MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION WEBSITES

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MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION WEBSITES

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MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NONPROFIT

ORGANIZATION WEBSITES

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Kelly Williams, daughter of Walter David Williams and Linda Kay Williams, was born July 2, 1984 in Columbus, Georgia. She graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication in May, 2006 from the University of West Georgia. While at the University of West Georgia she was both a staff writer and copy editor for *The West Georgian*. She also served as the public relations chair for the national honor fraternity Phi Sigma Pi. These two activities fostered her interest in both media and public relations. Kelly entered the Masters program in the Department of Communication and Journalism in August of 2006. While in the program, Kelly taught Public Speaking, Speaking Before Audiences and assisted in other related courses. She received the 2008 International Communication Association Graduate Teaching Award at Auburn University. Kelly also presented original research twice at both the 2008 Southern States Communication Association conference in Savannah, Georgia and 2009 SSCA in Norfolk, Virginia.

THESIS ABSTRACT

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ORGANIZATION WEBSITES

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This thesis utilizes a content analysis to explore how relationships are managed by nonprofit organizations with their publics via their Websites. It find that while most nonprofit organizations are in fact engaging in all six of the relational strategies (access, positivity, openness, shared tasks, networking and assurances) the level at which these strategies are engaged is low. This study then discusses those implications as well as limitations of the study and future research.

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INTRODUCTION

Nonprofit organizations lag behind *Fortune 500* companies in terms of technology use (Spencer, 2002). This lag is problematic because nonprofit organizations touch the lives of every American in some way (Steinberg & Powell, 2006). Some 65 million people volunteer their time with a nonprofit organization in some form (Bortree & Waters, 2008). For example, schools educate children, churches foster spirituality, charities can help to take care of those in need, and activist groups fight for the rights and liberties of those who may be underrepresented.

Public relations continues to be an area of communication study that needs to be researched through theoretical and practical approaches. Furthermore, the Internet is a medium that is not fully understood. Thus, an area of interest for research in public relations is how practitioners utilize the Internet. Specifically, this research will address how practitioners in the nonprofit sector utilize the Internet for the purposes of relationship building and maintenance.

Public relations is a broad area and has been defined by many. However, this study chooses to employ the use of the definition by Cutlip, Center and Broom (1994), which states public relations is "the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends" (p.2). As such, it is only appropriate to focus on the relationship literature in public relations study.

Ledingham (2006) discusses public relations as the management function that establishes and maintains relationships. However, much of the research on relationship management lacks a fully developed definition of relationship. Beginning with theoretical roots in social psychologist work, such as Dindia and Canary (1995), elements of relationships and their maintenance begin to develop. These elements are built upon by public relations scholars such as Broom, Casey, Ritchey, J.E Grunig, L. Grunig, Hon and Huang.

Hon and Grunig's (1999) relational strategies of access, positivity, openness, shared tasks, networking, and assurances are used as the theoretical backdrop for which this study completes a content analysis of nonprofit Websites. The goal of this study is to examine through content analysis how, if at all, nonprofit organizations' Websites use relational strategies to engage their publics. Also, it will observe if organization type has any effect on relational strategies used. This study hopes to expand literature on relationship management and nonprofit organizations, as well as demonstrate a practical application of theory to everyday Web use for nonprofit organizations. The framework is further explained within the literature review and method. Results are reported and discussed with indication of limitations and future research, finally conclusions are drawn and contributions of this study are revealed.

I. LITERATURE REVIEW

Public relations' definition is often contested. Many competing definitions and interpretations of these definitions exist from various scholars and practitioners. Some public relations scholarship highlights image or persuasion, while others focus on relationships (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Grunig, Dozier, Ehling, Grunig, Repper, & White, 1992; Broom, Casey, Ritchey, 1997; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Bruning & Ledingham, 1999; Broom, Casey, Ritchey, 2000; Ledingham & Bruning, 2000; Ledingham, 2000; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002; Ledingham, 2006; Pfau & Wan, 2006). However, the definition by Cutlip, Center and Broom (1994) states public relations is "the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends" (p.2). This definition is most appropriate for this study because it centralizes its focus on the relationship between organizations and their publics. Using this definition is also beneficial because many scholars have recognized it as their definition of public relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Grunig, Dozier, Ehling, Grunig, Repper, & White, 1992; Broom, Casey, Ritchey, 1997; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Bruning & Ledingham, 1999; Broom, Casey, Ritchey, 2000; Ledingham & Bruning, 2000; Ledingham, 2000; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002; Ledingham, 2006).

This conceptualization has not always been the standard definition of public relations. The evolution of public relations can be traced through scholars' discussions of the four models of public relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Grunig, Dozier, Ehling, Grunig, Repper, & White, 1992; Broom, Casey, Ritchey, 1997; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Bruning and Ledingham, 1999; Broom, Casey, Ritchey, 2000; Ledingham & Bruning, 2000; Ledingham, 2000; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002; Ledingham, 2006). Earlier models of public relations focus on press agentry/publicity; both of which are often criticized for deceiving the public (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The remaining three models that follow press agentry/publicity are public information, two-way asymmetrical communication and two-way symmetrical communication (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

The press agentry/promotion model seeks a one-way communication style. That means the main goal of the organization is to send a message out with no intention or mechanisms for receiving feedback (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The second model, public information, also utilizes a one-way communication method and is primarily concerned with the dissemination of information (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). A common example of a public information campaign would be a health campaign in which the main goal is to educate a public about a particular heath issue or concern. Two-way asymmetrical, the third model, begins to differ from previous models because it includes a voice for its public (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). However, the organization does not try to incorporate that voice into its policy making. Instead, the inclusion of the public, or publics, is to persuade or manipulate them to change attitudes and behaviors (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). What differentiates the two-way asymmetrical from the two-way symmetrical is the communication. Two-way symmetrical communication is interested in including the public's voice as well as using that voice to make decisions about the organization, whereas the two-way asymmetrical is interested in the inclusion of the publics' concerns to persuade them (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). This model of two-way symmetrical communication is a way of practicing and viewing public relations, however, some scholars also argue that different scenarios require different strategies (Grunig, Dozier, Ehling, Grunig, Repper, & White, 1992).

Understanding these previous models as individual strategies is important, but so is understanding when one is preferable to another. When considering strategic planning efforts or conflict resolution Plowman (2005) finds that multiple methods of public relations are used. Plowman's research is based on in-depth interviewing and focus groups of public relations managers. Furthermore, Tindell (2007) applied the four models of publics relations to fundraising efforts and found that each is useful in different situations.

Defining Relationship

Ledingham (2006) defines public relations as the management function that establishes and maintains relationships. However, an exact definition of relationship is not agreed upon by researchers. A definition for relationship is long in the making, with roots in social psychology, interpersonal communication and other public relations research (Dindia & Canary, 1995; Thomlison, 2000; Toth, 2000; Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Grunig, Dozier, Ehling, Grunig, Repper, and White, 1992; Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997; Grunig & Hon, 1999; Bruning & Ledingham, 1999; Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 2000; Ledingham & Bruning, 2000; Ledingham, 2000; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002; Ledingham, 2006).

Dindia and Canary (1995) look at theoretical perspectives and definitions of maintaining social and personal relationships. They state that most of the social psychology research on relationships is focused on the initiation and termination of relationships. When defining relationship maintenance they look at four common definitions: keeping relationships in existence, keeping relationships in a specified state, keeping relationships in a satisfactory condition and keeping relationships in repair (p.163). Though their research mostly discusses adult interpersonal relationships, these four principles can be applied to relationship management of an organization and public. Organizations need to keep relationships with publics in existence, in a specified state, in a satisfactory condition as well as repair any problems that occur in the relationship.

Thomlison (2000) discusses the core similarities of public relations and interpersonal communication. Both public relations and interpersonal communication scholars are interested in relationships. Thomlison defines relationship to mean “a set of expectations two parties have for each other’s behavior based on their interaction patterns” (p.178). Furthermore, Thomlison states relationships are also where interactants are aware of each other and take one another into account, exchange influence, and finally agree on what the relationship is (p.178). This observation means for public relations that relationship management would refer to the development and growth of mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics. Under this definition of relationships, publics would be treated as an equal and not a tool for accomplishing goals or monetary gain. This definition would ultimately be more beneficial for the organization.

Also making the connection between interpersonal communication and public relations is the research by Toth (2000). The main suggestion of this research is to focus study on the actual relationship rather than study the organization or the public. This claim would suggest looking at not only the message, but also the communication process (p.206). Coupled with Thomlison's work, this research indicates evaluating the relationships on mutually beneficial merits is imperative.

This combination of Thomlison's (2000) and Toth's research (2000) provides another area of study: relationship evaluation. Research in this area, specific to public relations, has been completed by Broom, Casey and Ritchey (1997 & 2000); Hon and Grunig (1999) and Grunig and Huang (2000). Broom, Casey and Ritchey (1997 & 2000) developed an earlier model of organization-public relationships. They sought this development as a way for relationships and their properties to be measured. The model originally developed separated organization-public relations into antecedents, relationships, and consequences (1997 & 2000).

Antecedent conditions could include perceptions, norms, motives, needs, and behaviors whereas the consequences refer to the outputs that have an effect on changing the environment and of achieving, changing or maintaining goals both in and out of the organization (Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 2000, p.16). In a relationship these perceptions, norms, motives, needs, and behaviors begin the first phase. These perceptions are the antecedents, thus they create the relationship. According to Broom, Casey and Ritchey (1997 & 2000), because antecedents cause the change, pressure, or tension that cause the formation of a relationship. The relationship refers to properties of exchanges, transactions, communication, and other activities. Consequences then result in things such as goal achievements, dependency/loss of autonomy, and routine and institutionalized behavior. These antecedents and consequences show how relationships are both dependant and independent as the consequences can bring about new changes and tensions, thus creating new antecedent conditions.

The model set forth by Broom, Casey and Ritchey (1997 & 2000) is later revamped by Hon and Grunig (1999) and Grunig and Huang (2000). Rather than using the antecedents, relationships, and consequences model, current methods of examining and measuring relationships break the model down into three phases or stages: consequences, strategies, and outcomes (Hon & Grunig, 1999; Grunig & Huang, 2000). The phase involving consequences describes how public relationships form. Hon and Grunig (1999) state that "relationships form because one party has consequences on another party" (p.12). This phase means when opportunities or problems arise there becomes a need for strategies or a specific and necessary relationship to develop. Once that relationship comes into existence then focus can shift to the second stage.

The second phase includes relationship strategies. For development of these strategies many interpersonal theories, as well as conflict-resolution theories, are utilized to develop the concepts for maintenance in relationships. These concepts are: access, positivity, openness, assurances, networking, sharing of tasks, integrative, distributive, and dual concern (1999, p.14). Access is defined as allowing for contact between the organization and the public. Again, the notion of two-way symmetrical communication would apply here as the organization can contact the public, and the public can contact the organization. Positivity is anything that makes the relationship more enjoyable. An example here could range from any of the benefits that are gained in the mutual relationship. Openness refers back to two-way symmetrical communication meaning that thoughts and feelings can free flow between the organization and public. Allowing for the open disclosure of information between the organization and its public fosters openness. Assurances are attempts by organizations to guarantee other parties that they and their concerns are genuine. These assurances mean following up on communication efforts and other means of facilitating understanding. Networking refers to the building of coalitions with other groups to which the other party in the relationship is connected. An example would be when organizations network with environmentalist groups, unions, or community groups (Hon & Grunig, 1999, p. 15). Finally there is the sharing of tasks. Having shared tasks means that when organizations and publics engage in a relationship they will share in the joint solving of problems or creating policy.

These relationship strategies, according to Hon and Grunig, produce outcomes. Through their research on organizations and interpersonal relationships, four reoccurring concepts appear for relationship outcomes: control mutuality, trust, relational commitment, and relational satisfaction (2000, p.42). Control mutuality refers to the amount of power and who holds that power in a relationship. It is important to note in this discussion of control mutuality that power is not always equally divided. This division according to Hon and Grunig (1999) is natural, but they advise that unilateral actions for control are associated with decreasing perceptions of competence and satisfaction of the relationship. Trust is the confidence and willingness to be open with another party. Hon and Grunig (1999) discuss trust as having three parts: integrity, dependability, and competence. More explicitly integrity refers to honesty in both communication and action; dependability is the characteristic of being reliable and consistent; and competence means that there is capability to accomplish goals. Another outcome is satisfaction, which results whenever benefits outweigh the costs or when behaviors are perceived as possible. Finally, commitment deals with how the public and organization determine the worth of the relationship.

Public Relations' Move to the Internet

The Internet has no doubt made significant change in the lives of many people and organizations. The field of public relations is not immune to the force that is the World Wide Web. Bobbitt (1995) has produced an internet primer for practitioners in *Public Relations Quarterly* with basic advice and information about e-mail, and origins of the Internet and the World Wide Web. That same year Marken (1995) also produced a guide for *Public Relations Quarterly* on how to maximize public relations potential on the Internet. The next year, Settles (1996) provides instruction on how to build a press center for an organization's website. All of these works are places where public relations began creeping its way online. The Settles' article even begins to suggest hints of relationship management with its description of how to facilitate a resource for a journalist to use.

Following the Internet how-to guides, Heath (1998) begins to look at how new communication technologies both help and harm the ability of organizations to deal with issues management. The study looks at Websites and their ability to be a medium for town hall discussions. Heath (1998) discerns that the Internet can be a place of discussing issues management rather than issues advertisement.

Along with discussions of issues management, D'Angelo and Little (1998) began to investigate evaluation standards for Websites. First, they ask if evaluation standards exist. They report that some guidelines exist, but they are not based in research. This observation pointed out by D'Angelo and Little helps future studies that seek to establish guidelines for Websites, such as this one.

Coombs (1998) looks at how activist publics are able to use the Internet to be heard by organizations. This study uses stakeholder theory to show how a traditionally ignored public gains power and presence through the Internet. All of these studies, again, show how public relations research is investigating practitioner uses of the Internet.

