Towards an Integrated Social Media Communication Model for the Not-For-Profit Sector: A Case Study of Youth Homelessness Charities

Karen Sutherland
BComn, Monash, PGradDipArts (Research), Monash
MMktg (with Merit), Newcastle

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ABSTRACT

Not-for-profit organisations have looked to social media as a less expensive option to build relationships with those they rely on for survival: donors, supporters and volunteers. While recent research has explored ways not-for-profits have used social media to strengthen brands, engagement and relationships, less attention has focused on stakeholders of charities in relation to habits, attitudes and approaches to social media technology, particularly within Australia. To address this gap, a triangulated, mixed-methods approach was used. This included semi-structured interviews, an online survey, and social media content analysis that compared organisational motives and challenges with stakeholder perspectives. This data was contrasted with observations of each party's interactions in a social media environment. Results indicated that public relations social media activities are generally engaged in as isolated ventures. However, as stakeholder relationships move fluidly between online and offline environments, communication using social and traditional media has the potential for greater impact when integrated. An integrated social media communications model to guide such endeavours is proposed.

CANDIDATE DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution. I affirm that to the best of my knowledge the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

Name of Candidate: Karen Sutherland 11932996

Signed: ███

Date: 15.05.2015

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Goal

The validity of social media as a communications tool remains an emergent area of academic study. Consequently, limited rigorous research is available in relation to how public relations practitioners can use social media to perform their role in building strong stakeholder relationships (Eyrich, Padman & Sweetser, 2008; Miller, 2011). As the general area of social media scholarship is still in its early stages, a scarcity of knowledge also exists regarding how public relations practitioners, particularly those in the not-for-profit sector, can leverage the medium to assist in achieving organisational objectives (Curtis, Edwards, Fraser, Gudelsky, Holmquist, Thorton & Sweetser., 2010; Ogden & Starita, 2009, Waters, Burnett, Lam & Lucas, 2009).

Compared with more traditional media channels such as television, radio and print, social media may be perceived to be a less expensive and direct medium with which organisations can communicate messages (Ogden & Starita, 2009). While traditional channels often charge organisations for space or air time, the most widely used social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) are free to use, which may position them as attractive options for not-for-profit organisations with limited budgets. From a public relations perspective, while PR practice can involve practitioners negotiating with traditional media outlets for free publicity, these outlets are uncontrolled, as journalists and editors have the power to manipulate information for the sake of a story rather than broadcasting it in the way that the organisation originally intended (Grunig, 2009). In contrast, social media allows organisations to circumvent the reliance on traditional media outlets to

communicate their messages to stakeholders. However, this in itself presents other challenges.

With organisations able to freely share information with other social media users, this technology also allows stakeholders to respond to organisations in a very public and timely way. Therefore, while social media provides organisations with access to new networks of social media users, it allows stakeholders direct contact with organisations in public view. It is this almost immediate, public, two-way communication environment that can herald both positive and negative results for the organisations using social media. The antithetical and unpredictable nature of social media poses a conundrum for organisations, especially those from the not-for-profit sector. As the medium can be perceived to cost less to use than traditional channels, its potential to raise funds and garner support has been documented. Although not originating from a not-for-profit organisation, a recent example was the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge that managed to raise more than $115 million through social media networking sites (Worland, 2014).

When considering social media as a communication channel, not-for-profit organisations can struggle with deliberating between the promise of rapid increases in support with risking reputation if a public backlash plays out on their social media profiles.

While studies exist on the use of social media in the not-for-profit sector, few have analysed both organisational and stakeholder perspectives – a research gap this study aims to address. This thesis describes an exploratory study with two primary aims. Firstly, this study aims to contribute to the area of public relations scholarship by exploring the development of an integrated model to provide a

framework for the use of social media and traditional communication within the not-for-profit sector. Secondly, as a result of achieving its first goal, this thesis aspires to provide public relations practitioners in the not-for-profit sector with an insight into how other similar organisations are grappling with social media and how organisations are using it for stakeholder communication and relationship management. This knowledge may assist public relations practitioners in the not-for-profit sector by informing future decisions about organisational social media activities.

The recipients of charitable services are central to a not-for-profit organisation's operations, however, this research is focused on the generation of funds and support rather than the expenditure of funds raised. In Australia particularly, limited research exists in relation to how current and prospective stakeholders (donors, volunteers and supporters) use social media, and what their attitudes are to using the technology to support charitable organisations.

This study intends to provide some insight into two sides of the charitable equation – those giving and the organisations receiving – to explore whether there is a disconnection between what stakeholders and organisations expect from each other in terms of social media communication. The objective is to identify whether gaps exist, identify what they are and explore whether the development of a workable integrated social media communication model is a feasible area of future research. The ultimate goal of this research is to provide both the field of public relations scholarship and the not-for-profit sector with new knowledge with which to facilitate greater stakeholder communication and engagement using social media.

1.2 Origins of the Study

Several factors have contributed to the impetus for this research study. Pressure exists in the not-for-profit sector to retain and develop strong positive stakeholder relationships to continue or increase stakeholders' support. In other sectors, stakeholders usually receive a tangible benefit for their investment in an organisation, such as an exchange of funds for a product. However, in the not-for-profit sector that exchange is not always so transparent. Charities rely on the goodwill of others so that they can pass this on to the people or cause to which their operations are devoted. Those giving must have faith that the organisation will carry this out. The necessity for trust between a not-for-profit organisation, particularly a charity, and those supporting it can place it in a very vulnerable position. In turn, a lack of trust can restrict an organisation from assisting those most disadvantaged within society. Two of the many common challenges experienced by not-for-profit organisations are a lack of resources and a strong dependence on trusting relationships; also a necessity for businesses in the corporate sector. Both challenges have inspired this attempt to assist the sector through this study. The work of relationship management theorists such as Fisher and Brown (1988), Grunig and Huang (2000), Jahansoozi (2006), Kent, Taylor and White (2003), Stafford and Canary (1991), and Taylor, Kent and White (2001) will play a fundamental role in scaffolding this research.

The notion that social media is an inexpensive way to build relationships with publics and stakeholders in theory (Fischer & Reuber, 2011) positions it as a highly useful medium for the not-for-profit sector, which is beholden to its resource availability and to the strength of its stakeholder relationships. The desire to

explore social media's usefulness to charities is the origin of this study, with the

hope that its findings can be applied across the wider not-for-profit sector.

1.3 Purpose of this Study

The overall purpose of this study is to develop an integrated social media

communication model for the not-for-profit sector. This knowledge will provide a

fresh contribution to an emergent area of public relations scholarship related to

social media research in a not-for-profit context. This knowledge may assist not-

for-profit organisations to develop appropriate responses to social media that

support organisational objectives and develop strong stakeholder relationships. To

achieve this, social media must be explored from an unbiased position. It must be

assessed in an integrated way alongside the media channels that preceded it and

those that remain part of the current mix of methods utilised by public relations

professionals. This study will not automatically assume that social media is both

relevant and appropriate for all charitable and not-for-profit organisations. Instead,

the information gathered and analysed in this study aims to equip organisations in

the sector with knowledge to determine how their organisation should approach

social media (if at all) to support the achievement of their mission.

The study itself incorporates data gathered from both sides of the communication

exchange: stakeholders and the public relations professionals from charitable

organisations. It also presents an independent perspective of this communication

exchange through an online content analysis of social media activity on the

profiles of the charities, where the researcher observed actual interactions

between both parties. This approach firstly aims to provide a balanced view of

what the public relations practitioners from the organisations in this study are

currently doing in terms of their social media activities, their attempts to use social media to complement traditional media channels, their social media preferences and barriers preventing the use of social media. These insights are contrasted with stakeholder social media use, traditional media consumption and attitudes towards current and preferred connections with charities. The content analysis intends to assess how charities and stakeholders interact via social media in reality. Exploring both sides of the relationship aims to provide the not-for-profit sector with knowledge regarding peer use of social media to gather new ideas on which to benchmark public relations practice.

Providing current and prospective stakeholder perspectives endeavours to provide not-for-profit organisations with an in-depth insight into what people want in terms of their social media engagement with not-for-profit organisations. This research seeks to uncover what people respond to positively, negatively or not at all. These findings hope to inform the not-for-profit sector about whether it is currently meeting the expectations of the supporters it is attempting to build or maintain positive relationships with and, if not, what can be changed to improve future exchanges. Additionally, this research may be one of the few to investigate social media within the not-for-profit sector using a process approach, and its findings will contribute to the development of the first integrated social media communication model for the sector.

The study focuses on charities that provide services to homeless youth located in the Australian state of Victoria. Seven organisations participated. Within the geographical scope of the study, the organisations chosen for inclusion all provided services to homeless youth yet ranged in size and complexity, each providing a different perspective and approach to addressing the same issue.

There were two reasons for the focus on organisations addressing the issue of youth homelessness, the first of which is that social media research of this kind has not yet been conducted with youth homelessness charities.

Next, youth homelessness as an issue does not appear to attract the same levels of support and attention (particularly from the media) as more high-profile and internationally recognised causes such as breast cancer. This makes it a worthwhile issue to study, because the organisations directly addressing the issue need to devise innovative strategies to raise awareness of their work and of the issue itself, rather than being able to leverage a highly recognisable cause.

1.4 Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into seven sections (further segmented into chapters), plus references and appendices. The first section – this section – provides a background to the study in terms of its structure, goals, origin, and purpose, and argues why this research is necessary.

Section 2 is a comprehensive exploration of Australia's not-for-profit sector and charity segment. This section approaches these topics by investigating the sector and charities from a macro level before focusing on youth homelessness charities in Victoria, the specific category of organisation targeted in this study. Next, that section investigates social media use in Australia and explores previous studies in social media engagement and relationship building. The analysis shifts to the uses and implications for public relations of using social media in general, in addition to using it as a tool for stakeholder engagement and relationship building. Definitions and terminology used in this thesis are also addressed in that section. It concludes

with a review of previous research conducted on the topic of social media use in the public relations profession.

Section 3 provides a review of the literature addressing the theoretical frameworks underpinning this study. The final component of this section poses four research questions that form the structure on which the overall study is based and which it aims to answer.

Section 4 provides the detail and rationale for the methodological approach to the study. Intricate detail and reasoning are presented to justify how and why particular research methods have been employed to achieve such an approach.

Section 5 presents the results from the semi-structured interviews, online survey and three-week online content analysis and how the relevant findings from each research method directly address the four research questions posed. Section 6 discusses the findings gleaned from the results and their practical implications. This section also presents the first stage in the development of an integrated social media communication model and an integrated social and traditional media spectrum. Section 6 ends with the identification of this project's limitations and further research to be conducted. Recommendations for public relations practitioners in the not-for-profit sector, and advice on the application of these suggestions, are included in Section 7 before a concluding statement completes the thesis. After the references (Section 8), the appendices (Section 9) provide copies of the research instruments, some personal reflection, written evaluations detailing the social media performance of the organisations being investigated with specific recommendations based on the research findings, Monash University Research Ethics Committee clearance and copies of participant consent forms.

1.5 Definitions and Terminology

1.5.1 Charity

In 2013, a new act was passed called the *Charities (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Act 2003* (Australian Taxation Office, 2013), which redefined the definitions of what a charity is and what a charitable purpose is within Australia. The new definition of "charity" was enforced from 1 January 2014. These amendments, however opaque, qualify that an entity is deemed charitable "if the entity is a charity", (Australian Government ComLaw, 2013). Similarly to the definition of a not-for-profit organisation, an entity is classed specifically as a charity if it fulfils the following criteria:

    a) that is a not-for-profit entity; and

    b) all of the purposes of which are:

        (i) charitable purposes that are for the public benefit; or

        (ii) purposes that are incidental or ancillary to, and in furtherance or

            in aid of, purposes of the entity covered by subparagraph (i); and

    c) none of the purposes of which are disqualifying purposes; and

    d) that is not an individual, a political party or a government entity.

                                    (Australian Government ComLaw, 2013).

Using this definition, a charitable organisation can be deemed as one that does not make a profit and one that exists solely to provide services and/or some other benefit to particular sections of the public that require assistance.

1.5.2 Producer

In this study, "producers" are the less senior interviewees from each organisation, who are primarily involved with maintaining the day-to-day aspects of their organisation's social media presence by producing content and interacting with followers while under the direction of their supervisor.

1.5.3 Stakeholder

The term "stakeholder" can refer to a range of internal and external groups that have a vested interest in a charitable organisation, including employees, recipients of charitable services and government funding bodies. In the context of this study, the scope of the term has been narrowed to refer only to current and prospective donors, volunteers and supporters.

1.5.4 Supervisor

The term "supervisor" refers to the most senior interviewee from each organisation, whose role typically involves providing strategic advice to and overseeing less senior staff members, referred to in this study as "producers".

1.5.5 Web 1.0

The term Web 1.0, also referred to as the "First Media Age" (Poster, 1995) describes the World Wide Web before the inception of social media technologies. Web 1.0 is characterised as a communications medium to facilitate the transmission of information to stakeholders. The term denotes the World Wide

Web and the internet in its infancy as compared to the present dialogic functionality available via social media. In Macnamara (2010a, p. 2), the First Media Stage (or Web 1.0) was described as possessing centralised content, being centrally controlled, only facilitating one-way information transmission and viewing publics as one homogenised mass audience, largely considered to be consumers rather than producers of web content (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008; Macnamara, 2010a). One-way transmission of information from an organisation to its publics has been described by scholars as an "information dump" (Grunig, 2009, p. 7) or likened to "lecturing" (Thackeray, Nieger, Hanson & McKenzie, 2008).

Similarly, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) suggested that Web 1.0 was the era of content publishing. In the early stages of the internet, the ability to publish online content was limited to users who had acquired specialised knowledge, such as HTML. User-friendly web publishing was not yet accessible to the average web user. Those with the knowledge of how to produce content using this new technology retained a degree of power over other web users, who were generally relegated to the role of content consumer, with limited opportunity for participatory activity.

This was also the case with public relations practice, whereby practitioners without technical knowledge of website design and maintenance were reliant on colleagues in their organisations with such expertise. Web 1.0 denotes a time when public relations practitioners used the technology to digitally publish items such as brochures on websites using the same content (rather than developing it especially for the web) and with limited focus on stakeholder-feedback mechanisms, accessibility or usability (Berthon et al., 2012).

1.5.6 Web 2.0

The limited characteristics of Web 1.0 in terms of user participation and

collaboration led to the development of Web 2.0. In its simplest definition, Web 1.0

can be described as facilitating one-way communication (Thackeray et al., 2008)

as signified by the "1" in its title. Terms used to describe the nature of Web 2.0

include "collaborative" (Berthon et al., 2012; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010;

Macnamara, 2010a; Thackeray et al., 2008) and "democratic" (Jones et al., 2009),

in the sense that it is accessible to all internet users. Web 2.0 heralded the support

of two-way communication between users. It represents the ability for any user to

be both content producer and consumer (Berthon et al., 2012; Cormode &

Krishnamurthy, 2008; Macnamara, 2010a). Users without specialised information

technology knowledge were no longer beholden to organisations – and the public

relations practitioners representing them – as their primary source of information.

Users could converse directly with organisations and interact with other users.

The term Web 2.0 has been described as "a piece of jargon" by World Wide Web

founder Tim Berners-Lee, who advised that Web 1.0 was also about connecting

people and facilitating interactions, but was the first stage in this technological

evolution (Laningham, 2006). While Berners-Lee may have criticised the term, it is

commonly used to describe the technological shift in power from organisations as

sole producers of content to the advent of publics transforming from being in the

less-powerful role of content consumers to becoming "prodsumers" (Koçak, 2011,

p. 22); an amalgamation of the words (and roles) of producers and consumers.

