# Brisbane Not-For-Profit Digital Engagement

## *Assessment Report*

November 2012

# Contents

# Background to the Study

## Introduction

Regional Development Australia (RDA) Brisbane engaged Glentworth to conduct a survey and analysis of digital engagement by not-for-profit (NFP) organisations that are based in or service the RDA Brisbane region (Brisbane City Local Government Area).

In an increasingly digital world, not-for-profit organisations must adapt and rise to the challenges of engaging with communities online. Ensuring NFPs have a clear digital strategy is integral to maximising the opportunities available through social media and emerging online technologies.

It is Regional Development Australia Brisbane's intent to provide relevant information and resources to help prepare and guide NFPs in establishing and increasing online presence.

This study was conducted by three members of the Glentworth team:

- Senior Business Analyst – Adam Fullarton
- Senior Business Analyst – Laura Foster
- Business Analyst - Esther Till

## Outputs and opportunities

Glentworth committed to delivering the following outputs:

- A survey and communication tool to be deployed to not-for-profits within the South East Queensland region. The nature of the survey and communication was to:
  - Gather a representative sample of data measuring digital engagement and readiness (current and proposed)
  - Inform the potential respondents of the upcoming CLICK! Digital Expo.

- A concise report including analysis, observations and recommendations. The aim of the report was to deliver:
  - A clear understanding of the current level of digital engagement and 'readiness' by NFPs within the Brisbane Local Government Area
  - Definition of key barriers and challenges faced by the NFP sector in developing their online presence
  - Identifying NFPs that show a high level of engagement which may be used in Case Studies
  - Identifying NFPs that require assistance in effectively engaging with communities online

Potential opportunities that may be drawn from this study include:

- Working with NFPs to develop online strategies to increase digital engagement and usage
- Provide targeted information to the NFP sector that addresses the current challenges and barriers to digital engagement.

## Digital economy and engagement

With an increasing number of technologies and resources available online, it is imperative to remain connected with the rest of the world at all times in order to compete in the global 'digital economy'.

The term 'digital economy' refers to an economic system which encompasses the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services facilitated by high-speed, ubiquitous digital infrastructure, digital applications and digital information.

The Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy summarised the growth of the digital economy in Australia, and the benefits for not-for-profit organisations:

***"…by 2020, Australia will rank in the top five OECD countries in the percentage of businesses and not-for-profit organisations using online opportunities to drive productivity improvements, expand their customer base and enable jobs growth."***

By engaging online, not-for-profit and community organisations can expand their supporter pool and introduce more innovative fundraising models.

# Methodology

## Survey

Glentworth performed a survey, targeting small to medium not-for-profit organisations. The survey asked respondents to answer a total of 23 structured and unstructured questions, covering key topics around digital engagement and associated tools. These topics included:

- demographics
- current digital engagement
- future digital engagement
- barriers to digital engagement
- success in level of digital engagement

The survey was agreed to be distributed to not-for-profit employees and volunteers through MyCommunityDirectory, and in addition other distribution channels were employed by RDA Brisbane and Glentworth to maximise the rate of responses. Overall the survey instrument was distributed to approximately 600 potential respondents throughout the period of 16$^{th}$ to 28$^{th}$ October.

The survey was originally planned to run for 1 week closing on 23$^{rd}$ October. However, the deadline was extended by 5 days given the low level of participation during the first week. As a result the survey closed COB 28$^{th}$ October.

Of the approximately 600 potential respondents, 79 started it, and 64 completed every question, a completion rate of roughly 80%.

## Maturity assessment

The RDA survey responses were assessed in comparison to Glentworth's Digital Engagement Maturity Model (refer to Figure 1). As a comparative model, it provides information to the not-for-profit community as to the overall maturity level of the sector, as well as that of the individual organisation. This score is derived by assessing the organisations' current engagement activities, the different communication activities that the organisations engage in and the plans for enhancement of their digital engagement activity.

## Maturity model


Figure 1 – Digital Engagement Maturity Model

# Observations

## About the respondents

Of the 79 survey respondents 75 were from various not-for-profit organisations situated in Brisbane, Queensland. The majority of respondent seemed to have what are normally seen as decision making roles; those that would play a significant role in the implementation or development of any digital engagement, such as: Manager or President.