According to Kent and Taylor (1998) the World Wide Web offers a place for negotiations between organizations and their publics. This medium allows for direct communication and instantaneous communication. Communication takes place while organizations and publics exist in different locations, at any time, in a variety of given settings and circumstances. Furthermore, many benefits come from the use of the Internet as a public relations tool. Cooley (1999) discusses improved corporate image, collects and analyzes public opinion, more easily sets corporate needs to reflect those of the public, and increases corporate accountability. However, not all communication between publics and organizations now reside online, but instead the Internet is a great tool for communicating. Duhé (2007) suggests that this online communication supplements the relationship building process rather than replaces it. Relationship building can occur both online and offline and not solely in one place. Also, because there are still things that cannot be encompassed by the Internet, such as face-to-face communication, offline relationships still have a place in public relations.

Internet Relationship Management Studies

As mentioned in the previous section, many practitioners are realizing the potential of the Internet. Thus, research began to merge between relationship management and the Internet. Kent and Taylor (1998 & 2002) were at the forefront of bringing the two areas together through their discussions of dialogic theory and creating relationships online. Dialogic theory, according to Kent and Taylor, refers to dialogical communication as the part of Grunig and Hunt's two-way symmetrical communication. They refer to it as a procedural issue where two-way communication is the process, and dialog is the product that results from that communication. Kent and Taylor report that the Web is a great place for fostering dialogic communication. However, in regard to relationships and the Internet, most of the research after Kent and Taylor is done either at a broad level, meaning that its focus is on online dialog and relationships, or between Fortune 500 companies and the publics of Fortune 500 companies. The amount of research on nonprofit organizations is marginal in comparison to that of Fortune 500 companies.

Online dialog and relationships

Taylor, Kent and White (2001) looked at how activist publics engaged the Internet. They define an activist public as "two or more individuals who organize in order to influence another public or publics through action that may include education, compromise, persuasion, pressure tactics, or force" (p.263). They examine 100 Websites created by activist organizations and determine that most of the Websites are designed for two-way communication but ultimately do not utilize or engage in two-way communication. Furthermore, the organizations focus more attention on non-media publics, such as their member publics, or those who are involved within the organization rather than the media.

Jo and Kim (2003) further explore online relationship building in their research. Surveying college students they report that the technological advancement of the Website does not correlate with a number of favorable attitudes, such as trust, commitment, or satisfaction, toward the website. They state that organizations must utilize the Web to engage publics and not simply rely on the medium of communication to produce a relationship.

Kent, Taylor, and White (2003) look at how organizations utilize their technology to engage stakeholders. They examine 150 Websites of activist publics and watchdog publics. When attempting to solicit information from the webmasters there was a return rate of only 16 percent. That lack of response means a low number of these Websites are engaging publics. What they also report was that organizations that rely on relationships with their publics need to solicit, consider, and adjust to stakeholder feedback.

Fortune500

Liu, Arnett, Capella, and Beatty (1997) use a content analysis of Fortune 500 Websites. They look to see what type of presence, or availability of Fortune 500 information, there is on the Internet. They report that 64.5 percent of Fortune 500 companies had a Website (p.338). However, this study does not examine the content of those websites, nor does it assess if Fortune 500 companies are engaging their customers in any type of relationship building.

Callison (2003) looks specifically at Fortune 500 companies and their relationships with journalists. A primary feature of these Fortune 500 websites is the presence of a pressroom. Virtual pressrooms that provide content for journalists are shown to be beneficial and enhance the relationship between Fortune 500 companies and journalists. These pressrooms include more than press releases. They include information on the company, such as history, projects, etc., and its employees, logos and other ready-made materials for the journalist to use. The study examines all Fortune 500 Websites and studies them. The number of pressrooms is few, with only one-third of the Websites surveyed having one. However, given the results of the study, other organizations could take note and become more involved in fostering their own media relations. Furthermore, the findings from this Website analysis of Fortune 500 companies does not have to be limited to this type of organization. Both smaller for-profit companies and nonprofit organizations still function in a similar fashion in that they need to communicate well with their publics.

Nonprofits

Nonprofit organizations are a large part of American society (Dyer, Buell, Harrison & Weber, 2002). They are like any other organization in the sense that they need public relations in order to help facilitate engagement of various publics. In the area of nonprofit organizations and online relationship management research, very little is known. Most research looks at nonprofit Website credibility and mission statement fulfillment (Kensicki, 2003; Ryan 2007), religious organizations (Campbell, 2004), and children publics (Bortree, 2007).

Kensicki (2003) examines the construct of credibility with nonprofit organization Websites. The primary focus for analysis is visual credibility. This means that the main element to examine is Website design. Hypothetical pro-life and pro-choice Websites are the focus for Kensicki's research. The Websites are shown to college students who evaluated them and answered questionnaires. Kensicki reports that Websites with strong symmetry are less credible than asymmetrical ones. Further, the author reports that photographs and warm colors are viewed as more credible. Finally, Kensicki says the more credible the Website appears visually, the more likely students are to want to join that organization.

Kang and Norton (2004) also explore how nonprofit organizations utilize their Websites to fulfill organizational goals. Using a content analysis of top 100 *Nonprofit Times* Websites, they look for ease of interface (design), information provided functions and relational communication to reach organizational goals (p. 282). They state that most of these organizations utilize a simple design interface. This leads to a streamlined Web experience for the Website user. As for information finding functions, most do not contain any type of glossary or online help. Finally, they state minimal use of relational communication. Kang and Norton suggest this could be a result of choosing the simple Website design over an interactive one.

Yeon, Choi, and Kiousis (2005) use a content analysis of the top 100 Websites according to the NPT, which gathers information based on revenues. They seek to understand how nonprofit public relations practitioners were utilizing the Web. Specifically they are interested in content made available to journalists, and the revenue that the nonprofit took in. They report, however, that higher revenue does not correlate with Website production.

Another study that focuses on nonprofits and the Internet at the general level is Ryan's 2007 study that researched online availability of nonprofit mission statements. A content analysis of 83 New York City nonprofit organizations states that only eight of those Websites include a mission statement on the first page. Further, 40 are one click in and 17 are two clicks in. Fourteen responded to e-mail when asked about their mission statement and another 17 do not have a mission statement available at all. The eight Websites that include their mission statements on the first page are deemed by Ryan as leaders in the nonprofit community that should be modeled (p. 23). Furthermore, Ryan suggests that if nonprofit organizations are not careful with their missioning stakeholders will step in and take up the slack and mission for themselves and not the organization. This action is bad because it would allow for ad hoc missioning which provides no basis for making organizational decisions (p. 24).

Most relevant to the study at hand, is Bortree. In 2007, Bortree examines how Hon and Grunig's relationship strategies are used on children's nonprofit organization Websites. This study finds that all six strategies are engaged by nonprofits and that most Websites viewed actually contained four of more of the strategies. This research is influential as it is one of the few to actually apply relational strategies to any Website, profit or nonprofit. Bortree's constructions of access, positivity, openness, shared tasks, networking, and assurances all play a part in the foundation for this study.

Non Profit Organizations

> Nonprofit organizations are ubiquitous. Many people are born in a nonprofit hospital, attend a nonprofit university, send their children to a nonprofit day-care center, worship at a nonprofit religious institution, watch the performances of nonprofit symphonies and dance companies, visit their parents in a nonprofit nursing home, and face the end of their life in a nonprofit hospice (Steinberg and Powell, 2006, p.1).

Steinberg and Powell (2006) discuss how society always has a multiplicity of tasks and those tasks are either accomplished by individuals or organizations both formal and informal. Furthermore, they stress the importance of nonprofit scholarship through a variety of areas such as ownership and structure. Structure and ownership are two areas that can help define what a nonprofit organization is exactly.

Defining a nonprofit organization may seem obvious but there are specific details to note. Kinzey (1999) argues that it is hard to define nonprofit organizations because a nonprofit is not part of a public or private sphere because it actually operates somewhere in between. Nonprofit organizations will in fact model profit organizations in that they plan strategy, budget, account, and market themselves (p.1). However, the clear delineation is economic advancement. Nonprofit organizations do not try to earn money for shareholders, but rather promote a public service objective. Furthermore, one also has to note that the IRS defines multiple separate categories of nonprofits ranging from charities, to political organizations, fraternal organizations, farming incentives, and many more (Tax Information for Charities & Other Non-Profits, 2008). However, for the purposes of this study, nonprofit will be defined as an organization that promotes a public service objective and is not invested in monetary gain for profit.

As Steinberg and Powell illustrated previously, nonprofit organizations touch many facets of everyday life, and thus are an immense place for inquiry. Kinzey (1999) states that while a wealth of research has been done on public relations and nonprofit organizations as separate entities, little has been done in the area of researching how nonprofit organizations can utilize public relations strategies. While this is no longer the complete case, there is still a lack of research when comparing the amount of research that focuses on profit organizations to nonprofit organizations.

Another reason to examine nonprofits and public relations is issue concerning truth. Nonprofit organizations came under scrutiny in the late 1990s for fraudulent cases (Herzlinger, 1999). Herzlinger stresses the importance of nonprofit organizations and the need to restore trust and accountability as a result of the many cases that appeared during this time. The model developed by Herzlinger for restoring trust included disclosure, analysis and dissemination of information, and sanctions (DADS). In the Herzlinger study, the model was applied to Orange County, California's bankruptcy and demonstrated how the controversial happenings around that incident could have been avoided. This case study and model place a high importance on trust, which is also emphasized in public relations scholarship by scholars such as Hon and Grunig (1999).

A recent study by Bortree and Waters (2008) examines the relationship between nonprofit organizations and volunteer relationships. This research uses Hon and Grunig's

(1999) four relational outcomes of trust, commitment, control mutuality, and satisfaction to explore the quality of the relationship. However, the study adds a fifth relational outcome of admiration. Admiration for Bortree and Waters means the degree to which relationship partners esteem one another. This concept of admiration has not previously been studied by public relations scholars but rather by interpersonal communication scholars. Bortree and Waters consider admiration to be highly important in the relationship as they report it is the strongest indicator of the relationship rating.

Non Profit Organizations, Public Relations and the Internet

Just as the Internet has helped to change the face of public relations, it also has helped to shift the appearance of nonprofit organizations. Zeff in 1996, and later revised by Johnston in 1999, published the *Nonprofit Guide to the Internet*. Both editions stress the beneficial tools that the Internet can provide to the nonprofit organization. Johnston (1999) claims that the move to the Internet is "worth the investment of time and money" (p.13). Both editions reflect four critical enhancements to the organization: improved communication, better access to information, professional development, and taking action.

Through the Internet, a nonprofit can yield improved communication. This bettered communication refers to both internal communication and external communication. Internally, e-mail coordination can help facilitate more flexible communication (Zeff, 1996; Johnston, 1999). Externally, communication is enhanced exponentially. The reach of the Internet allows one to literally connect to the world at a cost that is more efficient than television, radio, print, or any other medium (Johnston, 1999).

Along with improved communication, nonprofit organizations' integrated use of the Internet can provide better access to information. Information is quickly and easily gatherable via Internet news sources, groups, and other Websites (Zeff, 1996; Johnston, 1999). Johnston emphasizes the importance of linkages in this area where linkages refer to managing communications between organizations and publics (p.17). It is important to note here that this conceptualization of linkage is very similar to a relational perspective of public relations. The linkages according to Zeff and Johnston are managed communication between an organization and its publics, whereas the public relations relational perspective that embraces two-way communication is in the same vein; it seeks to foster dialog between an organization and its public in order to achieve mutually beneficial relationships. These linkages are important in the access to information process as many legislators, trustees, donors, etc are available via the Internet.

Similar to the linkage aspect of access to information, professional development is a third benefit outlined for nonprofit organizations use of the Internet. Simply put, the Internet allows workers in any organization more flexibility and thus the ability to be more effective in their jobs (Johnston, 1999). Additionally, it provides a place to connect with peers, such as professional associations and other groups, as well as mailing lists and other information for improving professional skills.

Finally, one of the greatest benefits for nonprofits utilizing the Internet is the ability to take action. The two main actions that can be taken are cyber-fundraising and cyber-campaigning (Johnston, 1999). Cyber-fundraising allows an organization to solicit funds through a new medium. Rather than stand on a sidewalk with a boot and ask for change an organization can seek larger donations via credit card. Similarly, cyber-campaigning also allows for a greater reach of audience at a cost effective rate. More audiences can be targeted allowing greater interaction with publics.

The previously discussed benefits of nonprofit organizations utilizing the Internet are substantial, but cannot be attained unless they are part of a carefully planned Web strategy. Johnston (1999) discusses Web strategy as having clear purpose, considering audience, Website design, publicity, evaluating success, and addressing integration. Having a clear purpose refers to the outlining of the objectives that an organization wishes to accomplish. One should take into consideration that the millions of people, who make up various publics available via the Internet, will need to be scaled down to those that the organization actually wants to target. The second part of planning, Website design, investigates how layout of a Website will help accomplish those goals as well as graphics, content, and interactive elements. Third, publicity is how the Website is promoted via announcement, press coverage, or self-promotion. Next, measuring the success of the Website's ability to fulfill organizational goals has to be defined by the organization's original objectives; i.e. did it meet its objectives and how did it meet them. Finally, integrating refers to incorporating the evaluations into maintaining the Website. A good Website will grow via this method (p.156).

The discussion above while not explicitly written by public relations scholars, incorporates several public relations elements. The benefits of nonprofit Internet use, such as cyber-fundraising and cyber-campaigning, are functions of a nonprofit public relations practitioner's role. Further, the benefits of access to information and improved communication are also elements of public relations. The emphasis on bettered communication is in sync with the Grunig and Hunt model of two-way communication. Finally, the Web strategy, particularly the evaluation and address of integration stages, are in alignment with Ledingham's evaluation and stewardship phases of the public relations practice.

Research following Zeff (1996) and Johnston (1999) outlines other ways in which nonprofit organizations can benefit from using the Internet. Johnson (1999) reports that the Internet is a way to offer nonprofits a way of reaching new donors. Based on Johnson's survey research of nonprofit online donors, 65% reported they are likely to donate online to a cause they believe in if there are secure credit card conditions.