Web 2.0 facilitates User Generated Content (UGC) (Tredinnick, 2006),

establishing a new communication environment that has supported and facilitated

the conception and evolution of social media technology.

1.5.7 Social media

A plethora of definitions exist to describe the concept and phenomenon of social media. Many are very similar in that they refer to two-way communication as a replacement for the broadcast or transmission models of communication: more specifically, the facilitation of content generated by its users, the connection of groups of individuals into online networks, or online communities, and the way in which information is created and shared between the users within these networks (Berthon et al., 2012; Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Thackeray et al., 2008; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010).

The UK-based Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) defined the concept of social media as encapsulating all of these aspects, while additionally emphasising its community-building characteristics and contemporary methods of accessing the medium:

> Social media is the term commonly given to Internet and mobile-based channels and tools that allow users to interact with each other and share opinions and content. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities and networks and encouraging participation and engagement. (CIPR, 2014, p. 3)

Solis and Breakenridge (2009, p. xvii) included the transformation in communication process in their definition, but highlighted the informal and conversational aspect of the technology when they explained social media as being "a shift from a broadcast mechanism to a many-to-many model, rooted in a conversational format between authors and peers within their social panels."

As well as providing a sound definition for the concept of social media, it is equally important to further specify exactly which websites or applications the term social media is referring to within the context of this study. The scope of this study encompasses the most commonly defined forms of social media, beginning with social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Google+; social file-sharing websites such as YouTube, Instagram and Pinterest, blogging sites such as WordPress, Blogger and Tumblr; and microblogging sites such as Twitter (Berthon et al., 2012; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Robson & James, 2012; Thackeray et al., 2008). The rationale behind this scope is to evaluate which of these mainstream sites are being used by both charities and publics to ascertain if, or how, the two groups are connecting, engaging and building relationships with each other. It is also critical to explore how the evolution of social media technology has affected public relations practice in general, in order to investigate whether practitioners representing the charitable organisations in this research have also been affected or influenced in comparison with the wider public relations industry.

2. NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS, CHARITIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN AUSTRALIA

2.1 Australia's not-for-profit sector

Charitable organisations in Australia form part of the larger not-for-profit sector. Essentially, a not-for-profit organisation does not exist to make a profit. All money raised is diverted back to the organisation to continue the services it offers to the community. Organisations in this sector are non-compulsory (cannot, by law, require membership or contributions of time or money) and are self-governing (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009). According to Leiter (2005), not-for-profit organisations directly address the needs of minority groups while governments concentrate on the needs of the majority. Australia's not-for-profit sector is diverse and consists of 600,000 organisations (Productivity Commission, 2010) with more than 58,000 registered with the Australian Tax Office as charities (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009). In terms of contribution to Australia's economy, in the 2006–2007 period not-for-profit organisations registered with the Australian Tax Office injected $43 billion into Australia's Gross Domestic Product and provided 8% of Australia's employment.

In 2010, the Australian Government ordered the Productivity Commission to assess the not-for-profit sector to determine its contribution to Australia's economy and the barriers preventing its further development (Productivity Commission, 2010). On July 11, 2013, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) was launched to provide governance and regulation in the sector that was previously lacking; the main recommendation in the Productivity Commission's 2010 report. Yet, only a few years after the creation of the ACNC, the federal government has publicised plans flagging its disestablishment (Ferguson, 2013).

This upheaval highlights the instability of the sector, and the necessity for not-for-profit organisations to be adaptable to change, particularly in response to environmental factors such as changes to government and governmental policy.

However, the sector has undergone considerable reform over the past five years, resulting in the aforementioned ACNC being created to both govern and regulate its associated entities. The Westpac Community Confidence Index (2013) found that within the sector itself, nearly half of organisations (43%) were unaware of this reform and 54% were "indifferent about its impact." Only 38% of organisations believed that the reform would have a positive impact. Similarly, the PwC-CSI Community Index (2013, p. 4), a survey of 362 chief executives and senior managers from Australia's not-for-profit sector, found that the sector had quite a negative outlook of itself overall, which specifically related to increased levels of demand and lack of confidence in how to address them.

The Productivity Commission (2010, p. 15) identified the characteristics of a not-for-profit organisation as one that aims to build "trust and confidence" with stakeholders by delivering services to the community in a range of areas such as welfare (animal and human), education, sports, arts, religion and culture. Such organisations work to gain access to resources through external funding via government grants and philanthropic donations and by canvassing volunteers to assist them in providing their services. The Productivity Commission (2010, p. 15) also identified not-for-profit organisations as "building the capacity and capabilities of staff, volunteers, members and clients for effective engagement over time". This finding is supported by the PwC-CSI (2013), where the Australian not-for-profit sector displayed a confidence score of +20% in relation to its stakeholder relationships. Similarly, Anheier (2003) proposed that the not-for-profit sector is

characterised by five categories: voluntary participation, self-governance, non-profit-distributing, independent from government and partially institutionalised.

Two main challenges identified in the Productivity Commission's report relevant to this study included the difficulty for not-for-profits in retaining staff, forcing them to rely heavily on volunteers to fulfil many of the responsibilities normally expected of paid employees and increasing calls for accountability and demonstration of impact (Productivity Commission, 2010, p. xxx, xxiv). The difficulty in retaining staff due to the inability to offer attractive salaries was also identified as a challenge for the sector by the PwC-CSI (2013 p. 4).

Leiter (2005) suggested that another factor impeding the sector's development is that of isomorphism or uniformity as a result of not-for-profit organisations attempting to assert their legitimacy through the establishment of parity (as opposed to differentiation) to attract funding. Yet isomorphism may be a positive change to the sector, as it may allow best practices to be adopted much more readily (Leiter, 2005). With 600,000 organisations in the sector, it seems that the chance of complete isomorphism is unrealistic. Alternatively, Leiter (2005, p27) also commended the benefits of heterogeneity (or diversity) in relation to not-for-profit organisations, stating such organisations are more responsive, "less bureaucratic and hegemonic" in terms of corporate practices. Whether isomorphic or heterogenic, it is clear that Australia's not-for-profit sector plays a significant role in Australia's economy and in assisting sections of the community neglected by government.

2.1.1 Australia's charities

According to the ACNC (2013), there are three categories of Australian charity: small (less than $250,000 in revenue annually), medium ($250, 000 to $1 million in annual revenue) and large (more than $1 million in annual revenue). In relation to organisational size, the PwC-CSI (2013, p. 7) found that small organisations displayed the most confidence: a result driven from positive attitudes in relation to funding and people. Large organisations demonstrated the least amount of confidence, driven by negative attitudes about increasing demands and difficulty employing people to adequately meet them.

According to ACNC (2013) 43% of Australia's charities endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office are devoted to causes relating to social and community welfare, with a category segment including charities addressing youth homelessness. Nearly one quarter (24%) of all Australian charities exist in Victoria, the location of this study. The PwC-CSI (2013, p. 6) found that, overall, not-for-profit organisations in Victoria have a negative outlook of the sector, but this attitude is less negative than that of the entire Australian sector. In terms of charitable giving, the rate of monies donated is increasing, with a growth of 2.6% in August 2013 compared to that of the previous year (National Australia Bank, 2013, p. 1). The average annual monetary donation per donor made throughout the same period was $312 on a national level and $168 in Victoria (National Australia Bank, 2013, p. 2).

A more recent study of 800 Australians conducted by Empirica Research for the Summer Foundation (2013, p. 1) found that the average donation made by Australians was $283. The Empirica (2013, p. 1) study recorded a decrease: from

$317 to $283, which differed from the National Australia Bank (2013) study that

reported an increase in the average donation amount from the previous year.

Australians are also claiming to give to a wide range of charitable organisations.

Latest figures from the Australian Taxation Office (2013, p. 98) showed that by the

end of October 2012, Australians had claimed charitable donations given to

29,046 different charities.

The age group contributing the largest donations to Australian charities was the

65+ age bracket (National Australia Bank, 2013, p. 2; Empirica Research, 2013, p.

1). Charitable organisations devoted to supplying humanitarian services attracted

the largest market share in terms of donations (32.2%) (National Australia Bank,

2013, p. 2). However, organisations providing community services for children and

family, attracted just over 10% of all overall donations (11.1%) in the sector

(National Australia Bank, 2013, p. 2). These statistics highlight the pressure that

charitable organisations are under to compete for funding, staff and volunteers. In

comparison to other countries, the proportion of Australia's gross domestic product

provided by charitable donations is much lower than the United States: 1.6% in the

USA compared with Australia's 0.6%. Yet contribution rate made by Australians is

greater than that of Canada's, which is 0.45%. Australia's contribution was

quantified by the Department of Family and Community Services (2005, p. ix)

using the following explanation: "[W]hen the difference in the sizes of economies is

taken into account, the USA generates more than twice the level of giving than

Australia, and Australians give about one and a half times as much as the

Canadians."

A more recent study of 13 countries, co-conducted by McGregor-Lowndes (2013)

in Australia, found that Australia ranked fifth in the world, behind the Netherlands,

United States, Sweden and Japan, in terms of its philanthropic freedom.

Philanthropic freedom examines the "barriers and incentives for individuals and

organisations to donate resources to social causes" (*Pro Bono News*, 2013a).

McGregor-Lowndes' (2013) overall conclusion in relation to Australia's

philanthropic freedom was that the nation's environment in relation to policy is one

that is "relatively conducive to philanthropic activity" (McGregor-Lowndes, 2013, p.

1).

Australians give to charities for a variety of reasons. The Department of Family

and Community Services (2005, p. ix–x) separated donors and volunteers into two

different categories: those with greater financial capacity to give, and those with

reduced capacity, who give what they can. The Department of Family and

Community Services (2005, p. x) also defined two main functions related to the act

of giving: altruism and reciprocity. The motivations for altruism were identified as

help for those in need, a personal expression of identity and/or reputation, and as

a consequence of community connectedness. Reciprocal motivations for giving to

charity were described as the possibility or the outcome of receiving some sort of

tangible benefit in exchange for giving. A tangible benefit may be some form of

marketing merchandise, such as a coffee mug displaying an organisational logo.

The Empirica Research (2013, p. 1) study found that the top three motivations of

Australian donors and volunteers were wanting to help others less fortunate than

themselves (40%), having a personal connection with the cause (16%) and

wanting to give back to the community (15%). Only 4% of people in the study

highlighted a reciprocal benefit as their motivation to give: tax benefits were

highlighted as the leading cause prompting them. The same study also found that

almost half of Australians (48%) give to charity several times per year and nearly

one quarter (24%) give once per year. Seven per cent of Australians said that they never give money to charity.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009, p. 6) defined a volunteer as "someone who willingly gives unpaid help in the form of time, service or skills, through an organisation or group." From 2006 to 2007, the efforts of 4.6 million volunteers contributed the equivalent of $15 billion in wages through unpaid work to support the Australian not-for-profit sector (Productivity Commission, 2010, p. xxiii). When comparing volunteering rates in Australia with other countries, more Australian adults volunteered on an annual basis than in the United States, but for a slightly shorter duration of time (Australian Federal Government's Department of Family and Community Services, 2005). It was a similar case when comparing Australians' volunteering rates with those of Canadians'.

2.1.2 Youth homelessness charities in Victoria

A broad profile of the not-for-profit sector provides some degree of context. Similarly, an understanding of charitable organisations and the giving and volunteering habits of people within Australia is an essential foundation for this research. Yet it is important to gain an insight into the environment in which the organisations in this study must function, and the members of the community they assist.

Homelessness can be grouped into three different categories: primary, secondary and tertiary (MacKenzie & Chamberlain, 2008). A person experiencing primary homelessness does not have conventional accommodation and includes people living in cars, parks and abandoned buildings. Secondary homelessness relates to anyone who frequently moves from one accommodation source to another. This

includes using homeless shelters and staying with friends and family members temporarily before moving on to the next form of accommodation. Finally, tertiary homelessness describes anyone "staying in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis, defined as 13 weeks or longer" (MacKenzie & Chamberlain, 2008, p. 2).

Since 2006 three comprehensive studies have examined youth homelessness. The Census of Population and Housing conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) found that 105, 200 people defined themselves as homeless on Census night (ABS, 2013a, p. 41). In 2006, the number of homeless people in Australia aged from 12–18 was 21,940, with 3,896 of those people located in Victoria (Organisation E, 2013, p. 1). These figures are based on those reported as part of the census. There is a strong likelihood that youth homelessness may be underreported. In the same year that the census was undertaken, MacKenzie and Chamberlain (2008) released a study into youth homelessness within Australia with a strong emphasis on homeless school students. MacKenzie and Chamberlain (2008) found that there were 9,389 homeless school students during census week in 2006 with 1993 living in Victoria.

Furthermore, 80% of homeless Victorian students were found to be staying temporarily with friends and family; 19% lived in some form of transitional housing, such as a refuge or a hostel; and 1% were classed as experiencing primary homelessness (MacKenzie & Chamberlain, 2008, p. 15). In Victoria, 60% of homeless students in the study were female and 40% were male; 20% were 14 or younger; 41% were aged 15–16, 36% were 17–18; and only 3% were 19 or older (MacKenzie & Chamberlain, 2008, p. 17). Originally, 69% of the sample came from a blended family; 19% lived with their biological parents; and 6% lived with

foster parents or lived in another type of situation (MacKenzie & Chamberlain, 2008, p. 19). The same research found under half of homeless youth in the entire study (46%) were undertaking some form of education at that time; 52% were classed as unemployed, and only 2% were in full-time employment (MacKenzie & Chamberlain, 2008, p. 28).

In 2008, the National Youth Commission Inquiry into Youth Homelessness investigated the prevalence and causes of youth homelessness and provided recommendations regarding how support services could be improved for this vulnerable demographic. The report focused on the issue from a national level and reported that, while there are twice the number of homeless youth in Australia than there were 20 years ago, every night one in two are denied access to emergency accommodation due to a shortage of beds (National Youth Commission, 2008). The report attributes this to a lack of funding increases to the national Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) over the past 10 years, despite the upsurge in demand (National Youth Commission, 2008, p. 49). This inquiry was consistent with the research of MacKenzie and Chamberlain (2008) with its finding that most homeless youth are still at school when they lose their homes, and their dire situation makes it difficult for them to continue with their education; the majority end up unemployed. Nearly half of all homeless youths (49%) identified a relationship breakdown with their parents or step-parents as the main cause behind becoming homeless; 32% cited financial difficulties; and 6% said that their homeless status was the result of drug use or mental illness (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007). Almost half (42%) of homeless adults had at one time been in a form of state care when they were minors, highlighting the lack of transitional support for youth from such care to independence (Johnson & Chamberlain, 2007).

The organisations in this study must cope with increasing demand to support the growing numbers of homeless young people seeking their assistance with limited resources. Often those seeking help need more than a roof over their head. Some also require assistance with education, employment, drug and/or alcohol dependency and mental health issues. Charities must seek engagement and support from donors, supporters and volunteers to assist them in helping young people in desperate need. This research hopes to ascertain whether social media can be used as a communication tool to foster engagement, resulting in donations of funds and goods and increased rates of volunteering and other support.

