of what you’re doing

Claudia Cashman defined PR as:

“It’s your relationship with the public, getting your message across, it’s all about building and protecting your reputation:.

4.2 Social Media

Each of the participants was asked to outline what they understood by the term social media. All the participants agreed that it was an online form of communication that allows an organisation to target their publics and helps to create two-way communication with them. According to Suzie Carley the purpose of social media is “to be able to target your publics, who are your audience, directly and effectively”, she went on to say that with social media you can “get it right down to your target audience within a specific medium, it’s a very targeted form of communication”. Similarly Jill Carey stated “Pretty much using the internet allows us to share stories and photographs of our organisation

online, really it is anything that you share with a person or a group of people. Catherine Griffen also said that the use of social media, Facebook in particular “Allows you (the organisation) more freedom to say more to your fans”. Interestingly Claudia Cashman also made the point that the use of social media also allows you the freedom to “Communicate with each other (organisation members) on our own private page, which helps to speed up our communication with each other”

4.2.1 Advantages of using Social Media

All of the participants were in strong agreement that there are significant advantages in using social media and particularly Facebook chiefly for non-profit organisations. The one point all four participants recognised is the fact that social media, and in particular Facebook, is free.

Both Suzie Carley and Jill Carey mentioned that Facebook allows you to communicate “directly with your audience” with Suzie Carley goes on to say that it also allows you to “see who is seeing (sic) your posts”. Suzie also went on to say that it allows you to “have a very wide reach of people in a short space of time, and you can react very quickly”. She also mentioned the fact that if when doing a new campaign and it has been noted that posts are not being “viewed or shared” you can then “change and measure accordingly”

Jill Carey has also found that you can get “instant results” which she said is so essential for DAWG especially if a “Particularly urgent foster is needed for a dog, puppies needing a temporary home, money needed for a vet bill, so in this regard it is excellent in getting the message out there”. According to Claudia Cashman, the biggest single advantage apart from the fact “It is free” is that it “helps with fundraising, gets the story out there” and Claudia also reiterates what Jill Carey already mentioned, that it “Helps when you have an urgent foster appeal”.

Catherine Griffen was the only participant that mentioned another advantage of using social media and that is its use in education. She stated “As a lot of the issues that occur in animal welfare arise from a lack of education, social media is a great way to just get a massive audience with very little actual input”.

4.2.2 Disadvantages in using Social Media

The study discovered that with all the advantages noted in using social media, three of the participants were in strong agreement that using social media also brings disadvantages to a non-profit organisation.

According to Suzie Carley one of the biggest difficulties she finds with using social media/Facebook is "The freedom the public have to say whatever they like about your organisation". She goes on to say that Facebook is not "9 to 5" and as it's a very "Public domain" you have to know how to "Deal with that comment effectively and fast, and be prepared with the answer. She also stated that "While one of the biggest advantages to using Facebook is it's free, the disadvantage is the man hours it takes to man it so it is not free".

Jill Carey expressed her concerns of the negative side of using Facebook, "People see a negative thing about a rescue which can then lead to a public slugging match, while there may be some credibility about what they say, quite often they don't know the bigger picture. This view was also shared by Claudia Cashman

"People who have their own personal agenda have been known to harass, abuse and slanders us, we have to be very careful in how we deal with that, our motto is 'say nothing at all', or ask that person to contact us directly if they have a problem, we're not into public slating".

Catherine Griffen was the only one of the participants who felt that "The advantages far outweighs (sic) the disadvantages" in the use of Facebook by a non-profit.

4.3 Campaign Planning

All the participants were asked about the campaigns they are currently running and what measure of success they have? They were also asked how important Facebook is in helping them to facilitate their campaigns. Both Dogs Trust and DAWG have several ongoing and long standing campaigns and continuously strive to come up with new and inventive campaigns. Throughout the interview it became apparent how important campaign planning is to both organisations. This is the method both organisations use to facilitate and support them in carrying out their work. The importance of fundraising to both organisations and the difficulties they have all faced as a result of the recession has led to a struggle to maintain the level of funding needed to carry on with their mission.

4.3.1 Campaigns

Both Dogs Trust and Dawg run an ongoing neutering campaign, they both aim to educate the public on the importance of neutering and neither organisation will rehome a dog that has not been spayed or neutered. However, the cost of this to both organisations would not be possible without extensive fundraising. Dogs Trust has recently launched a microchipping campaign. They have just completed trials where they microchipped dogs for free from 22 July 2013. They have found that social media has been very important in helping to roll out this campaign.

Dogs Trust also has a canine card campaign that is ongoing. Suzie Carley explains "It's a card available for those who already own a dog; "they want to think about after, when they pass away, what's going to happen to the dog"? Dogs Trust issue these customers a card that in the event of their passing, the dog comes to Dogs Trust where it will either be re-homed or have a home for life at the Dogs Trust shelter. Susie then explained

"This then leads on to the legacy campaign as they're kind of one and the same. We hope that people might think about us then in their will, so at the time those campaigns are running, we would use social media to complement and we'd have stories about previous legacy donors and how it's worked out"

Dogs Trust has recently launched their campaign entitled 'cardies for canines'. So far this has been a soft launch but they are now planning a "digital infiltration" where they are getting involved with blogs such as Ravelry. ie which is a knitting and crocheting community. According to Suzie Carley "we're infiltrating all those groups, which we'll follow with a hard launch later on," the reason for the delay in the launch is the fact that the weather has been hot recently "people aren't really thinking about knitting cardigans for canines". She also emphasised that "We wouldn't have been able to speak to these people about such a specific campaign if it wasn't for social media".

As previously mentioned DAWG also run an ongoing neutering campaign, which is something the organisation is passionate about. However, according to Jill Carey this wouldn't be possible without extensive fundraising. While they also have a campaign entitled "5 to Survive," Jill Carey feels that a lot of campaigns of this type have fizzled out. According to Jill Carey "It has become increasingly difficult to keep coming up with novel campaigns", events such as the doggy wedding they held last year which did generate a huge amount of publicity, "we even had coverage on TV3." However, they feel they cannot do campaigns such as this all the time. The reason for this Jill Carey felt is "there is

just too much competition out there.” Their newest campaign is the charity shop they’ve recently in Youghal, which Jill Carey feels has been a great success so far. However, the shop was launched in the middle of the tourist season, so Jill Carey believes they now need to work on drawing the locals in, so that is “why we’re pushing our shops through our website and Facebook page.”

Claudia Cashman believes that the “5 to survive” campaign is ongoing and is looking at ways to tie this campaign from the website to the Facebook page. She also told me that they are contemplating launching a microchipping campaign in response to the “numbers of dogs being stolen at the moment”.

4.3.2 Importance of fundraising for non-profit organisations

Fundraising is a particularly challenging facet of any non-profit organisation, all participants were asked to outline in their own opinion how important it is for their organisation. Two of the participants recognised the absolute importance fundraising is to the survival of their organisation. According to Jill Carey fundraising is “the cornerstone of the organisation, without fundraising we couldn’t exist, it is the butter on our bread”. While Claudia Cashman completely agreed with Jill Carey on the importance of fundraising, she did state that they try not to over do it. She believes in sparing use of a horror story to generate funds. She explained that they can get up to ten a week but in order to raise much needed funds, in particular for the spate of abused greyhounds they’ve helped recently one picture can bring in between €3,000 and €4,000 in a single day. As she stated “It would take a whole day on the streets trying to raise that, people respond to the impact of the photographs”.

In Suzie Carley’s opinion, they now have to be clever about their fundraising. As they receive no Government funding it is the only way they can keep going. She told me “We rely on members of the public and legacy donations to keep us going” They plan on incorporating social media into all their upcoming fundraising efforts. Their newest fundraising campaign, with the title “text hope to 53104” will allow members of the public to donate directly through text, which will become part of an integrated marketing campaign. Suzie believes that social media allows you to do “short bursts of online campaigns, just clever little campaigns, that social media allows you to do.

On the other hand Catherine Griffen commented on the fact that while Dogs Trust are a separate organisation from Dogs Trust UK, they are not totally reliant on funding based solely in Ireland.

4.3.3 Fundraising in the recession

The main goal of non-profit organisations fundraising efforts is to generate as much income as possible and both organisations see their relationship with their fundraisers as vital to achieving this goal. All participants were asked how they felt the recession has impacted on their organisation and their fundraising methods. There was a strong agreement between three of the participants that they have been affected by the recession, Cork DAWG would seem to be the most greatly affected. According to Jill Carey:

“The recession has impacted on us hugely. In the sense that our income has gone down but the volume of dogs needing help has risen dramatically, in other words we have less money to deal with more dogs.

Claudia Cashman mirrored this statement and said “a lot of standing orders have been cancelled”. The problem as she sees it is “a lot of people are now no longer able to afford the care of their dogs, so animal charities like us are left to take up the brunt”. This coupled with the fact flag days which used to bring in about €14,000 are now only bringing in between €5,000 and €6,000 makes the effect of the recession keenly felt by Cork DAWG.

Suzie Carley while she has only been with the organisation for over a year believes that “They’ve had to tweak (fundraising efforts) on a yearly basis since the recession”. Dogs Trust Ireland has also outsourced their fundraising to two different organisations that do door-to-door fundraising for them nationwide. Catherine Griffen wasn’t too sure if Dogs Trust had been too “greatly affected by the recession” or if there was any “particular change in their approach to fundraising”.

One of the themes addressed in the literature review is that Facebook has become an important tool for two-way communication. The majority of the participants agreed with this. Suzie Carley stated that “If it wasn’t for Facebook, we wouldn’t be able to communicate with our target audience, usually female aged twenty eight and upwards” She also went on to say that using Facebook helps us to get our message out there allows us to “communicate with our supporters and let them know how they can support the organisation.

4.4 Two-way Communication for Non-profits

Jill Carey is of the opinion that it is “hugely important to us to communicate with our donors and supporters, especially when it comes to donations” reasoning that the organisation is aware of the difficulties people have in making a donation. She also pointed out that people wouldn’t be aware of Cork DAWGs existence if it wasn’t for their use of Facebook. This point was further emphasised by Claudia Cashman who said that “Facebook allows us to communicate with our supporters, we would be invisible without it as we’re already having to fight (compete) against all other the other charities that use Facebook.”

The general consensus among the participants who use Facebook in their PR efforts is that it is a very successful method in helping them in getting their message across.

4.4.1 Control

All the participants were asked a question as to whether they felt that the use of social media/Facebook gives animal welfare organisations more control when it comes to putting their message out there? There was a strong agreement amongst three of them that it did allow more control. Suzie Carley was adamant “100%, it allows us to deliver a very targeted message to a targeted audience which is fantastic as it gives us a lot more control”. Both Catherine Grffen and Claudia Cashman both agreed that it gave their organisation more control. Catherine Griffen felt that sometimes people have misconceptions with regard to what the organisation does, she said “it’s more than just a dog shop” and she felt that Facebook was the first port of call when people sought out information on dog welfare. Claudia Cashman reiterated that Facebook is the heartbeat of the organisation and “helps with putting across our message about what we do”. Interestingly Jill Carey has very much an opposing viewpoint. She stated

“No it certainly does not help us with control, gives you greater access certainly, but once a story gets onto Facebook, you have no control, stories can go viral, you only hope it goes the right way, but sometimes it doesn’t”.

4.4.2 Supporter Acknowledgement

I asked three of the participants for their views on the importance of thanking their donors and supporters. All the participants agreed that thanking their donors was of paramount importance to them, particularly in view of the fact that the country is still very much in the grip of the recession.

Suzie Carley stated that "it is so important, that on the third weekend in June we have a supporters' day, where we do just that". This event is run over two days and it's a free event with entertainment such as 'Dogs Trusts got talent'. They also send out a quarterly newsletter and are planning to launch an online version shortly. She also told me that they send a thank you pack when people sign up.

Similarly, DAWG also send a newsletter to their supporters, Claudia Cashman said "we write about all the stories and let people know how we're spending the money, this is particularly important as people have so little money to spare". She also said that when supporters see a story from the sad beginnings to the happy ending is inclined to make them donate again. This viewpoint was also reiterated by Jill Carey who said "It's now more important than ever to thank our donors."

4. 5 Traditional Media vs New Media

This section of the research aims to determine how new media is impacting on traditional media. The question asked of the participants was does social media complement or conflict with traditional media. However, the research shows that there a variety of differing opinions on this question. Both Suzie Carley and Catherine Griffen felt that it complements more than it conflicts. According to Suzie Carley:

"In the past we would send out a press release using traditional media, this was like using a nuke to quell a riot, sending out a press release which was going out to everyone, using a scattergun approach. Now we can share that press release digitally which means we can get feedback from it".

Suzie also commented on the fact that now members of the public can comment on the press release which gives a story more longevity as people can now engage and add their own comments. This viewpoint was shared by Catherine Griffen who also added that "You can now link news stories to social media and vice versa".

Jill Carey and Claudia Cashman had somewhat differing viewpoints. Claudia felt that most traditional media are not really interested in anything other than the horror stories. TV3 were planning to visit their shelter and run a story but it was superseded by an occurrence at the Dail and that was the end of that. On the other hand Jill Cary expressed concern that in this age of new technologies the organisation could end up ignoring those customers who don't have access to a computer. A lot of clients of DAWG are elderly and use the shop to donate, the difficulty arises when they are interested in rehoming a dog. Clients are usually told to check out the website or Facebook page, however these

clients don't know anything about Facebook and they rely solely on the more traditional newsletter. Jill felt you could easily ignore these clients which could end up losing the organisation a large proportion of the population that will donate to you.

4.5.1 Reputation

All of the participants were asked if they felt Facebook can help a non-profit facilitate trust in their specific organisation which can then go on to enhance their reputation. Three of the participants strongly agreed with the above question, while one of the participants expressed some reservations as to how it could achieve respect.

Suzie Carley felt very strongly that Dogs Trust has only had enhancement of their reputation. She felt the reason for this is any incident that occurs that could result in a negative comment being put online is dealt with swiftly, she said "we're able to respond accordingly, very quickly" she also said "It's been about building a trust" which she felt was due to the fact the organisation is available five days a week but the actual shelter is open seven days a week to deal with any issues the public might have. Catherine Griffen also agreed and added how easy it could be to offend people using a social network, she mentioned that people can hide behind their computer and make irate comments about any issue that bothers them, but that it's important to deal with these comments quickly and without causing offense.

Claudia Cashman was also in strong agreement and stated that "It's how you (the organisation) uses (sic) it". She was also of the opinion that a non-profit organisation such as their's should not get involved in public online slanging matches and this she felt was why people respected their organisation. She emphasises the importance of transparency in dealing with the public, she told me "We have had members of the public ask to see our accounts recently and we've complied with this request". Jill Carey was somewhat more reserved on the issue of respect gained as a result of using Facebook. She said

"Gained respect! Well more people know about us, but respect! I don't know, I mean I believe we had a huge amount of respect anyway, before we ever started using Facebook, but I don't think it added to the respect, however, we are accessing a lot more people now and if you weigh it up that way, then more people respect us.

She further stated that as an organisation they are gaining new friends every day of the week, but the majority of them while they will 'like' a post and will often comment "Oh I'd love to help with

that.....but I can't" they quite often don't act on it. She also said that if you go back over their appeals, it's predominantly the same people who comment on a story on Facebook and it's usually the same core group of people who will act on it. She fully believes that people respect Cork DAWG due to the fact that 90% of what they do costs them (the public) nothing.

4.6 Analysis of Data and Presentation of Results

The next section of this chapter presents the results of an analysis undertaken on the social media use of the two non-profit organisations – Dogs Trust Ireland and Cork Dog Action Welfare Group. The full data of their Facebook postings which were gathered over a two week period in July can be found in Appendix G and Appendix H respectively.