In 2002, Boeder reports further the benefits of nonprofit organizations utilizing the Internet. First, Boeder illuminates the point that little empirical study has been conducted on nonprofit organizations and the Web. Second, Boeder collected data on nonprofit organizations online for over a year. The information analyzed by Boeder shows that many nonprofits of different types and sizes are facing the same challenges of decreasing donor giving, carrying out missions with limited resources, and communicating with their publics. Boeder states that the Internet can be a great place for nonprofits to succeed in the areas that they have failed. The Internet can help to increase giving, to carryout missions, and to communicate with publics such as the media.

Spencer (2002) also claims there are great benefits for nonprofit organizations using the Internet. Spencer states that often technology use by nonprofit organizations lags behind that of for profit organizations. However, according to Spencer, this can change with the use of the Internet. First, Spencer addresses fundraising efforts citing Johnson's study on donations via credit card. Securities are always an issue and nonprofits must work to overcome this concern to their publics. According to Spencer, merely having a Website does not ensure donations. Furthermore, Spencer also discusses the success of online volunteerism. The Internet has provided a place to cultivate volunteers for nonprofit organizations by way of advertising and through meta-sites, or searchable databases that connect people to nonprofits of their interest.

Another area Spencer (2002) examines is information credibility. Part of the nonprofit cause is to usually supply some sort of educational awareness information. According to Spencer, in the past, nonprofits have been quite successful at putting together educational campaigns. Spencer argues that the Internet can be an excellent way to distribute those educational materials, but warns that in doing so the information must be kept up to date. Also part of credibility, Spencer discusses the power of advocacy and community building claiming that the Internet is a great place where things such as e-mail allow information to make it to people personally. Furthermore, Spencer suggests examining community building literature to apply those ideals to nonprofit Websites.

Hazard (2003) details a more specific example of cyber-fundraising and nonprofit use of the Internet. Based on surveying 99 library Websites, only 67 have fundraising links, the other 32 did not. Hazard suggests many things for the improvement of library fundraising Websites. These suggestions are to display links on the main page of the library, adopt mnemonic addresses that are easier to remember, maintain currency of site information, experiment with friend pages and development pages, integrate other university libraries and their links, have e-mail links readily available, display events on the Website, and visit other library fundraising Websites.

Most recently in September 2008, Kenix discusses the current situation regarding nonprofit organizations and their Web usage. Using seven focus groups composed of representatives from the nonprofit sector Kenix reports that many of the group members do not indicate the Internet as democratizing their cause. Some in fact said that the Web, for them, is a way to make their organizations more like corporations because more can be done with $80,000 compared to $5,000. Furthermore, the Kenix study reveals that most practitioners are using their Websites in a one-way dissemination of information model. With regard to these one-way messages there is little planning involved in what the message says or for whom the message is meant.

The focus group also points out that there is lack of Internet training for nonprofit staff. Kenix suggests this could be due to the perception nonprofits have of the Internet as being not valuable to their cause. Rarely are these nonprofit organizations using interactive content to engage with their publics. Kenix states this lack of usage is cause for concern because other studies show that engagement of publics in an online setting can cause an organization to grow. In sum, Kenix finds that while the focus group is unable to generalize the whole population, it does reflect one approach for utilization of the Internet among nonprofits.

Lessons from Online Political Campaigning

One last area to explore is online political campaigning. Cyber-campaigns for political causes, particularly election campaigns, are visible in the public sphere. In the 2004 election Weblogs, often referred to as blogs, became a standard feature of campaign Websites (Lawson-Borders & Kirk, 2005). These blogs are defined as "online diaries where information is electronically posted, updated frequently, and presented in reverse chronological order" (Lawson-Borders & Kirk, 2005, p.548). Campaign blogs are similar to print information except for the feature that allows readers to comment directly on the blog posts. Discourse is then fostered by the back and forth commentaries that ensue post blog update. While the 2004 election results are not due to blogging alone, Lawson-Borders and Kirk feel that blogs are impacting the way the public discusses politics. Williams, Trammell, Postelnicu, Landreville, and Martin (2005) agree and state that blogs will now have to be a staple for modern campaigning Websites. Nonprofit organizations can relate to this because political campaigns are a type of nonprofit campaigning. With blogs becoming highly popular in elections, nonprofit organizations can mimic political campaigns by increasing the number of nonprofit blogs. Currently, according to Wallace (2008), few charities are actually involved with blogging and as such only six percent of regular charity donators read nonprofit blogs.

Despite these claims made by Lawson-Borders and Kirk (2005) and Williams, et al. (2005) about blogs becoming ubiquitous for future elections, scholars are torn over online campaigning for the 2008 presidential elections. Shields (2007) states that candidates will spend roughly one percent of their budgets online for this election where as major brands spend around seven percent of their budgets. Furthermore, Shields (2008a) continues to state that there has been little spending on the election, even as the election nears.

Teinomitz (2008) reports that at the end of the presidential primaries digital spending accounts for 1.6% of spending. However, Teinomitz suggests that looking to spending is not the best measurement. According to Teinomitz, President Barack Obama, the Democratic candidate, raised $55 million in February 2008 alone in online donations. Furthermore, there is the consideration of Websites such as YouTube. YouTube, founded in 2005, is a Website that allowed viewers to watch streaming videos; Obama's channel has over 788 videos on it and Senator John McCain's, the Republican candidate, channel has 171 videos. Finally, Teinomitz also reports on the presence of peer-to-peer sites such as MySpace.com or Facebook.com. These Websites are social networking sites that connect people via their common interests. Teionmitz suggests that TV is still the way to reach millions but campaigns are successful online.

Jones (2008) agrees that TV may be the way to reach millions but the Internet is growing in terms of information seeking for political campaigns. Sixteen percent of voters used the Web in Spring 2000, 31% in Spring of 2004 and 40% in Spring of 2008. Jones argues that what is found on the Website goes beyond that of print news or cable talk. Blogs and peer-to-peer Websites are being utilized by people for learning more about the 2008 presidential campaigns.

Yet, as of summer and fall of 2008, Shields (2008b) and Walker (2008) have doubts about the significance of the Web's role in electing a president. Walker (2008) reports that too often the Web is an afterthought of the new organization's overall strategy for campaign coverage. Still, Shields (2008b) continues to report low numbers spent on advertising and Web campaigning.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Previous studies have mostly examined for profit organizations, such as *Fortune 500* companies, or nonprofits specifically for children. This study will build on previous research by using the relationship management model, developed by Hon and Grunig, and Internet research to examine nonprofit Websites. Specifically it will examine how nonprofit organizations utilize their Websites for relationship building and maintenance with their publics.

RQ1: Are nonprofit organizations utilizing the Web to engage their various publics in dialogic relationships?

RQ2: What relational strategies are nonprofit organizations' Websites using?

RQ3: What type of nonprofit organization is most frequently engaging in relational strategies with its various publics?

III. METHODOLOGY

This study aims to understand and to expand the knowledge of online public relations and non-profit organizations. More specifically it evaluates how non-profit organizations utilize the Internet as a tool for relationship building and maintenance with targeted audiences. To do so, this study employs content analysis and tests reliability via intercoder reliability. The following information will discuss the benefit and justification of using a quantitative approach to further develop public relations research, specifically the method of conducting content analysis. Also, it will describe the unit of analysis, categories explored, sampling, coding, and reliability.

Quantitative Study

Research simply put means attempting to discover something (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). This study seeks to discover the possibilities of how relationships are built and maintained between nonprofit organizations and their target publics via Internet Websites. However, that attempt has to be narrowed down. The method this study utilizes is a quantitative method. Quantitative research is a method that uses standardized questioning (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). This means that the method will adhere to clear and concisely constructed variables that can be randomly sampled, measured and generalized to a population. It is important to note Stacks' (2002) claim that content analysis can be used to bridge the gap between quantitative and qualitative. This bridge between qualitative and quantitative is because quantitative data can be derived from qualitative means such as open-ended questioning or observing messages in the media, yet data also have the ability to be measured via random sample and counting and are thus observable and quantifiable.

Content Analysis

Content analysis has been defined by many (Budd, Thorp, & Donohew, 1967; Carney, 1972; Weber, 1985; Neuendorf, 2002; Stacks, 2002; Krippendorff, 2004; Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). In its most basic form it has been called a procedure to examine the content of recorded information (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). This study will use the definition that content analysis "is a systematic, objective, and quantitative method for researching messages" (Stacks, p.107). This definition means that nonprofit organization Websites will be analyzed and selected for this study by explicit rules, be replicable by another researcher, and be understood through statistical analysis.

According to Stacks (2002) content analysis has a place in public relations research. For example, it may be used to explore types of press releases, the number of times a client is mentioned by name in a medium, or the readability of a message (p.107). Content analysis can also be used in Internet research (Fielden & Garrido, 1998; Anderson & Kanuka, 2003; Wimmer & Dominick, 2006; Bortree, 2007). Several public relations studies mentioned in the previous literature review employed a content analysis as the methodology (Kang & Norton, 2004; Yeon, Choi & Kiousis, 2005; Bortree, 2007).

Content analysis is the best approach for this study. First, because the medium studied is a Website. Survey data would be useful only if the study is seeking to understand the public side of the relationship. As the focus is on Websites, and how nonprofit organizations use them to engage in relationships a content analysis is the best fit. The content analysis will allow for Websites to be categorized and counted. Then those results will be made into subsequent results and discussion.

Unit of Analysis

A unit of analysis is defined as "the systematic distinguishing of segments of text- images, voices and other observables - that are of interest to an analysis" (Krippendorff, 2004, p.83). As such, for the purpose of this study the unit of analysis will be the organization's Website itself. This concept has been used before in Bortree's (2007) study. Bortree looked at nonprofit Websites that target children where the unit of analysis was the Website at three levels deep. This procedure refers to using the main page of a Website, and two links or clicks into the Website (p.8). This concept is supported by other Internet research such as Dochartaigh (2002). Dochartaigh discusses the importance of understanding what a Website actually is:

> The Website which a document belongs to provides the context within which that document can be understood, situating it as part of a collection of related documents. To use a Web document without knowing what site it belongs to is a bit like using a photocopied page without knowing anything about the book it is copied from. It is bad research practice to use a document with no understanding of its context … (p.120).

This assertion means that it is critical to understand the Website researched, as well as the context that Website provides. The definition of Website for this study is, "all materials placed on the Web by a particular organization" (p.120). Thus, again, the unit of analysis for this study will be a Website that goes to the third level, or two clicks into the Website.

Categories

A codesheet (Appendix B) was constructed with 21 items. Several of these categories are adaptations of previous studies such as Bortree (2007) who looked at children's nonprofit Websites and relational strategies and Ki (2003) who first applied relational strategies to the Web via content analysis of *Fortune* 500 companies Websites. The frequency with which organizations engage in relational strategies will help to answer RQ1 - Are nonprofit organizations utilizing the Web to engage their various publics in dialogic relationships? The answer to this research question will be measured by evaluating the amount of strategies that are present. Next, the categories of access, positivity, openness, shared tasks, networking, and assurances will help to answer RQ2 - What relational strategies are nonprofit organizations' Websites using? These categories are developed in the following sections. Organization information will be used to help answer RQ3 - What type of nonprofit organization is most frequently engaging in relational strategies with its various publics? Subcategories in this area will include type (is the nonprofit primarily to benefit men, women, children, environment, etc) and reach (is the nonprofit primarily aimed at achieving global, national, regional, state, or local goals).

Organization information

Basic information will be collected on the nonprofit organizations by the primary research and the intercoder via the organization Website. Organization type is openly coded by the researcher based on the primary goals and objectives for the organization (examples include animals, arts, agriculture, financial, political, recreational, etc). Organizational reach is defined as the efforts and goals of the organization, and determining if they are intended for international, national, regional, state, or local levels of advocacy. For example, a city church may have a local reach; College Democrats has a national reach, etc. This basic information will help to answer the RQ3 - What type of non-profit organization is most frequently engaging its various publics?

Access

Access is the first relational strategy investigated. Access refers to information organizations provide to assist the public in making contact with the organization (Ki, 2003; Bortree, 2007). The three areas of access coded for this concept are (1) telephone contact information - which refers to telephone numbers by department, branch or division, as well as names of contacts and positions; (2) physical address - provides physical address by department, branch or division, as well as names of contacts and positions and; (3) e-mail address - provides e-mail address by department, branch or division, as well as names of contacts and positions. Each is coded as high, medium, low, or not available according to the codebook (Appendix A). The data is coded as high when the Website provides telephone numbers, physical address, and e-mail address by department, branch or division, as well as names of contacts and positions. Medium is coded when the Website provides telephone numbers, physical address, and e-mail address by department, branch or division. Low is coded when the Website provides only one central contact telephone number physical address, and e-mail address. This information will help answer RQ2 - What relational strategies are nonprofit organizations' Websites using?.

Positivity

Positivity is the second relational strategy examined. Regarding the Internet, this strategy has been interpreted as any attempt to achieve simplicity of the Website for users (Ki, 2003; Bortree, 2007). A Website that is deemed "user friendly" invites the user to stay on the Website rather than leave with confusion or unanswered questions. Thus, items coded for this concept are (1) ease of navigation - every item is clearly labeled, content accessed is what is to be expected and all links work well.; (2) search functions - the Website provides advanced search capabilities as well as tips for searching; and (3) site mapping - Website provides clearly hierarchical structure, content is easily found. Each is coded as high, medium, low, or not available, according to the codebook (Appendix A).

Navigation is coded as high when every item is clearly labeled, content accessed is what is to be expected and all links work well. Navigation is coded as medium when labels are clear, but some are confusing and there may be some inaccessible links. Navigation is coded low when labels are confusing. It may also be difficult to discern content and many links are inaccessible.

Search is measured similarly where high would be coded as the Website provides advanced search capabilities as well as tips for searching. Also, medium would provide advanced search capabilities where low would provide a simple search function.