2.2 Social media use in Australia

Australians are voracious internet consumers and, hence, this enthusiasm for online environments has manifested in significant rates of social media use. At the time of writing, Australia's population is reported as being more than 23 million people (ABS, 2014). The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013b) reports that there are 12,408,000 subscriptions to Internet Service Providers (ISPs), (an average of one subscription for approximately every two people) with 78% of that figure being for household use and 22% for businesses. This significant level of internet use is also confirmed in a study by the Australian Interactive Media Association (AIMA) in conjunction with Yellow Pages (2013), which found that, of the 932 Australians in their study, 86% (91% of males and 82% of females) access the internet, with 76% of people logging on at least once per day. With the majority of Australians accessing the internet, rates of social media consumption are continuing to grow slowly, but steadily. Currently, 65% of Australians accessing the internet are using social media websites (AIMA & Yellow Pages, 2013). This figure increased 3%

from the previous year, confirming an upward trend of social media adoption by Australian internet users.

Facebook is the social networking website most visited by Australian internet consumers. Nine million Australians use Facebook every day (Godfrey, 2013), 12 million Australians are active on Facebook every month (Cowling, 2013) and 95% of all social media consumers were identified as using the social networking site (AIMA & Yellow Pages, 2013). However, conflicting data exists regarding further rates of popularity of social networking sites with Australian internet users. According to Cowling (2013) YouTube rated as the second-most popular social media platform, with 12 million Unique Australian Visitors (UAVs) recorded as visiting the site in the month of November 2013. In third place was the blogging site WordPress.com, with 5.7million UAVs throughout the same period. LinkedIn rated as the fifth-most popular site. In contrast, the AIMA and Yellow Pages (2013, p. 14) study found that LinkedIn was the second-most popular social media platform, with 20% of users visiting the site. Instagram was rated as the third-most popular (16%) and Twitter as the fourth (15%).

The amount of time Australian users spend on social media varies according to the sites that they frequent. Facebook users spend more than seven hours per week on the site, staying for an average of 18 minutes per visit. LinkedIn users stay for 10 minutes per visit, and nine minutes for Twitter users. (AIMA & Yellow Pages, 2013, p. 19). Facebook is accessed on average 24 times per week, and most often by Australians aged between 20 to 29 years, who visited the site 33 times. Of most relevance to this study is the data illustrating that Facebook is accessed an average of 20 times per week by Victorian social media users, the

second-lowest activity of any state in Australia apart from the Australian Capital

Territory (AIMA & Yellow Pages, 2013, p. 18).

Australians use a number of different devices to connect with social networking

sites. Currently, smart phones are the most commonly used device for social

networking, utilised by 67% of social media users (AIMA & Yellow Pages, 2013, p.

26). Next were laptop computers, used by 64% of social media users, and the

traditional desktop computer rated as the third-most popular with 46% – a decline

in popularity of 60% from two years previously. Although tablet devices were the

fourth-most popular in terms of accessing social media, their usage rates almost

doubled in 12 months (18% in 2012 to 35% in 2013), clearly indicating a rapid

upward trend in adoption rates of this particular device (AIMA & Yellow Pages,

2013, p. 26).

The most popular location to access online social networking is within the home

(96%), followed by at work (34%) and on public transport (32%) (AIMA & Yellow

Pages, 2013, p. 27). Also, Australian social media users have an average of 258

people as followers, friends or contacts within their own social networks, clearly an

opportunity for public relations practitioners to engage and communicate with new

networks of current or prospective stakeholders.

Despite the fervour for social media by the majority of Australian internet users,

many do not trust the organisations providing social networking sites. In fact,

"Australians are less trusting of social media companies than they are of debt

collectors and market researchers" (Australian Associated Press, 2013, p. 1). A

study by the Australian Information Commissioner (2013) of 1,000 people found

that nearly half of the sample (48%) believed that their privacy and identity were

most at risk due to social media. This particular study also found that half of the participants did not read privacy policies because they were too long, (Australian Associated Press, 2013, p. 1). Such a finding highlights a concern for privacy but a lack of effort to understand exactly what may be at risk before signing up to social networking sites. Overall, the Australian population seems to be continuing to embrace social media regardless of the risks or their concerns about those risks, posing a unique opportunity for public relations professionals to leverage this relatively new communication channel.

2.3 Literature Review

2.3.1 Benefits of positive relationships with donors, volunteers and supporters for charitable organisations

The relationship between a charitable organisation and its donors, volunteers and supporters has been identified as a tenuous one on which the very survival of the organisation depends. As Park and Rhee (2010) attested, "In order for non-profit organisations to generate support, they need to develop favourable relationships with publics." It has been suggested that the longevity of the entire not-for-profit sector itself is reliant on the value of the relationships that exist between the organisations within that sector and its donors (Bortree & Waters, 2010; Rosso, 1993; Waters, 2009a,b,c). Sokolowski (1996, p. 275) likened the relationship to that of love or friendship, advising that it needs "careful cultivation by interpersonal contacts to thrive."

The theory behind the benefit of positive relationships between a charity and its stakeholders is that increased loyalty over time will result in greater fundraising

success and increased and/or ongoing support (Worth, 2002; Waters, 2009a, b, 2008). This theory has been supported by Waters and Bortree (2007), who found that volunteers were more likely to continue to donate their time to not-for-profit organisations when they considered their relationships to be positive. This finding was also the same as a study focusing on teen volunteers (Bortree, 2010). In different studies conducted by Penner and Finkelstein (1998) and Wilson and Musick (1997), it was also found that long-term volunteers were most likely to continue to volunteer at an organisation based on increased levels of altruism and support for the organisation's work. Van Slyke and Brooks (2005) also recommended that charities should seek donations of money and goods from their volunteers in the first instance, due to the existing bond and the history of participation between them.

It has been proposed that maintaining positive relationships with existing donors costs an organisation less than attempting to procure new ones. Greenfield (1996) advised that it would cost 25 cents out of every one dollar for a charity to maintain its relationship with an existing donor, but it would cost the organisation $1.50 for every $1.00 given to do the same with a new donor. While Nudd (1993) proposed that it is important for not-for-profit organisations to seek relationships with new donors, relationships with existing donors should be the primary focus, as past support can be a strong indication of future giving habits.

While the benefits of positive and ongoing relationships between stakeholders and charities have been highlighted in the literature, the ongoing development of trust has been identified as the fundamental foundation required for such associations to occur (Clohesy, 2003; Rosso, 1993; Waters, 2009a, b, 2008; Waters & Bortree, 2007). Clohesy (2003) suggested that a donor must have trust in both the person

fundraising and the charitable organisation. Alternatively, the fundraiser must have

trust in both the donor and the organisation that they are representing for a

positive and functional relationship to occur. Similar to this notion is the importance

of trust between volunteers and charities. Thus, a volunteer's trust in an

organisation "is one of the most significant variables in predicting which volunteers

are likely to give more volunteer hours to an organization" (Waters & Bortree,

2007, p. 63).

Trust between a not-for-profit organisation and its volunteers is also important in

reciprocal form, as the organisation must rely on volunteers to assist in carrying

out its mission (Waters & Bortree, 2007). Trust between stakeholders and charities

has been described as fragile. Sargeant and Lee (2004) suggested that scandals

involving the misappropriation of funds by charitable organisations have shaken

the public's faith in the not-for-profit sector. Therefore, trust is not something that

organisations can automatically rely on as they did in the past when the public

automatically had faith in a charitable organisation in direct response to the

philanthropic nature of its mission. Instead, an ongoing strategy for cultivating trust

must be implemented for positive and continuing relationships to occur.

Low levels of trust and confidence in not-for-profit organisations have been found

in studies conducted by Light (2003) and Waters (2008). In the Light (2003) study,

37% of participants answered that they had "not too much or no" confidence in the

sector, and in the Waters (2008, p. 83) study, 60% of the sample believed that not-

for-profit organisations misused funds. Although the perception of funds being

misappropriated may stem from stakeholder preference that 100% of donated

funds should be devoted directly to the cause rather than on administration and

other operational costs. Waters (2009a) and Sargeant and Lee (2004) implored

public relations practitioners from not-for-profit organisations to understand that

breaching stakeholder trust can have a devastating effect on reputation and the

long-term survival of a charity. Consequently, trust is fundamental to the

relationships explored in this study.

Networking is an additional theme emerging from the literature regarding the

benefits of positive relationships between stakeholders and charitable

organisations. While the literature explores the concept in a general sense, it is

highly relevant to this study when applying the same theories and findings within a

social media context. Sokolowski (1996, p. 263) explored the validity of the

microstructural model, an approach that "explains philanthropic activism by the

influence of social ties that link an individual to other members of society", and

found that personal values and attitudes were not as accurate in predicting levels

of volunteering and giving as social ties and interactions.

It follows that when a person belongs (or feels a sense of belonging) to a

community, and the culture of that community is one that both promotes and

undertakes philanthropic activity, this is a stronger predictor of volunteering or

giving to charity than focusing on an individual's attitudes to the same activity.

Becoming part of a network that volunteers or gives to a charity can provide

stakeholders with a unique sense of community by attaching themselves to the

same organisation in the same way. Van Slyke and Brooks (2005) stated that

volunteers are most likely to experience a sense of community due to their

interpersonal interaction with the charity they are supporting, and are most likely to

continue to give based on that association.

This finding was supported in a study by Choi and Chou (2010) suggesting that offline social networks had a positive impact on the giving habits of older adults. To simplify this notion, if those belonging to a philanthropic community are most likely to give, and if those volunteering are mostly likely to feel part of a philanthropic community, building a sense of community must be of paramount importance to charities in order to create a self-perpetuating cycle of giving with stakeholders. In a social media context, charitable organisations may be able to take advantage of the collaborative attributes of social media to assist them in fostering a community or social network with stakeholders to potentially create a new giving cycle or leverage an existing one.

Another benefit identified by Hong and Yang (2011) of fostering a sense of community with the stakeholders of charities is the increased likelihood of positive word-of-mouth; generated by providing stakeholders with positive experiences that they can share with others. Another concept worthy of exploration in this study is how well the generation (and likelihood) of positive word-of-mouth for a charitable organisation translates to a social media environment. By creating a sense of community online via social media, what is the likelihood that an organisation's members will relay this experience to other people within their networks? Social media can spread data such as images, text and video to larger networks of people, faster and in more geographically dispersed locations than ever before. This in itself may pose a valuable opportunity for charitable organisations to widen their giving networks to include people who were previously inaccessible. The legitimacy of this idea will be explored within this study.

2.3.2 Studies in social media engagement

The field of social media engagement studies is still an emerging one, with very

limited research currently available to inform public relations practice. Although it is

quite premature and unreasonable to provide definitive guidelines regarding how

best to engage stakeholders via social media, three themes are apparent when

comparing the outcomes of each study. The literature suggests that there is a

strong link between stakeholders that engage offline and online. Vesnic-Alujevic

(2012) investigated political participation in Europe and found that publics that

interacted at the highest levels with a political party on Facebook were also the

most likely to participate in offline events. This finding was consistent with Paek,

Hove, Jung and Cole (2013), who found that stakeholders who interacted with

charities via social media were more likely to participate in positive word-of-mouth

and volunteering. These findings were further confirmed in research investigating

the uses, gratifications and social outcomes of university students using Facebook

(Park, Kerk & Valenzuela, 2009), which proposed users seeking information about

an organisation on social media are more likely to attend its offline events. This

connection is one to be explored further within this thesis, as it may assist charities

in leveraging social media engagement to boost event and volunteering numbers

and vice versa.

Furthermore, studies conducted by both McCorkindale, DiStaso, and Fussell Sisco

(2013), Smith (2010) and Mangold and Faulds (2009) advised that the more

publics feel engaged or connected with an organisation or a cause, the greater the

likelihood that they would practice word-of-mouth or use social media to engage in

dialogue with or about that organisation or cause. Mangold and Faulds (2009, p.

361) stated that publics "feel more engaged with products and organizations when

they are able to submit feedback". However, some public relations professionals are using the two-way medium as a broadcast channel, inhibiting engagement with publics in the process (Lovejoy, Waters & Saxton, 2012). Strengthening engagement offline and facilitating feedback online are recommended as strategies to foster greater rates of social media engagement. The focus on the dialogic nature of social media is important when Taylor and Kent (2014, p. 389) proposed that "every dialogic interaction involves conversational engagement."

It is important to gauge the validity of such theories within the context of this study to better inform public relations practice. Other social media engagement studies also suggested that higher social media consumption rates in general by publics directly correlate to increased levels of interactivity with organisations via social media (Men & Tsai, 2013; Paek et al., 2013). Furthermore, strong expectations exist that organisations will interact with highly engaged publics at the same increased rates (Panagiotopoulos, 2012). Social- media-savvy publics are more likely to engage online, but expect that engagement to be reciprocated. Therefore, while this field of scholarship is limited, it has assisted in providing some guidance for this thesis.

2.3.3 Studies in relationship building using social media

Several studies have explored how public relations practitioners can use the internet or the World Wide Web to build relationships with publics (Bekmeier-Feuerhahn & Eichenlaub, 2010; Branston & Bush, 2010; Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009; Kent & Taylor, 1998; Waters & Lord, 2009; Williams & Brunner, 2010), and literature specifically investigating relationship building techniques using social media is an emerging field. In the few studies exploring social media and

relationships in a public relations context, some findings may have informed public

relations practice. One example suggested that blogs are a worthwhile platform for

facilitating positive relationships with publics (Fursdon & James, 2010; McClure,

2007; Yang & Lim, 2009), along with CEOs using Twitter to converse with publics

(Hwang, 2012). All studies focusing on social media relationship building by public

relations professionals highlighted the facilitation of interactivity as a key to

building trust, and in turn, strong relationships between organisations and publics

(Fursdon & James, 2010; McClure, 2007; Saffer, Sommerfeldt & Taylor, 2013;

Waters et al., 2009; Yang & Lim, 2009).

Saffer et al. (2013) found that social media interactivity also improved the

perception of publics of their relationship with an organisation. Just as Ingenhoff

and Koelling (2009) found in the case of organisations using websites as

relationship building tools, public relations practitioners ignored the effectiveness

of involvement and interactivity with publics via social media (Waters et al., 2009).

This study aims to ascertain if and how youth homelessness charities are using

social media as a relationship building tool with publics, how proficient public

relations practitioners believe they are at using this technology to cultivate and

maintain relationships, and what expectations are possessed by publics in relation

to social media reaction with charitable organisations.

2.3.4 The uses and implications of social media for public relations professionals in engagement and relationship building with publics

 It is important to explore broad themes relating to how social media technology

has affected public relations practice, specifically in terms of engagement and

relationship building with publics. Engagement, while identified as always being

part of dialogue, has also been criticised as a vague concept in relation to public relations theory and practice (Taylor & Kent, 2014). Speculation continues surrounding the true definition of the concept. Most recently, Taylor and Kent (2014, p. 384) attempted to reconceptualise the term so that it better aligned with dialogic theory. The new definition was thus:

> Engagement is part of dialogue and through engagement, organizations and publics can make decisions that create social capital. Engagement is both an orientation that influences interactions and the approach that guides the process of interactions among groups.

Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009, p. 322) argued that engagement is about "being connected with something", yet in a social media and public relations context the definition must be more specific. As also argued by Taylor and Kent, (2014, p. 388) the concept of social media engagement can often be defined as being only one way, "from the organisation to its publics and can focus more on interactive communication processes" than the deeper dialogic issues at play. In this study, engagement relates to a number of factors regarding how often stakeholders use social media: whether or not they follow or "like" a particular organisation and why, how they interact and what actions they employ as a vehicle to facilitate that engagement, either online (e.g. liking, sharing, commenting, retweeting) or offline through volunteering activity or attending events, as two examples. It seems logical that the level of engagement that stakeholders have with an organisation can directly relate to the nature and strength of their relationship – a notion supported by Thomlison (2009), who suggested that a relationship is fundamentally based on the expectations that each party has of the other formed during their interactions.