Over 45% of the not-for-profit organisations had between 0 to 5 employees. The majority of responding organisations serviced over 50 members/clients with 49.2% having between 0 and 10 volunteer employees. These figures suggest that the majority of responding organisations have a minimal number of employees/volunteers per the number of members/clients that they service.

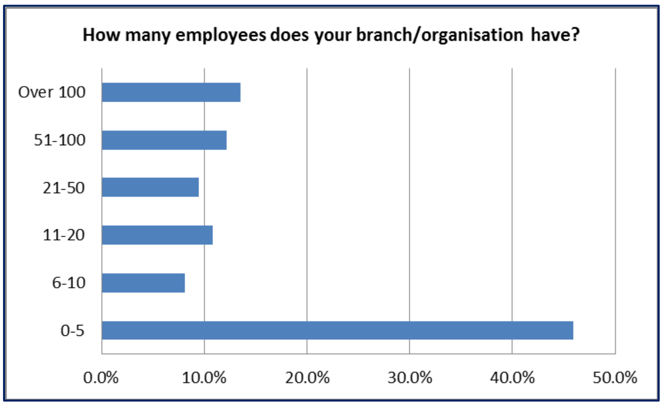


Figure 2 – Number of Organisational Employees

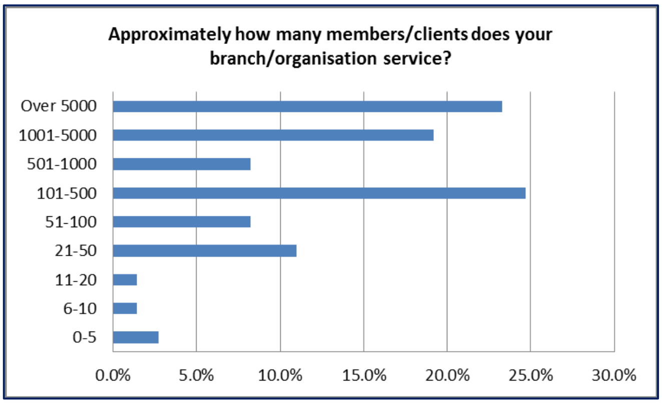


Figure 3 – Number Members/ Clients

## Digital engagement tools

The findings reveal that website and email are the most frequently used channels of digital engagement.

Interestingly, however, a significant proportion still ranked 'web and social media' as tools that they never use. This suggests that social media (with the exception of Facebook) is not used frequently, supported by the findings that a majority of NFPs have never used newsfeeds (such as RSS), blogs, instant messaging, image sharing, or social media aggregator tools. Video sharing tools and Twitter are used infrequently.

It is worth noting that organisations small in nature may not be using social media because they are not in a position to sustain online growth (due capacity/ funding limitations).

A significant proportion of NFPs have never used search engine advertising.