The sitemap will be coded as high when the Website provides clearly hierarchical structure and content is easily found. A medium coding would be when the Website provides a marginally clear hierarchical structure. It is mostly helpful for finding content. Finally, low would be coded if the page has unclear hierarchical structure and is not helpful. Additionally, this study follows Bortree's addition of a fourth element which is audiovisual. This strategy component means inclusion of photographs, illustrations, video, or music. High would be coded if the Website provides much interactive or audiovisual content such as videos, music, pod casts, games, photos, etc. Medium will be coded if the Website provides some interactive or audiovisual content such as videos, music, pod casts, games, photos, etc. Finally, low is coded when the Website provides little interactive or audiovisual content such as videos, music, pod casts, games, photos, etc. This information will help answer RQ2 - What relational strategies are nonprofit organizations' Websites using?.

Openness

Openness is the third relational strategy explored. It refers to how organizations present information in regards to finance, structuring, employment, mission statement, etc. to publics in order to demonstrate transparency (Ki, 2003; Bortree, 2007). For this strategy items are coded as (1) organization overview (also known on the Internet as an "About Us" section) - this will include information on an organization history or creation as well as goals and objective; (2) organizational news; and (3) annual reports and records. Each is coded as high, medium, low, or not available, according to the codebook (Appendix A).

Organizational information is coded as high when the Website has a chronological explanation of organization history, presenting information with graphics; Includes names and photos of directors/executive/other influential staff. Medium is defined as having chronological explanation of organization history, presenting information without graphics; includes names and but not photos of directors/executive/other influential staff. While low is defined as having some explanation of how the organization came into being.

News will be coded as high when the Website offers updated news more than once a week. Medium is when the Website offers updated news more than once a month. Low is when the Website offers updated news less than once a month.

Finally, annual reports are coded as high when the organization offers links to all annual reports. Medium is offering links to the current annual reports and low offers links to an annual report. This information will help answer RQ2 - What relational strategies are nonprofit organizations' Websites using?.

Shared tasks

Shared tasks is the fourth relational strategy examined. It refers to the activities an organization undertakes to share in some of the problems its publics are facing (Ki, 2003). Since these organizations are already nonprofit organizations, and not vested in a bottom line, it is important to think of this construct as more engaging in community or educational activity (Bortree, 2007). Thus, the items coded in this area are (1) community activity - programs that engage the community; (2) educational activity - programs that educate the community about a problem or issue; and (3) donation of time or money - volunteering or giving monetary contribution. Each is coded as high, medium, low, or not available according to the codebook (Appendix A). Community activity is defined as high when the Website offers detailed information about the community activity, its purpose, kinds of activities, programs, grants, services, etc. and includes evaluation of those activities. Medium offers detailed information, but not evaluation and low offers only a statement related to community activity.

Education activity is coded as high when the Website offers detailed information about environmental activity, its purpose, kinds of activities, programs, grants, services, etc. and includes evaluation of those activities. Medium is coded when the Website offers detailed information, but not evaluation and low offers only a statement related to environmental activity. Donation of time or money is coded high when the Website offers detailed information about how to get involved with organizations via time or monetary donation, where that money goes, goals, accomplishments, etc. It will also provide a place to volunteer/donate money. Medium is coded when the Website offers some information about how to get involved with organization via time or monetary donation, as well as provides a place to volunteer/donate money. Low provides a place to volunteer/donate money. This information will help answer RQ2 - What relational strategies are nonprofit organizations' Websites using?.

Networking

Networking is the fifth relational strategy in the study. In this instance networking refers to building coalitions with the same groups as the organizations' publics (Ki, 2003; Bortree, 2007). For example, a conservative political charity may want to network itself with a church where most of its volunteers are members. The items in this section were coded as (1) networking with similar nonprofits; (2) networking with dissimilar nonprofits; and (3) networking with for-profit organizations. Each is coded as high, medium, low, or not available, according to the codebook (Appendix A).

Networking with other nonprofits (similar) is coded as high when the Website has visibility of where the nonprofit works (past and present) with other nonprofits that share the same primary interest. It will evaluate those efforts, and encourages the visitor to look into the other nonprofit as well. Medium has visibility of this nonprofit working with another nonprofit that is similar. Low will have passive mentioning of past efforts with another nonprofit. Networking with other nonprofits (dissimilar) is coded as high when the Website has visibility of where the nonprofit works (past and present) with other nonprofits that don't share the same primary interest. It will evaluate those efforts, and encourages the visitor to look into the other nonprofit as well. Medium has visibility of the nonprofit working with another nonprofit that does not share a primary interest. Low will have passive mentioning of past efforts with another nonprofit.

Networking with for-profit organizations is coded as high when the Website has visibility of where the nonprofit works (past and present) with a for profit organization. It evaluates those efforts, and encourages the visitor to purchase from and look into the other organization as well. Medium has visibility of the nonprofit working with a for profit organization on a project. Low has passive mentioning of past efforts with a for profit. Networking with for-profit organizations is important because it allows for understanding of how a nonprofit and for-profit can work together. It can also help understand the nonprofit side of corporate social responsibility. These items were a departure from Ki and Bortree. This information will help answer RQ2 - What relational strategies are nonprofit organizations' Websites using?

Assurances

Assurances are the final relational strategy in this research. This strategy is defined as declarations of concern for a public (Bortree, 2007). On the Web this strategy would mean for Websites that there are places for computer-mediated communication. Thus, three items were coded for in this area. (1) Presence of a chat room; (2) presence of a message board; and (3) presence of a blog. Each is coded as high, medium, low, or not available according to the codebook (Appendix A). Presence of chat room is coded as high when chat room has many users who are registered users and not "guest" or "bots" (automated respondents). Medium is coded when the chat room has some users, may be "guest" or "bot" and low would simple have a chat room exists but no one is in it. Presence of message board is coded as high when it is active with many threads and registered users. The organization has a presence on the message board engaging with its visitors. Medium would be coded for when the message board are active with users, but with no real presence from the organization. Low would have inactive message boards.

Presence of blog is coded as high when the blog is updated once a week or more. Comments are posted by visitors and comments are responded to by the blog originator or other organization members registered to the blog. Medium is coded for when the blog is updated once a month. Some comments are posted and a few may be answered. Low would have a blog that is updated less than once a month and comments are rare. The presence of these computed mediated communications allow for the back and forth dialog between an individual and an organization. For example a chat room could allow various publics to dialog with representatives of the organization. Furthermore, the addition of a blog in this section is a new consideration unique to this study. It is included as an assurance because of the way in which the blog allows an organization to post a message and receive instantaneous and open two-way communication with a public (Seltzer & Mitrook, 2007). This information will help answer RQ2 - What relational strategies are nonprofit organizations' Websites using?.

Sampling

As with any quantitative research a sample is needed for study. For the purpose of studying non-profit organizations and their Websites, the population for this study comes from the Website www.idealist.org. Idealist.org is highly recognized as an influential nonprofit directory through popular press, awards and recognition (Hainer, 2005; Special Report, 2005; Employment, 2006; Zimmerman, 2008). Previous studies have often relied upon the *NPT* Top 100 list of nonprofits; however this reliance can be problematic. The list is compiled by utilizing the IRS report on how much in contributions nonprofits receive. Again, the problem with this population as a sampling frame for this study is twofold. First, it assumes that all of those nonprofits have Websites. Furthermore, the list changes only slightly from year to year, meaning the same organizations tend to stay in the top 100 such as the Red Cross and United Way, and thus a random sample is difficult to obtain.

Idealist.org is a free Web directory that through keyword search database inquiries will link a Web user to a non-profit that fits his/her search description. It is not only free to users who wish to search the database; it is also free to those organizations that wish to post their Websites. The Website itself then is a nonprofit organization. Thus, this fact is another reason for utilizing this population. Idealist.org will allow for a variety of nonprofits for study that range in type, size and reach. A keyword search was conducted of the database with only two options (English speaking Websites and United States only) which yielded 56,702 Websites for a sampling frame. Actual keywords were omitted to get a full broad range of Websites. By not entering a keyword, such as "environmental" or "women's issues," all organizations of all sizes and types were generated. Every potential Website in the directory that was English speaking and in the United States was then made available as the sampling frame.

After obtaining the sampling frame of 56,702 Websites, a random sample was chosen. A random sample is when "all members in a population have the same probability of being selected and the selection of each member is independent of the selection of all other members" (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 2003, p.142). A random sample will allow for the results to be generalized to the larger population. Given the nature of the Web and the possibility of broken links or unavailable sites, as demonstrated by the previous studies (Liu, Arnett, Capella, and Beatty, 1997; Taylor, Kent and White, 2001 & 2003; Callison, 2003; Ki, 2003; Bortree, 2007), a sample of 150 was chosen to ensure at least 100 would be usable. The sample sizes for previous studies have utilized sample sizes of 100. However, that it is not always easily attained. For example, Bortree's study demonstrates the difficulty in ensuring the number of usable links. Bortree's study started with 100 sites but ultimately ended up utilizing 39. Thus, 150 was the number chosen to ensure at least 100 usable sites would be present in the sample.

A random number generator was used via the Web tool randomizer.org to generate 150 numbers from the sampling frame. After obtaining the list of 56,702 Websites, each was automatically assigned a number via the search results list and the 150 were recorded by name and Website address. Of the 150 Websites selected, 129 were usable at the time of coding; the other 21 were no longer available, meaning they were broken and inaccessible.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the "amount of error coders make when placing content into categories." (Stacks, 2002, p.116). Basically, this means the coding can be counted in the same way in different instances. For the purpose of this study, intercoder reliability will be used. Intercoder reliability refers to another researcher following the same explicit rules and guidelines as the original researcher to get the same results during the content analysis (Stacks, 2002). The equation used to calculate reliability for this content analysis is:

$$\boxed{\frac{2M}{N_1 + N_2}}$$

M is the total coded items agreed upon, while N is the total items for coder. This formula comes from Holsti as used in public relations research by Stacks (2002). Good coder reliability is obtained at the .9 or 90 percent level.

In the case of Internet content analysis, Wimmer and Dominick (2006) suggest calculating reliability as soon as possible. This urgency is due to the nature of the Internet as being very fluid and constantly changing (p. 173). Thus, to help combat any discrepancies in the content studied, and also to aid in intercoder reliability, copies of Websites will be kept in a hard copy form so that coders are given the exact same content to code. Furthermore, to help bolster intercoder reliability, the codebook and codesheet are explained via training to another communication graduate student.

IV. RESULTS

This study investigates three research questions. RQ 1 asks "Are nonprofit organizations utilizing the Web to engage their various publics in dialogic relationships?" RQ 2 asks "What relational strategies are nonprofit organizations' Websites using?" and RQ 3 asks "What type of nonprofit organization is most frequently engaging in relational strategies with its various publics?" Answering these questions involves a content analysis of 129 nonprofit Websites. Each strategy includes three or four items, which are evaluated using categorizations from low to high. This section details the results of the content analysis using descriptive and Chi square (where significance levels were set to .05). Furthermore, intercoder reliability is calculated at 90.6% based on the coding of 20 Websites.

Engagement

Research question one asks, "Are nonprofit organizations utilizing the Web to engage their various publics in dialogic relationships?" The question seeks to understand how nonprofit organizations engage their publics via the Web. Descriptive statistics are used to express if the relational strategies are high, medium, low, or not at all. The first strategy to examine is access (Table 4.1). Access is coded in three areas - telephone contact, physical address contact, and e-mail contact. Of the 129 Websites, 87 (67.4%) are coded as having low telephone contact information, 14 (10.9%) are coded as having medium telephone contact information, 18 (14.0%) are coded as having high telephone contact information, and 10 (7.8%) of the Websites do not include telephone contact information.

Physical address is the second component for access. Of the 129 Websites, 96 (74.4%) sites are coded as low physical address, 15 (11.6%) are coded as medium, 5 (3.9%) are coded as high, and 13 (10.1) are coded as not having any physical address information.

E-mail address is the final component of access. Out of 129 sites, 65 (50.4%) are coded as low, 16 (12.4%) are coded as medium, and 37 (28.7%) are coded as high, while 11(8.5%) are coded as not having any e-mail contact information at all.

Table 4.1

Access

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Telephone	High	18	14.0%
	Medium	14	10.9%
	Low	87	67.4%
	Not Available	10	7.8%
Physical Address	High	5	3.9%
	Medium	15	11.6%
	Low	96	74.4%
	Not Available	13	10.1%
E-mail	High	37	28.7%
	Medium	16	12.4%
	Low	65	50.4%
	Not Available	11	8.5%

The second strategy to examine is positivity. Positivity is measured by ease of navigation, availability of search function, clear hierarchical sitemap, and presence of audiovisuals (Table 4.2). For the category of navigation ease, of the 129 Websites, 79

(61.2%) are coded as high, 28 (21.7%) as medium, 18 (14.0%) as low and 4 (3.1%) were not available.

Availability of search functions is the second part of positivity. The data shows that 3 (2.3%) are coded as high, 1 (0.8%) is coded as medium, 35 (27.1%) are coded as low, and 90 (69.8%) have no searchable function.

The third component of positivity is sitemap availability. Eighty five (65.9%) of Websites are coded as high, 18 (14.0%) are coded as medium, 7 (5.4%) are coded as low, and 19 (14.7%) of the Websites are coded as not available.

The final element of positivity is audiovisual presence. Forty-two (32.6%) Websites are coded as high, 34 (26.4%) are coded as medium, 43 (33.3%) are coded as low, and 10 (7.8%) are coded as not available.

Table 4.2

Positivity

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Navigation	High	79	61.2%
	Medium	28	21.7%
	Low	18	14.0%
	Not Available	4	3.1%
Search	High	3	2.3%
	Medium	1	0.8%
	Low	35	27.1%
	Not Available	90	69.8%
Sitemap	High	85	65.9%
	Medium	18	14.0%
	Low	7	5.4%
	Not Available	19	14.7%
Audiovisual	High	42	32.6%
	Medium	34	26.4%
	Low	43	33.3%
	Not Available	10	7.8%

The third strategy to explore is openness. The three areas observed for openness are organization overview, news, and annual reports (Table 4.3). First, organization overviews are found to be high on 20 (15.5%) Websites, 60 (46.5%) are coded as medium, 45 (34.9%) are coded as low, and 4 (3.1%) are not available.