In the appendices, the text of the original postings of each organisation is shaded in green while postings from fans of the organisations are left un-shaded. The origins of the postings are identified in the seventh column, with inputs from the organisation shaded in blue. To highlight two-way engagement between the organisation and their fans, the organisations replies will be highlighted in orange. This will highlight the level of activity of each organisation. Other details included for each organisation includes:

- Name of the Organisation
- Date comment was posted (all dates occur between 15 and 28 of July 2013)
- Type of post (in most incidences this was text with image)
- Text of post (produced verbatim)
- Original posting or comment
- Code
- Posted by Organisation/Fan
- Number of Likes
- Number of Comments
- Number of Shares

Having documented and detailed the postings of the two weeks under investigation, a deeper analysis was necessary in order to investigate the meaning and form of each posting from a PR perspective. Two sets of netnographic analysis were undertaken – the first an examination of the form of relationship management displayed by the posting and the second, an analysis of the publics/groups involved each posting. This has been divided into:

1. Form of Relationship Management

- Intentional use of the site for PR
- Unintentional use of the site for PR
- General News/Comment Related to Nature of the Site

2. Publics/Groups Involved

- Organisation to Organisation
- Fan to Fan communication
- Organisation to Fan communication
- Fan to Organisation communication

4.6.1 Intentional use of PR

This first category identifies how the organisation is intentionally using their Facebook page as a PR tool. Both sites made extensive use of their pages as a social media tool. Dogs Trust Ireland posted 17 original posts (See Appendix E) while Cork DAWG made a significantly higher number and posted 42 original posts (See Appendix F). In my opinion all notifications made by the organisations are a form of PR as they draw attention to the organisation and could also be said to advertise/communicate with their 'fans'.

While both organisations post upcoming events, at the time of this analysis only Dogs Trust Ireland had any events to publicise such as:

"Super exciting news!!!! Dogs Trust is offering FREE microchipping of ALL dogs for the month of August and September by appointment! Clinic will be held on Mondays and Tuesdays, as well as Saturdays 17th and 31st August." (See Appendix G, DTI, 01a,)

Both organisations use their site to let their public know about the wide variety of dogs available for adoption, they post images of dogs needing foster homes and they also use the site to highlight the kind of cruelty they have to deal with on an ongoing basis:

“A severely neglected Border Collie suffering from chronic abdominal pain was found by a Dogs Trust staff member tied to the gates of the Rehoming Centre in Finglas and left to die (See Appendix. G, DTI, 13a)

“This is the pitiful sight of the staffie girl rescued by a very kind passerby who untied her from the rock she was tied to in the scorching heat and took her to her vet. She was overheated and dehydrated.... (See Appendix H, DWG, 05a)

They also allow members of the public to post stolen and lost dogs. Cork DAWG would appear to have a higher incidence of this at present for example “This is Scottie, an 8 month old black and white Border Collie who went missing from the Coolavookig area of Macroom on Monday 17th June around 8pm” (See Appendix H, DWG, 44a). However, it isn’t all doom and gloom as most of the postings and pictures are of happy stories which as I’ve already mentioned in the first part of this chapter, both organisations like to ensure that the site is upbeat, too many sad stories can have a negative effect and drive fans away from the site.

4.6.2 Unintentional use of Site for PR

Unintentional use of sites for PR illustrates the unconscious influence that PR and media entities have over all types of publics and individuals. This category of analysis demonstrates how ingrained publicity is in society. The interactions on both Dogs Trust Ireland and Cork DAWG show that many of their fans promotionally enhance and publicise original postings by the organisation, such as:

“That’s brilliant news. You’re doing great work for the dogs. 500 dogs rehomed in the first half of the year is excellent. Keep up the good work folk 😊” (See Appendix G DTI, 01e)

“So happy for this little guy, followed your updates with joy/sadness/hope/relief and am delighted he is safe and secure. Well done to all” (See Appendix H, DWG, 29b)

The majority of the comments above from both organisations postings range from promotion of the host sites, events, or even voluntary external publicity. These unintentional posts all originate from fans and this in turn can create exposure for external sites or information.

4.6.3 Related General News/Comments

All organisations utilise any prospective advertising channels, particularly ones they are the administrator of. Consequently both of the organisations' posts contain information and notifications relating to issues and events:

"Super exciting news!!!! Dogs Trust are offering FREE microchipping to ALL dogs for the months of August and September by appointment!" (See Appendix G, DTI , 52a)

"4 year old Penny the King Charles is looking for a foster home. She is a very sweet dog and quite distressed at the vets". (See Appendix H, DWG, 12a)

These promotional and types of issues that relate to the nature of each organisation help to raise interest and also to elicit feedback from fans that appear engrossed in the content. A posting relating to free microchipping from Dogs Trust Ireland led to a huge surge in interest, comments such as "Where is your location?" to "Hi wereabouts are you in (sic) near waterford city". Consequently replies are compiled with related information, "Centre is Finglas at the moment, will be National hopefully soon" (DTI, Appendix , 53b).

4.7 Online Publics and Groups

4.7.1 Organisation to Organisation

Organisation to organisation communication is limited on Dogs Trust Ireland Facebook site and at the time of this research, apart from one posting, nonexistent on the DAWG Facebook site. Most of the organisation to organisation interaction is conducted via promotional work a Hotel group are doing in conjunction with the work carried on by Dogs Trust Ireland. This initiative was for a limited duration, whereby the Carlton Hotel group matched 32 dogs from Dogs Trust Ireland to the contestants in the Rose of Tralee contest. The Carlton Hotel also showcased the 32 dogs on their Facebook page.

"We have enlisted the help of this year's Roses to find 32 dogs new homes! Each Rose is supporting one of these dogs that needs a home and we want to get them all re-homed before the Roses get to Tralee so please do what you can to help!" (See Appendix G, DTI, 20a)

There was only one organisation to organisation posting on Cork DAWGs Facebook page:

“Tell your family and friends on Facebook to “like” our page Badassdogs. The more dog pages we can like on Facebook the more we can help each other out” (See Appendix H , 19a)

This post however was not acknowledged by either DAWG or fans of the organisation.

4.7.2 Fan to Fan

The second category of analysis identifies how fans and the organisations themselves converse with each other on the organisation’s Facebook page. Fans of each of the chosen organisations in this study engage in informal discussions mainly based on related information which is generated by the host social media site. In relation to both organisations sites, fans usually respond to a post uploaded by a fan. These postings are often in relation to a dog rehomed by them and they are thanking the host organisation and letting other fans know how they are getting on. Comments such as “A big thankyou from Izzie”, (See Appendix G DTI , 30j) which was originally a comment thanking the host organisation but led to other fans joining in the conversation, all expressing delight at such a happy and positive outcome, the most enthusiastic comment being “OMG that’s freaking amaze balls that Izzy got a home. Delighted for her she deserves it” (See Appendix , G, DTI, 37f).

4.7.3 Organisation to Fans

The main purpose of a social media page dedicated and maintained by an organisaiton is in an effort to contact the public. Their social media page provides each organisation with a direct channel to inform and have a conversation with their fans/public. These conversations can range from foster/transport appeals such as, “We have a transport appeal for tomorrow Tuesday, can anyone collect a lurcher from Sunbeam Vets in Blackpool and bring to our shelter in Macroom before 3pm. If you can help please text 086*****” (See Appendix H, DWG, 10a). Each organisation also use their page to thank their fans such as this post by Dogs Trust Ireland who are responding to a fan’s offer of old towels and bedding, “We would LOVE them Rachel, thanks a million!” (See Appendix G, DTI, 38b). This information channel is solely administered by each organisation which can report on any issue they feel is worthy of discussion with fans. As a consequence of this, information usually but not always contains promotional elements:

“We were so excited to have so many people take part in the Mini Marathon for us this year! If any of you haven't sent in your money yet, we'd really appreciate if you could get it to us as soon as possible so we can do a final tally :) You can send us a cheque or postal order, or drop by the centre with cash. Thanks so much everyone!” (See Appendix G, DTI, 38b).

4.7.4 Fan to Organisation

Fans of both Dogs Trust Ireland and DAWG Facebook pages actively comment on postings created by the host organisation. However, research has found that postings by DAWG generate more ‘likes’, ‘comments’ and shares. Fans of both organisations usually respond very quickly to comments which they are most directly interested in. The response to a dog found tied up in the extreme heat experienced this summer elicited a huge response from fans of DAWG, with comments such as: “This makes me sick. Poor little girl” (See Appendix H, DWG, 05b), and “hi if she's ok with children and another female dog id luv to foster her if ye a still looking for someone” (See Appendix H, DWG, 05c). Similarly, Dogs Trust Ireland's fans were just as prolific with their comments, particularly on foot of an equally horrendous story, whereby a seriously ill and elderly dog was left tied up outside Dogs Trust Ireland's premises, comments ranged from “The poor little pet, people like that should be so ashamed” (See Appendix G, DTI, 13d) to more strongly felt opinions such as “I really hope you have the right of the car... That horrible man deserves what he gets!! Poor little lady, RIP ☹ (See Appendix G, 13g)

4.8 Chapter Conclusion

The start of this chapter discusses the findings that were gleaned from the interviews carried out with Dogs Trust Ireland and DAWG. The themes that emerged from the interviews were discussed at length and all interviewee's viewpoints were portrayed in the context in which they were given.

The second section of this chapter discusses the importance of social media as a communication tool for both of the organisations researched. This chapter has extensively examined why social media is applicable to Irish non-profit organisations. It has delved into the Facebook pages of two very similar non-profit organisations in an effort to understand how each organisation individually communicate with their publics.

The next chapter will analyse and relate these findings to the theoretical framework laid down in Chapter Two – Literature Review.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

5. Introduction

This chapter discusses the most prominent themes and issues which emerged from the interviews and analysis of the Facebook pages of Dogs Trust Ireland and Cork Dog Action Welfare Group. The interviews took place in July and the netnographic analysis focused on two weeks in July. In this chapter the key themes and factors surrounding the examined sites will be discussed in order to construct a better understanding of the relationships within them.

The results revealed in Chapter Four give an indication of the interaction between the host organisation and their 'fans'. Chapter Four presented the results of this analysis using the principle categories employed to measure interaction on the site. This measurement will continue into the analysis and discussion. This study will thus illustrate the precise use of social media by the aforementioned non-profit organisations.

5.1 Public Relations

It was important that the first question asked of all the interviewees was to explain in their own words what their understanding of PR was. This was because all but one of the four interviewees has a traditional PR background. This would give a detailed view on how each participant working in different departments of their industry perceived PR.

All four participants agreed that PR is all about communicating with your 'fans' and it is about getting your organisations message out to your publics. Suzie Carley from Dogs Trust Ireland stated it is:

"A strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and its publics. We're building a relationship with them; It's a two-way communication process".

Catherine Griffen concurred with this viewpoint saying:

“A useful way to network within organisations especially within animal welfare groups, all aiming for the same goal, building relationships and communicating with our customers”.

Both Jill Carey and Claudia Cashman of DAWG both stated that PR is all about getting the name of your organisation out there, getting your message across and most importantly, building and protecting your reputation.

The researcher is in agreement with the interview participants' definition PR. This is also in agreement with the definitions which the researcher collected as part of the primary research. Cutlip et al (1999, p. 6) defines PR as a “management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relations between an organisation and the publics on whom its success and failure depends”. Similarly the definition which was put forward by the Institute of Public Relations (IPR) states that “Public Relations is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and understanding between the organisation and its publics” (Theaker, 2012, p. 5)

Almost all definitions mention communication and focuses on the ‘ideal’ which maintains communications is very much a two-way process and entails building positive relationships between organisations and their publics.

5.2 Social Media

Social media has become an inescapable part of everyday life. The findings show that Dogs Trust Ireland has a social media team driven by a dedicated department while Cork DAWG have one individual volunteer working on their social media. Analysis of the findings would suggest that both organisations employ their Facebook page as a method to communicate directly with their publics.

All of the participants were asked to outline what they understood by the term ‘social media’. All four agreed that it was an online form of communication that allows their organisations to target their publics and helps to create two-way communication with them. All four participants were strongly in agreement that social media allowed them to communicate. Suzie Carley stated that it is a “very targeted form of communication”. Similarly Jill Carey agreed that it allows us to “share stories and photographs of our organisation online”. According to Catherine Griffen it “allows you more freedom to say more to your fans” while interestingly, Claudia Cashman pointed out that the use of social

media allows you the freedom to “communicate with each other (organisation members) on our own private page, which speeds up our communication with each other”.

These viewpoints concur with my opinion that social media allow organisations to engage in two-way conversation with their customers. This is also the view held by much of the literature written on the subject. According to the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) “Social media is the term commonly given to Internet and mobile-based channels and tools that allow users to interact with each other and share opinions and content. Theaker (2012) also states that the audience is no longer the passive receiver of content, they are now more likely to search for information themselves using social media.

Social media technology allows both organisations and the public in general to stay in touch. Therefore, in the opinion of the researcher social media and social networking skills need to be integrated into PR and communication programs, as both organisations use social media extensively to stay in contact with their supporters. According to Solis (2010) it is embedded in conversations between peoples and peers, regardless of the technology that facilitates them

5.2.1 Advantages/Disadvantages of social media

There are many advantages to be gained for a non-profit using social media. All of the interviewees recognised one of the single biggest advantages in using social media and in particular Facebook is that it is free. Suzie Carley and Jill Carey both mentioned that it allows you to communicate “directly with your audience”. Suzie Carley also mentioned the fact that it allows you to reach a large amount of people in a very short space of time. This view was shared by Jill Carey who also added that you can get “instant results” which for an animal welfare organisation is so essential. This is borne out in the netnographic analysis. Both organisations deal with urgent cases on a regular basis, some more urgent than others. (See Appendix H, DTI, 13a) of the Dogs Trust Ireland Facebook page highlighted the case of a severely neglected Border Collie left tied to their gates. This post caused an outpouring of dialogue to the organisation from fans. In total there were 75 ‘Likes’, 151 ‘Comments’ and 51 ‘Shares’, with a total level of engagement of 277. Cork DAWG had a similar case where a Staffordshire Bull Terrier was left tied to a rock in scorching heat (See Appendix H, 05a) It too generated a considerable amount of dialogue amongst fans and in total there were 90 ‘Likes’, 21 ‘Comments’ and 29 ‘Shares’, with a total level of engagement of 140.

This reflects the view of Caywood (2012, p. 481) "Through the process of communications and public relations that an organisation identifies the audiences.....". Clearly Facebook is an effective communications platform for non-profit organisations as each post reached a large number of people in a short space of time. Interestingly, the posts which generated the most traffic on both sites were the ones associated with a happy theme.

There are not many disadvantages noted in the literature regarding the use of social media for a non-profit organisation as the social media landscape is still relatively new. While the main thrust of the literature promotes the advantages of the use of social media, three of the interviewees expressed some reservations about using Facebook. According to Suzie Carley one of the biggest difficulties she finds is the ability of the public to say "whatever they like about your organisation" and she emphasised that these kinds of comments must be dealt with "effectively and fast". This viewpoint was also held by both Jill Carey and Claudia Cashman who believed that sometimes the public can have their own agenda and use the organisation's Facebook page to vent frustration they have over what could be an unrelated issue. The way Cork DAWG deal with this is not to get involved in a public debate and will often ask that person to "contact us directly if they have a problem". The only participant who disagrees is Catherine Griffen who felt that "The advantages far outweighs (sic) the disadvantages."

5.3 Importance of Planning

All participants were asked to detail the campaigns they are currently involved with and asked to outline what measure of success they believe they have achieved? Many researchers have reached a similar conclusion that planning is the essential ingredient in any successful PR campaign (Gregory, 2000; Watson, NiDhurcain, & OCadhla, 1997, Tench & Yeomans, 2009; GuideStar, 2005).

Both organisations are involved in various types of campaign. Both organisations try to educate the public on the importance of neutering and neither organisation will rehome a dog that has not been spayed/neutered. However, this puts both organisations under a huge financial strain and would not be possible without extensive fundraising. Fundraising will be discussed at a later stage in this chapter.

Dogs Trust Ireland has a number of campaigns running at present. Several are ongoing and every year they try to introduce a novel campaign which they hope their fans will get behind. The Canine Care campaign is an ongoing campaign, which Suzie Carley explained as a card available for people

who own a dog, but are worried about what will happen to the dog in the event of their passing. Dogs Trust Ireland will then take the dog and either rehome it or it will have a home for life with Dogs Trust. According to Suzie this has the advantage of encouraging members to then think about Dogs Trust Ireland in their will. This is their legacy campaign. The organisation uses social media to run these campaigns simultaneously and publish stories in their newsletter which shows the happy outcome for the dog. By ensuring that the plan targets the right people, uses the right channels of communication and says the appropriate things at the right time lays the foundations for a successful campaign, this is a view supported by Tench and Yeomans (2009).

Their ongoing campaigns are supported by the novel campaigns they introduce every year. This year they are running with a campaign entitled 'Cardies for Canines' campaign. This campaign had a soft launch during the summer but the organisation was planning a 'digital infiltration' where they were preparing to infiltrate blogs such as Ravelry. ie. This has the added bonus of bringing in a new group of older fans, who may not previously been aware of the work Dogs Trust Ireland do.

