

Benchmark Study: Charity Homepages Get Top Marks For Design & Content But Miss Opportunity To Engage With Donors and Prospects

Submitted by: Wildfire

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Cancer Research UK and Save the Children top benchmark study

21st January 2009, London: The homepages of UK charity websites are following digital marketing best practice in relation to design and content, but are failing to capitalise on opportunities to build a loyal online visitor base, reveals a new benchmark study, Hitting the Heart (<http://www.dotmailer.com/hittingtheheart>). The report, released today by dotMailer, finds that charities are failing to put their website at the centre of a wider digital marketing strategy and neglecting donor contact and up sell opportunities.

Leading digital marketing agency dotMailer evaluated the websites of 15 high ranking UK charities and scored each against 26 best practice criteria, awarding each a total score out of 100*.

Cancer Research UK leads the index with a score of 81% followed by Save the Children, Action for Blind People and British Heart Foundation with 80%, 79.5% and 79.5% respectively. Homepages generally scored good marks overall for design, layout and clarity of message with high average scores in particular for putting key messages above the fold (78%), fresh content (78%) and easy-to-use search (100%).

However, only one in three of the charities assessed managed to score over 70%, with Crime Concern languishing at the bottom of the table with just (47.5%).

Crucial areas such as collecting permission based email signups and contact data, trading donors up in the donation path and following donations up with relationship building emails, saw charities score surprisingly low in many cases. In the case of sending follow-up email campaigns to donors within 30 days of the transaction, not one single charity surveyed scored a point.

Dave Ivy, Creative Director, dotMailer said:

“In the current economic climate, charities risk losing revenue as donors tighten their belts. By using online channels more effectively it is possible to achieve outstanding ROI for significantly less budget than traditional fundraising channels and generate a more long-term and productive relationship with supporters. Our study identified several key areas in which charities should focus on making changes, such as providing up-to-date content that engages visitors, working harder to capture permission-based email signups, and using more intelligent web content and email follow-up to engage and upgrade prospects to donors and turn existing donors into repeat givers.”

The whitepaper based on this benchmark study contains best practice advice for all website owners and includes top tips and practical examples from dotMailer's team of specialists. dotMailer has a long and successful track-record within the third sector, having worked with a numerous charities including the Fairtrade Foundation, CRUK and WaterAid. The full report and whitepaper is available from <http://www.dotmailer.com/hittingtheheart>

Ends

Notes to Editors:

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Action Aid 73.5%
Action for Blind People 79.5%
Action for Children 68%
Barnardos 77.5%
British Heart Foundation 79.5%
British Red Cross 66.5%
Cancer Research UK 81%
Crime Concern 47.5%
Leonard Cheshire Disability 65%
Oxfam 78.5%
RNID 76.5%
RNLI 75.5%
RSPB 70.5%
Save the Children 80%
Shelter 70.5%

About dotMailer

dotMailer is a UK-based, industry-leading provider of digital marketing solutions, backed up by a dedicated client services team to help customers get the most from their investment in email and digital marketing programmes. dotMailer offers a range of website design and development services including CMS, an e-commerce platform, SEO, prospect tracking and survey tools, along with a leading email marketing solution.

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