News is the second category coded for under openness. Twenty-one (16.3%) of Websites are coded as high, 19 (14.7%) are coded as medium, 50 (38.8%) are coded as low, and 39 (30.2%) are coded as not available.

Annual reports are the final part of openness. Of the Websites coded, 4 (3.1%) are coded as high, 8 (6.2%) are coded as medium, 7 (5.4%) are coded as low, and 110 (85.3%) are coded as not available.

Table 4.3

Openness

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Organization Overview	High	20	15.5%
	Medium	60	46.5%
	Low	45	34.9%
	Not Available	4	3.1%
News	High	21	16.3%
	Medium	19	14.7%
	Low	50	38.8%
	Not Available	39	30.2%
Annual Reports	High	4	3.1%
	Medium	8	6.2%
	Low	7	5.4%
	Not Available	110	85.3%

The fourth relational strategy the study looks at is shared tasks. This strategy is made up of community activity, educational activity and donation of time and/or money

(Table 4.4). The first component of this strategy is community activity. Of the Websites coded, 34 (26.4%) are coded as high, 23 (17.8%) are coded as medium, 48 (37.2%) are coded as low, and 24 (18.6%) are not available.

The second part of shared tasks is educational activity. Thirty-one (24.0%) Websites are coded as high, 22 (17.1%) are coded as medium, 34 (26.4%) are coded as low, and 42 (32.6%) are coded as not available.

Donation of time/money is the third part of the shared tasks category. Thirty-one (24.0%) Websites are coded as high, 25 (19.4%) are coded as medium, 31 (24.0%) are coded as low, and 42 (32.6%) are coded as not available.

Table 4.4

Shared Tasks

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Community Activity	High	34	26.4%
	Medium	23	17.8%
	Low	48	37.2%
	Not Available	24	18.6%
Educational Activity	High	31	24.0%
	Medium	22	17.1%
	Low	34	26.4%
	Not Available	42	32.6%
Donation of Time/Money	High	31	24.0%
	Medium	25	19.4%
	Low	31	24.0%
	Not Available	42	32.6%

The fifth relational strategy to look at is networking. For the study networking was divided into three types of networking: similar nonprofit networking, dissimilar nonprofit networking, and for profit networking. The first area coded is networking with similar nonprofits. Six (4.7%) Websites are coded as high, 34 (26.4%) are coded as medium, 33 (25.6%) are coded as low, and 56 (43.4%) are not available.

Networking with dissimilar nonprofits is the second area in networking observed. Three (2.3%) Websites are coded as high, 26 (20.2%) are coded as medium, 24 (18.6%) are coded as low, and 76 (58.9%) are not available.

The final area in networking is networks with for profit organizations. One (0.8%) Website is coded as high, 20 (15.5%) are coded as medium, 18 (14%) are coded as low, and 90 (69.8%) are coded as not available.

Table 4.5

Networking

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Similar	High	6	4.7%
	Medium	34	26.4%
	Low	33	25.6%
	Not Available	56	43.4%
Dissimilar	High	3	2.3%
	Medium	26	20.2%
	Low	24	18.6%
	Not Available	76	58.9%
For profit	High	1	0.8%
	Medium	20	15.5%
	Low	18	14.0%
	Not Available	90	69.8%

The last strategy to examine is assurances (Table 4.6). This category is made up of availability of chat, message board, and blog. Of all Websites available none have a chat room function. Also, of the 129 Websites, only one has a low level functioning message board. The other 128 Website do not have any message board capabilities.

Blogs are found on some Websites with 1 (0.8%) at the high level, 2 (1.6%) at the medium level, and 14 (10.9%) at the low level. The other 112 (86.8%) Websites do not have a blog present.

Table 4.6

Assurances

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percentage
	Not Available	129	100%
Board	High	0	0%
	Medium	0	0%
	Low	1	0.8%
	Not Available	128	99.2%
Blog	High	1	0.8%
	Medium	2	1.6%
	Low	14	10.9%
	Not Available	112	86.8%

Frequent Relational Strategy Uses

Research question two asks, "What relational strategies are nonprofit organizations' websites using?". This question seeks to gauge which strategies might be most present on nonprofit Websites. Again, basic descriptive statistics are used to examine frequencies of the categories of access, positivity, openness, shared tasks, networking, and assurances.

Of the six strategies, all six are present in some form on nonprofit Websites. However, the level at which they are coded ranges from strategy to strategy. The uppermost frequency that is coded as high is sitemap, which is part of the positivity strategy. The second largest concentration of high coding is navigation which is also part of the positivity strategy.

The lowest of all the six strategies is assurances. The presence of chat rooms is nonexistent in the sample of 129 Websites. Also, for message boards there is only one, the other 128 Websites had no message boards available. Both chat rooms and message boards fall into the assurances strategy.

Type and Reach Based Strategy Use

Research question 3 asks, "What type of nonprofit organization is most frequently engaging in relational strategies with its various publics?" This question seeks to explore if certain types of nonprofit organizations are better at using different relationship strategies than others. First, descriptives are done to show the distribution of organization type, and second, descriptives are done to show the distribution of organization reach. Of the 129 Websites, 2 (1.6%) are based in agriculture, 4 (3.1%) are based in animals, 12 (9.3%) are based in arts, 6 (4.7%) are based in children, 8 (6.2%) are based in community, 2 (1.6%) are based in domestic violence, 12 (9.3%) are based in education, 3 (2.3%) are based in environment, 4 (3.1%) are based in financial, 1 (0.8%) is based in general nonprofits, 24 (18.6%) are based in health, 4 (3.1%) are based in legal, 5 (3.9%) are based in media, 14 (10.9%) are based in political, 5 (3.9%) are based in poverty, 7 (5.4%) are based in recreational, 7 (5.4%) are based in religion, 2 (1.6%) are based in technology, and 7 (5.4%) are based in women's interests (Table 4.7).

The second set of descriptive data describes the organizations' reach (Table 4.8). Twelve (9.3%) of organizations have goals that reach the international level, 22 (17.1%) have goals that reach a national level, 6 (4.7%) of organizations have goals that reach a regional level, 19 (14.7%) of organizations have goals that reach a state level, 63 (48.8%) have goals that reach a local level, and 7 (5.4%) of organizations goals are unable to determine reach.

Table 4.7

Distribution of Organization Type

Type of Nonprofit	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture	2	1.6%
Animals	4	3.1%
Arts	12	9.3%
Children	6	4.7%
Community	8	6.2%
Domestic violence	2	1.6%
Education	12	9.3%
Environment	3	2.3%
Financial	4	3.1%
General	1	0.8%
Health	24	18.6%
Legal	4	3.1%
Media	5	3.9%
Political	14	10.9%
Poverty	5	3.9%
Recreational	7	5.4%
Religious	7	5.4%
Technology	2	1.6%
Women	7	5.4%

Table 4.8

Reach

Reach of Nonprofit	Frequency	Percentage
International	12	9.3%
National	22	17.1%
Regional	6	4.7%
State	19	14.7%
Local	63	48.8%
Unable to Identify	7	5.4%

Access

Chi-square analysis is performed to compare categorical data such as type and size to the low – high levels of access strategy use. First, reach is compared to telephone contact information availability with significance in the table ($X^2 = 31.77$, df = 15, p = .007). However, this strategy component was coded as low consistently across reach (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9

Reach Compared with Telephone

	Not Available	Low	Medium	High	Total
International	0	9	2	1	12
National	0	15	3	4	22
Regional	0	4	0	2	6
State	0	11	6	2	19
Local	7	45	3	8	63
Unable to Identify	3	3	0	1	7
Total	10	87	14	18	129

*p=.007

Next, telephone contact availability is compared using Chi-square analysis with organization type. There are no significant findings within this relationship in the table ($X^2 = 48.969$, df = 54, p = .668)

The second component of access measured is physical address availability. Chi-square results show that when comparing reach and presence of physical address information that there is no significant relationship in the table ($X^2 = 22.642$, df = 15, p =

.092). Also, there is no significant relationship between organization type and level of physical address availability in the table ($X^2 = 57.093$, df = 54, p = .361).

Finally, the last element of access examined is e-mail information availability. Chi-square tests between reach and e-mail levels show that there is significant relationship in the table ($X^2 = 25.241$, df = 15, p = .047). However, this significance is at the low level of e-mail availability (Table 4.10). When comparing organization type and e-mail information there is no significant relationship in the table ($X^2 = 54.686$, df = 54, p = .448).

Table 4.10

Reach Compared with E-mail Address

	Not Available	Low	Medium	High	Total
International	0	5	2	5	12
National	0	10	7	5	22
Regional	1	2	0	3	6
State	4	7	2	6	19
Local	4	38	4	17	63
Unable to Identify	2	3	1	1	7
Total	11	65	16	37	129

*p=.047

Positivity

Positivity is divided into four categories of navigation, search, sitemap, and audiovisual. First, navigation is compared with reach and no significant relationship is found in the table ($X^2 = 21.28$, df = 15, p = .129). Next, navigation is compared with organization type and again no significant relationship is found in the table (X^2 = 55.370, df = 54, p = .423).

The second component of positivity, search, has significance when comparing it to reach within the table (X^2 = 31.145, df = 15, p = .008). However, the search function is absent on most Websites across all areas of reach (Table 4.11). When comparing search with organization type, search is also found to be significant within the table (X^2 = 78.119, df = 54, p = .018). Yet again, it shows that search is absent on most of the Websites (Table 4.12).

Table 4.11

Reach Compared with Search

	Not Available	Low	Medium	High	Total
International	8	4	0	0	12
National	14	8	0	0	22
Regional	2	3	0	1	6
State	15	3	0	1	19
Local	45	17	0	1	63
Unable to Identify	6	0	1	0	7
Total	90	35	1	3	129

*p=.008

Table 4.12

Type and Search

	Not Available	Low	Medium	High	Total
Agriculture	2	0	0	0	2
Animals	3	1	0	0	4
Arts	12	0	0	0	12
Children	4	2	0	0	6
Community	5	3	0	0	8
Domestic Violence	2	0	0	0	2

Education	10	2	0	0	12
Environment	2	1	0	0	3
Financial	3	1	0	0	4
General	0	0	0	1	1
Health	15	8	0	1	24
Legal	3	1	0	0	4
Media	2	3	0	0	5
Political	10	3	0	1	14
Poverty	3	2	0	0	5
Recreational	6	1	0	0	7
Religious	3	3	1	0	7
Technology	1	1	0	0	2
Women	4	3	0	0	7
Total	90	35	1	3	129

*p=.018

Third, the sitemap categorization is observed. When comparing sitemap levels and reach, chi square shows that there is a significant relationship in the table (X^2 = 27.370, df = 15, p = .026). The Websites are all consistently at high levels (Table 4.13). Sitemap compared with organizational type reveals through chi square no significant relationship in the table (X^2 = 40.609, df = 54, p = .911).

Table 4.13

Reach Compared with Sitemap

	Not Available	Low	Medium	High	Total
International	0	2	0	10	12
National	2	2	3	15	22
Regional	0	0	1	5	6
State	2	0	1	16	19
Local	11	2	12	38	63
Unable to Identify	4	1	1	1	7
Total					129

*p=.026

Finally, the fourth part of positivity is audiovisual. Comparing reach and audiovisual levels using chi square there is no significant relationship in the table (X^2 = 10.379, df = 15, p = .795). Also, when comparing organizational types with audiovisual there is no significant relationship in the table (X^2 = 60.543, df = 54, p = .252).

Openness

Openness examines three areas: organization overview, news, and annual reports. First, organization overview is compared with reach yielding no significant relationship in the table (X^2 = 17.713, df = 15, p = .278). Next, organization type and organization overview are measured together producing no significant relationship in the table (X^2 = 59.447, df = 54, p = .284).

News is the second area explored within openness. When comparing news and reach there is no significant relationship in the table (X^2 = 12.863, df = 15, p = .613). Also, when news is compared with organizational type there is no significant relationship in the table (X^2 = 53.966, df = 54, p = .476).

Finally, the third component is annual reports. When comparing annual reports with reach there is significance within the table (X^2 = 29.940, df = 15, p = .012). However, this means that Websites are not providing annual reports, or if they do, it is at a low level (Table 4.14) . Comparing organizational type with annual reports produces another non significant relationship within the table (X^2 = 51.936, df = 54, p = .554).

Table 4.14
Reach Compared with Annual Reports

	Not Available	Low	Medium	High	Total
International	7	1	1	3	12
National	19	3	0	0	22
Regional	6	0	0	0	6
State	17	0	2	0	19
Local	54	3	5	1	63
Unable to Identify	7	0	0	0	7
Total	110	7	8	4	129

*p=.012

Shared Tasks

Shared tasks is the fourth strategy to explore. The three areas that make up shared tasks are community activity, educational activity, and donation of time/money. First, community activity (Table 4.15) is compared with reach and the relationship is significant in the table ($X^2 = 25.286$, df = 15, p = .046). When community activity is compared with organizational type there is no significant relationship in the table ($X^2 = 58.057$, df = 54, p = .328).

Table 4.15
Reach Compared with Community Activity

	Not Available	Low	Medium	High	Total
International	2	4	1	5	12
National	5	12	3	2	22
Regional	0	0	1	5	6
State	1	6	4	8	19
Local	14	22	13	14	63
Unable to Identify	2	4	1	0	7
Total	24	48	23	34	129

*p=.046

Next, the category of education activity is explored. When comparing reach with education there is no significant relationship in the table (X^2 = 22.891, df = 15, p = .086). Also, when comparing organizational type to educational activity there is no significant relationship in the table (X^2 = 53.747, df = 54, p = .484).

Finally, the area of donations can be examined. When comparing donation of time/money with reach there is no significant relationship in the table (X^2 = 20.895, df = 15, p = .140). Also, there is no significant relationship when comparing organizational type to donation of time/money in the table (X^2 = 58.767, df = 54, p = .305).

Networking

Networking is measured in three categories: with similar nonprofits, with dissimilar nonprofits, and with for profit organizations. First, when exploring relationships between networking with similar nonprofits and reach there is no significant relationship in the table (X^2 = 19.915, df = 15, p = .175). Also, when comparing networking with similar nonprofits and organizational type there is no significant relationship in the table (X^2 = 70.771, df = 54, p = .062).