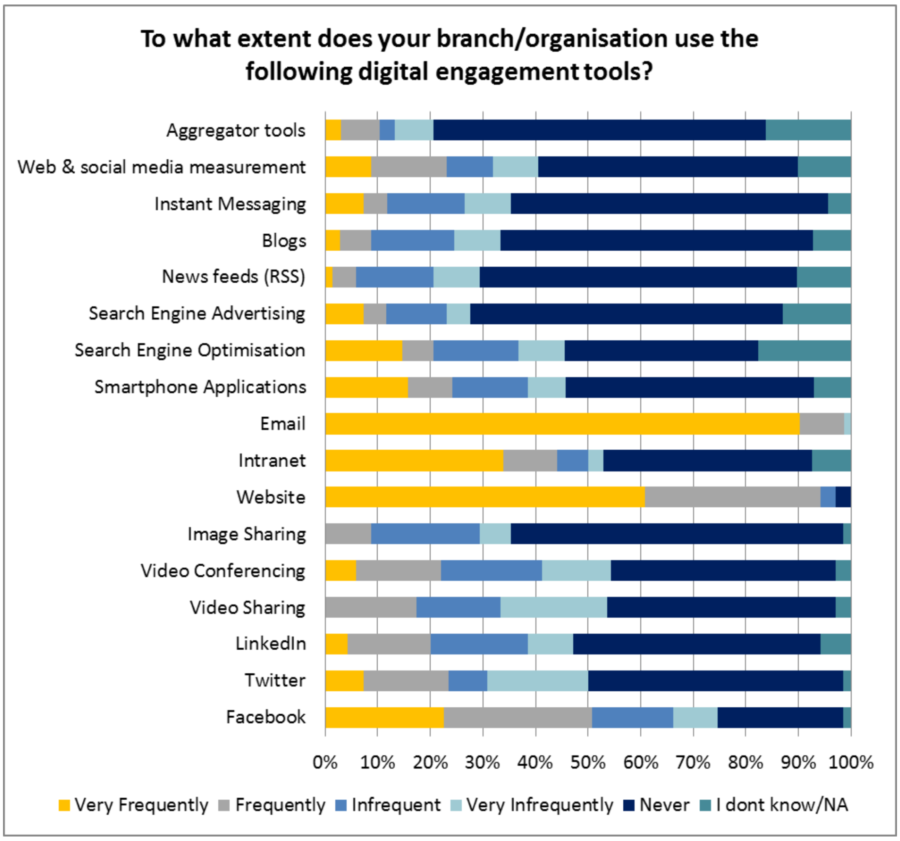


Figure 4 - Frequency of Digital Engagement Tool Usage

## Finding 1 – Low level of awareness and understanding

The findings suggest that there is a lack of awareness and understanding about digital engagement tools, and how they are currently being used (both internally and externally).

Based on the findings, the average maturity level for not-for-profit organisations is low (Level 2 – *Reactive)*. This indicates that whilst the majority are using digital engagement tools to a limited extent, they have not established a significant online presence, nor do they understand how to increase their level of maturity. Further information about the maturity level is demonstrated in the maturity assessment on page 6.

Refer to the figure below, noting the significant percentage of organisations who seem unaware of how they are using digital engagement tools (highlighted in dark blue).

