

# Making Participants and Donors Successful with Mobile Solutions

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It doesn't take a lot of searching these days to find someone using his or her smart phone to access and share information. The profile of today's mobile device user has, indeed, expanded. High tech and business professionals, for example, are no more likely to be walking around with a mobile device than tweens and other maturing adults at varying stages of life. The way people use mobile devices is also evolving. In addition to using smart phones for calling, texting, and checking email, mobile devices are also becoming the primary way in which individuals access content and conduct online business.

Nonprofits are by no means any less impacted by the mobile revolution than the next enterprise. The explosion of mobile capabilities creates great opportunities for nonprofit organizations to provide new tools that empower event participants and help increase their success as fundraisers.

## What If You Could Make Giving Easier for Donors While Increasing the Average Gift Size?

The Arthritis Foundation did just that by turning on Blackbaud's mobile-ready Friends Asking Friends® feature for the organization's 2010 Jingle Bell Run/Walk. By simply checking a box during donation form set-up, Friends Asking Friends automatically redirected mobile devices to mobile-ready content when smart phone users browsed to a Jingle Bell Run/Walk personal page, team page, event page, or an individual event donation page.

There were two key outcomes from this event that turned the Arthritis Foundation into big believers in the power of mobile:

1. The organization was quickly rewarded with a \$1,000 donation from a mobile device.
2. The average gift size from mobile devices ended up being 22 percent higher than the average gift size from online donations.

Through this experience, the Arthritis Foundation learned that smart phones can have a considerable impact on special event fundraising, and the foundation now plans to incorporate a mobile strategy into all future fundraising efforts.

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## The Intersection of Special Event Fundraisers and Mobile Devices

Increased adoption of personal online fundraising web pages and email solicitations has had a significant impact on the growth of special event fundraising. Prior to the integration of mobile devices, participants' online fundraising activities were separate from the activities involved with training for or taking part in the actual events themselves. Fundraising was conducted on a computer at home or work, while training happened somewhere else — like the streets, trails, or a gym — where participants could physically prepare for events. Mobile devices have narrowed this divide, making it increasingly possible for participants to conduct fundraising and training-related activities while in the same setting.

Between December 2009 and December 2010, web traffic generated by mobile devices grew by 600 percent, and the duration of each visit to a site grew by more than 200 percent. It is clear that a growing number of people are conducting a greater share of their online activities via mobile devices, whether it's browsing, conducting social media activities, or working with email.

The top activities for smart phone users include reading email, accessing social media, and browsing website content. Because individuals typically keep their mobile phones on all the time, they are also more likely to conduct these activities more frequently than they would on a desktop. These are the same activities that event participants use to drive their online fundraising, and a key reason why mobile devices represent today's biggest opportunity to expand special event fundraising.

“Jingle Bell Run/Walk smart phone donors gave 22 percent more compared to traditional JBR online donors. I was surprised that mobile donors gave at a higher level, especially when mobile donations are usually tied to \$5 or \$10 text gifts. It goes to show that smart phones are so much more than just phones to most users.”

— Sara Orrell  
Director, Cause Development  
Arthritis Foundation

### U.S. Mobile Internet Time by Category: May 2010

Rank	Mobile Sector	Share of mobile Internet time based on total time at an individual site-level*	Share of mobile Internet time based on average time spent at a category-level**
1	Email	38.50%	41.60%
2	Social Networking	10.70%	10.50%
3	News & Current Events	7.20%	4.40%
4	Search	6.30%	7.10%
5	Portals	4.60%	11.60%
6	Entertainment	4.30%	3.30%
7	Sports	4.10%	2.30%
8	Music	4.00%	3.10%
9	Videos/Movies**	3.00%	2.00%
10	Weather	2.80%	2.80%

Source: The Nielsen Company

\* The original share of time analysis was based on the average time spent at a category-level

\*\* The Videos/Movies category refers to time spent on video-specific (e.g., YouTube, Yahoo! Videos, Hulu) and movie-related websites (e.g., IMDB, Blockbuster and Netflix) only. It is not a measure of video streaming or inclusive of video streaming on non-video-specific or movie-specific websites (e.g., streamed video on sports or news sites).

\*\* New Analysis

## Mobile Return on Investment

When nonprofits measure the return on investment (ROI) for mobile solutions used in conjunction with their special events, they need to consider more than just donations and registrations. Participants and donors use mobile devices not only for transactions, but also to communicate and interact. That's why it's important to look at mobile ROI not only in terms of the number of individuals registered or total funds raised, but also in terms of the experience organizations are providing to donors and participants. Measuring mobile ROI is similar to how website and eCommunications are measured — by assessing direct-sourced requests for information, registrations, and donations, as well as the audience being served by mobile communications and content.