DAWG also have an ongoing online campaign called '5 to Survive'. Jill Carey and Claudia Cashman were in disagreement about the efficacy of this campaign. Jill Carey felt it had fizzled out and that novelty campaigns were becoming increasingly difficult to create. For this reason she felt that concentrating on the charity shops they run was the way forward. However, Claudia Cashman stated that the campaign was ongoing and is looking into ways to tie this campaign into their newly updated website and Facebook page. This suggests a lack of managed communication between members of the organisation. Both are directors and yet they have contrasting views on a campaign they are running. This is contrary to what research states, in that planned or managed communication is considered a defining characteristic of the discipline (Gregory, 2000).

5.4 Importance of fundraising

As the main goal of non-profit organisations fundraising efforts is to generate as much income as possible, all interviewees were asked about the importance of fundraising for their organisation. Suzie Carley while recognising the importance of fundraising did stress that the organisation relies on members of the public and legacies in order to keep going. Their plan is to integrate social media in all upcoming fundraising efforts. At this point she referred to a previously unmentioned up and coming campaign with the title 'text hope to 53104' which will allow members of the public to donate directly via text. This will then become part of an integrated marketing campaign. Catherine Griffen felt that

while their organisation is separate from Dogs Trust UK in her opinion the organisation is not totally reliant on funding based solely in Ireland.

Jill Carey and Claudia Cashman both recognised the absolute importance of fundraising to Cork DAWG. As Jill Carey pointed out it is “the cornerstone of the organisation” and “without fundraising we couldn’t exist”. Claudia Cashman is in agreement with this statement but she did state that the organisation tries not to overdo it. She mentioned the fact that a single photograph can bring in as much money as an entire day spent on the streets. This supports the view by Cutlip & Centre (2012, p. 404) who stated that non-profits “develop channels of communication with all those the organisation aims to serve”. They further stated that this in turn helps to create a “climate favourable to fundraising”. The researcher feels that DAWG is aware of their publics and how best to communicate with them in order to get the best results. This is also in agreement with Caywood (2012, p. 481) who also acknowledges that it is through the process of “communications and public relations that an organisation systematically identifies the audiences..... communications is integral to an organisation’s strategic plan and deserves special focus”.

5.4.1 Fundraising in the Recession

The obvious goal for any non-profit organisation is to generate as much income as possible, and with this in mind all of the interviewees were asked how they believed the recession has impacted on their organisation and how it has affected their fundraising efforts. All of the interviewees acknowledged the importance of having a good relationship with their supporters which they felt is vital in helping them achieve this goal. While there was strong agreement among all the interviewees on the effects of the recession, it would appear that DAWG are being the most greatly affected. Jill Carey acknowledged that while their income has dropped significantly, the volume of dogs needing help has risen dramatically. Claudia Cashman further clarified this, stating “a lot of the standing orders have been cancelled”. She also mentioned that more people are now unable to care for their dogs, which has put a greater strain on animal charities.

The researcher feels that the recession is not affecting Dogs Trust Ireland in the same way as in light of the statement by Suzie Carley that “Dogs Trust have also outsourced their fundraising to two different organisations that do door-to-door fundraising for them nationwide”. A viewpoint shared by Catherine Griffen who stated that she “wasn’t too sure if Dogs Trust had been too greatly affected by the recession” or if there was any “particular change in their approach to fundraising”.

The researcher believes that in order to help offset the effect the recession is having on non-profit organisations, communication with donors/supporters is vital. This view is supported by many researchers, among them (Goodey, 2010; Yue 2009; Gergen & Chatterji, 2009 and Bridgespan, 2009) who have all highlighted the importance to non-profit organisations of communicating with donors' and using social media as the best method for keeping in touch with your stakeholders.

5.4.2 Peer to peer PR

One of the main themes addressed in the literature review suggests that Facebook has become an important tool to enable two-way communication. Research would suggest that the use of online media will give the non-profit organisation new options for practicing public relations which leads to more of a peer-to-peer view of the communications process. This, according to research should allow the practice of effective public relations more room to move from a one-way targeting of a message to more of a two-way conversation (Kelleher, 2007) The majority of the participants agreed with this statement. Suzie Carley stated if it "wasn't for Facebook, we wouldn't be able to communicate with our target audience". She also mentioned how Facebook allows them to get the message of the organisation to their supporters and let them know how they can support the organisation". Jill Cary is also of the opinion of how important communicating with donors and supporters on Facebook is when it "comes to donations". She too felt people would not be aware of DAWG's existence if it wasn't for their use of Facebook. This point was further reinforced by Claudia Cashman who added "we would be invisible without it."

Both organisations advocate communicating with supporters/donors and engaging in two-way communication. However, the netnographic analysis would prove otherwise. While there is a significant volume of posts and comments by fans of both organisations, there is very modest two-way communication with Dogs Trust Ireland and their fans.

5.4.3 Does social media give organisations more control?

All of the interviewees were asked if they felt that the use of social media and in their case Facebook, gives them more control when it came to putting their message out. Suzie Carley felt strongly that it did lend itself to giving the organisation control, she felt it allowed them to "deliver a very targeted message..... which gives us a lot more control." Both Catherine Griffen and Claudia Cashman were in agreement on the issue of control. Claudia Cashman felt Facebook was the first port of call when

people sought information on dog welfare. She felt it helped with “putting across our message about what we do.”

However, Jill Carey is very much in opposition and she felt that while Facebook does give one greater access to one’s supporters, once a story is posted to Facebook, the organisation no longer has control. Jill Carey felt this could have implications for the organisation. The researcher does not agree with this opinion and submits it is the responsibility of the non-profit organisation in question to be vigilant, as ongoing monitoring of the organisations Facebook page will prevent misconceptions. According to Safko (2010) now that organisations have a tool that has the capability to reach millions of people who are in one place, with common interests it is imperative that the PR practitioner/page administrator needs to understand it and how best to use it. If a Facebook page is well managed it can be a great tool for managing a crisis, it can be used to answer questions, and take control of its messaging and communicate directly with its audience.

5.4.4 Donor Acknowledgement

Three of the participants were asked for their views on the importance of thanking their donors and supporters. All agreed that this was of paramount importance to them, now more so than ever as Ireland is still in the grip of the recession. Dogs Trust thanks their supporters on the third weekend in June. This has become a free annual event. The organisation feels this is necessary as it gives everyone from supporters, donors and adopters an opportunity to bring their families to their headquarters in Dublin for a fun filled two day occasion. They also use the more traditional newsletter, a quarterly publication to thank their supporters, and finally they send a thank you pack to new supporters when they sign up.

Similarly, DAWG also send a newsletter to their supporters. In this they write about stories that have occurred and also detail how they spend the money donated by their supporters. The organisation feels that this degree of transparency is necessary as supporters now have so little money to spare. Seeing how the money is spent and the resultant happy endings, DAWG feels this is more inclined to make supporters want to donate again. This is in line with research as Carlson and Donohoe (2010, chp. 13) point out “Stakeholders who feel appreciated will be ready and willing when you need their help.” They also point out that the most effective and efficient method a non-profit organisation can reach its stakeholders is through personal communication.

5.5 Traditional Media vs New Media

All participants to the research were asked how they felt new media is impacting on traditional media. The researcher found there were differing opinions among the interviewees. Both Suzie Carley and Catherine Griffen of Dogs Trust Ireland were both of the opinion that it complements more than it compliments. As Suzie Carley stated "In the past we would send out a press release using traditional media, this was like using a nuke to quell a riot.....we can get feedback from it." Catherine Griffen strongly agreed and added "You can now link stories to social media and vice versa." This is in agreement with research which states that while mainstream media still continues to play an important role in the dissemination of information, even these traditional channels are being influenced by more and more online conversations. Morris and Goldsworthy (2012) argue that persons and groups of people can now be targeted far more precisely than with most traditional media.

The participants from DAWG have a considerably different opinion to the participants at Dogs Trust Ireland. Both Jill Carey and Claudia Cashman were both of the opinion that most traditional media, newspapers and television particularly, are not interested in anything other than horror stories. A large portion of DAWG's supporters is elderly and either do not know or do not have access to a computer. For this reason Jill Carey feels that new media could lead to the organisation ignoring these clients, therefore she believes that their newsletter should be accorded as much importance as their Facebook page.

Traditional or mass media until recently comprised of newspapers, television, films and the internet. This is no longer as straightforward. The continued emergence of digital communications technology now changes the way mass media is viewed. This new media can give a story more longevity according to Suzie Carley, which enables engagement with supporters and should lead to two-way conversation. However, analysis of Dogs Trust Ireland postings shows in the two weeks of the analysis, out of 17 original postings by the organisation, they only entered into dialogue three times with their fans. (Appendix , 15g) the organisation posted in response to a fans enquiry. (Appendix , 39b) the organisation responded to a fans offer of bedding. (Appendix , 51c) the organisation answered a fan's query as to their location. However out of 42 original postings made by DAWG in the two weeks under investigation, there were 25 interactions in response to comments/questions posed by fans. Responses by the organisation to fans are highlighted in the tables in Appendices G and H.

5.6 Reputation Management

According to William Shakespeare, "The purest treasure mortal times afford, is spotless reputation." (Richard 11, 2012). There is no amount of wishful thinking that will ensure a spotless reputation will be available when an organisation requires it most. A non-profit's reputation is different from its brand and an organisation with a damaged or less than stellar reputation is likely to find that its brand is also damaged. With this in mind all participants were asked if they felt Facebook can help a non-profit facilitate trust in their specific organisation which can then go on to enhance their reputation. Three of the participants strongly found this to be the case, while one of the participants expressed some reservations as to how it could achieve respect.

Susie Carley was of the opinion the Dogs Trust Ireland has only had enhancement of their reputation. She stated the reason for this is any incident that occurs that results in a negative comment being posted online is dealt with swiftly. She added "we're able to respond accordingly very quickly, it's been about building a trust." Catherine Griffen also reiterated that it is "important to deal with those comments quickly and without causing offence."

Claudia Cashman also agrees and asserts that a non-profit such as theirs should not engage in online public slanging matches. This she observed was why the public respected their organisation. Furthermore, Claudia emphasises the importance in "transparency in dealing with the public" However, Jill Carey was somewhat reserved on the issue of respect gained as a result of using Facebook. She was not totally convinced that Facebook enhanced their reputation, she firmly believes the organisation has a "huge amount of respect anyway, before they ever started using Facebook.

Many researchers have reached a similar conclusion to that expressed by three of the participants. The Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR, 2000) state "Integrity is key to the ethical treatment of social media, and requires practitioners to be transparent through their engagement online." This point is also supported by Solis (2008) who states that the core factor is to guarantee transparency when participating online during the entire process.....). A good reputation is of particular importance to a non-profit organisation and helps them to support fulfillment of their mission. According to Christianson & Herman (2013) a good reputation can help attract donors and contributors and can always serve as a retaining wall that affords your non-profit the benefit of the doubt

5.7 Limitations of the Research

Qualitative research allows for analysis and understanding it does have its limitations. The limitations of the study are those characteristics of design or methodology that impacted or influenced the application of interpretations of the results of the research. They are the constraints on generalisability and utility of findings that are the result of the ways in which the researcher chose to design the study and/or the method used to establish internal and external validity.

5.7.1 Methodological Limitations

5.7.2 Sample Size

If the sample size is too small it will be difficult for the researcher to find significant relationships from the data. This can provide a significant obstacle in finding a trend and a meaningful relationship from the data.

5.7.3 Lack of available/reliable data

Citing prior research studies forms the basis of the literature and helps lay the foundations for understanding the research problem under investigation, which can lead to an exploratory rather than an explanatory research design. This limitation can serve as an important opportunity to the need for further research

5.7.4 Self Reported Data

If the researcher conducting a qualitative research study is gathering the data themselves, self-reported data are limited by the fact that it rarely can be independently verified. This means the researcher has to take what participants of the study say at face value.

5.8 Researcher Limitations

5.8.1 Longitudinal effects

Time taken to complete the research is constrained by the due date of the thesis. While the use of in-depth netnography was decided by the researcher as the ideal method for the research, the researcher found analysing the netnographical analysis and organising the resultant table took longer than anticipated. The researcher also found that transcribing an accurate and authentic interview took much longer than originally anticipated.

5.8.2 Bias

Bias occurs when a person, place or thing viewed is shown in a consistently inaccurate way, usually negative. The researcher was concerned that as she works for Cork Dawg she did not want to let this influence the findings. The researcher attempted to remain neutral and findings were presented as they were described with no attempt made by the researcher to influence the results.

5.8.3 Inexperience of the Researcher

The researcher was aware of her inexperience when conducting this research. This became evident while conducting the interview. The researcher interrupted the interviewee and as a consequence missed out on vital parts of the interview. This necessitated several phone calls to ensure answers to the questions presented were accurate and complete.

5.6 Conclusion

5.7 Introduction

This section will conclude this thesis by discussing the overall findings of the study. A thorough overview of the chosen Irish non-profit organisations social media ventures has revealed a promising online image by the selected non-profit organisations. In view of the recession a strong online presence is a necessity for non-profit organisations. As a result, this study concentrated on two relatively similar Irish non-profit organisations with the main objective being how does social media enable them to raise awareness of their cause. Dogs Trust Ireland, while only in Ireland since 2009, is affiliated to the well known Dogs Trust UK. Dogs Trust Ireland has a dedicated Marketing team that looks after their social media full time. DAWG on the other hand, is run by a network of dedicated volunteers who look after their social media while also working at their full time employment. The organisations were chosen in an effort to show that regardless of budget, social media has allowed them to effectively promote their organisation.

In an effort to reach relevant conclusions to the study the original research objectives will be utilised. When these questions have been answered an overall conclusion to the study will be discussed.

5.7.1 Does social media aid animal welfare organisations raise awareness of their cause?

From both the primary and secondary research carried out it appears that social media is fast becoming a primary area to focus on. In each of the organisations researched, the participants interviewed regarded it as their primary PR tactic. The first post on the Dogs Trust Ireland analysis (See Appendix G, DTI, 01a) which announced the successful rehoming of their 500th dog, also allowed the organisation to thank their supporters for their help in achieving this objective, and encouraged their supporters to post and share photographs of the dogs in their new home. This post generated a large response – ‘likes’ 471, ‘comments’ 28 and ‘shares’ 26. DAWG uploaded a poster which contained an uplifting message extolling the virtues of adopting, this too generated a very high volume of traffic, - ‘likes’ 336, ‘comments’ 6 and ‘shares’ 198. From the netnographic analysis of the organisations researched the researcher believes the volume of traffic each organisation experiences, added to their extensive reach would not be possible without social media.

Social media is all about relationships and at its core, non-profit work is also about relationships. Therefore non-profits can use the tools of social media to build relationships in a way that was not possible before the advent of social media.

5.7.2 Exploration of the advantages of the use of social media by non-profit organisations

The researcher has found that social media can help non-profit organisations by helping to drive awareness of campaigns and issues, to share stories and open up a two-way communication with their supporters. Social media aids non-profit organisations in raising much needed funds, which would be impossible without the aid of a social media platform. While participants in the study did express some concerns, for example that while it is free to engage in social media, they still need to spend time manning the page. However, the researcher would argue that if they did not engage with social media, non-profit organisations would be unable to compete with the many similar organisations that are challenging for a diminishing source of income. Social media is all about ease of organisation whereby people can find like minded people which allow them to build a conversation or generate an action. Non-profits can tap into that to engage with their community and the networks of each of their community members.