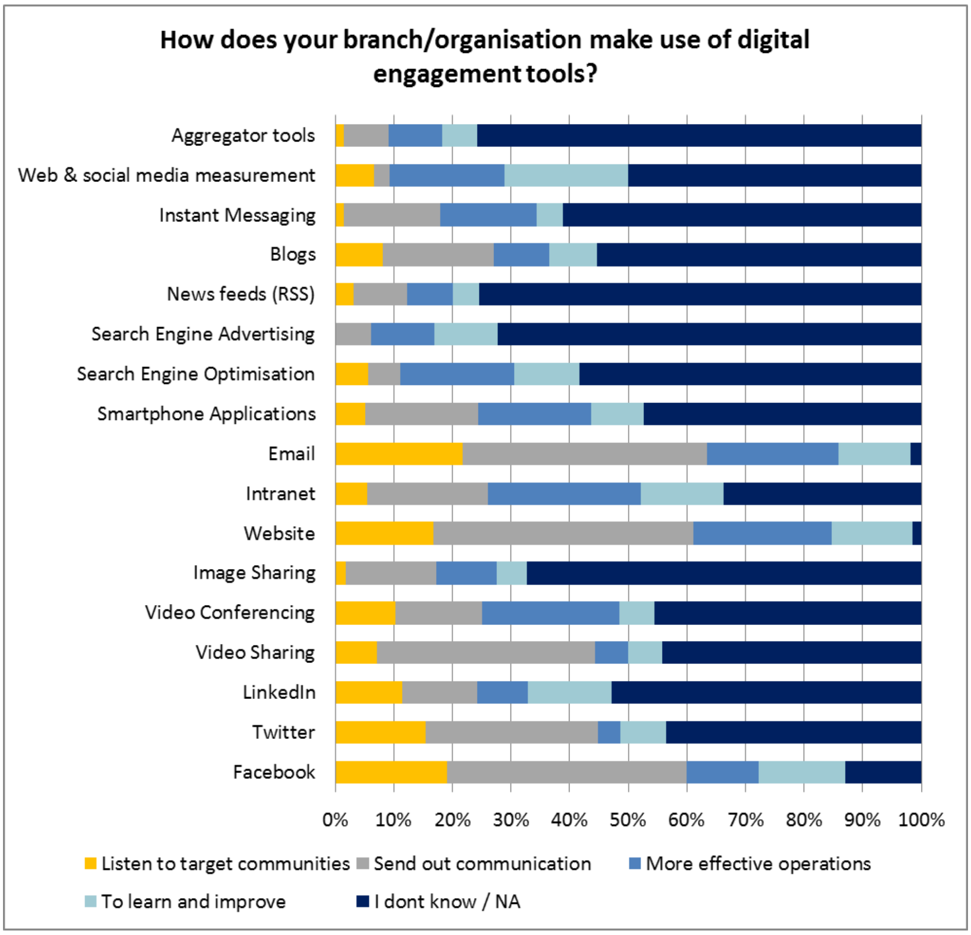


Figure 5 – Use of Digital Engagement Tools

## Recommendation

Organisations low in maturity would benefit from targeted workshops that assist in raising awareness and understanding of how to use digital engagement tools (within the organisation and when communicating with clients and the community). The more mature not-for-profit organisations would benefit from in-depth analysis about optimising their digital activities and engagement (e.g. cross channel integration and analytics).

## Finding 2 – Lack of time and budget

The survey responses indicate that time and budget are key barriers to optimising digital engagement. It is also apparent that organisations do not fully understand the linkage between digital engagement activities and business outcomes. This can be attributed to a lack of understanding about return on investment (ROI).

## Recommendation

In order to encourage not-for-profit organisations to invest time and money into digital engagement initiatives, it would be beneficial to provide programs that help identify the ROI on these activities. This would assist organisations that are planning to investigate or planning to enhance the use of existing digital engagement tools.

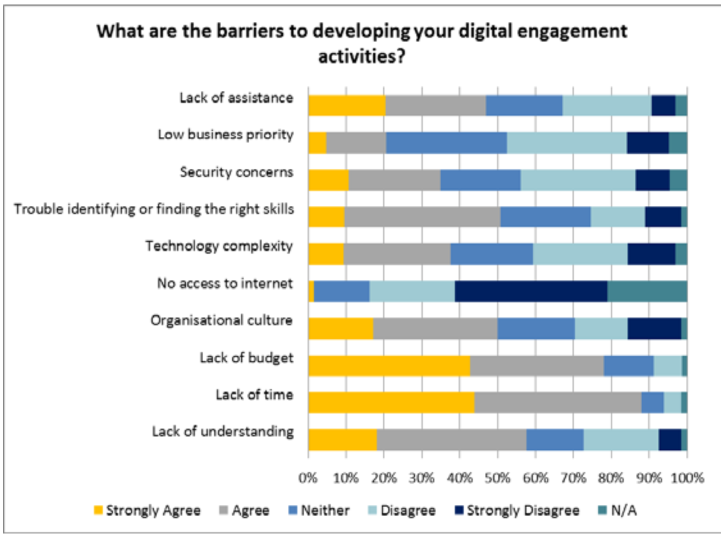


Figure 6 - Planning for Digital Engagement Usage

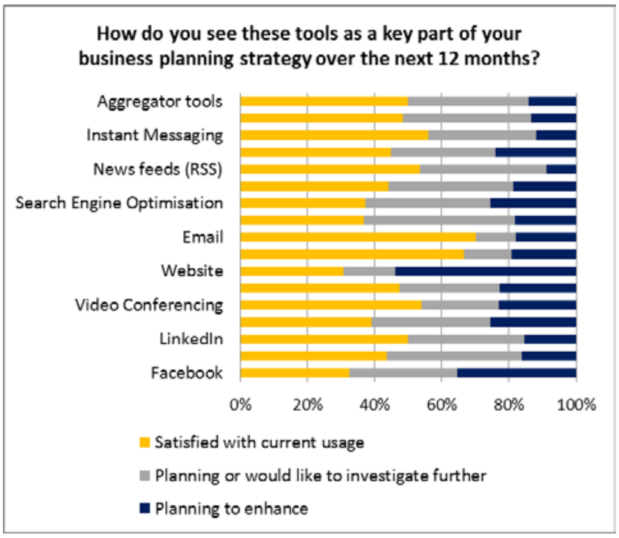


Figure 7 – Key Barriers to Developing Digital Engagement Activities

## Finding 3 – Limited engagement using broadcast communication

Responses to the survey indicate that broadcast (one way) communication using the website and email is standard in most organisations. Whilst email may be used to engage with clients and the community, the website is likely to remain largely static and does not promote other engagement channels. There is a low level of understanding of how organisations can optimise their digital engagement tools to engage and 'listen' to the needs of the community.