Nonprofits that add mobile solutions to their event strategies will experience increased ROI because they are further enabling an integrated approach with an additional channel through which donors and participants can easily engage with their organizations.

## Mobile Activity Today

For most special events, tracking and analyzing activity on traditional desktop and laptop computers versus mobile devices is a fairly recent development. We know that participants are increasingly turning to their mobile devices to conduct a range of event-related activities including registering, managing fundraising, checking social media channels, and communicating with friends and supporters. One of the top activities today for mobile users is viewing email. In fact, a significant portion of individuals who check and read emails — more than 13 percent, as indicated by the data below — do so from the convenience of their mobile devices.

Mobile							Desktop			
iPhone	iPad	Android	Windows	BlackBerry	Palm	Total	Windows	Mac	Linux	Total
8.74%	2.00%	1.92%	0.31%	0.15%	0.25%	13.36%	70.27%	16.19%	0.18%	86.64%

Source: Knotice Email Open Report Q42010, January 2011

Nonprofits investing in and assessing the potential for mobile solutions provide insight into what's possible for other organizations. During the second half of 2010, the availability and increased use of mobile-ready donation forms made it easier for mobile users to make donations. More than two percent of donors made donations through a mobile device rather than a traditional computer. After speaking with many organizations who received mobile gifts, it appears that donors found the mobile-ready forms organically due to their mobile use and comfort level.

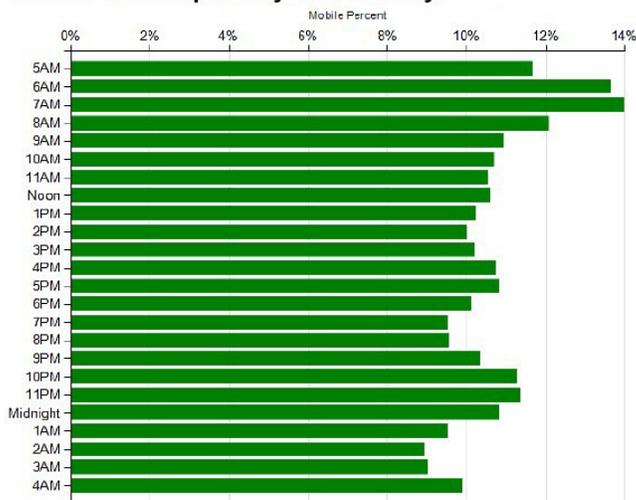
## Online Activity and Mobile Donors

Mobile users access information online throughout the day and often supplement their mobile activity by using a computer at work or home. The majority of traditional registrations and donations are consolidated across the work day when individuals have easy access to computers. But mobile devices have removed this constraint, and now fill in the gaps during the hours in which online activity normally lagged. As such, online activity is now more broadly distributed around the clock and across all days of the week.

“According to our analytics, we receive a surprising percentage of traffic via mobile devices. I’m not surprised that mobile users found the mobile donation form, but I am a little surprised at the volume of mobile donations. What’s most interesting and exciting is that the average gift from mobile devices was actually higher than those from the web.”

— Marc Sirkin  
Chief Community Officer  
Autism Speaks

### Mobile Email Opens by Time-of-Day



Source: Knoctice Mobile Email Opens Report Q4 2010, January 2011

## Mobile Applications

Applications for mobile devices are generally best used by nonprofits when they target specific audiences with existing relationships, rather than using them to try to build awareness for an event or other broad marketing activities. While mobile applications may represent a large investment in time and money, they can drive success for one of an organization’s strongest audiences — participants.

When creating a mobile application, nonprofit organizations should make sure not to simply recreate what a user could do by accessing its website online. Groups should consider integrating the unique activities of mobile users within their target audience with activities that are unique to native applications such as GPS location base, push messages, email, social media, photos, and video.

The Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation recently invested in an iPhone and Android application for their Team Reeve event participants. Individuals commit to raising at least \$1,000 in order to participate, and spend significant time preparing for physically challenging events such as marathons and triathlons. The organization’s Boundless Fundraising mobile applications provide Team Reeve participants with access to fundraising tools in the palms of their hands. Participants can easily check their fundraising status, make updates to personal pages and photos, and send fundraising requests to their contacts, all from the convenience of their mobile devices. The applications have launched with the Reeve Foundation’s 2011 events and have shown early promise to generate new levels of success for participant fundraisers.



## Best Practices for Making Your Event Mobile Friendly

### 1. Know Your Participants and Donors

Learn what mobile means to your organization's participants and donors, in terms of what they say they want as well as their current online behaviors. Solicit feedback through focus groups, surveys, and committees. Learn from the online behaviors that you can assess through Google Analytics and other tracking methods. One key point to keep in mind is that a significant amount of mobile access to email, web content, registration pages, and donation forms does not happen by pushing people to read it from a mobile device. Rather, it's about being ready when someone chooses to access content through their mobile device instead of through a personal computer.