5.7.3 Exploration of the importance of two-way communication by non-profits.

One of the main themes addressed in the literature review is that social media has become an important tool for two-way communication. While all the interviewees agreed with this, further analysis has shown that there is very little dialogue between one of the organisations studied and their fans/supporters. At the time of the netnographic analysis, Dogs Trust Ireland engaged in dialogue a total of three times in the two weeks under investigation. Interestingly Cork DAWG entered into dialogue with their supporters a total of twenty five times. Cork DAWG is constantly posting original comments on their home page and frequently responds to fan comments. The section where 'publics/groups' was analysed revealed the active and vibrant nature of the DAWG Facebook page. On both Facebook sites the findings show that while fans of both organisations are entering into dialogue with both the organisations and other fans. The fan-to-organisation and organisation to fan interaction on the DAWG Facebook page was more noticeably evident throughout the course of this study. This level of two-way communication enables non-profit organisations carry out their mission. Findings show that participating in online dialogue is now an important part of the online PR strategy

5.7.4 Analysis of how social media can help to enhance non-profit organisations reputation

The final theme discussed in the literature was how social media can help to enhance non-profit organisations reputation. A good reputation encourages supporters and non-supporters alike to seek services from the non-profit. It can also help attract donors and contributors and even inspire members of the community to volunteer their time and talents. A non-profit organisation with a good reputation can act as a retaining wall in times of crisis as supporters assume the administrators of the organisation will do the right thing. Findings have shown that both the organisations studied have good reputations and at the time of the interviews and netnographic analysis there were no indications of negative comment directed at either non-profit. Three of the participants in the study were in agreement, that negative comments must be dealt with efficiently and without delay. Participants from both organisations were adamant that it was of the utmost importance not to become involved in a public online argument, and any contributor who still felt they had a problem were invited to engage privately with the organisation in question. Appendix—and Appendix—show a summary of the posts by both non-profits during the two week analysis. The findings would support the objective that a good reputation is necessary for a non-profit organisation and social media, particularly an organisations Facebook page is instrumental in this.

5.8 Overall Thesis Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to assess how the use of social media as a PR tactic has aided animal rescue organisations in raising awareness of their cause. The research findings confirm the views expressed in the existing literature published. The use of Facebook has enhanced both organisations reputations and both have a base of loyal followers who engage with these organisations on an almost daily basis. This is evidenced by the positive comments each has received on their Facebook sites. Facebook is used by both Dogs Trust Ireland and DAWG to actively promote their organisations which enables them to carry on their mission.

While both Dogs Trust Ireland and DAWG engage in two-way symmetrical conversation with their supporters. The research has found that DAWG engages far more extensively with their supporters. This was an unexpected result as the researcher would have assumed Dogs Trust Ireland would be far ahead of DAWG in this respect. Dogs Trust Ireland has a dedicated full time team in charge of their social media, whereas DAWGs social media was administered by volunteers already in full time employment.

A second surprising fact emerged from the research. Prior to this, the researcher assumed the posts which generated the most traffic and fan engagement were stories relating to the business of both organisations, namely rehoming abused and abandoned dogs. However, the facts which emerged from the netnographic analysis would suggest it is the 'feel good' stories that result in the most 'likes', 'shares' and 'comments'.

Facebook is currently being used by both Dogs Trust Ireland and DAWG as a PR tactic. Both non-profits utilise Facebook to gain followers and attempt to drive traffic to their Facebook page. From the research carried out, the following are the reasons why the researcher believes social media is an effective PR tool:

- It is an inexpensive method to engage in two-way communication with your publics.
- It is an excellent way to build a loyal following for your organisation.
- When it is done well it can enhance your organisations reputation and standing amongst your peers.

CHAPTER 6

Recommendations

6. Introduction

A number of recommendations can be made as a result of this study. They are as follows:

6.2 General Recommendations

- The administrators of the both Dogs Trust Ireland and Cork DAWG Facebook pages should add their organisations events and campaigns to the organisations Facebook page to drive registration and encourage further involvement. This would give 'fans' the ability to R.S.V.P. to your event online.
- Email Facebook 'fans' through the organisations branded Facebook page and invite them to organisational events. The researcher feels it is important for non-profits to build a file of supporter information. Social media/Facebook is an ideal place to ask for new supporters to take action by signing a pledge or providing information about themselves. This information can be used in future efforts to galvanise these contacts into becoming donors or activists.
- The non-profit organisations researched should create a Hashtag and encourage supporters to use it to raise awareness and interest in their online campaigns. Dogs Trust Ireland and DAWG should create or be a part of the big discussions on Facebook by using Hashtags in their posts. This will help to expose the organisations brand to relevant users that might find them interesting.
- Both of the non-profit organisations should add Milestones to their Facebook pages. Milestones are a great method for telling the organisations story. Each of the non-profits studied should add Milestones to highlight moments the organisation is proud of.
- Social media requires constant monitoring and maintenance in order to be totally efficient, to this end the organisations studied need to ensure there is always someone capable of dealing with any issues that could occur.

6.3 Dogs Trust Recommendations

From the netnographic analysis conducted, the following suggestions are recommended to Dogs Trust Ireland:

- The organisation should write longer posts
- They need to ask more questions of their fans
- They need to respond more quickly to posts by others more frequently
- They need to add more milestones.
-

6.4 Dog Action Welfare Group recommendations

From the netnographic analysis conducted, the following suggestions are recommended to Dog Action Welfare Group:

- Write longer posts
- Respond to posts by others more frequently
- Cultivate a relationship with local media
- Implement a plan to find a suitable celebrity ambassador who can help to raise the profile of the non-profit organisation.

6.3 Suggestions for further study

Further research on the use of social media as a Public Relations tactic may give similar non-profit organisations ideas on how to utilise social media/Facebook to further enhance their profile. As the research was conducted on only two non-profit organisations, further analysis on a bigger sample could prove to be beneficial to this area of

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APPENDICES

Appendix A -Sample Email:

Dear _____,

My name is Carole Hennessy and I am currently completing a thesis as part of my MA in Public Relations with New Media in Cork Institute of Technology.

The title of my thesis is to How the use of Social Media as a Public Relations Tactic has aided Animal Rescue Organisations in raising awareness of their cause

I would appreciate the opportunity to interview you regarding this topic. If you would be interested in taking part in this interview you may contact me on:

Mobile: 085-*****

Home: 021-*****

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards,

Appendix B - Participant Consent form sample

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

The purpose of this study is to examine the use of social media as Public Relations tactic which aids rescue organisations in raising awareness of their cause.

Consent to use name:

Do you agree to have your true name used in any written documents resulting from this research:

Yes No

Signature to agree to use of name _____

Consent to record interview

May I record this interview?

Yes No

Signature to agree to recording _____

Consent to quote from interview

I may wish to quote from this interview in the thesis resulting from this research. (A pseudonym will be used in order to protect your identity, unless you specifically allow me to identify you by your true name, as specified above).

Do you agree to the use of quotes from this interview?

Yes No

Signature to allow use of quotes from interview _____

Consent to follow-up interview(s)

I may wish to contact you in the future in order to clarify items and ask for further information. This may be done by phone or email

Do you agree to allow me to contact you for a follow-up:

Yes No

Please read and initial the following statement:

I understand that this research is intended for the study of how Irish non-profit organisations use Facebook as a Public Relations tactic, which is part of the research by Carole Hennessy for the Masters Degree in Public Relations with New Media at the Cork Institute of Technology.

Subject to the conditions stated above, I understand that Carole Hennessy may keep and use my identifying information, as well as the content of the interview.

I approve of the use of my personal information as agreed upon with the above conditions.

Subject to the confidentiality conditions, I authorise Carole Hennessy to use this interview for the purpose of research, which may be published.



23rd July 2017

Date

Appendix C Interview Guide

The following are the questions that were asked of the four participants to the research study

1. What is your understanding of Public Relations?
2. What in your opinion is the purpose of social media? And what are its advantages and disadvantages?
3. What are the advantages of a non-profit using social media? What platform do you interact most with your publics?
4. Some suggest social media either compliments or conflicts traditional media, what is your opinion on this?
5. Do you think social media has given the public relations industry more control when it comes to putting their message out there?
6. Have you ever changed a product/service from an interaction you had with your customers through social media,?
7. Since 2008, do you think organisations have had to change their methods of communication and public relations? Do you think the recession has affected this area? i.e. fundraising, communicating with donors

8. In your opinion, how important is fundraising for non-profit organisations and have your fundraising methods changed since 2008?
9. Could you compare your profile now and your profile if you didn't use social media?
10. What campaigns are you currently involved with and how successful are they? And how important is using social media in helping to carry on your campaign?
11. Why does your organisation use Facebook and what do you think the organisation gains from using Facebook?
12. Do you in your opinion think that using Facebook helps to facilitate trust in your organisation and thereby enhance your reputation?
13. Do you think using celebrity ambassadors make a difference to non-profit public relations?

Appendix D 1

Interview Transcript - Interview with Suzie Carley,

Dogs Trust, Ireland

23 July 2013

What is your understanding of Public Relations?

There is an official definition that has come about recently, after months and months of debating, its been decided strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and its publics. And its funny I suppose, cos it's the hardest thing in the world to define and for me it's exactly that, its building relationships between dogs trust and our publics, so whether that be our donors, our supporters, our adopters, general members of the public, other welfare organisations, we're building a relationship with them, it's a two-way communication process

What in your opinion is the purpose of social media? And what are its advantages and disadvantages?

I suppose the purpose of social media is to be able to target your publics, your audience directly and effectively, with traditional media you were using a nuke to quell a riot, you were sending out a press release and it was going to everyone, using a scattergun approach. Whereas with social media you can get it right down to your target audience within a specific medium. So I can even see from YouTube who's been viewing my data, what format they've been using the data on and I can tweak my campaigns then directly, so I'm able to use it, it's a very targeted form of communication

Do you target you target different publics with different campaigns

Yes, very much so,

Advantages of social media

I think the advantages are that you can communicate directly and you can see who is seeing your posts. It's measurable, which is important, even though the old view of PR was that it was fluffy, not measurable. But, PR is 100% measurable, we're very accountable in PR now. It also builds relationships, you have a very wide reach of people, within a very short space of time and you can react quickly, so if you're doing a campaign and you see it's not really being opened, for example you're doing a direct mail online, your posts aren't being viewed or shared, why is that happening?, We need to change the image, we can change and measure accordingly.

What are the advantages of a non-profit using social media? What platform do you interact most with your publics?

I suppose what people can say on social media, it is not 9 to 5 and it really isn't 9 to 5 with social media involved, so you could have a comment on Facebook, it may or may not be right, you've to deal with that comment effectively, fast, and be prepared with the answer, and know accordingly what to do as it's a very public domain. You have to refresh your content regularly, you can't just sign up for every different form of social media and expect it to look after itself. I suppose, It's free which is an advantage, but the disadvantage is the man hours it takes to man them so it is not free.

I think from a non-profit point of view is, ok it's free for the signups. You're not paying for advertising in newspapers and magazines it is free if it's done properly, provided you're getting back what you're

putting in, so, for us as a non-profit, we're using it and, our business is to home dogs, and get the message out there, who we are, what we do to re-home as many dogs as possible, as quickly as possible which means we can take more in from the pounds. And the platform we interact with most, would be Facebook. We have nearly 23,000 followers on Facebook, even though we use Twitter, that only has about 3,500, we would use Facebook as our main forum. (I asked do they use YouTube?) Before I started there were videos up there, but I think that for various different reasons – 1. For search engine optimisation if you have video included in your data in your website, or whatever, you'll get higher ranking, prioritising, it loves video, the Google robots and that's what I'm very mindful of, I suppose my background is producing video content, commercials, so I'd be interested in doing that and 2. When we decided to introduce qr codes, we link our website to the videos on the website and we do that through YouTube which is fantastic as I'm able to see who's viewing it on YouTube and what device they're viewing it on, so I can see now even since we introduced them in the beginning of June, we're only trialling 8/10 dogs but I can see that compared to the other dogs in the centre, they're viewings have increased by about 500%.

Some suggest social media either compliments or conflicts traditional media, what is your opinion on this?

For me, I can see why I could fight both sides, but for me I feel it complements more that it conflicts. For us, we can send out a press release which is traditional media even though we do it online, yet then we can share that press release digitally so we can put it on Facebook, we can put it on Twitter and we can get feedback from it and also new media, for instance we did one (press release) recently on a collie, a border collie cross who was tied to our gates and that went up on Irish independent. I and the Irish times. IE and from that, members of the public can comment directly on the press release, whereas before, you'd send out a press release and that was that. There is a bit more longevity now when people can add comments, maybe say "I saw that car" so there's a bit more

interaction, so you're getting the two-way communication. We can see the direct follow up from the stories that we send out, for example on Ireland am, we had 4 dogs on Ireland am this morning, which is traditional media and yet when we get the link on TV3 we're able to share that now so that's on new media, which will go up on Facebook, so anyone who missed it this morning has another opportunity to see it.

Do you think social media has given the public relations industry more control when it comes to putting their message out there?

100%, I think that as I said before you're using a nuke to quell a riot when you're sending out a press release or a negative comment whereas now you're having a very targeted message to a very targeted audience, which is fantastic, which gives us a lot more control.

Have you ever changed a product/service from an interaction you had with your customers through social media?

That's a good question, I suppose I've only been here a year, so for me, perhaps maybe one thing we do is Christmas cards every year and a couple of years ago we decided to do a Facebook, we'll call it a Facebook competition which it isn't, where people would send in pictures of their dog, and we would pick the best card to go on the Christmas Card. So the reaction was so good from what was supposed to happen only that year, the interaction was so fantastic online that we decided to continue it so rather than just doing the Christmas Cards as normal, last year we shot our own dogs at the centre here, should I say we "photographed" our own dogs at the centre here and then we did an online campaign.

Since 2008, do you think organisations have had to change their methods of communication and public relations? Do you think the recession has affected this area? I.e. Fundraising, communicating with donors?

I, think that they've had to introduce other methods of communicating, by the nature, or the fact that everybody else is, they had to do it, and also they had to think...and I hate this expression 'think outside the box' that using perhaps the old methods of fundraising are not going to cut it anymore and I think the recession has affected fundraising and communicating with donors 1000% it has to have, and we're looking at other methods now, where're we're looking at incorporating social media into our fundraising, so for example, 'text hope to 53104" is a campaign that we're looking at, where people can text that number and then donate directly to us, and that will become part of an integrated marketing campaign, where there will be posters up that will go on traditional media and the poster will include text "like", on social media will incorporate that, so it's a different way of fundraising, its more specific, we've had to be 'cleverer' about how we fundraise. The Dogs Trust UK does fabulous fundraising campaigns; in the digital team they have 9 in the PR team. A campaign that they did recently for Valentines Day on Twitter was they got everybody to put a twibbon up on their Twitter account and they got people to share that and they raised €2,000 in a day or twenty four hours. You can do short bursts of online campaigns, just clever little campaigns, that social media allows you to do.

In your opinion, how important is fundraising for non-profit organisations and have your fundraising methods changed since 2008?

As we're an organisation that receives no Government funding whatsoever fundraising is the only way we can keep going. We rely on members of the public and legacy donations to keep us going, so it's imperative for us, and our fundraising methods again, as I've only been here for the last year, but, it's

something that they've had to tweak on a yearly basis since the recession. We have 2 different organisations that go fundraising door-to-door for us.

How do you thank your donors?

It's hugely important when it comes to thanking our donors. On the third week of June we had our supporters' day. We have an annual supporters' day where we do just that. We thank our donors and supporters. It's a two day event, because we physically don't have the capacity to host them all over one day. There were a total of nearly one thousand people here. We had almost 400 dogs over the 2 days. We had face painting, a Marquee and we had entertainment. We had 'Dogs trusts got talent', a sort of x Factor thing, judging the best haircut, etc., Where people who've adopted from us get to bring back their dogs, dogs that are happy to be in an environment with other dogs, so that's a huge event that we do every year. We also send a quarterly newsletter, which you can see up on the wall there behind you which we use to thank people and keep them updated on the various different campaigns that are going on. That is a physical newsletter that is also going to go online. We send thank you letters, we've a thank you pack when people sign up, it's very important, to 'give them a hug' as we say, that yellow fluffy feeling that they have to feel

Could you compare your profile now and your profile if you didn't use social media?

It would be a lot more difficult. I don't think we'd have the same profile, we're isolated to one area of Ireland, Finglas, Dublin 11 and we rehome to houses all over Ireland and that's where people need to know. We'd love to be physically all over Ireland, but finances will dictate that. So in the meantime our message needs to be out there and people need to know, so having social media has helped us to be all over Ireland, also, to let people all over Ireland know what we do so that they can help support us as well, such as running 'cardies for canines campaign' . For me, we did a soft launch and now we're doing a digital infiltration so we're going into all the blogs like ravel is where the knitters where

the groups of knitters are online. We're infiltrating all those groups this week, and then we'll do a hard launch a little bit later on, as it's been so hot recently people aren't really thinking about knitting cardigans for canines. So we've very separate strands of marketing and the digital strand is at this moment in time for that particular campaign is big. I don't think that we would have been able to speak to those people that we need to speak to about such a specific campaign if it wasn't for social media.

What campaigns are you currently involved with and how successful are they? How important is using social media in helping you to carry on your campaign?