## Recommendation

To overcome these issues, it is recommended that targeted programs be developed which help organisations understand how to turn social media into a service benefit.

NFPs should be encouraged to participate in two way engagement by demonstrating how to:

- engage in social media conversation – how to join the conversation
- build the (online) community and encourage interaction
- measure their impact (using monitoring tools to measure sentiment, trends and usage)
- integrate social media with the website and traditional channels

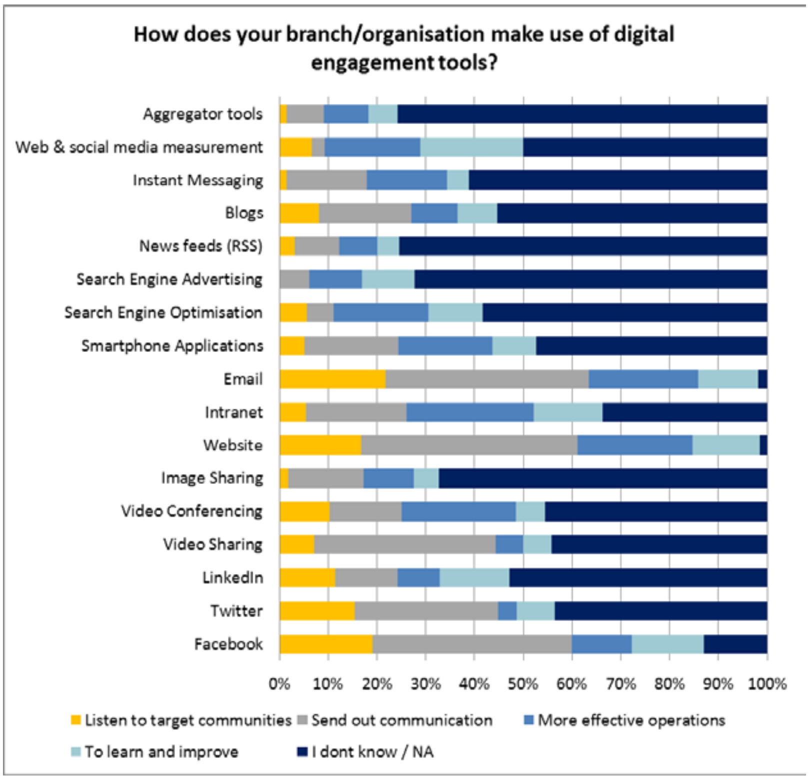


Figure 8 – Use of Digital Engagement Tools

## Conclusions

The survey findings indicate that most NFPs are using some form of digital engagement tools and services. There is a lack of understanding, however, about how these tools are being used, and how they can be optimised to support business outcomes. The lack of business planning suggests that NFP organisations are unaware about the return on investment, and are more focused on current issues such as capacity and funding.

Subsequently this presents an opportunity for the RDA to provide guidance and education, exposing NFPs to the digital engagement tools and services available at low or no cost. It is recommended that successful case studies (eg the top performing organisations in this survey) could be approached as part of the education process (e.g. holding workshops to share key learnings/discuss collective issues and best practice).

It is important to not only focus on the level of engagement, but ensure that activity is managed, supported, and sustainable. To ensure that organisations increase their level of maturity and rate of adoption/engagement, particular emphasis should be placed on analysing the business drivers and ways to increase ROI (in the context of the NFP sector).

# Appendix A - Digital Engagement Maturity Levels

Organisations with a maturity ranking of 1

Organisations with a maturity ranking of 2 or 3

Organisations with a maturity ranking of 4 or 5