### 2. Be Prepared

Make sure your organization is ready when your event participants and their donors are ready. Invest in a mobile-ready email template, mobile site, and mobile content for key actions. And, of course, make sure your donation forms are mobile ready.

### 3. Focus on the Big Picture

The number of mobile devices, statistics, new applications, and evolving growth of mobile activity can be overwhelming. Avoid getting caught in the weeds and focus on the mobile devices and platforms that have the largest market adoption for your participant and donor demographics.

### 4. Keep Safety Top of Mind

The integration of mobile devices with special events adds a new dynamic involving the safety of your participants — which should always be a top priority for your organization. Be sure that you adequately address new safety-related issues involving participants' use of mobile devices, and make recommendations that put safety first as you promote mobile solutions.

The way people access the Internet for content, messaging, and transactions is rapidly evolving based on their access to and increased use of mobile devices. Nonprofits that begin integrating mobile solutions into their event strategies will empower participants and donors in new ways, while better positioning their organizations to achieve new levels of fundraising success.

<sup>1</sup> Smartphone market drives 600% growth in mobile web usage, Bango, February, 2010

## Where To Go from Here

This paper provided a starting point for understanding the role that mobile devices play in event fundraising. For more information about mobile marketing and how it can support your programs, Blackbaud and Charity Dynamics offer the following:

### Blackbaud Friends Asking Friends®

As the original peer-to-peer fundraising solution, **Blackbaud Friends Asking Friends** has supported more than 37,000 events and helped 17 million individuals — and counting — raise more than \$1.3 billion online.

## About the Author

Amy Braiterman, principal strategy consultant at Blackbaud, is a facilitator for the donorCentrics Events Benchmarking Group. She also supports customers with their peer-to-peer fundraising events with a process she refers to as “data-driven strategy.” Amy's data-driven strategy analyzes how effective event participants are using online fundraising tools and takes those results to develop an event fundraising plan. Prior to joining Blackbaud, Amy earned her fundraising stripes managing events for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Alzheimer's Association, and Share Our Strength. She shares her fundraising know how through her popular blog [FriendsAskingAmy.com](http://FriendsAskingAmy.com), by hosting educational webinars and speaking at customer conferences.

“Your passion, our purpose” is more than our brand promise; it’s who we are at Blackbaud. We understand the marketplace and continue a tradition of innovation from being the nonprofit industry’s first open platform and providing organizations the freedom to customize the solution to enabling fundraising on the go with mobile-ready event forms. Our goal is to help you empower your participants to be successful fundraisers, expand your reach with extensions into social media platforms, and manage your events more efficiently.

## Charity Dynamics

**Charity Dynamics Boundless Fundraising™:** Charity Dynamics’ Boundless Fundraising Mobile application allows organizations and their participants to take fundraising on the go by providing Headquarters functionality through mobile applications. Participants can check fundraising status, send fundraising and recruiting messages, update their personal fundraising pages, and access event information.

Charity Dynamics provides strategic services and solutions to nonprofit organizations. The company empowers organizations to successfully integrate social media and mobile channels into communication, fundraising, and grassroots advocacy campaigns. Charity Dynamics provides strategic consulting, campaign planning, and implementation services to complement organizations’ in house capabilities.

## About the Author

Donna Wilkins is the president of Charity Dynamics and leads the company in developing innovative online programs that help nonprofits of all sizes achieve extraordinary results. She has worked with hundreds of organizations to implement integrated online solutions that provide them with the tools and confidence they need to more effectively advance their missions. Donna has worked with nonprofits of all sizes and varying missions, including LIVESTRONG, Arthritis Foundation, Autism Speaks, and Chesapeake Bay Foundation. She holds an MBA from The University of Texas at Austin and a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from the University of Illinois.

## About Blackbaud

Blackbaud is the leading global provider of software and services designed specifically for nonprofit organizations, enabling them to improve operational efficiency, build strong relationships, and raise more money to support their missions. Approximately 22,000 organizations use one or more Blackbaud products and services for fundraising, constituent relationship management, financial management, website management, direct marketing, education administration, ticketing, business intelligence, prospect research, consulting, and analytics. Since 1981, Blackbaud’s sole focus and expertise has been partnering with nonprofits and providing them the solutions they need to make a difference in their local communities and worldwide. Headquartered in the United States, Blackbaud also has operations in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. For more information about Blackbaud solutions, contact a Blackbaud account representative. In the United States and Canada, call toll-free 800.443.9441. In Europe, call +44 (0) 141 575 0000. Visit us on the web at [www.blackbaud.com](http://www.blackbaud.com).

> **Get involved! Contact us at [solutions@blackbaud.com](mailto:solutions@blackbaud.com) for more information.**

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