This study explores the role social media can play in facilitating such interactions

and the attitudes possessed and approaches used by the stakeholders and

organisations, and how social media influences the relationship between them. To

better understand the impact that social media has on public relations practice, it is

vital to define the concept of social media and how the technology evolved; a

definition is included further in this thesis.

2.3.5 The implications of social media on public relations practice

Common themes emerge from the literature relating to the effect/s of social media

on public relations practice: two-way communication, power, control, transparency,

measurement and the speed of information flow. Firstly, social media supported by

Web 2.0 facilitates the practice of two-way communication between its users.

Cormode and Krishnamurthy (2008) suggested that the terms social media and

Web 2.0 are often used interchangeably, which is inaccurate. Instead, Web 2.0 is

a scaffold or a "technology cluster" (Payne, 2008, p. 76) on which collaborative

applications such as social media, blogs, podcasts and web videos can function

(O'Reilly, 2005). In a public relations context, it means that organisational

representatives now have the opportunity to directly engage in dialogue and

conversation with stakeholders in a very public way via social media (Estanyol,

2012; Eyrich et al., 2008; Robson & James, 2013) and with decreased reliance on

traditional media outlets as the conduit to deliver messages. Social media has also

altered the traditional public relations – media relationship with journalists mining it

for story leads (Robson & James, 2013).

Primarily, social media technology facilitates what is deemed to be public relations

best practice of two-way symmetrical communication in building relationships, as

detailed in Excellence Theory (Grunig, 2001; Grunig & Huang, 2000, Hon & Grunig, 1999). While two-way symmetrical communication is lauded as best practice, it seems to be more of an aspirational one for an industry that has instead clung to the traditional transmission or broadcast models of communication in its attempt to build stakeholder relationships. Solis (2007, para.4) confirmed a shift from traditional public relations practice due to social media with the statement that "monologue has given way to dialogue".

The notion that social media is providing more of an opportunity for public relations practitioners to attain two-way symmetrical communication with stakeholders may not be accurate. Instead, Grunig (2009 suggests that social media technology is largely used by public relations practitioners in traditional ways to broadcast information and by posing as publics to write complimentary content about their representative organisations (Grunig, 2009). The practise is "outed" from time to time for online review sites such as TripAdvisor (Bradshaw, 2012) – such negative exposure could be damaging to charities that rely on the goodwill and trust of the public.

A prominent theme within the literature, in relation to social media's facilitation of two-way communication, is that this function results in the reduction of power and control on behalf of an organisation in its information management with stakeholders. Instead, the ability to contribute to online interactions has shifted power away from an organisation's marketing and public relations departments to the stakeholders at whom these departments were used to broadcasting (Bernoff & Li, 2008; Berthon et al., 2012). The perception that social media has "empowered" publics has also been suggested by scholars such as Bernoff and Li (2008), Grunig (2009), Pavlik (2007) and Wright and Hinson (2012, 2013), with

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 60) describing organisations as being "relegated to the sidelines as mere observers, having neither the knowledge nor the chance – or, sometimes even the right – to alter publicly posted comments provided by their customers". It is the perception of diminished control that has been reflected in the literature as a wariness, confusion and lack of knowledge on behalf of public relations as a profession (Fitch, 2012; Kietzmann Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011; Macnamara, 2010b; Robson & Sutherland, 2012), resulting in some practitioners reverting to traditional tactics and using the medium for one-way communication instead of leveraging its dialogic aspects (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Macnamara, 2010a; Robson & James, 2013).

Grunig (2009, p. 4) opposed the notion of a loss of control with the proposition that it is merely an "illusion". Instead, Grunig (2009) argued that social media has just amplified dialogue that stakeholders were already engaging in offline via word-of-mouth. According to Grunig (2009), public relations practitioners have been experiencing a false belief if they are under the perception that the information disseminated by their organisations to their stakeholders was consumed and understood exactly in the way that they intended.

Grunig (2009) stated emphatically that while the speed and geographical breadth inherent in social media has resulted in word-of-mouth becoming even more of a powerful influencer between stakeholders, it also provides a valuable resource for public relations practitioners – an advantageous and convenient channel for listening. The notion of utilising social media as a new way to measure, monitor and analyse stakeholders is one that is also reinforced within the literature (Bernoff & Li, 2008; Macnamara, 2010a; Macnamara, 2010b; Smith, 2009; Solis & Breakenridge, 2009).

The rapid pace of information exchange facilitated by social media technology has been highlighted as somewhat of a risk for public relations professionals. The speed at which negative information or misinformation can spread has increased the necessity for practitioners to be able to gain the necessary approvals from senior management to respond to such issues on social media appropriately and swiftly (Estanyol, 2012; James, 2007; Jones, Temperley, & Lima, 2009; Macnamara, 2010a; Macnamara, 2010b). Public relations professionals have been urged to approach social media in an open and transparent way when interacting with publics to minimise the risk of negative backlash that can occur when organisational misrepresentation is exposed (Jones et al., 2009; Macnamara, 2010b; Wright & Hinson, 2008b, 2012, 2013). However, misrepresentation can also occur on behalf of the stakeholder, as highlighted by Luoma-aho (2015, p. 2), who suggested that stakeholders, particularly those using social media, can be divided into three groups: "faithholders (the positively engaged), hateholders (the negatively engaged) and fakeholders (the unauthentic persona produced by astroturf and algorithms)." Luoma-aho (2015) encouraged public relations practitioners to support the faithholders, convert the hateholders and reveal the fakeholders. Luoma-aho's (2015) theory may be useful in analysing the social media activities of stakeholders in this study.

While social media's impact on public relations practice is still to be determined, the issues of power, control, two-way symmetrical communication, issues management and transparency remain key considerations for the profession, both online and offline.

2.3.6 Social media use in public relations practice

A number of studies have been conducted in a range of countries that focus on the way that social media is being used as part of public relations practice. In a review of this research, Robson and Sutherland (2012) advised that there were seven prominent themes: social media adoption, social media platform use, practitioner preparedness to use social media, social media governance, communications models used via social media, and level of audience research. These seven themes seemed the most relevant framework to review this research.

2.3.6.1 Social media adoption

The rate of social media adoption by public relations practitioners seems highest in the United States. DiStaso, McCorkindale and Wright (2011) recently reported that 91% of the practitioners in their study had used social media in the past year. These figures reinforced those by Wright and Hinson (2010), who found that 96% of practitioners spent some time working with social media. One explanation for the high level of social media adoption in the United States could be that the most mainstream platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube etc.) were developed in that region of the world, providing practitioners with greater opportunities to grow accustomed to the technologies as they infiltrated everyday communication.

Lower adoption rates are common in the rest of world. In the Middle East, Avidar (2009) found social media adoption to be on the rise in Israel, with 78% of practitioners experimenting with at least one social media element. In Europe, Zerfass, Fink and Linke (2011) reported that 54% of 1007 organisations took advantage of social media as a communication channel, while in Turkey, Alikilic

and Atabek (2012) found that only 15% of practitioners used social networks as part of their practice. In the Asia-Pacific, Macnamara (2010a; 2011) discovered relatively high adoption rates.

Robson and James (2011) found that while 86% of Australian public relations practitioners had used social media, only 12% of those respondents could be classified as active users. This proposes a possible disconnect between reporting adoption rates of practitioners who have used social media at one point in time, compared to those who actively use social media on an ongoing basis. The disconnect could stem from the fact that a clear and commonly accepted definition of the word "active" in terms of social media use does not yet exist. Zerfass et al. (2011), Sweetser and Kelleher (2011), KPMG (2011) and Wright and Hinson (2010) all discussed public relations practitioners or organisations being or becoming "active" on social media, but none actually specified nor quantified what the term meant, nor the level of activity that the word represented.

Similarly, Gillin's (2008, p. 2) study focused on "social media power users", defined as "communications professionals with a deep knowledge and heavy usage pattern of social media tools including blogs, podcasts, online video, social networks, and other new and emerging communications tools and technologies". However, again the term "heavy" was not quantified. Although it may be optimistic to seek consensus on what the terms "active" and "heavy" mean, this lack of consensus makes it difficult to understand whether sole use of social media is being described as "active" compared with everyday use in the research findings available on the topic, and what "heavy use" actually represents.

In a wider context, a KPMG (2011) study found that more than 70% of organisations in 10 countries were using social media, and that social media

adoption in emerging markets such as China, India and Brazil was 20% to 30% higher than in countries such as the UK, Australia, Germany and Canada. Limited research exists investigating public relations practitioners' use of social media in emerging markets, and this topic should therefore be considered an important area for further research. Based on all the findings currently available, it seems social media is being used to varying degrees and is not yet considered by many public relations practitioners to be a fundamental communication channel compared with more traditional methods. Social media adoption is a prominent theme in the literature, and all of the organisations in this study have adopted the use of social media to some extent. However, this study may provide a greater insight into the ways in which social media is being used – a current deficiency identified in the literature.

2.3.6.2 Social media platforms

Overall, the most popular social media platforms among public relations practitioners are blogs, social networks and microblogging. In the United States, Gillin (2008) and DiStaso and Bortree (2012) found blogging to be the most-used social media platform among practitioners. The Gillin (2008) study surveyed 297 communications professionals and found that 78% of the sample used blogs, with online videos rating a close second (63%). Furthermore, after analysing 44 award-winning public relations campaigns from the United States, DiStaso and Bortree (2012) found that 73% included blogging as part of their chosen communication channels, with Twitter following in second place (50%). Avidar (2009) experienced similar results in Israel, with 80% of practitioners using blogs and 69% using social networks.

While it seems that approximately three-quarters of practitioners in the United

States and Israel from these studies were using blogs as their social media

platform of choice, there remain roughly a quarter of practitioners who have not

identified blogging as a social media platform they often use. Blogging is extremely

popular as a communications tool with the general population as statistics from

blogging interface WordPress (2015) have suggested, with more than 409 million

people viewing over 14.7 billion pages every month using this site alone. Such

popularity may stem from the fact that blogging was the first of the modern-day

social media offerings, and it has therefore had a greater period of time to be

accepted as a communications method.

Other researchers from the United States (Wright & Hinson, 2011) and Europe

(Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011; Verhoeven, Tench, Zerfass,

Moreno, & Verčič, 2012) found social networks such as Facebook to be the

platforms most used by public relations practitioners. Again, this may be due to

Facebook's popularity with the general public; according to Facebook (2015), the

platform had more than 890 million daily active users in December 2014, although

what behaviour defined someone as "active" was not defined in this instance.

Microblogging sites such as Twitter were also popular in the United States.

DiStaso and Bortree (2012) found that Twitter featured 50% of the time in award-

winning campaigns, ahead of Facebook (32%). Sweetser and Kelleher (2011)

found 100% of their sample (81) had used Twitter within a week of their survey

taking place.

These results imply that practitioners have their audience in mind when selecting

which social media platforms to use. Twitter is yet another popular mainstream

platform, with Lunden (2012) recording that, while Twitter reports having 500

million users, only 170 million could be described as "active", defined in the study as a profile being altered within a three-month period. Furthermore, video and photo sharing were also commonly used in the United States (Curtis et al., 2010; Lariscy, Avery, & Sweetser, 2009), Israel (Avidar, 2009) and Europe (Verhoeven et al., 2012). Asian-Pacific practitioners preferred social networks, microblogging, and video sharing as their go-to social media platforms, with the most popular sites listed as LinkedIn, Facebook, and YouTube (Macnamara, 2011).

In terms of social media sites, logically, public relations practitioners are utilising the platforms that, according to usage statistics, their stakeholders are most likely to be frequenting. However, how "actively" they are frequenting these platforms is yet to be determined. Comparing the outcomes of these findings with the social media platforms being used by the public relations practitioners in this study will provide a valuable insight into how closely aligned the practitioners are with international trends.

2.3.6.3 Preparedness

In all regions analysed in this review, public relations practitioners perceived themselves to be underprepared in terms of their social media skills. In Singapore, one of Fitch's (2009) respondents commented that practitioners were struggling so much with the technology that they were leaving the profession. In Israel, Avidar (2009) found that "their minor experience does not allow Israelis to actually believe in the new environment or to recommend it with confidence."

In Europe, Zerfass et al. (2011) found that 41% of public relations professionals considered their social media skills to be low, and 42% described their skills as

medium, especially in the areas of evaluation, strategies and web community

management. In the United States, IBM (2011) reported that 64% of chief

marketing officers felt underprepared to manage social media, and just over half

the respondents in Lariscy et al's. (2009) study felt they had the necessary

knowledge to effectively use social media.

Resourcing was a common reason attributed to lack of social media expertise in

studies by DiStaso et al. (2011) and Briones et al. (2011). Participants in Wright

and Hinson's (2011) study blamed their lack of training on the low level of

importance placed on social media tools in organisations. Underpreparedness also

featured highly in Australia, where Macnamara (2011) reported that 67% of

organisations did not provide social media training for employees, and few

organisations had a solid social media strategy. In his study, 74% of practitioners

claimed to have intermediate or advanced knowledge, but the lack of social media

strategy and measurement also highlighted in this study could contradict this

perception of expertise. What is not clear with this statistic is the differentiation

between expertise in personal and organisational contexts.

Macnamara (2011) also found that the majority of public relations practitioners

claimed that they and their management were highly or moderately knowledgeable

about social media, which contradicted studies from other regions. Robson (2011)

found that limited resources (time, staff and budget) were the main reasons

Australian public relations practitioners gave for their inexperience with social

media. In most of the studies analysed in this review, at least half the public

relations practitioners did not feel as though they had the necessary skills and

knowledge to effectively use social media on behalf of their organisations.

Social media is a relatively new inclusion to a practitioner's raft of communications channels, and unfamiliarity may be sufficient to create unease caused by less experience with the medium compared to more traditional ones. What is lacking with the research undertaken thus far is a benchmark or standard in terms of what knowledge and skills a practitioner must have in order to be prepared. One must ask what the term "prepared" really means and, with social media technology constantly evolving, whether it will ever be possible to completely prepare a public relations practitioner to function competently in the ever-changing landscape. Exploring the influence limited resources in the not-for-profit sector have on the issue of social media preparedness will be highly relevant to this study.

2.3.6.4 Social media governance

The literature relating to social media governance suggested a consensus that the term "governance" was referring to training, measuring, monitoring and having guidelines and/or policy in relation to social media use (Macnamara, 2011a; Verhoeven, Tench, Zerfass, Moreno, & Verčič, 2012; Zerfass et al., 2011). The sheer speed and breadth at which information can travel via social media has resulted in the issue of governance becoming a prominent topic within the literature. The increased risk to reputation and fear of loss of control is presented in the literature as a major concern to public relations practitioners and a barrier preventing their organisations from embracing the technology (DiStaso et al., 2011; Macnamara, 2010a; Robson & James, 2011; Verhoeven et al., 2012).

While it is impossible for information and communication to be controlled on social media, properly preparing staff within organisations through training, processes and policies may assist them in navigating an organisation through issues or

crises. Studies conducted in Europe, the Asia-Pacific and the United States

revealed that very few organisations had implemented governance structures in

relation to social media use. Zerfass et al. (2011) found that 84% of organisations

in Germany had insufficient regulatory structures. Wright and Hinson (2010) found

46% of organisations did not deem it a priority to monitor what social media users

outside the organisation were saying about them, and Macnamara (2011) found

that more than 65% of Asia-Pacific organisations had not developed social media

guidelines.