So that's the cardies for canines which we've already spoken about and even though its been a soft launch it seems to be going very well, we have Womens Way involved, the Sunday Business Post and we haven't even targeted them but they've seen it through Facebook, through our blog, so that's great. The microchipping campaign is something that we've only just launched, really only getting it together this week. We did a trial yesterday (22 July) and the day before and we're doing one today, microchipping dogs for free downstairs from 2.30 to 4.30 pm. To roll out this campaign, social media would be hugely important. We would have legacy campaigns and our canine care card campaign. It's a care where people who have a dog, they want to think about after, when they pass away, what's going to happen to the dog? They get a little card to say that in the event of their passing, the dog comes to Dogs Trust and we will look after the dog for the rest of the dog's life, so we rehome the dog and if for some reason we can't rehome the dog the dog stays with us for the duration of its life. And I guess that leads on to the legacy campaign as they're sort of one and the same, so we'd hope that people might think about us then in their will, so at the time those campaigns are running, we would use social media to complement and we'd have stories about previous legacy donors and how it's worked out.

Why does your organisation use Facebook and what do you think the organisation gains from using Facebook?

Facebook, specifically because we are able to communicate with our target audience, usually female usually aged 28 and upwards. It is mainly female, usually because the female is often the decision maker in the house with regard to pets. Facebook allows us to talk very much to those people. And they opt in you know! It's their choice to be there, they don't have to be friends with us on Facebook, they can choose not to, but they choose to be, to listen to our message. It's fast, so if we want to get a message out there, like we needed a we had a puppy fostering appeal where we had abandoned one day old pups the same time as we had many other puppies, we needed fosterers asap, we used Facebook to put out the message and we'd never had such an incredible response. We had over 1,000 likes and over eight hundred comments., It was unbelievable, and the shares.... So getting that message out there as well as it gets that specific message out there, it's also got the message of Dogs Trust out there.

Do you find it frustrating that lots of people will like your posts but they don't actually do anything?

With sad stories people don't generally 'like' them, but you're acknowledging it and hoping someone else in your feed will see it, but, we have learned that if you want someone to share a post, you need to say, "please share with your friends" you need to ask them to share, people won't automatically share, and I think that..And I will be corrected having just gotten my iPhone 5. The increased use of Smartphones, means people don't have to wait to get home, I can see peaks at lunchtime therefore a 12.30 pm post is always a good time to post, and people usually check again late afternoon. We can also keep up to date with dogs that have been rehomed, so people love putting up pictures, such as "This is Toodles now at home" they might have changed his name, but they keep us posted. Plus we

can see how the dogs are doing, other potential adopters can see and then there is a share at the end, so people love seeing... Oh look they adopted from Dogs Trust, so did we, so there is a real community element and I think that's huge with Dogs Trust, that we have a little community of people, like minded people who share the same interests, having Facebook allows us to be part of that community of people so I think we get a huge gain from it.

In your opinion, do you think that using Facebook helps to facilitate trust in your organisation and thereby help to enhance your reputation?

Yes, and thank God we've only had enhance of reputation, there's crisis management issues that organisations face all day every day, but for us it has just enhanced our reputation. We're there if there has been an incident where a donor could have called to somebodies house what they felt was too late in the evening, they could have put something negative up, we're able to respond accordingly very quickly, yeah its been building a trust, we're there five days a week, online for sure, but we're open seven days a week to the public, so yeah for both I think it's one hundred percent.

Do you think using celebrity ambassadors make a difference to non-profit public relations?

It's something that Dog's Trust has been very cautious about using. We wouldn't use anyone for the sake of using somebody. It has to be the right fit for the organisation, with the right message, so we have Amy Huberman who has just been amazing for us. She's the right fit for the organisation. We are very fortunate that we have people that are willing to help us with campaigns and whatnot. We have to be very careful that it's the right person for the right campaign, but I think that using a celebrity ambassador does make a huge difference. It can help you tap into an audience that you may not already been on the radar of for example, PJ Gallagher did stuff for us recently where we rehomed 500 dogs. He was there for the photo shoot and perhaps at the time when there was only 500 dogs that

people in that age bracket may not have (we just got a direct connection with those people. But they have to be seen to be a dog lover, if he had gone off then and it was known that the dogs he had rescued he'd given back because they didn't fit in with his social life, that wouldn't look very good then so we have to be very careful.

How important is animal welfare to you personally?

To me personally, it's a good question, it's so far up my priority list that... put it this way, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now if animal welfare wasn't paramount. You know yourself, you work for a charity, you're never going to be a millionaire. So, for me its one of the reasons I left my career. I did the job....I did the initial ad for Dog's Trust back in 2009, the ad was predominantly done in the UK, but we did the Irish insert in it, and I was so blown away by the organisation, that I remember saying to my business partner at the time that I want to work there, and the cameraman thought I was barmy, and I made it my business over the next four years that I would eventually do what I'm doing now, because I truly truly believe that it's making a difference, I truly believe that, we used to always say in our old job you know when you're stressed out, we're not saving lives, but I truly believe that the work I do here does save lives and that Dogs Trust is such a fantastic organisation to do that, to be a part of and not just for the specific dogs we do here but for the broader picture, we're involved in lobbying the Government, in Legislation, in the nationwide neutering campaign, the nationwide education program for kids, so we're starting at the root of, while not the problem, the kids, the dog owners of the future, we're starting with them, educating them in responsible dog ownership, safety around animals and so Dogs Trust, I believe, from an animal welfare point of view it's not just dogs, its benefiting every aspect of animal welfare throughout Ireland. They really are thought leaders in Ireland

Appendix D 2 -Interview with Jill Carey

Cork Dog Action Welfare Group

27 July 2013-

What is your understanding of Public Relations

To me it is having an understanding of PR is that the organisation has to put itself out there – make sure you get the name of your organisation out there, people then become aware of what you're doing. Every organisation needs good PR, we all get bad PR from time to time, but, it's the positives that need to be pushed all the time. Many organisations put lots of hard luck/negative stories, horror stories, that's fine but people need to see the positive stories ie the success stories, which then encourages people in being more generous towards the organisation, can see where the money is going, bringing dogs from malnourished to healthy, you see the result and PR has to be approached in that way, you need to achieve a good balance of positive and negative.

What in your opinion is the purpose of Social Media? What do you think are the main advantages/disadvantages of a non-profit using social media?

By social media I would infer that to be Facebook and how we use it. It has huge advantages, in that you can get instant results, put a dog up that needs a foster, puppies that need a temporary home, you may need money for vet fees or support with some issue or another. In this regard it is excellent in that the message is just out there straight away, people can see it as it's happening. However, I do have concerns about the negative side of it, big concerns which are that people seem to use it as a bit of a knocking board, they log onto Facebook and see on negative comment said and it can just escalate from there, while there may be some credibility in what they say, they quite often don't know the bigger picture, and I don't approve of people getting into arguments on Facebook, similar

organisations scoring points off one another, and this seems to happen an awful lot in rescues like ours. People will see a negative thing about a rescue and it can very quickly go viral and the slagging match goes on. It has happened in our organisation, to our detriment in some cases and that is one of the biggest negatives about social media.

Has social media helped you understand your customers and potential customers?

Some would suggest social media either compliments or conflicts traditional media?

It should complement, but I feel in this age of social media it would be quite easy to ignore those customers who do not have access to a computer, those who rely on the newspaper or newsletter.

We get a lot of elderly people who come into our shop, they donate in the shops, they do not know anything about Facebook and they rely on the newsletter or newspaper articles, the more traditional media. While the younger people, while they're not really aware of that, because they've grown up with Facebook, it's part of their everyday lives. It's how they live, whereas, the older people don't. While of course we need to put up all our information and stories on the website and facebook page, but we do need to put the same information in our newsletters, because an awful lot of the older generation will not have access to Facebook and I worry that Facebook will actually overtake these more traditional forms of media, and you'll be losing out on a huge proportion of the population that will donate to you, will take dogs and possibly leave legacies to you. So it should definitely complement traditional media, but the only time it is going to complement traditional media is when you try and strike a happy medium between the two of them, we should be aware as I've already mentioned that there are older people there or just people who wouldn't be computer literate who really do not rely on social media, and I've seen it with housing dogs, a lot of our elderly customers come into our shops and say I'm interested in taking a dog and they would be told to check the website to see what is available, but they often don't have access to a website so for organisations like ours we need to keep the two going together, put as much effort into one as you do to the other.

Do you think social media has given the public relations/animal welfare organisation more control when it comes to putting their message out there?

No it certainly hasn't give you more control, it has give you greater access, but once a story gets out on social media/Facebook, you have no control. That's when you lose control of it, it's inclined to go viral and people share and then you're in a situation where its like anything you put on Facebook, you really lose control of it then, you would hope that it would end up going the right way, whoever, sometimes it doesn't. Yet, it wouldn't work if you were just depending on newspapers, traditional media. Yet before Facebook, back in the early 2,000s we would have re-homed quite a high proportion of dogs, nowhere near as many as now of course. And that's another thing Facebook has done to us, it has made us very widely accessible to people, so if you have puppies that need to move on or someone has a dog at home they no longer want....they know we're there at the end of the click of a button, much more so than before we had Facebook, however, we did rehome a higher percentage of dogs, because we didn't have as much competition and it has done nothing for the rehoming of dogs, I don't think because proportionally if you look back to 2001/2, of the dogs we took in we would have rehomed a higher percentage here in Ireland – whereas most now go to the UK.

In your opinion how important is fundraising for non-profit organisations?

It's the cornerstone to our organisation; we wouldn't be here only for fundraising. It's what keeps us going; it's the butter on our bread really. Facebook has helped hugely, because when we have an event now, we can put it up on Facebook, we know that a hell of a lot more people are going to see it then if we just put it into a newspaper, it was particularly helpful when we were opening the new shop in Youghal, we were able to put it up on Facebook and so many knew about it, we did run newspaper ads for the people who don't have access to the internet, but we know that when it goes onto Facebook it's out there immediately.

Do you think your organisation has gained respect because of its use of social media?

Gained respect! Well more people know about us, but respect! I don't know, I mean I think we had a huge amount of respect anyway, before we ever started to use Facebook, we are using it hugely now, but I don't think it added to the respect, however, we are accessing a lot more people and if you weigh it up that way, then more people respect us. However, people can better see what we do, people can see what success we've had and 90% of that costs them nothing and I think they respect that.

How do you feel the recession has impacted on your organisation?

Hugely, in the sense that our income has gone down and our volume of dogs has gone up dramatically, so we now have less money to deal with more dogs. Our vet bills haven't dropped, and we haven't been give any reduction in those bills from our vets. Our food bills are roughly stayed the same, however, a lot of people do donate food to the shops which is good and helps a lot. Now having said that, the core group of people who are the big dog lovers, are still giving as much as they always did. But it's the people who will shop in our shops and don't care whether it's for dogs or for themselves, are not going to be any more generous, so it has affected us hugely.

Do you think it is important to communicate with donors and inform them of how their money is being spent? Recognise and thank them? Has this become even more important since the onset of the recession?

It has become more important, it was always very important to us, but it has become hugely more important to us now, as we know it's hard for them to give us money, and I presume they feel like...just to tell you about an incident we had at one of our shops last week. An English lady came in to the shop and gave a €500 donation, she was only visiting as her sister had died, but she saw the pictures in the window of which we have loads, we display a lot of stories in the window and she stopped to read, she saw the extent of the cruelty. Now to thank her is so important, now while she's only visiting for a few days, it could lead to more for us, she's going to go home and obviously we made an impression on her while she was here, so the fact we have acknowledged it could have a

knock on effect, even though it's only a once off donation as it stands from her, she may decide to name us in here will, you just don't know....and she could also tell others who could also do the same.

Could you compare your profile now and your profile if you didn't use social media?

Well we'd get a lot less dogs in I'd presume,if we didn't have it, we wouldn't be swamped like we are with dogs, because people wouldn't be aware that we exist without the use of Facebook, but that's not a good thing either, because if you don't know what's happening to the poor creatures, if we didn't get them, however, I can say it would be harder to get things out there, but having said that, if it wasn't available to anybody we'd all be in the same boat, so it wouldn't be a case of one charity having an advantage over us, we'd all be vying for the same thing then.

What campaigns are you currently involved with and how successful are they? And how important is using social media in helping to carry on your campaign?

Our newest campaign is the charity shop in Youghal that we just opened two weeks ago. It has been hugely successful so far, because we opened it at a very good time, tourist season is in full swing and Youghal was like Benidorm, packed with tourists. It just played out right, hopefully this will continue on into the winter. We're now starting to get locals in which is very important to us because we obviously can't rely on tourists in the winter, we really need the local people. The shops are the mainstream of our source of funding, the three shops guarantee us money every week, it means we don't have to go looking for volunteers to shake boxes for us too often as that is getting harder and harder. All the other campaigns we're involved in such as the '5 to survive' campaign have all trickled out, but the charity shops with the initial difficulty being the setting them up, and getting them up and running until they take off . which is the most difficult. And they do seem to have taken off themselves, because in fairness, people have been very generous with their donations of clothes and bric a brac etc, so apart from the rent, that's our only outlay.

It's becoming increasingly difficult to come up with new campaigns, especially a novelty type thing such as the doggy wedding we held last year, you can't do them every week, not even every year. I mean the charity walks are done by every organisation, they're a thing where you usually get the same people coming every year to support us, but you rarely get new people and like that we had the DHL promotion, where they picked 3 charities, where they were going to do a whole overhaul. We were shortlisted, but as soon as I heard that (organisation to remain undisclosed) I knew we'd be blown out of the water, and we were. I think that because our organisation doesn't have a high enough profile for a big company like DHL. I mean we could really have done with it, they'd have painted the house and helped clean all the yards, but even though I new in my heart we wouldn't get it we still had to put a big effort in preparing the proposal. It's very hard when you're competing against big big campaigners, who have PR team behind them, pushing for them, so it's hare in that sense to come up with new ideas. So that's why we're pushing the shops through Facebook as they appeal to everyone, whether they're dog lovers or not, most people we have found love charity shops.

Why does your organisation use Facebook and what does your organisation gain from using Facebook?

Basically, esposure.

In your opinion do you think that use of Facebook helps to facilitate trust and help further your organisation's reputation?

You're gaining new friends every day of the week as a lot of people spend a fair portion of their day in Facebook. What I have noticed about it is however, is that often times you get an awful lot of people who have come on and made the odd comment, "Oh I'd love to do that.....but I can't", we get an awful lot of this, and these comments are really useless to you, because they're people who've gon on and seen a story and they'll 'like' it and then that's it. We have a core group of people who follow us all the time on Facebook, who are very active, they see a story developing on Facebook, and they'll act on it, they will share, but they're our core group....not the majority of people that really follow us. I know

when we do have the hard luck stories up, the awful cases, the donations for that dog will go up, when we do the appeals for the vet bills, especially for the dogs that are going to cost a lot of money, once they go up on Facebook. But if you look back through all the appeals, it's predominantly the same people who do contribute all the time, it is not a whole new group of people. We do get a trickle of new people, but nothing to the value of that consistent core group of supporters.

Do you think that the use of celebrity ambassadors would help to further your cause?

It would help hugely, but they're not exactly falling out of the woodwork, you see I always say "dogs don't vote" and that is the big negative, they can't say what will happen, they can't promote anything, and therefore they don't.....there isn't a lot of kudos involved, unless you (the celebrity) are a hug dog lover themselves, and that's the type of people who will come on board, those that have the interest in dogs themselves, whereas you will see other people who will get involved in cancer charities or autism charities.....they're people charities and there is a lot of kudos to be gained for the celebrity in being involved with them....no kudos in being involved with the poor stray dogs that's sick at the side of the road.