The second component of networking is networking with dissimilar nonprofits. When comparing reach with dissimilar networking there is no significant relationship in the table (X^2 = 21.507, df = 54, p = .121). However, when comparing to organizational type there is a significant relationship within the table (X^2 = 89.163, df = 54, p = .002). Most of the Websites lacked any information on networking between dissimilar nonprofits (Table 4.16).

Table 4.16

Type and Networking with Dissimilar Nonprofits

	Not Available	Low	Medium	High	Total
Agriculture	1	0	1	0	2
Animals	3	0	1	0	4
Arts	5	3	4	0	12
Children	3	0	3	0	6
Community	5	2	1	0	8
Domestic Violence	2	0	0	0	2
Education	7	3	2	0	12
Environment	2	0	1	0	3
Financial	1	3	0	0	4
General	0	0	0	1	1
Health	16	4	4	0	24
Legal	2	0	2	0	4
Media	3	1	1	0	5
Political	9	3	2	0	14
Poverty	4	0	1	0	5
Recreational	4	2	1	0	7
Religious	5	1	0	1	7
Technology	0	0	2	0	2
Women	4	2	0	1	7
Total	76	24	26	3	129

*p=.002

The last part of networking is examining relationships that occur with for profit organizations. First, when looking at reach and networks with for profit organizations there is no significant relationship in the table ($X^2 = 10.240$, df = 15, p = .804). Also, there is no significant relationship between organizational type and networking with for profit organizations in the table ($X^2 = 53.508$, df = 54, p = .493).

Assurances

This is the final strategy to explore. Assurances are divided into presence of chat rooms, message boards, and blogs. When looking at chat rooms there are none present on any of the 129 Websites so tests could not be conducted with reach or organizational type.

Similarly, message boards could not be compared because only one was present on any of the Websites. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between reach and message boards in the table ($X^2 = 1.056$, df = 5, p = .958) or organizational type and message boards in the table ($X^2 = 24.994$, df = 18, p = .125).

Lastly, when looking at assurances the third category is blog presence. Comparing reach and blog presence shows no significant relationship in the table ($X^2 = 8.159$, df = 15, p = .917). Also, comparing organizational type with blog presence yields no significant relationship in the table ($X^2 = 50.277$, df = 54, p = .619).

V. DISCUSSION

Nonprofit organizations are using the Web as a means of engaging their publics in relationships. However, the degree at which nonprofits are completing this engagement is not to the highest level possible. When looking to the results of this study it can be seen that all six strategies (access, positivity, openness, shared tasks, networking, and assurances) are present. However, the rate at which relational strategies are present is varied. When comparing this study's data to the results of the *Fortune 500* content analysis by Ki (2003), most of the nonprofit Websites are lagging behind in their use of relational strategies. This assertion supports the research conclusions drawn by Spencer (2002) that nonprofit organizations are behind for profit organizations when it comes to technology. This section will discuss the results and findings for the research questions, as well as provide suggestions to nonprofit organizations, address limitations and provide future research opportunities.

Access

The first strategy to examine is access. According to Hon and Grunig (1999) publics and organizations need to provide access to one another. Furthermore, Ki (2003) and Bortree (2007) define access as information organizations provide to assist the public in making contact with the organization. In this study, access, is low across the three components of telephone contact information, physical address contact information, and e-mail address contact information. A low score in these three areas indicates that there is only minimal contact information. For example, most Websites examined have only one telephone number, only one physical address, and only one e-mail address. A higher level of access would include staff names and positions making available their telephone numbers and/or extensions, as well as their e-mail addresses. According to Ki (2003) "access is a good relationship maintenance strategy in that it provides basic contact methods to a company's publics. It is especially valuable in providing information about whom to contact" (p.52). Having a high access level projects a willingness of nonprofit organizations to communicate. It is especially important as it allows publics to know whom to contact for specific needs.

Unfortunately, most of the nonprofit Websites in this study are not providing a range of contact information. Most Websites include one main phone number, one centralized location, and one organizational e-mail contact. This data indicates that nonprofit organizations in the sample are not fostering adequate communication with their publics. Not having the additional contact information hinders the relationship by preventing two-way communication. This two-way communication is vital because it allows for linkages between publics and organizations (Zeff, 1996; Johnston, 1999). In order for two-way communication to take place, publics need to know how to communicate with the nonprofit organizations, be it by telephone, physical address, or e-mail address. Without knowing this information there is no channel for communication to take place.

Positivity

Positivity is the second relational strategy to explore. Hon and Grunig (1999) define positivity as anything the organization does to make the relationship more enjoyable. The nonprofit organizations' Websites in the study's data set are high in two of the categories. First, ease of navigation is found on 61.2% of the nonprofit organizations' Websites. Having no difficulty with navigation means that all links are working, and are clearly labeled, and content accessed is what is expected. The other high scoring category is sitemap availability. Similar to ease of navigation is the presence of a strong sitemap. Most nonprofit Websites have a clear hierarchical structure of where information is located within the site. Sitemaps are helpful for visitors because knowing where to go, and not having problems trying to get there, fosters liking and positivity. The areas in which nonprofit Websites lag behind are the search function and audiovisual. Nonprofit organizations are not including a search function on their Websites. This strategy component is an area that can be improved on to facilitate positivity. When a visitor approaches a Website specifically looking for information and he/she cannot readily find it, there is a disconnect between the organization and the visitor. Nonprofit Websites should be designed so that all information is easily accessed and disseminated. If a member of a public seeks to find information on a Website, and cannot find it he/she may not feel as if there is a strong connection to the organization. Thus, this disconnect harms the relationship.

Audiovisual content is another area within the positivity strategy that needs improvement. The audiovisual component is originally looked at by Bortree (2007).

Bortree says that these interactive features, such as podcasts, music, etc, or inclusions of graphics, photos, and sounds are also important for fostering positivity. The data in this study found mixed results across high, medium, and low levels of use. The mixed results indicate that some of the nonprofit organizations' Websites in this sample are engaging in interactive media and some are not. It also indicates that even though some of the Websites include audiovisual content, the content does not always work. For example, some Websites in the sample have places for graphics, but the links to the audiovisual content are broken. One religious Website provides downloadable audio files of the previous sermons. This feature would score highly on positivity if the links worked. Unfortunately, the links to the audio files are broken and thus, the sermons cannot be accessed. This is problematic for nonprofit organizations. If a service is supposed to be available and cannot be accessed then there is a disconnect between the public and the organization causing more strain on the relationship.

Overall, positivity is the most often used strategy by the nonprofit organizations examined in this study. This finding helps to answer research question two: "What relational strategies are nonprofit organizations' Websites using?." This is an area where nonprofit organizations differ from *Fortune 500* companies as Ki (2003) reports that the highest scoring strategy in for profit organizations is access. This comparison reveals a difference between nonprofit organizations and for profit organizations. With for profit organizations scoring highest in access they are more invested in disseminating information. Nonprofit organizations would then be more interested in creating an enjoyable environment for their publics. Hon and Grunig (1999) state that positivity is "anything the organization or public does to make the relationship more enjoyable for the parties involved" (p.14). By allowing for easier navigation and clearer structures, two very important aspects of Website design, nonprofit organizations in this sample are fostering a more easily accessible and more enjoyable atmosphere for their Website visitors.

A positive Website experience can help in building the relationship because it allows for two of Hon and Grunig's (1999) relational outcomes. Both trust and satisfaction have connection with the relational strategy of positivity. First, trust is defined as "one party's level of confidence in and willingness to open oneself to the other party" (p.19). Furthermore, Hon and Grunig state that trust is based in dependability, as well as competence. Having a positive Website experience according to this study's outlined areas of navigation, sitemap, search, and audiovisual would produce dependability when at the highest levels. When a visitor can readily find information because of navigation, sitemaps, search, and audiovisual the Website is dependable. Furthermore, competence, or having the ability to do what an organization states it is going to do, is also achieved when all of the areas (navigation, sitemap, search, and audiovisual) are at the higher levels. A visitor to the Website can see that when all four elements are present that the organization is demonstrating its competence by showing it can accomplish what it seeks to do. In addition, having a positive Website experience can be linked to the relational outcome of satisfaction. Hon and Grunig (1999) state that satisfaction can occur when one party believes the other party's relationship maintenance behaviors are positive. For a Website, the organization must make sure to maintain high levels of navigation ease, sitemap clarity, search function, and audiovisual elements. Thus, if nonprofit organizations improve their positivity strategies they can increase satisfaction in their public relationships.

Openness

Openness is the third relational strategy. This refers to how organizations present information in regards to finance, structuring, employment, mission statement, etc to publics in order to demonstrate transparency (Ki, 2003; Bortree, 2007). Openness is a strategy used by most nonprofit organizations in this sample; however, it is far from a high level of engagement. Of the 129 Websites, 125 (96.8%) have some type of organizational overview. Also, of the 129 Websites, 90 (69.7%) have some type of news. Only 19 (14.7%) of the 129 Websites have some access to annual reports. Ki's (2003) study of *Fortune 500* companies included more open information than this study's content analysis of nonprofit organizations. Of the six strategies Ki explores, openness was the highest (2003). This is interesting in comparison with the nonprofit data collected because for profit organizations are more forthright with their information on Websites. This finding could be due in part to the requirements of for-profit organizations to report certain financial data. In this study, results are scattered for nonprofits. This means there is an inconsistency with the willingness of the nonprofit organizations to be transparent. This is problematic because openness is crucial to relationship management. Openness is vital to the relational outcomes of trust and commitment.

Some organizational overviews are lacking detailed information. Knowledge is needed about their histories, as well as information on trustees and other board members. Without knowing who backs the organization, financially or politically, there can be issues and concerns with the motives of the organization. Information about sponsorship can play an important role in credibility of the organization. This lack of information can cause issues with trust and commitment. When considering the late 1990s and the crisis of trust for nonprofit organizations, this fact becomes a very important relational outcome.

Furthermore, news is critical to maintaining openness in a relationship. Without knowing the day-to-day ongoing operations of an organization, publics cannot make informed decisions about whether or not to support the organization. Most of the nonprofit Websites lack consistently updated news. Of the 129 Websites, 50 (38.8%) are operating at the lowest level of news coverage, which means that they updated their Website within the year. In fact, one Website claims "breaking news" with a date of "May 2005" in the year 2008. If news is indeed breaking, Websites should make sure that the news is in fact new. Not having up to date news provides a huge disservice to Website visitors because they expect news to be accurate and timely. Having old news diminishes the credibility of the organization. Also, in regard to the previous example of the Website with breaking news, it is misleading. This can also affect the relational outcomes of trust and commitment. Publics will not believe that an organization is dependable and competent, two factors in trust, when the organization cannot maintain accurate news. Furthermore, commitment can be affected if the public no longer feels the relationship is worth the cost to manage.

Finally, for the last component of openness, annual reports include information that covers most of the financial information for nonprofits. Only a small percentage of nonprofit organizations are making their annual reports available. While annual reports are not legally required by nonprofit organizations, other financial information must be reported. For example, while coding the data a few Websites provide links to their IRS 990 form, a form which is required. However, that information is not coded for and is only found on a few Websites. Without these disclosures of information, be it news, annual reports, or background information on the organization, relationships are difficult to foster.

Without openness there is little that can be done to build trust. In regard to trust, information must be disclosed by parties involved in the relationship or else there is no way to check for integrity. Hon and Grunig (1999) define integrity as the belief that an organization is fair and just. It is difficult to discern if an organization is being fair and just when there is a grave lack of information on where spending is allocated, and what spending is accomplishing. Furthermore, dependability is a critical aspect of trust. Hon and Grunig assert that dependability is when an organization does what it says it will do. Again, this is hard to facilitate when there is a lack of knowledge about the organization's history and goals. If this information is not made clear, there is nothing to compare the actions promised to the actions that result from nonprofit organization efforts.

Shared Tasks

The fourth strategy of shared tasks involves three areas that are paramount to the day-to-day operations of nonprofit organizations: community activity, educational activity, and donation of time/money. Shared tasks are the ways in which publics and organizations come together to solve problems (Hon & Grunig, 1999). Johnson (1999) reports that if people are going to donate to an organization's cause online, they want to know what issues are addressed and how they are addressed. Information on these issues is critical. The content analysis of nonprofit Websites shows mixed results for community activity. Most of the nonprofit Websites in this study are engaging in a discussion of their community efforts but the level to which they do this ranges from low to high. Some organizations use their Website only to mention their community activity in passing while others are including in depth information on community activity and also evaluating those community efforts. For example, one Website contained a list of sponsors but no information about those sponsors. Another Website had a list of sponsors and linked to those sponsors' Websites. A third Website listed sponsors and the products they donated and how those products had been used within the nonprofit organization. By showing the linkages between sponsor and nonprofit organization there is a transparency that can be used by the public. The public can evaluate how the organizations are sharing tasks. Furthermore, this element of evaluation links with the relational outcome of trust. Again, comparing what an organization says it is doing to what it is doing is part of the dependability aspect of trust. The same can be said about educational activities. Most of the Websites examined in this area also return mixed results in the low to high areas.

The final area of donation of time and/or money is a very important component. Without volunteers or financial backing, most nonprofit organizations would not thrive. Most of the Websites examined include some information on how to donate or volunteer but few actually express where those donations go or how money is used once it is received by the organization. This is problematic because it can severely impact relationship outcomes. If a public is donating to a cause, but does not receive information on how that donation is used there is a disconnect in the flow of information. This disconnect can cause issues with the public's trust, satisfaction, and commitment. The Sustainable Food Center, a regional sized nonprofit organization, did an excellent job of supplying this information. That organization is able to show an itemized list of how much resources cost, and supply this data at the site of donation. This breakdown of information shows exactly where every cent of a donor's contribution is being spent. This disclosure is important because it allows publics to evaluate what an organization says versus what the organization does, as well as how well the organization is accomplishing its goals which make up two aspects of trust – dependability and competence. On the opposite side of the spectrum, many nonprofit Websites simply include a link to an offsite donation page where financial contributions can be made without the donor ever knowing where his/her money goes. If a public cannot see how financial contributions are working they may not choose to donate again. Again, this is cause for concern in terms of fostering relational outcomes. If publics cannot trust nonprofit organizations the relationship is not growing and as such the organization may lose support and future funding.