Furthermore, in Europe only one-third of public relations professionals had social

media guidelines at their organisations, and only a similar number conducted any

type of monitoring (Verhoeven et al., 2012). However, this finding differed from the

situation in Israel, where 95% of public relations practitioners in the study

monitored the social media mentions of their clients (Avidar, 2009). In relation to

the allocation of social media resources and training to use the technology, most

of the literature indicated this was not a top priority for the organisations studied

(Avidar, 2009; Fitch, 2009 IBM, 2011; Lariscy et al., 2009; Macnamara, 2011a;

Zerfass et al., 2011). The literature proposed that formal social media structures

such as policies and training are not a priority for public relations practitioners and

the organisations that they represent. Part of this study will investigate whether

these findings are present within the organisations being explored in this research.

2.3.6.5 Measurement

Social media measurement did not rate highly in most regions, except for Israel,

(95% of public relations practitioners measured social media activity) (Avidar,

2009) and China, where 15 out of 18 respondents measured social media

campaigns using a variety of methods. In Asia, one of Fitch's (2009) respondents stated that passing on the social media return-on-investment evaluation to clients was purely a description of the activity itself, rather than an evaluation of its effectiveness. However, in China, Luo and Jiang (2012) surveyed 18 public relations practitioners regarding their methods of social media campaign measurement and found that 16 used measures, such as followers, comments and retweets; 15 measured brand awareness; and the majority attempted to measure online advocacy and influence. However, only five believed that analysis of the dialogic interactions between users was a valuable indicator of relational bonds with an organisation.

Luo and Jiang (2012) found that many of their respondents lacked knowledge of the specific goals of their social media campaigns, opting to react to their competitors rather than being strategically proactive from the outset. This would have created difficulties in measuring the success of a campaign, as practitioners would not know if they had achieved the set objectives. While these two studies (Fitch, 2009; Luo & Jiang, 2012) were conducted in different parts of Asia, one could deduce that social media measurement has increased as an important part of public relations practice over the three years between each of the studies. In Fitch's (2009) study, evaluation of the success of a social media campaign was non-existent, and practitioners focused purely on outputs. Alternatively, in the Luo and Jiang (2012) study, social media campaign measurement had become both a common and complex practice for most practitioners. However, the lack of fundamental campaign structure suggests deficiencies in the validity of the measurement methods being reported.

In the United Kingdom, only 53% of organisations evaluated the effectiveness of using social networking sites (Michaelidou et al., 2011). Respondents from the same study generally agreed that the lack of social media measurement was due to limited knowledge relating to what is important to measure and which methods are appropriate to use.

In Europe, Zerfass et al. (2011) found that 87% of organisations had serious deficiencies in key performance indicators (KPIs), and Verhoeven et al. (2012) found only 26% of the organisations they surveyed had KPIs in place. Yet only a further 27% were planning to implement them, similar to what was happening in China (Luo & Jiang, 2012). This theme continued in the United States, where Wright and Hinson (2010) reported that only 38% of public relations professionals in their study conducted measurement research on their social media activities, even though they were categorised as having a "deep knowledge", and 51% from Gillin's (2008) study were found to measure their activity. DiStaso et al's (2011) study asserted that public relations practitioners were measurement-averse because they were unsure how to measure beyond their reach and unsure how to connect measurement outcomes to wider communications strategies.

Macnamara (2011) reported that 47% of Australian public relations practitioners he surveyed did not monitor social media regularly and 36% did not conduct any analysis of their social media activities. The 22% of Australian practitioners who monitored social media focused on quantitative metrics such as mentions, views, and visits, neglecting to qualitatively measure the content of such mentions. By overlooking the analysis of sentiment in social media comments, organisations will not gain an accurate picture of how users view them. One hundred comments may seem impressive, but is much less so if 70 of those are negative.

The common theme emerging from each of the countries investigated is a general lack of knowledge surrounding social media measurement. Public relations practitioners may still be struggling with and focusing on how to use social media itself, rather than simultaneously learning how to measure whether what they are doing is successful. Adding to this is conflicting information regarding how public relations practitioners can accurately measure social media performance. The confusion surrounding the growing complexity of social media measurement may have rendered practitioners paralysed from testing the best methods for their organisations.

Limited resources may be another reason for the lack of importance placed on social media measurement. This notion corresponds directly to the reasons surrounding why limited training is being offered to public relations practitioners by their organisations. It will be beneficial to this study to investigate the current social media measurement techniques employed by the participating organisations, in order to understand whether similar confusion or complacency exists to that found in the literature.

2.3.6.6 Communication models used

Most research exploring the communication models used on social media by public relations practitioners involved practitioners self-reporting via surveys and interviews, or used content analyses of social media activity employing Kent and Taylor's (1998) dialogic principles (e.g. Bortree & Seltzer, 2009). A prominent theme in the literature from practitioners and academics was social media being lauded as the technology most conducive to dialogue facilitation, relationship

building and collaboration (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Estanyol, 2012; Evans, Twomey, & Talan, 2011; Grunig, 2009; Macnamara, 2010b).

Yet, a scarcity of evidence exists to support the notion that social media is being used to facilitate two-way symmetrical communication or the mixed-motive model. Instead, the literature proposes that social media is being used to broadcast information rather than trying to instigate stakeholder engagement and dialogue (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Lovejoy et al., 2012; Waters et al., 2009). Macnamara (2010a) advised that while public relations practitioners understood that social media technology could facilitate dialogue, many did not carry this out in reality. The study highlighted that 41% of practitioners in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Hong Kong used social media for research and listening, and 20% for collaboration (Macnamara, 2011).

The notion of rhetoric was also prominent in research by Evans et al. (2011). However, a study of the American Red Cross conducted by Briones, Kuch, Liu and Jin's (2011) that suggested that the ideal of two-way symmetrical communication was being realised by social media. However, data was gleaned via self-reporting through interviews, which may not have provided the researchers with a truly objective view of what was happening in reality (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986).

Investigating the communication models being used in the theoretical framework for this research will help to provide insight into the ways in which the organisations in this study are using social media. It may also uncover whether the charities are using the dialogic features of the technology. Ascertaining such information will help develop recommendations that may better support the ways

in which the participating organisations use social media to build and maintain

relationships with current and prospective stakeholders.

2.3.6.7 Audience research

A further interesting point to note in the current social media literature is that the

majority of research so far has focused solely on how the public relations

practitioner or organisation is using social media technology (Austin, Fisher Liu, &

Jin, 2012; Dodd & Campbell, 2011; Schultz, Utz, & Göritz, 2011). Less emphasis

has been placed on better understanding how stakeholders are using the

technology to engage with organisations and the public relations practitioners

representing them. The research project informing this thesis aims to make some

contribution to this gap in knowledge by surveying and interviewing current and

prospective stakeholders. A comparison between organisational approaches and

stakeholders' attitudes and practices will provide a valuable insight into both sides

of the social media equation for public relations practitioners and scholars in the

field.

2.3.7 Social media use by charities/not-for-profit organisations

Research into the use of social media by not-for-profit organisations is increasing,

but it remains a relatively unexplored field. The research undertaken in this study

provides much-needed insight into a comparatively new area of scholarship. Beth

Kanter, Richard D. Waters and Gregory Saxton were three of the first people to

address the topic of social media in the not-for-profit sector. While not an

academic researcher, Beth Kanter is viewed as an authority on the topic. Her first

book, *The Networked Nonprofit* (Kanter & Fine, 2010), was the primary text that

introduced social media to public relations practitioners working within the sector,

and Kanter continues to publish and blog prolifically to inform and train not-for-

profit organisations on how to adapt to the rapid evolution of social media

technology.

Similarly, since 2010 Richard D. Waters has researched extensively in the field

and co-produced 13 academic research papers to provide some insight into the

ways in which the not-for-profit sector, particularly in the United States, is using the

technology (specifically Facebook, Twitter and blogs) to interact with stakeholders.

Gregory Saxton has also made a valuable contribution to this area of scholarship

by investigating and categorising the ways in which not-for-profit organisations are

using social media technology, and is one of the few scholars to focus on the

stakeholders' perspective. His most recent study, co-authored with Waters (2014),

analysed 1,000 Facebook posts from organisations on the Nonprofit Times 100 list

and found that stakeholders are more likely to share posts from not-for-profit

organisations than engage in dialogue with them – an important finding for this

study. Waters, Kanter and Saxton remain leading voices in this field; yet the

conversation commenced only five years ago, highlighting the infancy of this field

of scholarship.

Key research studies into the use of social media by the not-for-profit sector, such

as Nah and Saxton's (2012, p. 1), found that "organizational strategies, capacities,

governance features and external pressures" influenced social media adoption

and utilisation by not-for-profit organisations. Culture had less influence than

organisational structures according to Waters and Lo (2012) who found mixed

support in relation to the impact of culture on organisational use of social media by

not-for-profit organisations from countries such as North America, China and Turkey.

A common theme that has emerged from research into social media and not-for-profit organisations is that those using it have yet to embrace and completely utilise the dialogic features the technology provides (Waters et al., 2009; Lovejoy et al., 2012; Guo & Saxton, 2013; Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009). Waters et al. (2009) provided an insight into how 275 not-for-profits were using Facebook to engage with stakeholders. They found that not-for-profits were not using many of the available Facebook applications to their full potential and social networking sites could be an effective engagement tool, provided organisations knew how their stakeholders used the sites. Smitko (2012) examined Twitter as a possible fundraising tool for charities to engage with donors, yet, Lovejoy et al. (2012) found that many not-for-profit organisations still used Twitter as a method of one-way communication, rather than taking advantage of its capabilities for two-way communication. Guo and Saxton (2013) found Twitter to be a powerful communication tool, but one used less as a tool of mobilisation in not-for-profit advocacy. Lovejoy, Waters and Saxton (2012) also found that not-for-profit organisations used Twitter primarily to broadcast information, with community building and calls-to-action aimed at stakeholders being less of a priority. The use of social media to connect with publics and stakeholders was considered to be "effective and necessary" by Briones, Kuch, Fisher, Liu and Jin (2010, p. 37) after interviews with 40 employees from the American Red Cross. Furthermore, a Barnes and Mattson (2008) study of 200 US charities also found that 97% had a Facebook profile, and 96% had a Twitter account, positioning social media as a widely adopted communication platform. This was also apparent in research by Curtis et al. (2010, p. 91), who found in a study of 409, US, not-for-profit public

relations practitioners that all except five used social media. However, adoption of social media was not at the same level in the United Kingdom. Quinton and Fennemore (2013, p. 48) explored the use of online social networks by twelve major charities and found their current involvement in social media to be limited. This discrepancy may suggest that increased rates of social media adoption by not-for-profit organisations are not prevalent in every country. However, the US studies included much larger samples than the Quinton and Fennemore (2013) UK research, which may have also impacted the results. The research undertaken for this PhD thesis will focus more on social media practice by not-for-profit organisations and only includes charities that have already adopted the technology as part of their communication mix.

A similar study to the one undertaken for this thesis was completed by Lord (2009), who conducted a national survey as the basis for a doctoral thesis. The research explored the motivations and methods of 147 fundraising professionals in the United States in relation to how each used social media as part of their work. The findings indicated that social media was not accepted by the majority of study participants, with 42% reporting using the technology (Lord, 2009, p. 10). While Lord's (2009) research was focused on social media in the not-for-profit sector, it differed from the research conducted for this thesis by focusing solely on fundraisers and fundraising in the United States and using one method (a survey) to gather data.

Wirth Consulting (2012) and Digital Business Insights (2013) have provided some knowledge into adoption rates and use of social media in Australia's not-for-profit sector. One study described 20% of not-for-profit organisations as hesitating to adopt technologies such as social media. Seven per cent of organisations used

social media to complement other communications channels, or as the sole

channel for marketing and fundraising tasks (Digital Business Insights, 2013). A

study of 221 Australasian organisations from a range of sectors found that 74%

used online social networking (Macnamara, 2011). Compared to the Digital

Business Insights (2013) study, this suggested a significant lag in social media

adoption rates by Australian not-for-profits compared with organisations from

different sectors.

Results from Wirth Consulting (2012) reinforced the lack of social media adoption.

Australian not-for-profits have become comfortable with having an online presence

– 97% own a website – yet less than a third of them used social media (Wirth

Consulting, 2012). For example, LinkedIn was the most prevalently used social

media platform (32%), followed by Facebook (31%), YouTube (23%), Twitter

(22%) and blogs (10%) (Wirth Consulting, 2012). The same study also found that

the 5% of organisations within the $100,000 – $250,000 annual revenue bracket

were the least likely to use social media at all.

Organisations earning more than $5,000,000 and those earning less than

$100,000 per annum were most likely to use social media (Wirth Consulting,

2012). Analysis into the rationale behind why each revenue segment uses or

avoids social media would provide an insight into motivation surrounding their use.

The Wirth Consulting (2012) study also reported that when reviewing the third of

Australian not-for-profits using some form of social media, the majority were not

using each platform to its full capacity. This is in line with a US study that found

not-for-profit organisations had not incorporated the majority of features and

applications that were available to them (Waters et al., 2009). These findings could

suggest that a lack of training and resources such as funding, time and staffing

may be responsible for the lack of expertise in the area of social media by many
not-for-profit organisations.

Significant focus has been placed on social media adoption rates and usage
methods of not-for-profits, yet the tangible benefits associated with social media
activities are still to be determined. Barrett (2009), Klein (2000) and Warwick
(2009) all reported social media as being an ineffective tool to attract donations.
Ogden and Starita (2009) found that social media provided limited rewards for
many of the 256 charitable organisations in their study. For example, 45% of
charities reported attracting less than 25 volunteers, and 32% of charities admitted
attracting less than $100 in donations via social media. The majority of charities in
both cases did not measure their social media returns at all. A further study by
Lewis, Gray and Meierhenrich (2014) found that although the *'Save Dafur'*
Facebook campaign had 1.2 million members only $90,000 was raised (an
average of $0.075 from each member).

After reviewing the literature in this area, it appears that the research undertaken
so far has been largely unbalanced in terms of its focus. Research to date appears
to have placed greater emphasis on adoption rates (Digital Business Insights,
2013; Wirth Consulting, 2012) and ways in which charitable organisations are
using social media technology without comparison to how current and prospective
stakeholders view and interact with organisations in the same context. At the time
of writing, Gray and Hopkins (2013, 2014 & 2015) have explored stakeholder
perspectives, but in relation to their interaction with email newsletters from not-for-
profit organisations in New Zealand. Saxton and Waters (2014) and Paek et al.
(2013) have also investigated social media activity from a not-for-profit
organisational stakeholder perspective. Miller (2011, p. 40) surveyed 105 people

and found that 36% of respondents followed a not-for-profit organisation via social media, 24% gave donations after a call-to-action via social media, and 58% volunteered when requested via social media. What could be deemed the most comprehensive study into donor and volunteer social media attitudes and behaviour was conducted by Georgetown University's Center for Social Impact Communication in collaboration with Waggener Edstrom Worldwide (2013). The study involved 2,004 "digitally engaged cause supporting adults" and found that 54% were more likely to support a cause when prompted on social media rather than by offline methods, and 55% of those who engaged with causes via social media had been inspired to take further action for that particular cause (Center for Social Impact Communication/Waggener Edstrom Worldwide, 2013, p. 3).