Appendix E – Summary of Dogs Trust Ireland Postings

Author	Type	Likes	Comments	Shares	Total Engagement
Page Admin	photo	378	69	894	1,341
Page Admin	photo	471	28	26	525
Page Admin	photo	419	14	3	436
Page Admin	link	75	151	51	277
Page Admin	photo	106	8	89	203
Page Admin	status	143	6	0	149
Page Admin	photo	111	6	1	118
Page Admin	link	103	6	2	111
Page Admin	photo	88	1	3	92
Page Admin	photo	89	0	2	91
Page Admin	photo	84	3	0	87
Page Admin	photo	81	1	1	83
Page Admin	photo	76	3	2	81
Page Admin	link	34	16	21	71
Page Admin	link	55	3	2	60
Page Admin	link	28	9	17	54
Page Admin	link	29	0	2	31
Totals	17	2370	324	1116	3810

Appendix F – Summary of Cork Dog Action Welfare Group Postings

<u>Author</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Likes</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Shares</u>	<u>Total Engagement</u>
Page Admin	photo	336	6	198	540
Page Admin	photo	112	22	335	469
Page Admin	photo	327	25	1	353
Page Admin	photo	96	22	137	255
Page Admin	photo	222	21	0	243
Page Admin	photo	210	23	1	234
Page Admin	photo	61	7	144	212
Page Admin	photo	84	20	62	166
Page Admin	photo	132	6	18	156
Page Admin	photo	73	15	56	144
Page Admin	photo	90	21	29	140
Page Admin	photo	86	7	34	127
Page Admin	photo	53	22	48	123
Page Admin	photo	36	7	55	98
Page Admin	status	30	3	51	84
Page Admin	photo	40	5	35	80
Page Admin	status	76	3	0	79
Page Admin	photo	26	14	38	78
Page Admin	link	53	5	17	75
Page Admin	photo	64	5	0	69
Page Admin	link	38	5	15	58
Page Admin	status	14	8	36	58
Total Status	42	2634	318	1360	4312

Appendix G – Summary of Dogs Trust Ireland Facebook postings from 15 – 28 July 2013

Analysis of Dogs Trust Ireland Facebook Postings										Form of Relationship Management		Publics/ Groups Involved				
Organisation	Date	Type of Post	Text of Post	Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares	Intentional use of site for PR	Unintentional use of Site for PR	General News/Comment Related to Nature of Site	Organisation to Organisation	Fan to Fan	Organisation to Fans	Fan to Organisation
DKI	15/07/13	Text and image	Happy Monday everyone! We have some exciting news we would like to share with you - this past weekend, we rehomed our 500th dog so far this year! How amazing is that, 500 dogs given a second chance and now gone off to their forever homes! We couldn't have done it without your support, so a huge thanks to all of you! If you adopted a dog from us this year, please feel free to share a picture on our page! We love to see how all the dogs are getting on in their new homes! :)	Original	01a	Org.	471	28	26	X	X				X	
	15/07/13	Text	super :)	Comment	01b	Fan					X	X				X
	15/07/13	Text	Well done to everyone	Comment	01c	Fan	3				X	X				X
	15/07/13	Text	Congrats guys :0 great work xoxo	Comment	01d	Fan	2				X	X				X
	15/07/13	Text	Thats brilliant news. You're doing great work for the dogs. 500 dogs rehomed in the first half of the year is excellent. Keep up the good work folk.:-)	Comment	01e	Fan	3				X	X				X
	15/07/13	Text	THAT'S FANTASTIC!!!!!! Well done! And that's 500 neutered/spayed dogs too!!	Comment	01f	Fan	5				X	X				X
	15/07/13	Text	we took Mary Now renamed Kish and she is doing fantastic. :)	Comment	01g	Fan					X	X				X
DKI	15/07/13	Text and image	Congrats on 500 dogs re homed!! Here's a pic of Lucy our JRT adopted March 2012! She's a great dog, thanks dogs trust	Original	02a	Fan	4	1			X	X				X
	15/07/13	Text	I was with you all on sunday not only are the dogs lovely but the staff are fantastic too	Original	03a	Fan	5				X	X				X
	15/07/13	Text and image	Muska is getting on great - he's such a smart boy and loves his long walks every day. Congrats on your 500 dogs rehomed. We're so glad that Muska was one of them!	Original	04a	Fan	10				X	X				X
	15/07/13	Text and image	Max Power (on the right) and his new friend Satchmo	Original	05a	Fan	6	3			X	X				X
	15/07/13	Text and image	That's Mia, 3 months old crossed breed taken from Dublin rehoming center 2 weeks ago :)	Original	06a	Fan	7	2			X	X				X

Analysis of Dogs Trust Ireland Facebook Postings											Form of Relationship Management		Publics/ Groups Involved			
Organisation	Date	Type of Post	Text of Post	Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares	Intentional use of site for PR	Unintentional use of Site for PR	General News/Comment Related to Nature of Site	Organisation to Organisation	Fan to Fan	Organisation to Fans	Fan to Organisation
	15/17/13	Text and Image	These bags for Nourish are not only great looking, but are also for a great cause! Dogs Trust Ireland	Original	08a	Fan	9	4		X	X	X				X
DKI	15/07/13	Text and Image	Logged on to Facebook and wondered who had put a picture of 'Buzz' who we adopted in Jan 2011, but it must be one of his brothers or sisters???	Original	09a	Fan	1	1			X		X			X
DKI	15/07/13	Image	Photograph		10a	Fan	2	1			X		X			X
DKI	15/07/13	Text and Image	Buster and Bonnie (socks)	Original	11a	Fan	5				X		X			X
DKI	15/07/13	Text and Image	'Nikita' now known as Oreo, chilling in one of her many beds!	Original	12a	Fan	7				X		X			X
DKI	16/07/13	Link	A severely neglected Border Collie suffering from chronic abdominal pain was found by a Dogs Trust staff member tied to gates of the Rehoming Centre in Finglas and left to die. Dogs Trust centre manager Catriona Birt said, "A staff member heard crying and was horrified to find this beautiful lady lying down outside tied to the gates of the centre	Original	13a	Org.	75	151	51	X	X			X		
DKI	16/07/13	Text	Reg plate of car!? Give to Gardai	Comment	13b	Fan	2				X		X			X
DKI	16/07/13	Text	Bas***d. Poor little pet!!! What I wouldn't do to get my hands on that wimpy little shit. Trace his reg and name and shame. He could do with a piece of his own medicine!!!	Comment	13c	Fan	15				X		X			X
DKI	16/07/13	Text	The poor little pet, people like that should be so ashamed	Comment	13d	Fan	2				X		X			X
DKI	16/07/13	Text	Was the dog not chipped? Can the owner not be traced that way?	Comment	13e	Fan	13				X		X			X
DKI	16/07/13	Text	That is heartbreaking! I just don't know how someone could do that to an animal! They should be treated like Family ... Not like a piece of rubbish! RIP Doggy :)	Comment	13f	Fan	24				X		X			X
DKI	16/07/13	Text	I really hope you have the reg of the car... That horrible man deserves what he gets!! Poor little lady, RIP :(Comment	13g	Fan	11				X		X			X
DKI	16/07/13	Text	People are horrible!!!! Hope you can trace the reg!	Comment	13h	Fan	3				X		X			X
DKI	16/07/13	Text	This is so sad the poor boy some people are so cruel :((((Comment	13i	Fan					X		X			X
DKI	16/07/13	Text	Did'nt this happen again a few months back again? Very similar description of vehicle also?	Comment	13j	Fan	1				X		X			X

Analysis of Dogs Trust Ireland Facebook Postings										Form of Relationship Management		Publics/ Groups Involved				
Organisation	Date	Type of Post	Text of Post	Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares	Intentional use of site for PR	Unintentional use of Site for PR	General News/Comment Related to Nature of Site	Organisation to Organisation	Fan to Fan	Organisation to Fans	Fan to Organisation
DKI	16/07/13	Text	I hope they catch them , people who do this should be banned for life from owning a pet , it makes me sooo mad to make an animal suffer like this the poor, poor dog didn't sign up for this , I better stop ranting I can feel my blood boiling.....	Comment	13k	Fan					X	X		X		X
DKI	16/07/13	Text	Sick excuse for a human being - this is happening way too often.	Comment	13l	Fan					X	X		X		X
DKI	16/07/13	Text	I've just read the article in this evenings Herald and am on the point of tears for that poor Collie. I want to say thank God for people like yourselves who are there for animals and thank you for helping her God bless you.	Original	14a	Fan	4	6			X	X		X		X
DKI	16/07/13	Text	Imagine if we all got hold of this guy!! Keep sharing and encourage your friends to do so too! Facebook is the best way as someone has to know who this disgusting excuse of a man is	Comment	14b	Fan					X	X		X		X
DKI	16/07/13	Text	You're a star! I really do hope karma exists and some kind of afterlife where he will get everything that he did to that beautiful dog x1000	Comment	14c	Fan					X	X		X		X
DKI	16/07/13	Text	You can be guaranteed he will. What comes around goes around. I feel terrible putting my hamsters in their cage at bedtime so I can't imagine a human being so lacking in decency and feeling they could treat an animal like this	Comment	14d	Fan					X	X		X		X

Analysis of Dogs Trust Ireland Facebook Postings										Form of Relationship Management		Publics/ Groups Involved				
Organisation	Date	Type of Post	Text of Post	Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares	Intentional use of site for PR	Unintentional use of Site for PR	General News/Comment Related to Nature of Site	Organisation to Organisation	Fan to Fan	Organisation to Fans	Fan to Organisation
DKI	16/07/13	Text	Just wondering how Brave is getting on! Looking at the photos on the rehoming page and he looks like he's thriving! The horrific story about the border collie left at your gates just brought him to mind, at least he could be helped unlike that poor soul! Keep up the good work lads even though I know with heartbreaking stories like that you can sometimes feel like you are fighting a losing battle, you are all fantastic!!! Amy & Pam :O)	Original	14f	Fan	2	1			X	X		X		X
DKI	16/07/13	Text	Hi Amy! Brave is doing super :) We'll pass on your good wishes lol! The Collie story is horrific, still makes us well up :(Big smooches for Pammy! <3	Comment	14g	Org				X				X	X	
DKI	16/07/13	Text	Hi there's a dog lost in the griffith area it's a black bitch with a pink collar it's only about 1 years of age if anyone drops in or rings up about it send me a mail and ill ring you's thanks	Original	15a	Fan						X		X		X
DKI	16/07/13	Text and Image	me and my son justin walking mulligan	Original	16a	Fan	6					X		X		X
DKI	17/07/13	Text	Timeline Photos So how many of you have had a look at our dogs that are up for adoption with Dogs Trust Ireland?! What about this gorgeous boy Buddy-Casper?! If you know anyone looking to give a dog a home make sure to check out our new Facebook app;	Original	18a	Fan	19			X		X				X
DKI	17/07/13	Text	We have enlisted the help of this year's Roses to find 32 dogs new homes! Each Rose is supporting one of these dogs that needs a home and we want to get them all re-homed before the roses get to Tralee so please do what you can to help! Check out this cool app from Carlton Hotel Group! Each of this year's Rose of Tralee International Festival contestants are backing one of our dogs to find a home.	Original	19a	Fan	76	3	2	X		X	X			X

Analysis of Dogs Trust Ireland Facebook Postings										Form of Relationship Management		Publics/ Groups Involved				
Organisation	Date	Type of Post	Text of Post	Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares	Intentional use of site for PR	Unintentional use of Site for PR	General News/Comment Related to Nature of Site	Organisation to Organisation	Fan to Fan	Organisation to Fans	Fan to Organisation
DKI	17/07/13	Text and image	Ruthy sure knows how to keep cool	Original	20a	Fan	6	1				X				X
DKI	18/07/13	Text and image	We were so excited to have so many people take part in the Mini Marathon for us this year! If any of you haven't sent in your money yet, we'd really appreciate if you could get it to us as soon as possible so we can do a final tally :) You can send us a cheque or postal order, or drop by the centre with cash. Thanks so much everyone!	Original	21a	Org.	81	1	1			X			X	
DKI	18/07/13	Text	Nice picture	Comment	21b	Fan						X				X
DKI	18/07/13	Text	Just letting you guys know that Carlton Hotel Dublin Airport will be offering FREE ice cream cones with their Carvery Lunches tomorrow served from 12:30-2pm.. Don't forget we're a dog friendly hotel so it might be worth an afternoon stroll down to us ;)	Original	22a	Fan	1				X		X			X
DKI	18/07/13	Text and image	Izzy making herself at home	Original	23a	Fan	13	7				X				X
DKI	18/07/13	Image	Photograph	Original	24a	Fan	9	2			X			X		X
DKI	18/07/13	Text and image	Chilling out	Original	25a	Fan	6	1				X				X
DKI	19/07/13	Text and image	Carlton & The Roses Tighe Tighe is a 2 year old male Crossbreed. Sadly he is struggling living in a kennel environment so we really hope to find him his forever home really soon. He would love his adopters to be active, and to have a real interest in developing his basic training and socialisation skills. Today we are introducing Tighe, a 2 year old male Crossbreed. Sadly he is struggling living in a kennel environment so we really hope to find him his forever home really soon. Please help us and Dogs Trust Ireland get this lovely dog settled into a new home!	Original	26a	Fan	10				X	X		X		X
DKI	19/07/13	Text and image	Tomorrow is Pepsi's 6 month anniversary with us :) She has come on leaps and bounds since we got her, she is getting better with the family every day. Can't wait until she gets to the stage where she fully embraces the love we all have to give her!! Thank you for our new family member, we all love her to bits!!	Original	27a	Fan	21	7				X	X			X

Analysis of Dogs Trust Ireland Facebook Postings

Analysis of Dogs Trust Ireland Facebook Postings										Form of Relationship Management		Publics/ Groups Involved			
Organisation	Date	Type of Post	Text of Post	Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares	Intentional use of site for PR	Unintentional use of site for PR	Organisation to Organisation General News/Comment Related to Nature of Site	Fan to Fan	Organisation to Fans	Fan to Organisation
DKI	19/07/13	Text and Image	Apart from the risks of obesity and the obvious dangers of eating the foil wrapping, the biggest risk of eating human chocolate is poisoning, resulting in an emergency dash to the vet and sadly even death. Our TBA (Training and Behaviour Adviser) Catherine has been busy in the kitchen, lovingly crea... We received such a heart-warming story from one of our adopters recently, about her dog Floyd - he saved a man's life! To read the rest of the story, head on over to our blog	Original	28a	Org.	103	6	2			X		X	
DKI	19/07/13	Text	Awww! Good dog!	Comment	28b	Fan						X		X	X
DKI	19/07/13	Text	Ahhhhh great work Floyd, delighted to hear you have a forever home with loving people :) x	Comment	28c	Fan						X		X	X
			Amazing boy! Kisses on that cheeky cheek!	Comment	28d	Fan						X		X	X
			Wonderful story. Rotties are a very intuitive breed	Comment	28e	Fan									
			Such a lovely story! Dogs really do have a 6th sense for the welfare of us humans!	Comment	28f	Fan									
			Well done Floyd.....you are a hero		28g	Fan									
DKI	19/07/13	Image	Photograph	Original	29a	Org.	88	1	3			X		X	
DKI	20/07/13	Text and Image	Check out one of the fab doggies who popped in to say hi to our fundraisers in Maxi Zoo Tallaght yesterday! Please feel free to drop by and show your support, our fundraisers will in the Maxi Zoo stores in Tallaght and Naas from 11-6pm today.	Original	30a	Org	84	3			X	X		X	
DKI	20/07/13	Text	Aww	Comment	30b	Fan						X			X
DKI	20/07/13	Text	Nom nom	Comment	30c	Fan						X			X
DKI	20/07/13	Text	If only all human beings could behave with love and kindness	Comment	30d	Fan						X			X
DKI	20/07/13	Text and Image	A big thank you from Izzie. Thank you for looking after me for the last 3 years.	Original	30e	Fan	19	6			X	X		X	X
DKI	20/07/13	Text	Such an amazing girl! :) Iz you will be so missed but I couldn't b happier that you have finally found your forever home x	Comment	30f	Fan					X	X		X	X
DKI	20/07/13	Text	Great news that Izzie got a hom	Comment	30g	Fan					X	X		X	X