This strategy of shared tasks is also central to relationship outcomes. Nonprofit organizations' Websites should be expressing their community activity, their educational activity, and information on how to engage in donating time or money to the organization. Those evaluation efforts need to be expressed openly on the nonprofit organizations' Websites so that publics can see what the organization is accomplishing.

Networking

Networking is the fifth relational strategy in this content analysis. Hon and Grunig (1999) suggest organizations build networks with the same groups that their publics do. Many nonprofits are not displaying their linkages to other nonprofits (both similar and dissimilar) and for profit organizations. This data indicates that the linkages may not exist, that the linkages are not noteworthy enough to display, or that the nonprofit organizations do not know the importance of displaying these networks. Those Websites that are displaying linkages are not clearly explaining why they connect to other organizations. For example, some sites may present a list of sponsors but they do not detail the relationship to the sponsor. Other Websites included detailed information about their sponsors, what their sponsors contribute, and other information about the relationship between the nonprofit organization and for profit organization. This disclosure is important because of credibility. Knowing more about who sponsors an organization assists in determining the credibility of an agency. Publics should be allowed to know what financial driving forces may be behind certain nonprofit groups.

Networking is critical to sustaining relationships as well as creating and maintaining image and reputation (Ki, 2003). Thus, an area of improvement for nonprofit Websites is to increase the visibility of networks. This could be done by explaining any links to outside organizations, whether they are similar nonprofits working for the same goals, dissimilar nonprofits that cooperate on some goals, or for profit organizations that contribute to the fulfillment of organizational goals. Explaining these linkages and giving details reveals more about the connections that the nonprofit organizations are making. If organizations are not explaining their linkages there can be risk. First, the organization is risking potential negative connections. For example, a nonprofit organization that claims nonpartisanship might want to avoid receiving funds from an extremist group. Nonprofit organizations would want to avoid any linkages to other organizations that are known for not providing good contributions. Furthermore, another risk would be if the nonprofit organization does have connection with an excellent organization, or organization that contributes a great deal to society, but fails to tell how they, too, link with this other organization.

Detailed information on an organization's networks can also provide insight into the relational outcome of control mutuality. Control mutuality refers to the degree to which organizations agree on who has power and influence over one another (Hon & Grunig, 1999). When an organization gives details on its Website linkages between its networked associations then insight is given into who may have what power in the relationship. Hon and Grunig (1999) also assert that the most stable relationships are when organizations and publics have some degree of control over one another.

Assurances

Finally, the last strategy to examine is assurances. Hon and Grunig (1999) define assurances as attempts to assure the other party in the relationship that they and their concerns are legitimate. The three areas that make up assurances are chat rooms, message boards, and blogging. None of the nonprofit organizations in this content analysis's sample have chat rooms. Furthermore, only one message board was present on a Website and it is low level functioning. That finding means the one nonprofit Website found in the sample has a message board that is not updated regularly and no users are using the board. This lack of updating renders the message board inactive and unhelpful to the organization and its publics. The area that does in fact have some attention is blogging. Blogs are present on 17 of the 129 Websites. However, most of these blogs did not update regularly, and did not engage readers in discussions. These findings indicate that there is marginal effort made to engage in two-way communication. Also, these findings show little attempt to have a discourse in a public place where concerns by publics can be addressed.

Many of the elements for assurances are missing, or presented at a low level. This finding makes assurances the least used strategy. This information helps to answer research question two: "What relational strategies are nonprofit organizations' Websites using?." Lacking in assurances can be problematic. Assurances help to make sure that parties involved in the relationship can see their concerns as legitimate (Hon & Grunig, 1999). If the cares of publics are not seen as genuine, they are less likely to support an organization that is dismissive. In terms of relational strategy, assurances help to demonstrate commitment between parties in the relationship.

Assurances is the least engaged strategy making it the one in need of the most improvement. While nonprofit organizations may not have the resources to engage in a chat room all day every day, they can arrange times when a representative can be live to answer questions. As for message boards, if one is created on the Website it must be maintained and updated. If publics are making posts and asking questions they should be treated as any other type of communication and responded to accordingly. Finally, blogs are probably the most likely avenue to explore for assurances given their popularity among political organizations (Lawson-Borders & Kirk, 2005; Williams, et al., 2005) and because they are more often found on nonprofit Websites in this study. When maintaining a blog on a nonprofit organization Website, the organization must keep it up to date just the same as it would keep its news up to date. Furthermore, the author of the blog posts should be someone in the organization with the knowledge to not only disseminate the information, but also to respond to comments that the public may have. Having someone outside of the ongoings of the organization can cause inaccurate response to publics concerns. If the public are not getting the information they need there will be a disconnect in the relationship. If the disconnect grows it can cause the organization to lose the funding and support from its publics.

Organization Type and Reach

When analyzing whether or not a certain type or size of organization would have effect on strategies used, no major findings are present. Data that are significant only showed that organization size and type did not have any major effect on strategies used. For example, Chi-square analysis shows that when comparing reach and telephone contact information the relationship is significant. However, the data also reflects that consistently across all levels of reach telephone contact information remained low. Low indicates that only minimal contact information is provided. Thus, a consistent low ranking between all reaches (international, national, regional, state, and local) means there is no organization category that is superior to the others at accomplishing this strategy.

These findings are interesting when compared to Bortree (2007). Bortree examines children's nonprofit Websites and found that most of those Websites include four or more strategies. However, what that study does not do is assess the level at which those strategies are expressed. Assessing the full scope of Website relational engagement is a preferable method to simply checking to see if a strategy is present or absent because it allows for more data. That data can then describe what areas nonprofit organizations need to improve upon. When specifically looking at children's nonprofits, this study reports that only two areas had significant results. Those two areas are search function and networking with dissimilar nonprofits. Children's nonprofits lack a search function on most Websites. Also, children's nonprofit organizations either do not display networks with other dissimilar nonprofits or they do at a medium level which means they discuss the relationship but do not evaluate the relationship. To improve this area, efforts can be made by the organizations to explain the linkages on the Website. Not explaining, as mentioned in the previous networking section, can cause problems with trust and control mutuality.

Nonprofits and relationship management

This study illuminates the subjects of nonprofit organizations and the public relations theory of relationship management. The research data here is consistent with previous research such as Taylor, Kent, and White (2001), Jo and Kim (2003), and Kent, Taylor, and White (2003) in that is does not engage its publics in direct two-way communication. This communication method is important because it allows for both the organization and the public to engage in a discourse that can affect both parties mutually. Furthermore, if the organizations continue to fail at engaging their publics they might lose trust, commitment, control mutuality, and satisfaction which in turn can lead to little support from key publics. Spencer (2002) reports the Internet has the potential to help nonprofits match for profit organizations in their technology standards. This study does not support that claim fully, instead it can compare with Ki (2003) to show where nonprofits lag behind *Fortune 500* companies in most areas. This is important to note because if the potential is out there, nonprofit organizations are not grasping that potential. Spencer also notes that relationship building should be a component of Websites in hopes that those relational strategies can be used to strengthen nonprofits. This study explores where nonprofit organizations are using relational strategies. It unfortunately shows where many improvements to nonprofit Websites can be made.

Kenix (2008) claims that nonprofit organizations want to be more corporation-like so that they can succeed in their goals. Nonprofit organization representatives think of the Internet as a way to do so. This content analysis examines nonprofit Websites and then compares them to *Fortune 500* Websites. If most representatives of nonprofit organizations want to model for profit organizations' Websites, then much will be needed to improve the Websites so that they can reach the same high levels of strategy use as for profit organizations. Nonprofit organizations will have to increase their efforts to update and maintain their Websites.

Furthermore, nonprofits will need to increase their use of relational strategies if they seek to gain successful outcomes. Hon and Grunig (1999) express four relational outcomes: control mutuality, trust, satisfaction, and commitment. One of particular interest to nonprofits is trust. Herzlinger (1999) claims that as a result of the late 1990s nonprofits should seek to regain trust in the public eye because of ethical concerns. The content analysis results indicate that currently most of the nonprofit Websites examined are functioning at a low level of maintenance, with the exception of positivity's navigation and sitemap, and it is likely that trust is not being regained for some of these nonprofits. To regain this trust much more information will be necessary. It may be difficult for some to trust an organization that does not disclose where donations are going to, or who is a member of a board of trustees.

Previously mentioned nonprofit literature suggests a common theme of increases for information (Zeff, 1996; Herzlinger, 1999; Johnston, 1999; Johnson, 1999). Zeff (1996) and Johnston (1999) discuss the importance of improved communication and better access to information. Both Zeff and Johnston claim that the Internet provides a place for nonprofits to improve communication and access to information; unfortunately, this study shows that efforts are still needed to maximize two-way communication taking place on nonprofit Websites, as well as to increase the amount of openly disclosed information on Websites. Furthermore, Herzlinger (1999) states that nonprofit organizations need to restore trust and suggests ways to increase trust in the organizations through disclosure, analysis, and dissemination of information. This study shows that the nonprofit organizations in this sample could greatly improve in disseminating information that could then yield increased trust.

Given the current trends of the United States economy it is important for nonprofit organizations to be aware of certain issues. First, while Johnson (1999) may have found 65% of people are likely to donate to a cause they believe in online, this statistic is almost 10 years old. Furthermore, Spencer (2002) states that simply having a Website does not ensure donations. Finally, Boeder (2002) reports that many nonprofits of varied types and sizes are all facing decreases in donor giving and support. All of these claims taken together indicate that nonprofit organizations should take special care to maintain what relationships they have with volunteers. With economic concerns being great, donations may be fewer and less frequent. Increasing volunteerism may be a way to offset the financial burdens to nonprofit organizations.

Furthermore, Bortree and Waters (2008) suggest that organizations offer resume building skills to volunteers. If nonprofit organizations play professional development up it may have implications for relationship building. This professional development can mean saving financial costs for the day-to-day operations of the organization as well as improving the potential financial concerns of volunteers. When volunteers earn professional development and build their resumes through volunteer work, they can perhaps obtain better jobs and improve their own economic circumstances.

Suggestions for Nonprofit Organizations' Use of Relational Strategies on the Web

The first relational strategy suggestion comes with access. Nonprofit organizations must ensure that they are providing adequate contact information such as phone number, e-mail and physical addresses. To facilitate communication at a higher level, organizations need to provide as much contact information as possible as well as ensure that the contact methods are not simply filler on the Website. Nonprofit organizations will also have to ensure that they actually have representatives who can respond to publics and their concerns via the different contact media. Otherwise including the various contact outlets will be ineffective.

Positivity is a strategy that nonprofits appear to be using quite well. Nonprofits organizations in this study can build on the elements of site design that they already appear to do well, navigation ease and sitemap, and add a clearer search function. These three elements will increase their overall strategy of positivity and thus also increase the strength of the relationship between organization and public.

Furthermore, in terms of the audiovisual aspect of positivity, Websites must be checked periodically to make sure that materials are still functioning properly and are accessible to all users to the Website. Another suggestion might be to allow a place for users of the Website to contact the organization should the content become unavailable.

The third strategy involves openness. Many of the nonprofit organizations in this study did not provide much information on trustees, board members, staff, histories, annual reports, etc. In order to improve this strategy among nonprofit organization Websites many things can be done. First, organization histories, mission statements, goals, and objectives must be made clear to anyone visiting the Website. This information should be at the forefront of the Website and not buried underneath several levels of clicking into the Webpage. When the information is obscured by other Website content it might as well not exist. Next, news should always be updated. Breaking news must in fact be recent news. Finally, it will be helpful to produce some type of document, whether it is annual report formatting or IRS990 forms, that reports financial information to the public. These suggestions will allow publics to compare what the organization says it wants to do with what the organization actually accomplishes.

Shared tasks is the fourth strategy to consider its role on Websites. More organizations could model the practices used by the Sustainable Food Center in terms of monetary donations. Organizations can model how the Sustainable Food Center breaks down where each cent is spent, and organizations can also apply this practice to other instances also, such as showing what a day is like for a volunteer. This principle goes back to issues with information and disclosure of that information to the public. By detailing where donations go, the organization is showing the public where the public and the organization are coming together to accomplish a goal and how that goal is accomplished. This shared task component of relationship management has the advantage of facilitating not only trust, but also commitment. This relational outcome of commitment is fostered because when information about donations is clearly laid out publics can view the costs and benefits and compare them.

In terms of the fifth strategy, networking, nonprofit organizations need to be explicitly clear. Providing information on their relationships to the organizations they link with can provide information on sponsorship, as well as credibility. If the organization is linking with and explaining their relationships with other positive and credible Websites, that is more beneficial than simply providing a link to an outside organization.

Finally, there is the sixth relationship strategy of assurances. These appear to be the least engaged in terms of this study. Chat rooms, blogs, and message boards all are prime places for the two-way communication process to occur; yet are seldom used on the nonprofit organizations in this content analysis. Websites could include one or all of these measures.

One last thing to note for nonprofit organizations is moral obligation. It is both unethical and unwise to misrepresent one's organization on an organizational Website. If organizations are utilizing the Web to in fact submit false information to publics it is not actually building or maintaining a relationship by Hon and Grunig's stanrdards, and thus is not fostering trust. Furthermore, the information on the organization's Website is in fact put there by the nonprofit organization employees/members, and not a third party outsider, thus it is not objective. This fact is something that should be noted when researching. Should organizations wish to foster the previous relational outcomes discussed throughout this research, then it would be to the benefit of the organization to utilize these suggestions only in accordance with their actual organizations goals and objectives.

Falsifying information, especially if found out by the organizations' publics, will only harm current and future relationships. This is supported by previous research conducted by Herzlinger (1999). Herzlinger discusses why nonprofits must work harder at being truthful with their publics. Nonprofits have to ensure that they are meeting their ethical guidelines because of the negativity and increased scrutiny of nonprofit actions as a result of many unethical practices by nonprofits in the 1990s.