The Miller (2010) and Georgetown University's Center for Social Impact Communication/Waggener Edstrom Worldwide (2013) studies have highlighted the need for further exploration into the rates of people following not-for-profits on social media and the ways in which they engage in this space.

To date, research has not been undertaken investigating Australian stakeholders of not-for-profit organisations in comparison with findings from international studies. This study includes current and prospective stakeholders as part of its sample and explores charitable organisations within Australia that undertake a variety of public relations functions within a specific charitable sector (youth homelessness). The research framework includes a survey, semi-structured interviews and content analysis as methods of gathering data; endeavouring to address a current gap in knowledge.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK COMPONENTS

3.1 Theoretical Framework for this Study

This research study is multifaceted in its methodological approach (interviews, content analysis and surveys – see Chapter 4), and sample variation (charities, and current and prospective stakeholders) to explore how youth homelessness charities approach social media to build and maintain stakeholder relationships. A multifaceted approach has also been adopted to develop the most relevant theoretical framework to underpin the project. When undertaking the literature review, it became apparent that a single theory would not amply support the complexities of this study. As such, the theoretical framework chosen for this research consists of elements from four different theories: dialogic theory (Kent & Taylor, 2002), relationship management theory (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998), two-way symmetrical communication (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) (and its progression to the mixed-motive model) (Murphy, 1991), with some emphasis also placed on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989).

This section will introduce each theoretical component, explore its origins, summarise the discussion surrounding the theory, and establish its relevance to this research. Additionally, a brief overview of the Integrated Public Relations Media Model (Hallahan, 2010) will be provided as an example of a comprehensive framework similar to that which this project aspires to develop for the not-for-profit sector for the integration of its social media and communication activities.

After delving into the characteristics of dialogic and relationship management theories and the two-way symmetrical communication/mixed-motive model, a degree of overlap was evident, particularly regarding the conceptual elements of each theoretical construct (Pieczka, 2011). While specific elements of the theories

appear to be aligned or supportive of others, each theory remains distinctive

(Theunissen & Wan Noordin, 2012). In particular, mutuality, commitment,

transparency and trust are common theoretical elements to dialogic and

relationship management theories, as depicted in Figure 1.The upper blue line

connects to the relationship management components and the lower

demonstrates the dialogic theoretical components. Trust features prominently in

Figure 1 to demonstrate how it underpins all theoretical components in dialogic

and relationship management theory and its significance in the charity/stakeholder

relationship.

Drawing on these shared characteristics in addition to the other dialogic elements

(empathy, risk and commitment) aims to provide a frame of meaning to better

understand if dialogic interaction is occurring between charities and their

stakeholders on social media and how charities are using social media to manage

stakeholder relationships. Two-way symmetrical communication and its extension,

the mixed-motive model, is positioned under the other theoretical elements as an

underlying aspiration in public relations practice that bolsters the other theoretical

components.

Although it does not overlap with the other theories, the Technology Acceptance

Model is significant, as it explores the way in which people accept and adopt

technologies – in this case, social media. The interplay between these similarities

and differences is illustrated in Figure 1. This section will explore how the different

characteristics of each theory provide their own unique value and function to the

study, while the parity between some theoretical components work to scaffold the

research being undertaken.
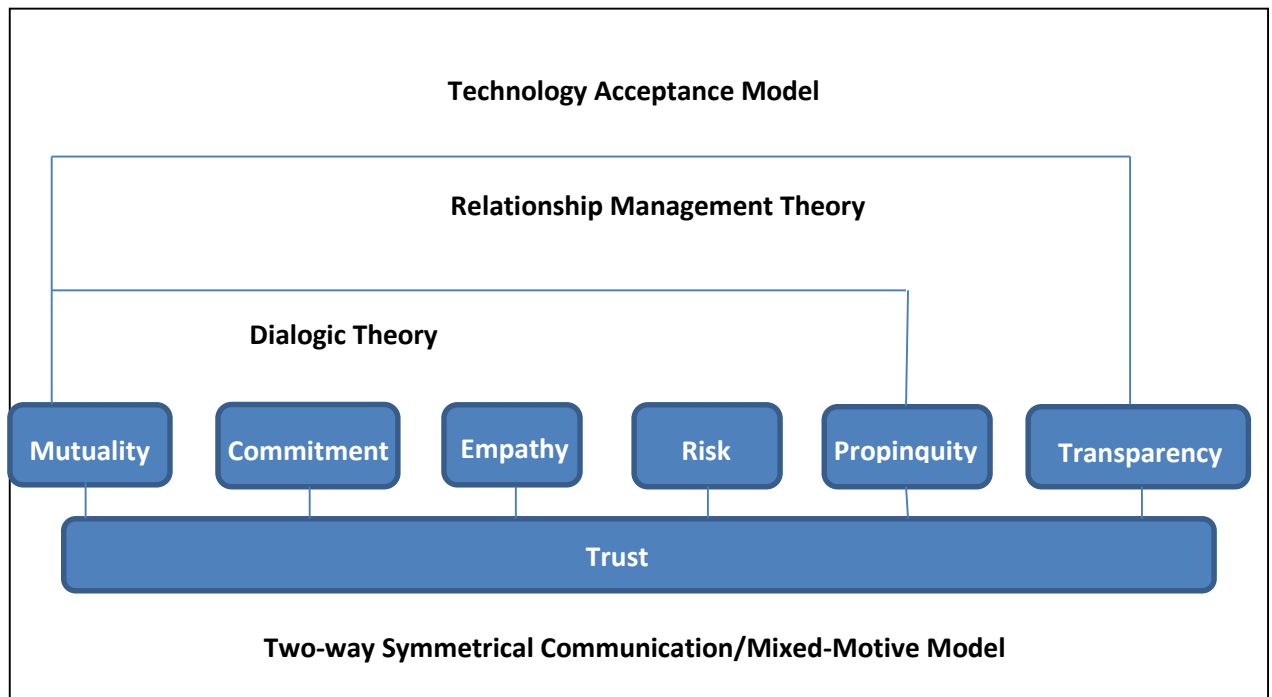
Figure 1. Theoretical Framework for this Study

3.2 Dialogic Theory

It has been argued that the concept of dialogue remains widely misunderstood in the field of public relations (Pieczka, 2011; Taylor & Kent, 2014). The word dialogue derives from the Greek word "dialogos": with "dia" meaning "through" and "logos" meaning "word" or "the meaning of the word", suggesting a "stream of meaning" (Bohm, 1996, p. 6). Before its application in a public relations context, dialogic theory was explored by theorists from a range of disciplines, including philosophy, communication (particularly relational communication theory), political science, and management (McAllister-Spooner, 2009; Pieczka, 2011; Theunissen & Wan Noordin, 2012). Buber (1970, 1985) and Habermas (1970, 1984) have been identified as the two theorists most pivotal in the evolution of dialogic theory prior to its adoption by public relations scholars (Kent & Taylor, 2002; Pieczka 2011). Buber (1970) believed that dialogue was the basis of a relationship where parties come together with openness and respect, also described as an "I-thou"

relationship that is "based on reciprocity, mutuality, involvement and openness" (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 22). Similarly, Habermas (1984) approached dialogue as the fundamental ingredient to cooperative and communicative relationships, a notion also supported by Anderson and Cissna (2004).

However, Stewart and Zediker (2000, p. 2) suggested that Aristotle provided a prescriptive definition of dialogue as "tensional, situationally-accomplished and inherently ethical" praxis, with tensions existing between surrendering and "holding my own, univocality and multivocality and theory and practice." , Dialogue has been defined in some literature as a communicative process, as opposed to a stagnant characteristic or concept (Goodall & Kellett, 2004), and this process is one that aims to result in shared meaning – an integral outcome for public relations (Heath, 2001).

Pearson's (1989) doctoral thesis exploring the use of dialogue as a tool to facilitate ethical public relations practice has been described as the earliest use of dialogic theory in a public relations context (Kent & Taylor, 2002; Pieczka, 2011). While Heath (1998) discussed dialogue from an issues management perspective, and later explored a rhetorical approach to the use of dialogue in public relations (2000, 2006). Heath (2000) suggested that public relations added value to society through rhetorical dialogue in three ways: by enabling ethical standards to be refined, through the facilitation of standards and policies being forged by interested parties to create mutually beneficial relationships and social capital, and by allowing publics and stakeholders to participate and witness discussions around decisions that affect them. While Heath's (1998, 2000, 2006) work is central to issues management, Kent and Taylor's (1998, 2002) and Taylor and Kent's (2014)

contributions to the discussion surrounding dialogue display greater relevance to social media engagement and management in the context of this study.

Kent and Taylor (1998, 2002) were vital in highlighting the relevance of dialogic theory to public relations practice and who were the first to apply it to relationship management on the World Wide Web. Kent and Taylor (1998, p. 325) defined dialogic communication as "any negotiated exchange of ideas and opinion." They asserted that dialogic communication consists of two main characteristics: that the individuals involved in the exchange do not have to agree, but must share a willingness to reach a position by which they are mutually satisfied. Dialogue, of which engagement has always been a strong component, is characterised by open discussion and negotiation rather than a fixation on reaching agreement (Taylor & Kent, 2014). It is important to highlight the importance of engagement to dialogue as "without it there can be no real dialogue". (Taylor & Kent, 2014, p. 390). All parties must be willing to actively participate (to listen and openly contribute) for dialogue to take place.

Kent and Taylor (1998) went on to assert that dialogic communication is founded on intersubjectivity (seeking to understand the positions of others and how such positions were reached), and not objective truth or subjectivity. While Kent and Taylor (1998) heralded the value of the World Wide Web as a tool that public relations practitioners could use to facilitate dialogic communication with stakeholders, they stressed that technology alone cannot make or break relationships. Instead, the deciding factor is how that technology is used. In contradiction of Goodall and Kellett's (2004) notion of dialogue as a process, Kent and Taylor (1998) approach dialogue (on- or offline) as a product of the relationships and ongoing communication of its participants. The argument that

dialogue cannot be reduced to a set of articulated steps is consistent with Pieczka

(2011), Stewart and Zediker (2009) and Theunissen and Wan Noordin (2012),

each of whom presented dialogue as an abstract activity and one that is unique to

each occasion and each participating party.

Pieczka (2011) raised the dangers relating to Kent and Taylor's (1998)

recommendation to public relations practitioners that incorporating a "dialogic loop"

(a tool to facilitate feedback and response, such as email) into a website will assist

in building organisational public relationships. Pieczka (2011) argued that such a

practice was attempting to mechanise an abstract exchange. Similarly, public

relations practitioners were discouraged from objectifying publics in a dialogic

exchange, rather than approaching each participant as an active individual (Kent &

Taylor, 2002; Pieczka, 2011; Theunissen & Wan Noordin, 2012)

Solid recommendations have not been made on how to apply dialogic theory to

public relations practice (Pieczka, 2011). A review of the literature positioned Kent

and Taylor as the only theorists who attempted to translate what is viewed as an

abstract concept into a set of applicable recommendations. This highlights the

importance of dialogic theory in enabling organisations and stakeholders to

"interact, foster understanding, goodwill and a shared view of reality" (Taylor &

Kent, 2014, p. 391).

In attempting to conceptualise such an abstract concept, Kent and Taylor (1998)

and Taylor and Kent (2014) suggested five key components inherent in dialogue:

mutuality, commitment, empathy, risk, propinquity and transparency. These five

components can be applied to the dynamics at play between charitable

organisations and current and prospective stakeholders in a social media
environment.

3.2.1 Mutuality

Simply stated, mutuality is defined as willingness (Auger, 2010; Kent & Taylor,
2002): a willingness for an organisation and its publics to be connected. This
agreement to be linked is believed to result in the most suitable environment for
dialogue and collaboration to occur. Kent and Taylor (2002) stressed that such
willingness must also extend to efforts made by each party to foster a relationship
where each participant feels equal to the other. In what has been described as the
"spirit of mutual equality" both sides are warned not to view the other party as an
object, or superior or inferior, but as individuals engaging in a dialogical exchange
(Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 25). Mutuality directly relates to this study, as it can guide
the exploration of willingness (or unwillingness) of current and prospective donors,
supporters and volunteers to follow and interact - forms of online dialogue - with
charitable organisations on social media.

3.2.2 Commitment

Genuineness, commitment to conversation and commitment to interpretation are
the three key elements of commitment in facilitating dialogic communication (Kent
& Taylor, 2002, p. 29). Firstly, genuineness is related to transparency: an element
of relationship management theory that will be discussed further in this review and
that requires participants to be open and honest in their communication. Next,
participants must be committed to the conversation for its "mutual benefit and
understanding" for dialogue to take place and must be committed to deciphering

the meaning that the other party is attempting to relay (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 29).

The concept of commitment is important to this study, as it may help to explain

stakeholder motivations to interact with charities on social media and how the

charities consider stakeholder needs in their social media activities.

3.2.3 Empathy

Dialogue is fostered when the parties involved display empathy, supportiveness

and confirmation of the objectives and interests of the other participants (Auger,

2010; Kent & Taylor, 2002). The dialogic process resulting from this approach is

one where the "participants create a new space that is outside the participants yet

belongs to each – akin to Buber's notion of 'between'. This space is borne from

our understanding of the situation and context, and it is in this space that a

meaningful relationship is built." (Theunissen & Wan Noordin, 2012). Empathy has

also been credited as an essential ingredient in community building, both on and

offline, as it facilitates communal orientation (community building) (Kent & Taylor,

2002; Stark & Kruckeberg, 2001) – a concept that is highly relevant to this study.

Empathy may underpin the decisions made by current and prospective

stakeholders whether to support a charitable organisation in general and, more

specifically, on social media. Empathy may play a role in the way that charities

structure their social media activity and in the way they interact with stakeholders

when attempting to engage with them in this space. Organisations expending the

effort to appear to their stakeholders as being dialogically focused online tend to

actively participate in dialogue (Kent & Taylor, 2002). Therefore, empathy in this

sense may assist in exploring which organisations "walk the walk and talk the talk"

by providing what they understand their stakeholders are seeking from them on social media.

3.2.4 Risk

The notion of risk highlights the unpredictability of dialogue in its true sense. Dialogic communication cannot and should not be controlled by its participants in order to ensure that it remains an open, equal and supportive exchange of ideas (Stewart & Zediker, 2009; Theunissen & Wan Noordin, 2012). Relinquishing perceived control to facilitate the free flow of dialogue gives rise to the perception of risk by participants, particularly in relation to "vulnerability, unanticipated consequences and recognition of strange otherness" (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 28). Transparently sharing information may be deemed to be perilous by charitable organisations and current and prospective stakeholders, as it places each party in a vulnerable position if the information is used in a negative way in the future.

The benefits of sharing information through dialogical exchange may include increased trust and stronger relationships. Charitable organisations may be reluctant to share information about the way in which donated funds are spent due to fear that stakeholders may deem certain activities to be unethical. However, the act of non-disclosure may herald the same result: mistrust. Prospective and current stakeholders may be reluctant to interact with charitable organisations on social media as they may not want to show such an affiliation with people within their own networks, or they may be fearful that the charity will use their contact information to bombard them with requests for support.

The unpredictability and uncontrollable aspects of dialogic communication may result in unanticipated consequences for participants (Kent & Taylor, 2002).