Analysis of Dogs Trust Ireland Facebook Postings										Form of Relationship Management		Publics/ Groups Involved				
Organisation	Date	Type of Post	Text of Post	Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares	Intentional use of Site for PR	Unintentional use of Site for Pre	General News/Comment Related to Nature of Site	Organisation to Organisation	Fan to Fan	Organisation to Fans	Fans to Organisation
DKI	20/07/13	Text	This is just so so lovely. Izzy we'll miss you so so much but couldn't be happier to see you finally in a loving home to call your own xxx	Comment	30h	Fan					X	X		X		X
DKI	20/07/13	Text	What a great day. Couldn't be happier to see this dog chilled out in a home. Well done to new owners and best of luck. Her home is well over due n she's a lovely dog 🐶!!	Comment	30i	Fan					X	X		X		X
DKI	20/07/13	Text	Omg that's freaking amaze balls that izzy got a home. Delighted for her she deserves it	Comment	30j	Fan					X	X		X		X
DKI	20/07/13	Text	I will miss u so much Izzy. You are an amazing girl. U so deserve a home of your own. The best of luck n well done to her new family, ur getting a lovely addition to ur family. mwahaa xxx	Comment	30k	Fan					X	X		X		X
DKI	20/07/13	Link	HUG - Homes for Unwanted Greyhounds Welcome to HUG! The organisation was founded by Amanda Saunders Perkins who came to live in Ireland in 1998 with her Irish greyhound...	Original	31a	Fan		1		X		X		X		X
DKI	20/07/13	Image	im free eeeeeeeee	Original	32a	Fan	9	4				X		X		X X
DKI	21/07/13	Image	a pair off owl see dogs	Original	33a	Fan	4	1				X		X		X X
DKI	21/07/13	Image and Text	Happy Birthday Galway, with us one year today, looking forward to another year of chaos and fun...	Original	34a	Fan	13	7				X				X
DKI	20/07/13	Image	im free eeeeeeeee	Original	35a	Fan	9	4				X				X
DKI	21/07/13	Image	a pair off owl see dogs	Original	36a	Fan	4	1				X				X

Analysis of Dogs Trust Ireland Facebook Postings

Analysis of Dogs Trust Ireland Facebook Postings										Form of Relationship Management		Publics/ Groups Involved			
										Intentional use of Site for PR	Unintentional use of Site for PR	General News/Comment Related to Nature of Site	Organisation to Organisation	Fan to Fan	Organisation to Fans
Organisation	Date	Type of Post	Text of Post	Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares						
DKI	21/07/13	Text and Image	Black cocker, age 5-6, not chipped, male, found Artane/Raheny area about a week ago. Original man who found him, held on to him for a week in the hope of finding the owner but needed to bring the dog to pound yesterday for work reasons. As Ashton Pound was not open yesterday, a kind woman in Rathfarnham is minding him at the moment. Please contact Rathfarnham Garda Station for contact details of the lady minding the dog.	Original	37a	Fan		1				X		X	
DKI	21/07/13	Text	hi..i have a bag of towels and also old pillows and a duvet, would these be of any use to you guys? i will drop them down if so!	Original	38a	Fan	4	2				X			X
DKI	21/07/13	Text	We would LOVE them Rachel, thanks a million!	Comment	38b	Org.									
DKI	21/07/13	Text and Image	Cooper being weighed in Maxi Zoo in Tallaght - one day after his friends from Dogs Trust had been there. He weighs exactly 30KG.	Original	39a	Fan	6					X			X
DKI	22/07/13	Text and Image	Huge thanks to our friends at IKEA Dublin who dropped off a huge bag of goodies for our canine residents last week. There was lots of new bedding & toys so happy, waggy tails all round :)	Original	40a	Org.	419	14	3		X		X	X	
DKI	22/07/13	Image	Image	Original	41a	Fan	1					X		X	X
DKI	23/07/13	Text	We're off to TV3 for IrelandAM this morning! Super excited to introduce you to 2 gorgeous pups & 3 of our adult dogs, all hoping to find their forever homes. Our slot is on around 9am so tune in :-)	Original	42a	Org.	143	6		X	X			X	

Analysis of Dogs Trust Ireland Facebook Postings

Analysis of Dogs Trust Ireland Facebook Postings										Form of Relationship Management			Publics/ Groups Involved		
										Intentional use of site for PR	Unintentional use of site for PR	General News/Comment Related to Nature of site	Organisation to organisation	Fan to Fan	Organisation to Fans
Organisation	Date	Type of Post	Text of Post	Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares						
DKI	23/07/13	Text and Image	This morning we've got a whole host of gorgeous pets, including a whippet and an elkhound, who are all looking for a loving new home. Timeline Photos Ciara & Rory with Fionn and Storm this morning at IrelandAM! We will post the link to the slot later today in case you missed it ;)	Original	43a	Org.	111	6	1	X	X	X			
DKI	23/07/13	Text	heya dogs trust i just love ur company and i love all the dogs that are in it dogs are my favourite animals x	Original	44a	Fan	5	5		X	X	X			
DKI	23/07/13	Text and Link	Adopt a pet - Ireland AM link as promised, here's the link to our slot on IrelandAM this morning. Featured dogs were Hubble and Coxy t he puppies, and Patch, Storm & Fionn are the adults! If you're interested in any of these dogs, pop along to the centre and speak to our rehoming team :)	Original	45a	Org.	55	3	2	X	X	X			
DKI	23/07/13	Text	hi am wondering if you can help me am trying to find out if their is any help given to people who want to have their dogs neutered, I was saving up to do so but my little dog met with an accident and lost their leg which I'm now paying for so can't afford to pay for her to be neutered and she has just come into season, she would not be able to carry pups due to the fact that she has lost her back leg so would love some help to prevent this from happening as she is now only beginning to go back out on walks and eating properly after the event	Original	46a	Fan		1			X	X			

Analysis of Dogs Trust Ireland Facebook Postings											Form of Relationship Management		Publics/ Groups Involved			
Organisation	Date	Type of Post	Text of Post	Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares	Intentional use of site for PR	Unintentional use of Site for PR	General News/Comment Related to Nature of site	Organisation to organisation	Fan to Fan	Organisation to Fans	Fan to Organisation
DKI	23/07/13	Text	Hi Louise, we have a subsidised neutering scheme for people in receipt of means tested Social Welfare payments. You can call our neutering hotline on 1890 946 336 to see if you qualify and if any vets in your locality would have vouchers remaining for the scheme x	Comment	46b	Org				X	X				X	
DKI	23/07/13	Text and Image	Hi all in Dogs Trust just wanted to update you on Casper. He has settled in so well since we picked him up on that snowy February morning earlier this year. Think we need a bigger couch. Love and licks from Casper.	Original	47a	Fan	23	8					X			X
DKI	23/07/13	Text and Image	Hi all , just to let you all know Memphis is having a ball in his forever home (literally - he carries a ball no matter where he goes - even on his walk) , settled in great with all the family. Hes loves to go to the park (but doesn't like the swans - and they don't like him . Great new running buddy too . X x	Original	48a	Fan	9	3					X			X
DKI	23/07/13	Text and Image	Sisi has passed the cat test	Original	49a	Fan	14	6					X			X
DKI	24/07/13	Image	YouTube Link	Original	50a	Fan	13	5						X		
DKI	24/07/13	Image	Dog Saves Owner Man's Best friend Save the Day Pitbull saves owner from oncoming freight train! – YouTube link	Original	51a	Fan								X		X
DKI	24/07/13	Text and Link	Super exciting news!!!! Dogs Trust are offering FREE microchipping to ALL dogs for the months of August and September by appointment! Clinic will be held on Mondays and Tuesdays, as well as Saturdays 17th and 31st of August. Click on the poster for all the details! You can book your appointment, follow this link http://www.eventbrite.ie/org/4418761315 You can also call 01 879 1000 and make an appointment with our reception team!	Original	52a	Org.	378	69	894	X		X			X	
DKI	24/07/13	Text	Hi were abouts are you im near waterford city	Comment	53a	Fan										
DKI	24/07/13	Text	Location is our centre in Finglas	Comment	53b	Org.	4			X		X		X		

Appendix H – Summary of Cork DAWG Facebook postings from 15 – 28 July 2013

Analysis of Dog Action Welfare Group Facebook Postings										Form of Relationship Management		Publics/ Groups Involved			
Organisation	Date	Type of Post	Text of Post	Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares	Intentional us of site for PR	Unintentional us of Site for PR	General News/Comment Related to Nature of Site	Fan to Fan	Organisation to Fan	Fan to Organisation
DWG	15/07/13	Text and Image	This is Max and his family who came to visit the Youghal shop over the weekend. Youghal shop is doing great right now, thanks to all who donated and all those who are purchasing in our shop. All dogs are welcome of course.	Original	01a	Org.	64	5		X		X		X	
DWG	15/07/13	Text and Image	We have a lot of dogs at the moment who need to be in a foster home where they will get one to one. Most of our fosters already have dogs so they are not suitable. These are not bad dogs its just for different reasons they need to go as only dogs. They are currently taking up a kennel each where we could normally put 4 dogs so it is preventing us from helping more dogs. If you don't have a dog and cannot commit to owning a dog please consider fostering. It will help us a lot. If you can help please text 0863457488.	Original	02a	Org.	30	3	51	X		X		X	
DWG	15/07/13	Text and Link	Rover is a male German Pointer cross Collie. He was born in February 2011. He loves walks and company. Best suited to an adult home as he is nery around young children. Rover loves the outdoors and will make a ... Continue reading	Original	03a	Org.	8		4	X		X		X	
DWG	15/07/13	Text and Link	This is Jessie, a petite Jack Russell Terrier girl approx 2 years old, with gorgeous ears that flop at the tips, a lovely expressive little face and a very waggy tail. Jessie had a bad start to her life and ...	Original	04a	Org.	13		2	X		X		X	

Analysis of Dog Action Welfare Group Facebook Postings

Analysis of Dog Action Welfare Group Facebook Postings											Form of Relationship Management		Publics/ Groups Involved	
Organisation	Date	Type of Post	Text of Post	Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares	Intentional use of site for PR	Unintentional use of Site for PR	General News/Comment Related to Nature of Site	Fan to Organisation	Organisation to Fan
DWG	15/07/13	Text and Image	This is the pitiful sight of the staffie girl that was rescued by a very kind passerby who untied her from the rock she was tied to in the scorching heat and took her to her vet. She was over heated and dehydrated. Only for the passerby we dont like to think how this dog would have suffered even more. We are appealing for a foster home for this girl where she can recuperate and where she can experience love and kindness. Please contact Vicky 086***** or email info@dogactionwelfaregroup.ie	Original	05a	Org.	90	21	29	X		X	X	
DWG	15/07/13	Text	This makes me sick. Poor little girl.	Comment	05b	Fan	3			X			X	X
DWG	15/07/13	Text	hi if she's ok with children and another female dog id luv to foster her if ye a still looking for someone.	Comment	05c	Fan	4			X			X	X
DWG	15/07/13	Text	So glad shes safe	Comment	05d	Fan	2			X			X	X
			hi if she's ok with children and another female dog id luv to foster her if ye a still looking for someone.	Comment	05e	Fan								
DWG	15/07/13	Text	Foster sorted, thank you Julie.	Comment	05f	Org					X		X	
DWG	15/07/13	Text and Image	MISSING - since 6th July from Clondalkin, Pomeranian - 3 yr old female, neutered and microchipped, very friendly family pet - if you have seen her please contact her owner at 0872431848, her family are devastated and just want her home, she could be anywhere so please share far and wide please	Original	06a	Fan		2			X			X
DWG	15/07/13	Text	Garda Checkpoints Cork White Transit Van - stealing dogs in Glanthaune. Just stole a Bichon Frise.	Original	07a	Fan		4			X			X
DWG	15/07/13	Text and Image	After all the sad stories at the weekend we thought this picture might bring a smile to the faces of all dog lovers	Original	08a	Org.	336	6	198	X		X	X	
DWG	15/07/13	Text and Image	A lot of you will remember Angel's story, she touched the hearts of a lot of people. We were unsure whether we could save the leg or not. Today she went to the specialist in Gilabbey vets and they are hopeful with extensive physio we might be able to save the leg. This is good news and we will do everything we can to make sure this happens. However we do need her to go to a foster home where she will be able to rest and have some comfort. She is a quiet soul and doesn't ask for much. The physio will just be gentle exercises that will be done daily so it will not be time consuming. If you have room in your home to help Angel on her road to recovery please text Vicky 086*****	Original	09a	Org.	132	6	18	X		X	X	

Analysis of Dog Action Welfare Group Facebook Postings

Form of Relationship Management

Publics/ Groups Involved

Organisation	Date	Type of Post	Text of Post	Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares	Form of Relationship Management			Publics/ Groups Involved		
										Intentional use of site for PR	Unintentional use of site for PR	General News/Comment Related to Nature of Site	Fan to Organisation	Organisation to Fan	Fan to Fan
DWG	15/07/13	Text	Good luck Angel xxx	Comment	09b	Fan	20		13		X		X		X
DWG	15/07/13	Text	Angel is the sweetest most uncomplaining and undemanding little girl and I'm just so thrilled she's not going to lose her leg	Comment	09c	Fan	15				X	X	X		X
DWG	15/07/13	Text	Great news - please someone give her a home??	Comment	09d	Fan	35				X				X
DWG	15/07/13	Text	Is she spayed do u know?		09e	Fan						X			X
DWG	15/07/13	Text	Not spayed Ciara Crowley	Comment	09f	Org.	3				X			X	
DWG	15/07/13	Text	I can take her as my boy is off to his forever home at the weekend. Is she ok with other dogs?	Comment	09g	Fan	42					X	X		X
DWG	15/07/13	Text	Brilliant, thanks Claire Kennedy can you text me. Vicky.	Comment	09h	Org	25				X	X		X	
DWG	15/07/13	Text	We have a transport appeal for tomorrow Tuesday, can anyone collect a lurcher from Sunbeam Vets in Blackpool and bring to our shelter in Macroom before 3pm. If you can help please text 0863457488	Original	10a	Org	5	6	5	X		X		X	
DWG	15/07/13	Text	I'll be leaving MIDLETON at 3 ish if your stuck prob wouldn't make to Shelter till 430	Comment		Fan				X		X			X
DWG	15/07/13	Text	hi can do it give me a buzz in the morning if you're not already sorted:)	Comment		Fan									X
DWG	15/07/13	Text	I can do it I'm taking Marley in for 8am and going back to Macroom straight to work....	Comment		Fan									X
DWG	15/07/13	Text	Sorted, thanks.	Comment		Org					X				X
DWG	16/07/13	Text, Image and Link	Maximus the Spanish Mastiff. Maximus is a stunning Apricot speckled Spanish Mastiff who truly turns heads. Weighing in at 49kgs, he is a gentle giant. He has been neutered, is well behaved and responds excellently to training. Maximus needs an experienced owner who has ... Continue...	Original	11a	Org	17	3	3	X		X		X	X
DWG	16/07/13	Text and Image	4 year old Penny the King Charles is looking for a foster home. She is a very sweet dog and quite distressed at the vets. Please contact Vicky on 086*****	Original	12a	Org	84	20	62	X		X		X	
DWG	16/07/13	Text and Image	Just found this little guy in Crosshaven wandering along on his own, no collar & v. Young. Owner can call me on 086-2451427.	Original	13a	Fan	2	7	11		X				X
DWG	16/07/13	Text and Image	Can people please keep an eye out for this dog, she has been straying now for several weeks in the Farranree area. She is a black and Tan hound, we think she is in season as there are other dogs chasing her. If you can catch or confine her please do and contact us on 0863457488	Original	14a	Org	26	14	38	X		X		X	

Analysis of Dog Action Welfare Group Facebook Postings

Analysis of Dog Action Welfare Group Facebook Postings											Form of Relationship Management		Publics/ Groups Involved		
											Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments
Organisation	Date	Type of Post	Text of Post	Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares	Intentional use of site for PR	Unintentional use of site for PR	General News/Comment Related to Nature of Site	Fan to Fan	Organisation to Fan	Fan to Organisation
DWG	17/07/13	Text and Image	These two dogs are wandering around the Burnfort Mallow area together. A local man is feeding them at present but they wont let him near them. Does anyone recognise them	Original	18a	Org	35	7	55	X		X	X		
DWG	17/07/13	Text	Tell your family and friends on facebook to "like" our page Badassdogs. The more dog pages we can like on facebook the more we can help each other out.	Original	19a	Fan					X		X		X
DWG	17/07/13	Text and Image	just another update on olive :) have had her for 2 years now have achieved so much with this dog couldn't have asked for anything better :)	Original	20a	Fan	25	8	4			X	X		X
DWG	18/07/13	Text	To all those who have requested a sponsorship card for the Women's Mini Marathon, they will be sent out this week. If you have registered for the mini marathon and havent yet chosen your charity, please consider Cork DAWG. All proceeds will go towards their care.	Original	21a	Org	18		1	X		X		X	
DWG	18/07/13	Image and Link	George the Toy Poodle www.dogactionwelfaregroup.ie Meet the gorgeous and lovable George. (Affectionately known as Prince George) George is approximately 3years of age, possibly older and he is a toy poodle boy. George was found in horrific conditions and will require a very special home. He will	Original	22a	Org	4				X	X		X	
DWG	18/07/13	Text and Image	Brogan the Staffie Meet Brogan, he is a 12 week staffie puppy, he loves his cuddles and is a real sweetie. He is only a baby so will need a home where there is someone home for most of the day. He will ... Continue reading	Original	23a	Org	38	5	15	X		X		X	
DWG	18/07/13	Text and Image	just another update on olive :) have had her for 2 years now have achieved so much with this dog couldn't have asked for anything better :) Photos of Cork Dog Action Welfare Group What a transformation. She came into us a wreck, covered in mange and starving. This girl has won shows and has turned into some beauty. Thanks Eve for the update.	Original	24a	Org	327	25	1	X		X		X	
DWG	18/07/13	Text and Image	Rolli (nee Rollo) won first prize for most handsome male dog, then First in Show at Puddletown Carnival in Dorset last weekend.	Original	25a	Fan	3	3			X		X		X