Limitations

As is the case with most research there are limitations. First, this study uses a random sample for obtaining the original 150 Websites. A stratified random sample might have resulted in more significant results when comparing organization type and relational strategies. By having a stratified random sample of organization types more accurate information could be given on the relationship between organization type and strategy used. However, this information would have been difficult to obtain given that organization types are generated via visiting the Website first. Also, this task may have been more difficult because the sample size could have included a sample size over 1,000. Furthermore, regarding sample size, power was not accounted for originally in the study. Power was calculated after the initial calculations in this study occured. After calculating power it is now known that a proper sample might have included approximately 154 Websites for a sample rather than the 129 Websites gathered. This calculation for power was obtained utilizing Maritz Statistics (2009) which uses the formula:

$$\boxed{n = \frac{(Z\alpha - Z\beta)^2\,\alpha^2}{diff^2}}$$

A second limitation to consider is the category of donation of time/money that fell under the shared task strategy. In the future it would be helpful to separate these two out. While both are similar it could be helpful to see if publics are more willing to give time or money. Furthermore, the importance of where monetary donations get spent might be deemed more important than where volunteers are being used. It would be best, in the future, to separate the categories out to see if more significant results occur.

Third, this study is only exploratory. Much of the information is adapted from two previous studies. The first, Ki (2003) provides the framework and details many of the variable constructs. For Ki, these are focused in for profit language. For this study, they are adapted to try to reflect more nonprofit. For example, annual reports became a slight issue in the study as nonprofits are not legally bound to produce such documents. In the future, an alternative to annual reports should be the IRS Form 990. This form is where nonprofit organizations report financial information. Furthermore, the second study, Bortree (2007) is specifically tailored to look at children's nonprofit organizations and adaptations are made to make this study more exploratory of all nonprofit organization types.

Fourth, the statistics used in this study are very simple. Most of the statistics are either frequencies or Chi-square. The Chi-squares that are significant are only based on the full Chi-square's table being significant. Individuals cells are not identified to find where the significance lies within that larger table. Again, this view of overall tables is used because the study is simply exploratory.

Finally, the very nature of a Website is that it is created and maintained by the organization. Thus, the data on the Website is self reported. Even if the data, such as a news article from an outside source, is posted on the Website, the nonprofit organization's Webmaster or Web designer chose to include such information and thus there is a filter. However, if nonprofit organizations are utilizing the Web as an enhancement in their relationship building it would be wise for the organization to stick to its moral obligation to reporting the truth, lest the organization wish to foster the relational outcome of *dis*trust.

Future Research

Much research needs to continue as a result of this study. This study is only exploratory and many specific approaches can initiate from it. First of all, this study looks at many types of nonprofit organizations. More studies can branch out and look at how specific nonprofits, such as health or environmental, use the Web to engage their publics using the six relational strategies of access, positivity, openness, shared tasks, networking, and assurances. It is important to study the differences among nonprofit organizations because they are all unique. Perhaps further studies might show that certain types of nonprofits only require minimal levels of engagement because the nonprofit organization does not require it. This information could be used by many people from scholars to practitioners. Staff looking to work in communication or public relations in the nonprofit sector can now know what the work detail of maintaining a good organizational Website entails.

Furthermore, research should look more at the perceptions publics of nonprofit organizations have. Survey data can be collected from publics who affiliate themselves with a nonprofit. The survey data could then investigate perceptions of relationships between the publics and the organization that are based on the Web. This information would allow for a different type of quantitative analysis to get the full scope of how effective nonprofits are in terms of their relationship building and maintenance. This is an important area to consider because when only looking at the Website itself, you are only looking to the organization. To get the other side, the public's side, data needs to be collected so the full relationship is understood. If content analysis shows low levels of engagements and survey research indicates that there is a high relationship then perhaps the model developed by Ki (2003), Bortree (2007) and this study will need to be reevaluated. That step cannot be known until research is done from the public's side as opposed to the organizational side.

Finally, another possible area to explore would be the addition of admiration as a relational outcome. Upon further investigation of the research based in Bortree and Waters (2008), admiration could become a fifth relational outcome. This particular content analysis did not specifically address admiration because only one study based on a convenience sample has been conducted. Upon further investigation of the outcome, more can be done to determine if strategies used online are producing admiration.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

With research on nonprofits and the Internet is vast and varied, this content analysis provides current insight on nonprofit organizations' use of the Internet for relationship management. Thus, this study asks three primary research questions. It seeks to know if nonprofit organizations are using the Web. It seeks to know which strategies are most often used. And finally, it seeks to know it organization type or size have any bearing on which strategies are used. The findings are that nonprofit organizations are engaging in relationship management strategies, with positivity being most frequently engaged and assurance being least likely engaged. Furthermore, it does not find organization type or size to have any relationship with the strategies chosen.

Additionally, this content analysis of nonprofit Websites provides insight in two ways. First, theoretical concepts are expanded and second, practical suggestions can be obtained for nonprofits. This study uses principles outlined by Hon and Grunig (1999) to look at how the Web can facilitate relationship management strategies. Only one study previously has made this usage with regard to *Fortune 500* companies (Ki, 2003) and one has looked at children's nonprofits (Bortree, 2007). While Bortree looks at a specific area of nonprofits, only presence or absence is examined. This study actually looks at how frequently, or at which level, the strategies are used. This examination of frequency is important for understanding relational strategies fully because it takes into account how often strategies are engaged and whether or not those strategies are reaching their full potential.

The second contribution made by this research is to practice. Nonprofit organizations, of all types and sizes, can use this information to better their Websites. For nonprofits, increasing relationships on the Web can aid in increasing control mutuality, trust, commitment, and satisfaction. These outcomes are important because they are measurable outcome indicators that can allow an organization to evaluate its relationships with publics. For example, a practitioner can now utilize the original strategies developed by Hon and Grunig (1999) and see how his/her organization's Website can be improved based on the development of Website criteria developed now by Ki, Bortree and now this study. Another example of how a practitioner can use this is to create a Website that may not have existed before. This study has shown the value of having a Website, and how it can help increase the general well-being of the nonprofit organization.

Furthermore, nonprofits wish to become more corporation-like in their strategic practices (Kenix, 2008) As previously stated, one nonprofit representative stated in Kenix's study that more can be accomplished with $80,000 instead of $5,000. Thus, the bottom line becomes important. Can these relationships help nonprofit organizations run day-to-day like corporations in the sense that they accomplish goals? The answer would be yes, relationships help in a number of ways. First, when your publics trust you (Johnson, 1999) they are more likely to donate to your cause. Second, when you have high levels of commitment you have volunteers showing up to assist. And finally, and most importantly in terms of finances, Hon and Grunig (1999) state that good relationships can save an organization money. Bad relationships can cost money. When you cultivate relationships you are nurturing relationships with donors, shareholders, legislators, etc.

In sum, having good relationships can make a world of difference in a nonprofit organization and ultimately most nonprofits are trying to make a difference in the world. However, it is not clear at this point if nonprofit organizations are using Websites to their fullest potential for fostering relationships. This content analysis has utilized theory to explore the current status of how nonprofit organizations are using their Websites. While most organizations still have a long road ahead of them in terms of improvement, there are some things they are doing correctly. Nonprofit organizations are scoring highest in the positivity strategy. Perhaps the lesson learned can now be how to use the strengths of that strategy and apply that to the rest.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Code book

Unit of Analysis: Website

Organization Name/ID: Fill in the organization name/ID number starting with 1 and ascending.

Organization Type: Indicate the primary type of organization

Organization Reach: Indicate the reach of the organization whether it is International, National, Regional, State or Local.

1- International is defined as the organization efforts and goals go beyond the scope of the United States.
2- National is defined as the organization efforts and goals target the United States as a whole.
3- Regional defined as the organization efforts and goals target specific clusters (ie North, South, East, West,) within United States.
4- State is defined as the organization efforts and goals are limited to a particular state.
5- Local is defined as the organization efforts and goals are limited to a city or town.
99- Unable to identify.

<u>Relational Strategies</u>

Access

Telephone

3-High- Provides telephone numbers by department, branch or division, as well as names of contacts and positions
2-Medium- Provides some telephone numbers by department, branch or division.
1-Low-Provides only one central contact telephone number
0-Not available- Provides no telephone contact information

Address

3-High- Provides physical addresses by department, branch or division, as well as names of contacts and positions
2-Medium- Provides some physical addresses by department, branch or division
1-Low-Provides only one central physical address
0-Not available- Provides no physical address

Email

3-High- Provides e-mail addresses by department, branch or division, as well as names of contacts and positions
2-Medium- Provides some e-mail addresses by department, branch or division
1-Low-Provides only one central e-mail address
0-Not available- Provides no e-mail address

Positivity

Navigation

3- High- Every item is clearly labeled, content accessed is what is to be expected and all links work well.

2- Medium- Most labels are clear, but some are confusing. Some inaccessible or "broken" links.
1- Low- Labels are confusing. Difficult to discern content. Many links are inaccessible or "broken."

Search

3- High- The site provides advanced search capabilities as well as tips for searching.
2- Medium- Provides advanced search capabilities.
1- Low- Provides simple search function.
0- Not available- No function at all

Sitemap

3- High- The site provides a clearly hierarchical structure. Content is easily found.
2- Medium- The site provides a marginally clear hierarchical structure. Mostly helpful for finding content.
1- Low- Unclear hierarchical structure and not helpful.
0- Not available- No sitemap at all

Audiovisual

3- High- The site provides much interactive or audiovisual content such as videos, music, pod casts, games, photos, etc. These are all also functional (i.e. files open, pictures display, etc)
2- Medium- The site provides some interactive or audiovisual content such as videos, music, pod casts, games, photos, etc. Most are functional but some are not.
1- Low- The site provides little interactive or audiovisual content such as videos, music, pod casts, games, photos, etc. What little is provided may be nonfunctional.
0- Not available- No audiovisual content at all

Openness

Organization Overview

3- High- Chronological explanation of organization history, presenting information with graphics. Includes names and photos of directors/executive/other influential staff.
2- Medium- Chronological explanation of organization history, presenting information without graphics. May includes names and but not photos of directors/executive/other influential staff.
1- Low- There is partial explanation of how the organization came into being.
0- Not available- No overview at all.

News

3- High- News has been posted weekly
2- Medium- News has been posted monthly
1- Low- News has been posted within the calendar year
0- Not available- No news has been updated at all

Annual Reports

3- High- Offers links to all annual reports
2- Medium- Offers links to the current annual reports
1- Low- Offers link to an annual report
0- Not available- No overview at all.

Shared Tasks

Community activity

3- High- Offers detailed information about the community activity/involvement, its purpose, kinds of activities, programs, grants, services, etc and includes evaluation of those activities.
2- Medium- Offers detailed information, but not evaluation.
1- Low- Offers only a statement related to community activity.

0- Not available- No information.

Education activity

3- High- Offers detailed information about education opportunities and programs, purposes, kinds of activities, programs, grants, services, etc and includes evaluation of those activities.

2- Medium- Offers detailed information, but not evaluation.

1- Low- Offers only a statement related to educational activity.

0- Not available- No information.

Donation of time or money

3- High- Offers detailed information about how to get involved with organization via time or monetary donation, where that money goes, goals, accomplishments, etc. Provides a place to volunteer/donate money (sign up forms/direction donation pages such as pay pal etc).

2- Medium- Offers some information about how to get involved with organization via time or monetary donation. Provides a place to volunteer/donate money (forms, or direction donation pages).

1- Low- Provides a place to volunteer/donate money.

0- Not available- Neither available.

Networking

Networking with other nonprofits (similar)

3- High- Visibility of where this nonprofit works (past or present) with other nonprofits that share the same primary interest. Evaluates those efforts, and encourages the visitor to look into the other nonprofit as well (could include links to these groups).

2- Medium- Visibility of this nonprofit working with another nonprofit that is similar (could include links to these groups).

1- Low- Passive mentioning of past efforts with another nonprofit (doesn't include links).

0- Not available

Networking with other nonprofits (dissimilar)

3-High- Visibility of where this nonprofit works (past or present) with other nonprofits that don't share the same primary interest. Evaluates those efforts, and encourages the visitor to look into the other nonprofit as well (could include links to those groups).

2- Medium- Visibility of this nonprofit working with another nonprofit that do not share a primary interest (could include links to those groups)..

1- Low- Passive mentioning of past efforts with another nonprofit (does not include links).

0- Not available

Networking with for-profit organizations

3- High- Visibility of where this nonprofit works (past and present) with a for profit organization. Evaluates those efforts, and encourages the visitor to purchase from and look into the other organization as well(could include links to those groups)..

2- Medium- Visibility of this nonprofit working with a for profit organization on a project(could include links to those groups)..

1- Low- Passive mentioning of past efforts with a for profit(does not include links).

0- Not available

Assurances

Presence of chat room

3- High- Chat room has many users who are registered users and not "guest" or "bots"

2- Medium- Chat room has some users, may be "guest" or "bot"

1- Low- Chat room exists but no one is in it.

0- Not available- None

Presence of message board

3- High- Message board is active with many threads and registered users. The organization has a presence on the message board engaging with its visitors.
2- Medium- Message board is active with users, but no real presence from organization.
1- Low- Message board is inactive.
0- Not available- None

Presence of blog

3- High- Blog is updated once a week or more. Comments are posted by visitors and comments are responded to by the blog originator or other organization members registered to the blog.
2- Medium- Blog is updated once a month. Some comments are posted. A few may be answered.
1- Low- Blog is updated less than once a month. Comments are rare.
0- Not available- None

Appendix B: Code sheet

Website # ________

Organization Name: ____

Organization Type: ____

Organization reach:

International
National
Regional
State
Local

Relational Strategies:

Access
___Telephone
___Address
___Email
Positivity
___Navigation
___Search
___Sitemap
___Audiovisual
Openness
___Organization Overview
___News
___Annual Reports
Shared tasks
___Community activity
___Education activity
___Donation of time of money
Networking
___Networking with other nonprofits (similar)
___Networking with other nonprofits (dissimilar)
___Networking with for-profit organizations
Assurances
___Presence of chat room
___Presence of message board
___Presence of blog