Dialogue is unscripted, and its flow and subject matter are dynamically dependent on participants as they co-produce its course. Social media facilitates such exchanges between organisations and stakeholders in a very exposed environment (Brown, 2009). Discussions that may have once taken place over the phone or via mail are now in full view on organisational social media profiles. This particular aspect of risk is highly relevant to the participants in this study. Social media interactions can provide valuable results for an organisation when the exchange is positive, but can tarnish an organisation's reputation and reduce its trustworthiness if negative. The final aspect of risk is the recognition of "strange otherness", which involves both participants in the dialogue unconditionally accepting the "uniqueness and individuality" of the other party (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 28). Social media networks consist of people from all walks of life. As mentioned previously, organisations must recognise current and prospective stakeholders interacting with them on social media as individuals with unique needs, ideas and opinions – not as a homogenous group.

3.2.5 Propinquity

The concept of propinquity relates to the elasticity of a relationship between an organisation and its publics: specifically, the organisation's extension of dialogue to issues that relate directly to its publics and vice versa. Propinquity is believed to include three main characteristics: "immediacy of presence, temporal flow and engagement" (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 26). The propinquital feature of "immediacy of presence" refers to dialogue on issues taking place in the present, rather than after decisions have been made that affect both parties (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 26). Using immediacy of presence as an approach is different to managing either a

positive or negative response after the fact if one side has been excluded from the discussion. Social media can facilitate such discussions in real-time between an organisation and its stakeholders and can also be used by stakeholders to visibly respond to organisational decisions once they have been made, rendering it relevant to include in this study.

The "temporal flow" of propinquital dialogue requires both parties to have an understanding of the history of the relationship and its present condition while simultaneously considering its future well-being (Auger, 2010, p. 5; Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 26). This requires both parties to enter into dialogue not as a singular encounter, but as part of an ongoing process of relationship building. This aspect of propinquity is highly relevant to this research because, when using social media, charities practising temporal flow will use the technology to strengthen relationships that have been cultivated in other environments, such as offline through volunteering activities or fundraising events. Such organisations will utilise social media as a method of acknowledging and maintaining those relationships until they can be strengthened further through an offline activity.

Kent and Taylor (1998, p. 323) reminded public relations practitioners of the suitability of using the World Wide Web for temporal flow with the following statement, applicable to social media technology: "The trick is to realize the technology, at hand and forthcoming, must be used to keep in touch and not distance ourselves – from clients, peers and the media." This notion was raised by Isaacs (1999, p. 388), who warned that while advances in digital technology have provided increased opportunities for connection, they have not yet achieved true "contact". Thus, in this study temporal flow will refer to the way in which charitable

organisations use social media to enhance and support relational elasticity to positively function in both online and offline environments.

Despite speculation surrounding the concept of engagement, Kent and Taylor (2002, p. 26) describe the final propinquital component as vital for participants to be "willing to give their whole selves to encounters" (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 26) for true dialogue to occur. This willingness extends to participants being accessible and motivated to listen and actively contribute to the dialogic communication process in a transparent way. This requires participating parties to be both ready and sincere in their exchanges, as Taylor and Kent (2014, p. 387) asserted: "Engagement assumes accessibility, presentness and a willingness to interact". This is a topic of great importance to this research, as the concept frames and can describe the varying levels of interaction that publics have with charitable organisations via social media and vice versa. In a social media context, engagement is often quantified by "likes", "shares", "retweets" or the rate at which followers participate by leaving comments on an organisation's social media profile or mentioning an organisation or brand within their own networks. Engagement has also been defined as offline interaction, (such as event attendance), generated by social media interaction with an organisation (Vesnic-Alujevic, 2012; Men & Tsai, 2013; Paek et al., 2013).

Alternatively, engagement on behalf of an organisation using social media may refer to the number of platforms on which the organisation maintains a presence, how often it attempts to generate interactions with stakeholders, how timely it is in responding to stakeholder posts, and the approach or voice chosen to represent the organisation during those exchanges.

The three propinquital components: immediacy of presence, temporal flow and engagement are suggested to work together to facilitate dialogic exchange. Temporal flow enables a commitment to an ongoing relationship so that dialogue is possible. With the relationship formed, immediacy of presence promotes a culture of discussing issues in a timely manner and a willingness to engage in dialogue is necessary for an exchange to ensue.

Overall, while the unpredictability and abstract nature of dialogue results in it being difficult to accurately define, Kent and Taylor's (2002) dialogic principles directly relate to particular aspects of social media interactions between charities and stakeholders resulting in their framework being a highly relevant theoretical construct to underpin parts of this research.

3.3 Relationship Management Theory

The relationship management approach to public relations was introduced by Ferguson (1984), who proposed that relationships are central to public relations practice and, therefore, that their study is of vital importance to publics relations scholarship. A relational approach differed from previous approaches as it placed its focus on the dynamics and health of relationships instead of purely approaching public relations as a communication function (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998) or with the intention of persuading publics (Ehling, 1992). This was apparent in a statement by Grunig (1992, p. 57) that defined public relations as the practice of "building relationships with publics that constrain or enhance the ability of the organization to meet its mission", which only emphasised the benefits to be experienced by the organisation. The same notion was later incorporated by Cutlip, Center and Broom (1994, p. 1) where relationships were at the core of their

definition of public relations: "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".

Primary scholars of relationship management theory, Ledingham and Bruning (1998, p. 62), further defined the concept of relationship purely as a state that exists between an organisation and its publics whereby "the actions of either entity impact the economic, social, political and/or cultural well-being of the other entity", suggesting that a mutually beneficial relationship is where both parties are advantaged in all respects as a result of the connection.

Broom, Casey and Ritchey (1997) acknowledged the lack of a universal definition of relationships and set of metrics with which to measure them. Broom et al.'s (1997, pp. 90–91, p. 94) definition focused on relationships as transactional exchanges existing in three states: the antecedents to the relationship, the relationship itself, and the consequences of the relationship, with characteristics that can be measured by assessing "necessity, asymmetry, reciprocity, efficiency, stability and legitimacy" as relationship values.

Two years after Broom et al's (1997) contribution to the discussion of relationship management, Hon and Grunig (1999, p. 3) proposed that an organisation's long-term relationships can be best measured by focusing on six key components: control mutuality (agreement on which party has the rightful power to influence the other), trust (integrity, dependability and competence), commitment (the relationship's benefits outweigh the costs), exchange relationship (reciprocal benefits), and communal relationship (providing benefits to the other party out of concern rather than expectations of reciprocity).

Grunig and Huang (2000, p. 37) also conducted extensive research into the measurement and maintenance of relationships in public relations practice, proposing six areas that are integral to the maintenance of organisational–public relationships: "access, positivity, openness (transparency), assurance, networking and sharing tasks." Additionally, Grunig and Huang (2000, p. 42) advised that there are four main relational outcomes: "control mutuality, trust, relational satisfaction and relational commitment". Similarly, Ledingham and Bruning (1998, p. 59) recommended that "trust, openness, involvement, investment and commitment" were the central outcomes of organisational–public relationships. It must be noted that the outcomes of mutuality, commitment, trust and openness (transparency) directly overlap with characteristics from dialogic theory, asserting the relevance of relationship management theory to this study. Specifically, this study utilises the theoretical framework to detect whether components of dialogic theory exist in the social media attitudes and activities of youth homelessness charities and stakeholder and if the elements of relationship management theory are being realised as a result of social media dialogic interaction.

Overall, the literature suggested that organisational–public relationships are complex and multifaceted, requiring attention to conflict resolution and openness (Grunig & Huang, 2000; Leningham & Bruning, 1998). As such, a relational approach to public relations is extremely important to consider in the context of the communication process between charities and stakeholders – both in general, and via social media.

Charitable organisations are strongly dependent on relationships cultivated and maintained with stakeholders to generate support; relationship management may

be viewed as integral to the survival of such organisations (Park & Rhee, 2010).

Charities may use various methods to maintain relationships. This study focuses

on the approaches to social media that youth homelessness charities take in

attempting to develop and maintain relationships and engage in dialogue with

stakeholders. As such, the theoretical elements shared between dialogic and

relationship management theories render them highly relevant to include within the

theoretical framework of this study. While the shared elements of mutuality and

commitment were explored in the review of dialogic theory literature, the concepts

of transparency and trust require further review to quantify their significance to this

study.

3.3.1 Transparency

Transparency, or openness, relates to the free flow of accurate information

between an organisation and its stakeholders, as opposed to public relations

practitioners concealing and framing information purely for the benefit of the

organisation. Ledingham and Bruning (1998) conducted a survey to ascertain the

relationship dimensions in which good organisation–public relationships are

initiated, developed, and maintained. An integral element identified was openness.

Organisational openness or transparency has been described as the opposite

practice to concealing information and maintaining secrecy; an open, transparent

organisation may also be referred to as a "naked corporation" (Florini, 1998;

Tapscott & Ticoll, 2003). Lack of transparent organisational practices also links to

Grunig's (2009) "illusion of control" whereby public relations practitioners

incorrectly perceive that communication can be controlled.

Transparency is important in forming positive relationships through the development of trust between the parties involved. The level of disclosure of financial and organisational performance that a not-for-profit organisation provides on its website has a positive impact on the number of donations that it attracts (Saxton, Neely, Guo, 2014). With the onset of new media such as the internet, in which social media plays a key role, stakeholders have access to a greater volume of information about an organisation, especially through electronic word-of-mouth. With the nature of current technology, organisations have a rapidly decreasing number of opportunities to control or interrupt the flow of information when compared with public relations practices from twenty years ago (Tapscott & Ticoll, 2003).

This notion implies that because of the magnitude and speed at which information travels via social media, the most negative and sensitive information has the potential to become common knowledge amongst stakeholders within minutes. Public relations practitioners and organisations, especially in the not-for-profit sector, need to be open, transparent and genuine when engaging with stakeholders using social media to avoid a negative backlash. Organisations that strive to become transparent with stakeholders and reveal behaviour do not always expose intent and retain an element of secrecy (Florini, 1998).

Organisations may also go to the extreme in terms of acting transparently, possibly bombarding stakeholders with too much unrestricted attention that may be unwanted (Jahansoozi, 2006). Stakeholders may quickly deduce whether an organisation is not representing itself honestly. Once uncovered, the knowledge of any deceit can spread quickly, often being picked up by traditional media or

covered by social media influencers in blogs or via other social media platforms (Stratmann, 2010; Tapscott & Ticoll, 2003,).

Jahansoozi (2006) suggested that in the context of the not-for-profit sector, organisations are not expected to adopt a transparent culture because they are already assumed to be honest and undertaking positive work for the community. However, not-for-profit organisations are often scrutinised about the way in which donated funds are allocated. Therefore, transparency in the context of social media and not-for-profits remains a highly relevant inclusion in this study (Auger, 2010).

3.4 Trust

Trust is an abstract and fragile human emotion. While challenging to define, it has been described as an expectation that someone will treat us fairly in the future, because they have done so in the past (Moloney, 2005). Chia (2004, p. 280) suggests that "trust is one component of relationship management that will develop when all other parts of the relationship are managed with reliability."

Taking this approach has positioned trust as underpinning all dialogic and relationship management theoretical elements in this study. Trust forms the foundation of a relationship and can increase over time to strengthen relationships. As an essential ingredient in the stakeholder/not-for-profit relationship, trust is required for stakeholders to feel confident that any support provided by them to a charity will be used in an honourable way. Relational trust is a key antecedent of a positive organisational reputation (Yang, 2007) with other scholars suggesting that, "without trust there is no relationship,"(Welch, 2006, p. 140). In the context of

the stakeholder/charity relationship, goods are generally not exchanged for money. Instead, stakeholders make contributions of support out of good-will. Not-for-profit organisations rely on the existence and ongoing development of trust to strengthen the stakeholder/organisation relationship to encourage ongoing support for their continued survival.

Yet, developing trust is complex and as a construct is multidimensional (Chia, 2005; Welch, 2006). Trust specifically relates to the theoretical framework of this study as it is inherent in the concepts of commitment, empathy, risk, propinquity and transparency. Empathy, mutuality and transparency help to develop trust and commitment (McAllister & Taylor, 2007). In turn, trust reduces perceptions of risk and strengthens propinquity. In a social media context, stakeholders and organisations need to have an adequate level of trust in the information exchanged online for relationships to be cultivated or maintained (Stafford & Canary, 1991; Fisher & Brown, 1988; Jahansoozi, 2006). Trust has also been identified as a relational outcome by Grunig and Huang (2000) and has been labelled as one of the five principles of dialogic communication linked with risk (Taylor et al., 2001). Theunissen and Wan Noordin (2012) proposed that trust is essential to dialogue. Pearson (1989) advised that dialogue attempted without a foundation of trust may be viewed with suspicion, increasing the necessity for transparent communication; as such, trust and commitment can be developed and perceptions of risk minimised.

Charities may fear that by trusting stakeholders with genuine information and behaving transparently they are placing their organisation in a vulnerable position and placing its reputation in jeopardy. Trust as a concept will also be considered within the theoretical framework of this study due to its intrinsic nature within the

other theoretical elements and because of its significance to the development and management of the stakeholder/not-for-profit relationship.

3.5 Two-way Symmetrical Communication

A further theoretical construct identified as facilitating dialogue is two-way symmetrical communication and, more specifically, an extension to the theory: the mixed-motive model (Grunig, 2009; Kent & Taylor, 1998; Leeper, 1996; Murphy, 1991). Two-way symmetrical communication has been described as "utilising research, listening, and dialogue to manage conflict and to cultivate relationships" with internal and external publics (Grunig, 2009, p. 5), which is motivated by a desire for shared understandings, honesty and genuineness (Pieczka, 2011). Two-way symmetrical communication theory is viewed as the most ideal public relations model out of the four suggested by Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2006) as part of Excellence Theory, the other three being press agentry, public information, and two-way asymmetric communication.

Developed after a fifteen-year study of 327 organisations in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Foundation, Excellence Theory characterised aspects of best practice in the public relations profession (Sison, 2012). However, two-way symmetrical communication in public relations is often viewed as aspirational: a practice that is strived for, but one that rarely takes place in reality. Dialogue has been differentiated from two-way symmetrical communication as the product of the two-way symmetrical communication process taking place (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Yet while the focus of two-way symmetrical communication has been identified as establishing mutual understanding, (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), Theunissen & Wan

Noordin (2012) proposed that two-way symmetrical communication theory has evolved into the quest for agreement. Such consensus is not always an indication that dialogue has actually occurred – consensus can also be a result of persuasion.

While some scholars have claimed that social media technology can facilitate two-way symmetrical communication (Grunig, 2009; Waters & Jamal, 2011; Waters & Williams, 2011; Wright & Hinson, 2008), others have argued that this scarcely occurs in reality due to the power differentiation that exists between an organisation and its stakeholders. It has been suggested that the power disparity is coupled with reluctance from organisational leaders to surrender control or, as Grunig (2009) described it, their illusion of such control (Jahanhoozi, 2006; Murphy, 1991; Theunissen & Wan Noordin, 2012). Only when power can be totally removed can a relationship be equal and so too can the communication associated with that relationship (Jahanhoozi, 2006).

In terms of the not-for-profit sector, stakeholders possessing the currency of time and funds are much sought after by charities. However, it is the organisations that retain the power within legislative constraints of how the donated resources are distributed once they have acquired them. Removing power from the charity–stakeholder relationship may prove difficult, as Jahanhoozi (2006) highlighted, as the distribution of power within the relationship is innate. Even if social media provides a channel where open dialogue can occur, the division of power can interfere with its ability to provide two-way symmetrical communication in the true sense of Grunig's (2009) definition. This research study will attempt to understand if two-way symmetrical communication is a priority for not-for-profits and stakeholders and if it is present in their social media interactions.