Analysis of Dog Action Welfare Group Facebook Postings

Organisation	Date	Type of Post	Text of Post	Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares	Form of Relationship Management			Publics/ Groups Involved		
										Intentional use of site for PR	Unintentional use of site for PR	General News/Comment Related to Nature of Site	Fan to Fan	Organisation to Fan	Fan to Organisation
DWG	18/07/13	Text and Photo	Then he decided to become a Diva and somewhat relax after his hard work. Still, he won us a voucher for a meal for two at the local gourmet pub - the Blue Vinney.	Comment	25b	Fan	3				X				X
DWG	18/07/13	Text and Photo	My brother in law just found this doggy outside the bons. Has a collar but thinks definitely lost	Original	26a	Fan	3	1	60			X			X
DWG	18/07/13	Text and Photo	Found today outside the bons hospital cork	Comment	26b	Fan				X			X		X
DWG	18/07/13	Text and Photo	My brother in law just found this doggy outside the bons. Has a collar but thinks definitely lost	Original	27a	Org	40	5	35	X		X			X
DWG	18/07/13	Text and Photo	Spotted 2 dogs outside St. Finbarr's hospital around 5.00 p.m.to-day,could not catch them,one a Golden retriever/labrador,small brown terrier following him,both had collars and looked well cared for roaming in and out of traffic,please keep a look out if you are going that way.	Original	28a	Org	2			X		X		X	
DWG	19/07/13	Text and Image	Who could forget little Benny, the tiny puppy abandoned over Christmas with his sister. He was blind and needed one eye removed. We werent sure what the future held for Benny. Luckily he thrived in fantastic foster homes. When it was time for Benny to find a home we put up his story and were delighted when we found a wonderful home for Benny with Bob and Caroline. Thanks so much for the update and the photo of Benny living the life:)	Original	29a	Org	210	23	1	X		X		X	
DWG	19/07/13	Text	So happy for this little guy, followed your updates with joy/sadness/hope/relief and am delighted he is safe and secure. Well done to all	Comment	29b	Fan			4		X		X	X	X
DWG	19/07/13	Text and Image	Bob is loving the warm weather!!! He loves rolling in the grass, chasing bugs and most of all, playing with sprayed water!!!	Original	30a	Fan	12	3				X			X
DWG	19/07/13	Text and Image	Baxter and Fudge ! Chilling on the couch!	Original	31a	Fan	6	2				X			X
DWG	19/07/13	Text and Image	Toby in the house he actually posed for the photo	Original	32a	Fan	5	1				X			X
DWG	19/07/13	Text and Image	Benny with his favourite toy :)	Comment	32b	Fan	5					X			X
DWG	19/07/13	Text	Female westie red collar hanging around the curragh caravan site ine Ardmore, residents giving water etc please share 086 8200161	Original	33a	Org		1		X		X		X	
DWG	19/07/13	Text and Image	We have a very urgent foster appeal for this boy. He is about 2 years old, he was found wandering a few days and is now sitting in the vets as we have no room in the shelter. The vets is no place for him to be in this weather. If you can offer him a temporary foster home please text Margaret 0851251929	Original	34a	Org	53	22	48	X		X		X	

Analysis of Dog Action Welfare Group Facebook Postings										Form of Relationship Management	Publics/ Groups Involved				
Organisation	Date	Type of Post	Text of Post	Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares	Intentional use of site for PR	Unintentional use of site for PR	General News/Comment Related to Nature of Site	Fan to Fan	Organisation to Fan	Fan to Organisation
DWG	19/07/13	Text	Anybody looking for a greyhound? It's been wandering around Kilcrea Park/Lima Lawn area of Glasheen all evening. Sorry the photo's not great we can't get close to it	Original	35a	Fan		6	1		X				X
DWG	19/07/13	Text	Aisling, what condition is he in?	Comment	35b	Org				X				X	
DWG	19/07/13	Text	I think it has mange, it's starving and it's too scared to come near anyone. Haven't seen it around yet this morning	Comment	35c	Fan	3				X	X			X
DWG	19/07/13	Text	Aisling can you email the address and your phone number please info@dogactionwelfaregroup.ie	Comment	35d	Org.				X		X		X	
DWG	19/07/13	Text	Just emailed it there:-) I haven't seen it since yesterday morning though...	Comment	35e	Fan				X		X		X	
DWG	20/07/13	Text, Image and Link	Handsome gentle Jacob came into us in a terrible way. Extremely thin and terrified of people. He became extremely depressed at the shelter and refused to even come out for walk time. We knew the only thing that would save ...	Original	36a	Org.	35	1	1	X		X		x	
DWG	20/07/13	Text	Hi guys, just wondering how that poor staffie girl who was left tied to a rock is doing?	Original	37a	Fan	2	1			X				X
			In foster with another female staffie and doing well so far:)	Comment	37b	Org.				X		X		X	
DWG	20/07/13	Text and Image	Meet Benji the Jack Russell. Benji gets on so well with all the dogs in foster, and every dog he meets on his walks. He is very well behaved around the house, and is so gentle with food. He just ... Continue reading	Original	38a	Org	12			X		X		X	
DWG	21/07/13	Image	Playtime	Original	39a	Fan		1			X				X
DWG	21/07/13	Image	Yay you're home!	Comment	39b	Fan	1				X				X
DWG	21/07/13	Text and Image	This is Molly who was adopted from you by a family in sweden, she lives with 2 jack russels, cats and chickens at the country and her new family adores her, she is a fantastic dog who is very easy and cool - she charms everyone who meets her! Her family Emma Skärvall and Fredrik Bratt just wanted to let you know she is happy and thank you guys for all work!	Original	40a	Fan	23	2	1		X	X			X
DWG	22/07/13	Text and Image	My name is George I would love a home and family to call my own. As you can see I am a very handsome man, I am about three years old and great with children and other dogs. I do get a bit anxious when I am left on my own so would love a home where someone will be around to keep me company and I will of course be your best and most loyal friend for life. If you would like to meet me please contact Margaret at 0851251929	Original	41a	Org	86	7	34	X		X		X	
DWG	22/07/13	Text	Lost from Ballincollig West this morning - old black lab called Sam - neutered male not chipped with red collar (maybe). Photo attached. Phone 087 2267119 if you see him please. Owners very worried.	Original	42a	Fan	1	1	12			X	X		X

Analysis of Dog Action Welfare Group Facebook Postings

Analysis of Dog Action Welfare Group Facebook Postings										Form of Relationship Management		Publics/ Groups Involved			
Organisation	Date	Type of Post	Text of Post	Original Posting OR Comment	Code	Posted by Organisation/Individual	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares	Intentional use of site for PR	Unintentional use of site for PR	General News/Comment Related to Nature of Site	Fan to Fan	Organisation to Fan	Fan to Organisation
DWG	22/07/13	Text and Image	Some dreams do come true. Goldie came into our care last year, he was a special boy who needed lots of patience and TLC. He was lucky enough to be fostered by Fiona who fell in love with him and devoted so much time to ensuring he became a happy and confident boy. It goes without saying that Fiona was never going to let this boy go and so Goldie is now part of her family. As you can see from the picture he doesn't need to dream about finding a great home as this is a dream that has already come true. Goldie would also like to say a big thank you to Nichola who looked after him for a few weeks.	Original	43a	Org.	222	21		X	X		X		
DWG	22/07/13	Text and Image	This is Scottie, a 8 month old black and white Border Collie who went missing from the Coolavookig area of Macroom on Monday 17th June around 8pm. Someone out there has had contact with Scottie or is caring for her at the moment. She is an important part of our family, especially an elderly lady for whom Scottie was a great companion. We would appreciate any information as to the whereabouts of Scottie and what happened to her and where she is now. Reward offered for her safe return. Contact Connie @ 086	Original	44a	Fan	6		123		X		X		X
DWG	22/07/13	Text and Image	Hi people, I have found this precious girl near the Blackpool Shopping center in Cork. I can only have it today since I already have a dog and two cats in my apartment. Tomorrow I will bring her to the vet to see if is micro-chipped but I cannot have her in my apartment another full day. If someone have any information about this girl's owner please call as soon as possible to this number :	Original	45a	Fan	3	6	35		X		X		X
DWG	23/07/13	Text and Image	Hi, my name is 'Cooper'. I am a 7 year old snow white Labrador. I'm a lovable, friendly, gentle dog with a playful nature. I 'love' shoes but I promise I only take them in my mouth and won't chew them up :-). ...	Original	46a	Org	25		3	X	X			X	
DWG	23/07/13	Text and 3 x image	Lloyd's hopeless world turns to happiness	Original	47a	Org	57	9		X	X			X	
DWG	23/07/13	Text	via samantha that white van is just after robbing a dog in cathedral rd	Original	48a	Fan	1	3			X		X		X

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DWG	24/07/13	Text and Image	This little girl is about 5 - 6 months old and is currently sitting in the vets waiting patiently for a foster home. She is a lab, good with other dogs and a sweetheart. We would love her to go to a foster home as she is only a baby and could not cope in the shelter. If you can help please text or phone Margaret at 0851251929	Original	49a	Org.	73	15	56	X		X		X	
DWG	24/07/13	Text	Do you know how she is with cats?	Comment	49b	Fan	2								X
DWG	24/07/13	Text	The person who found her had cats and said she was fine with them.	Comment	49c	Org.	26			X		X			X
DWG	24/07/13	Text	Is she ok with children?	Comment	49e	Fan	3					X			X
DWG	24/07/13	Text	Labs are usually grand with children, especially at this age, the only possible issue is that labs of this age are very bouncy and enthusiastic so if they're small kids she may knock them over by accident.	Comment	49f	Fan	16				X	X	X		X
DWG	24/07/13	Text	Hi I wud b interested in taking her iv three dogs of my own.. one is only a pup also only 6 months old	Comment	49g	Fan	23					X			X
DWG	25/07/13	Text	Please contact Margaret at above number as she is coordinating foster of this girl	Comment	49h	Org.	1			X		X			
DWG	24/07/13	Text	I rang the number you gave but there was no answer so I left a message yesterday. Haven't gotten a reply. Just wondering if u know whether she has found a home or not. Thanks	Comment	49i	Fan						X			X
DWG	24/07/13	Text	Eleanor Trihy could you message us your number please or alternatively text Margaret with your number.	Comment	49j	Org.	1			X		X	X		
DWG	24/07/13	Text	If anyone is in the area of Knocknaheeny close to Apple a small white and brown Jack Russell has been spotted looking disorientated and coming on and off of the road. Possibly injured. Seemed to be heading towards the filling station on Harbour view road.	Original	50a	Org.	14	8	36	X		X		X	
DWG	24/07/13	Text	Transport appeal for a little lurcher from gilabey vets to our shelter in macroom. Please contact 0831714307.	Original	51a	Org.	4	7	3	X		X		X	
DWG	24/07/13	Text	Will the lurcher be needing a foster home?	Comment	51b	Fan						X			X
DWG	24/07/13	Text	is this the one that was straying around togher/lima lawn by any chance ?	Comment	51c	Fan						X			X
DWG	24/07/13	Text	I'm heading to shelter tomorrow...leaving from city.	Comment	51d	Fan	10					X			X

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DIWG	24/07/13	Text	Janet yes this girl will need a foster. This is little angel you may remember her story. We are hoping we can save her leg.	Comment	51e	Org.	12		29	X		X		X	
DIWG	24/07/13	Text	Guys I am sorted for this.	Comment	51f	Org.	34			X		X		X	
DIWG	24/07/13	Text	Please keep an eye out for Buddy. He went missing on Monday from Bishopstow/Viaduct area. He is neutered, has just got a haircut and is charcoal grey with golden paws and answers to the name Buddy or Bud. He has a purple collar with a red tag - Reply here. Owner v. worried	Original	52a	Org.	61	7	144	X		X		X	
DIWG	24/07/13	Text and Image	Catch this twat. Re post every where. Stop this person	Original	53a	Fan	20		50		X		X		X
DIWG	24/07/13	Text and Image	Wandering around st johns well, carrigaline.	Original	54a	Fan	10				X		X		X
DIWG	25/07/13		Cream husky straying in onslow gardens north side of city	Original	55a	Fan	31								
DIWG	25/07/13	Text and Image	This is Coco, she is only 7 weeks old. She is a very placid pup who just adores playing ball. She is loving, loyal and gets on great with dogs and children. She is already learning to sit and comes ... Continue reading	Original	56a	Org.	53	5	17	X		X		X	
DIWG	25/07/13	Text and Link	Mister Max the Labrador	Original	57a	Org	39	4	3	X		X		X	
DIWG	25/07/13	Text	Vicky and myself, are doing Belgooly car boot on sund 4th Aug, in aid of DAWG! We would appreciate it if you would support us on the day and in the meantime, share and help spread the news. We are selling lotsa womens clothes for 5e and hundreds of great books for a euro. Thank you.	Original	58a	Fan	8	6				X	X		X
DIWG	25/07/13	Text	Just lodged 612 euros to your account today. Money raised at table quiz in Temple Inn, Ballintemple last night	Original	59a	Fan	10	1				X			X
DIWG	25/07/13	Text	Huge thank you to Maire Holly who organised a table quiz in the Temple Inn in Ballintemple last night in aid of Cork DAWG and raised a much needed and much appreciated 612 Euro. Thanks Maire!!	Original	60a	Org	76	3		X		X		X	
DIWG	25/07/13	Text	Hi, I was hoping you could help - my daughters dog bolted last night from Ballycotton area because of the thunder and lightening. He is a staffie, tall, brown and very gentle. His name is Jake. Has anybody seen him/got him? Thanks so much.	Original	61a	Fan	6	1			X		X		X
DIWG	25/07/13	Text	Female Staffie Stolen from Rock Cottages on the Commons road, blackpool. They left the male and took the female from a secure garden. Dog only had puppies 7 weeks ago so is slightly thinner than usual. Please keep an eye out!!! txt 0858876482 if you think you may see her!	Original	62a	Fan		1			X		X		X

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DWG	25/07/13	Text	Hi we have a male collie dog about one year old. We found him almost two weeks ago in the Bandon area. We've tried to find his owners tried vets gardai etc but so luck.we live in ballincollig and have no space for him and work full time so its not fair to him. He really is a lovely dog and deserves for him,with loads of space and time for him.he's friendly and playful and loves people.fully house trained and very obedient. If you could help us find an appropriate home for him or even better his owner, we'd really appreciate it.please contact me on this.thanks :)	Original	65a	Fan	15	5		X		X			X
DWG	25/07/13	Text and Image	Hey we haven't seen the greyhound for a while now but he was spotted on magazine road yesterday. Here's another picture of him, incase anybody spots him.	Original	66a	Fan	2			X		X			X
DWG	25/07/13	Text and Image	Jake bolted last night after the thunderstorm in the Ballycotton area, his owners are distraught looking for him, they have had this boy since he was a small puppy. Please share this and if any sightings please contact 0868861070, he is micro-chipped.	Original	67a	Fan	112	22	335	X		X			X
DWG	25/07/13	Text and Photo	Sheepdog missing in Fermoy. Lovely family pet. 4 years old. Quiet but friendly. Never usually barks. Distinctive dots over his eyes. Very nice coat for a sheepdog. Missing from Corrin Hill area. May have traveled in Fermoy or Rathcormac direction	Original	68a	Fan	2	1		X		X			X

Legend

		These two colours represent the organisations Dogs Trust: yellow, Cork Dog Action Welfare Group: dark blue
		Original text of post by Organisation
		Comment posted by Organisation
		Organisations reply to fans
		Posts which received the highest number of likes, comments and shares

The above Facebook postings are a representation of the total postings of both organisations. The researcher did not put in the full two weeks posts as they would have run to over forty pages each.