3.5.1 Mixed-motive model

The mixed-motive model differs from the two-way symmetrical model by blending symmetrical and asymmetrical perspectives to utilise conflict in a positive and productive way, developing, through compromise, a resolution to benefit both parties rather than attempting purely to reduce contention (Lauzen, 1997; Murphy, 1991; Tindall, 2007). Touted as the "most completely developed model of conflict and public relations", the mixed-motive model is the application of game theory to public relations, an approach acknowledging the combination of motives possessed by its participants: organisations and stakeholders (Lauzen, 1997; Plowman, 2005, p. 133; Sison, 2012). The model also recognises that public relations practitioners "serve both as advocates for their organizations and as mediators between the organization and its strategic publics" (Grunig, Grunig, Sriramesh, Huang & Lyra, 1995 p. 170), whereby the participants compromise in a symmetrical way while retaining their asymmetrical self-interest (Lauzen, 1997; Plowman, 1998). Tindall (2007, p. 202) suggested that the mixed-motive model is inherently flexible so that it can be applied by public relations practitioners to the fundraising process in the not-for-profit sector by incorporating symmetrical and asymmetrical habits to adjust internal and external communication and to achieve both long-term and short-term goals.

When compared with two-way symmetrical communication, the mixed-motive model appears to be a more realistic and achievable approach to communication in the context of the not-for-profit organisation – stakeholder relationship and the way these groups communicate using social media. The model accepts the differing agendas of, and power distribution between, each party. Rather than expecting participants to curtail their objectives to minimise conflict, it encourages

charitable organisations and stakeholders to openly communicate their motivations

to reach a win-win resolution.

The dialogical nature of social media can facilitate the mixed-motive model and

vice versa by allowing charitable organisations to be transparent in their agendas

and engage in prompt and timely discussions with geographically dispersed

stakeholders. Such discussions may assist in a greater likelihood of achieving

organisational objectives by facilitating participation and monetary donations from

stakeholders or managing issues, such as complaints or negative comments on

the social media profiles of charitable organisations. This is because the

resolutions reached would suit both parties to a greater degree rather than one

participant yielding to the other party's point of view purely because they are

participating in dialogue (Murphy, 1991).

Interestingly, Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002), in defence of their two-way

symmetrical model of communication, stated that rather than developing an

extension to the model, Murphy's (1991) mixed-motive model is merely a

description of the two-way symmetrical communication process as they had

originally conceptualised it. One wonders why it had not been described as such

from its beginning. Laskin (2009) claiming that this model dichotomised a

communications process that does not include oppositional communication

models. Instead of asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical as two opposing forces

working together, Laskin (2009) argued that asymmetrical communication is a

communicational direction inherent in two-way symmetrical, as it needs to be

directed one way before it can be returned. However, Grunig (2000, p. 34) has

also supported the mixed-motive process as detailed by Murphy (1991), describing

it as advocacy and collaboration working together and constituting "excellent"

public relations. As such, this concept will be considered highly relevant for

inclusion in the theoretical framework of this study to examine whether this variety

of social media exchange is occurring between charities and their stakeholders.

3.6 Technological Acceptance Model

The Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) lends itself to be an appropriate

theoretical framework in this study to assist in describing the participants' (public

relations professionals and prospective and existing stakeholders) acceptance and

use of social media technology. TAM, as first developed by Davis (1989), has

been widely used and proven to be both a valid and rigorous theoretical method to

understand why technology is adopted or rejected (Chung, Park, Wang, Fulk &

McLaughlin, 2010; King & He, 2006; Park, Son & Kim, 2012; Legris, Ingham &

Collerette, 2003; Straub, Keil & Brenner, 1997). Based on the theory of reasoned

action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB)

(Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), TAM proposes that technology is adopted

and used based on two key determinants: "perceived usefulness and perceived

ease of use" (Davis, 1989, p. 319).

Davis (1989, p. 320) defined perceived usefulness as "the degree in which a

person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job

performance." In the context of this study, this will refer to how public relations

practitioners at youth homelessness charitable organisations perceive social

media to be useful in communicating with stakeholders and vice versa.

Alternatively, perceived ease of use is defined as "the degree in which a person

believes that using a particular system would be free of effort" (Davis, 1989, p.

319). Within the framework of this research, ease of use will relate to how

straightforward the study participants perceive using social media technology to be.

While TAM has been criticised for possessing a narrow focus that has limited and prevented researchers from exploring other determinants in the adoption and use of technology (Bagozzi, 2007), its widespread use and validation as a robust theoretical model outweighs its suggested deficiencies, positioning it as a worthwhile inclusion to assist in the meaning-making of this project.

The theoretical framework being used to underpin this study may seem to be cluttered with overly numerous theoretical models and concepts, yet this review has attempted to highlight the complementary nuances of each. This description also endeavoured to differentiate each theory's specificity and what it can do to assist in understanding and articulating the findings from this research in order to answer the research questions. All theories explored in this review are highly relevant either to specific areas of inquiry being undertaken, the overall aim of this study or to both, solidifying the place of each as the theoretical framework supporting this research study.

3.7 Integrated Public Relations Media Model

Hallahan (2001, 2010) developed a five-category model to assist public relations practitioners in strategically selecting channels based on their communication purposes and objectives (see Figure 2). The development of an informative integrative matrix upon which public relations practitioners in the not-for-profit sector can base their decisions related to their social and traditional media communication choices is a key aim of this research. Hallahan (2010) used a

scale where mass communication and personalised communication are positioned

at opposite ends.

	Mass communication			Interpersonal communication	
	Public Media	**Interactive media**	**Controlled media**	**Events/group communication**	**One-on-one communication**
Key uses in a public relations program →	Build awareness	Respond to queries; exchange communication	Promotion; provide detailed information	Motivate attendees; reinforce existing beliefs and attitudes	Obtain commitments; resolve problems
Principle examples	Newspapers Magazines Radio Television Out-of-home media Directory advertising Special media Movie trailers	Telephone-based: Automated response systems Audiotext; Computer-based: Internet, intranets, extranets Databases (e.g., telnet, file transfers, Gopher) Email and listservs Newsgroups, chat rooms and bulletin boards, Electronic kiosks, CD-ROMS	Brochures Newsletters Sponsored magazines Annual reports Books Direct mail Point-of-purchase displays Ad specialities Video brochures	Speeches Trade shows Exhibits Meetings/conferences Demonstrations/rallies Sponsorships Observations/anniversaries Sweepstakes/contests Recognition/awards programs (Supported by audiovisuals and multimedia)	Personal visits Lobbying Personalised letters Telephone calls Telemarketing solicitation

Figure 2. Integrated Public Relations Media Model

Within the scale are five categories of communication: public media, controlled media, interactive media (including social media), events, and one-on-one communication. Each communication category is allocated to specific key uses for their inclusion in a communications mix. For example, the interactive media category in which social networking sites are allocated has "respond to queries; exchange information; engage users" (Hallahan, 2010, p. 626) as its key uses.

A possible deficiency in the model is that it presents communication as rigid and categorised, instead of fluid and constantly shifting its key uses depending on stakeholders' consumption and preferences. Social media can be used for more than the key uses assigned to it in this model. It can also be used to build awareness, enhance credibility, motivate participants, to name other examples of key uses that may also apply. While the Hallahan (2001, 2010) model is comprehensive, this research aims to advance it further to develop a framework that addresses a current gap in the public relations literature and in knowledge for the not-for-profit sector. The model intends to illustrate how social media can be used in multifaceted ways to achieve the key communication uses proposed by Hallahan (2001, 2010) and incorporating the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

Adopting an integrated approach to social media has been recommended by Hannah, Rohm and Crittenden (2011, p. 265), who suggested that "companies should view their approach to social media as an integrated strategy that brings consumer experiences to the forefront, all while recognizing that Internet-based media does not replace traditional media." However, Smith (2010) viewed integrated communication as more than purely an operational function, but also as a managerial philosophy. Both sides will be explored in this study. Yet refining the

Hallahan (2001, 2010) model to offer a necessary comprehensive articulation of methods in which social media and traditional media can be better integrated may have three potential benefits for the not-for-profit sector, reinforcing its validity as a research area. These potential benefits could best be described as reaching wider audiences, repurposing content and reinforcing messages.

By integrating communication efforts across a selection of different channels – traditional and social – public relations practitioners may have a greater chance of reaching a wider audience. As consumers of media, stakeholders use and interact with a range of communication channels according to accessibility, preferences and knowledge of how to use them. Increasing the number of channels on which not-for-profit organisations have a presence may have a direct and positive impact on the breadth of reach they have in terms of exposing their messages to larger groups of new and existing stakeholders.

Producing original and compelling content for traditional and social media channels can prove to be an extremely costly venture for a not-for-profit organisation, particularly when new and different content is produced specifically for each channel. By integrating social media and traditional communication efforts, not-for-profit organisations can start with base content that is refashioned and tweaked to suit the characteristics of the other platforms chosen for use in the integrative mix. Such a practice may improve the chances of content remaining consistent in terms of its key messages, look and feel, as its presence on each platform has originated from the same core content. Furthermore, repurposing content so that it can be integrated across a carefully selected range of relevant channels may also reduce the cost of content production for not-for-profit organisations. Slightly amending base content so that it suits the specific features

of each platform may also cost less in the time and human resources associated with setting up and creating new content for each channel in isolation. Within the typically under-resourced environment of the not-for-profit sector, an integrated social media communication model would provide a valuable framework for public relations practitioners. Such a model could inform practitioners to make more cost-efficient decisions regarding their content production requirements and on which communication channels to have a presence.

Finally, integrating content across a range of relevant communications channels may also improve the potential for stakeholders to be exposed to key messages from not-for-profits more than once, particularly if they are consuming media using multiple devices. Each interaction with the content would be slightly different as it would be enhanced to suit each channel, but the messages would remain the same. Such repetition may assist in reinforcing key messages with stakeholders to potentially generate a positive response to calls-to-action (displaying the desired behaviours requested by the call-to-action).

The development of an integrated social media communication model for the not-for-profit sector may address a current gap in knowledge and have the potential to make a valuable contribution to public relations theory and practice by providing an informative framework on which to base practical decisions and further research. One of the main aims of this study is to first ascertain the feasibility of further research in this area.

3.8 Research Questions

The research questions to be addressed in this study have been developed to incorporate the complex mix of theoretical elements of relationship management theory, dialogic theory, two-way symmetrical communication/mixed-motive model, and TAM. The answers to these questions aim to provide valuable knowledge to inform youth homelessness charities regarding social media use in the first instance, with the goal that this knowledge can be extended to the wider not-for-profit sector.

The research questions for this study are thus:

1. ***What are the motives for youth homelessness charities in using social media to communicate and engage with their stakeholders?***

This question aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the rationale behind why public relations practitioners use social media to assist them in their role of stakeholder communication and engagement.

2. ***What are the challenges for youth homelessness charities in using social media to communicate and engage with their stakeholders?***

Identifying the various challenges experienced by public relations practitioners from youth homelessness charities when using social media for stakeholder communication and engagement is the first step in the process of developing potential resolutions to address these challenges.

3. *What is the frequency of social and traditional media integration and*

    what are the social media techniques utilised by youth homelessness

    charities to support and/or complement the traditional methods already

    in use?

The rationale behind this question is to firstly establish which traditional media

methods (e.g. radio, television, print media) are being used by the charitable

organisations in this study and then how (or if) public relations practitioners are

using social media in an integrated or isolated way. The information gleaned from

practitioner interviews will be compared with the findings from a content analysis to

achieve this understanding. Such knowledge may inform the sector in relation to

best-practice use of social media as a supportive addition to more traditional

methods of communication. Alternatively, the information attained from this area of

inquiry may also provide a benchmark for other charitable organisations to

compare with their current methods.

4. *To what extent is social media use by youth homelessness charities in*

    line with the dialogic components expected by their stakeholders?

It is fundamental to this study to ascertain whether the charities involved are

accurately addressing the activities, attitudes and expectations of stakeholders

with whom they are attempting to build and maintain positive relationships via

social media. This knowledge will reinforce that charitable organisations are

successfully connecting with current and prospective stakeholders or will highlight

discrepancies between organisational social media activities and expectations of

the segments with whom they are trying to engage. Exploring the answer to this

question through social media content analysis, participant responses to

interviews and survey results will provide a valuable insight into the not-for-profit

sector through the comparative analyses of public relations practitioners and

prospective and current stakeholders.

4. METHODS

The primary aim of this research was to assess the feasibility of developing an integrated social media communications model for the not-for-profit sector. To achieve this aim, it was fundamental to gather relevant data to address the four research questions. Rather than focusing on one specific methodology (quantitative or qualitative) or philosophy (positivist or interpretivist), a pragmatic methodological approach was adopted. Combining multiple perspectives provides a more comprehensive and holistic outlook.

Advantages and disadvantages existed in both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. An online quantitative survey contained closed-ended questions plus options for qualitative responses. Semi-structured interviews were employed as a qualitative technique to delve deeply into the particular topics associated with the social media activity. As the survey was conducted first, the researcher was able to analyse its data to identify areas that warranted deeper inquiry and incorporate those into the interviews with both samples. Finally, a content analysis incorporating quantitative and qualitative approaches and techniques was included to compare the accuracy of interview data from the public relations practitioners with the social media activities of their organisations; providing a more balanced view of social media activity in terms of its methodological approach and objectivity. The content analysis data was gathered directly, without informing the charities in question of the method or its timing.

This study used data triangulation, each method provided three different perspectives: charitable organisations'; stakeholders', both current and prospective; and a view of how both sides interacted with each other on social media. The benefit of using a mixed-methods approach, as suggested by Axinn

and Pearce (2006), Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) and Denscombe (2007),

enabled for the strengths of each specific method used to help counteract the

weaknesses of the other methods.

4.1 Online Survey with Prospective Stakeholders

Online surveys have been criticised for their exclusion of respondents without

access to the necessary technologies, such as a computer or the internet, and

therefore they have been seen as not adequately representing populations (de

Vaus, 2014; Sue & Ritter, 2007; Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). However, this

study focused on exploring online activities such as social media engagement with

charities, and a sample limited to internet users provided a workable frame directly

in line with the aims of this study.

There were 177 responses to the online survey snowballing via social media (Sue

& Ritter, 2007). All efforts to seek survey participants were conducted using online

methods, as this seemed the most appropriate approach for an online survey that

was also focused on particular aspects of social media use. The survey was

advertised in two email newsletters: one for staff and the other for alumni of the

researcher's home institution. These newsletters were emailed to an estimated

total of 94,000 email addresses from the two databases with the aim of reaching

the inboxes of as many people as possible. The request for participants appeared

in the staff email newsletter for four consecutive weeks and once in the alumni

email newsletter. These databases were selected to promote the survey because

they were convenient and free to use and they contained the details of a

significant number of prospective survey respondents.

It was presumed that by targeting staff and alumni there was a greater likelihood that they might be high-income earners, making them more likely to be donors. Next, the survey was advertised via social networks using two different strategies. Firstly, a call for participants appeared on the same institution's alumni LinkedIn group. At the time, this was a closed group for Monash alumni members only and had more than 3,000 subscribers (LinkedIn, 2014).

Friends within the researcher's network were asked to promote the survey through a status update on their own personal profile. Interested friends sent a personal message to the researcher that communicated their interest and the researcher provided text and the survey link to post as their status. The text also included a request for readers to share the status to increase the survey's exposure to a wider proportion of the Facebook network. This technique allowed the researcher access to larger and new networks of people, while leveraging the personal endorsement of the person posting or sharing the request for participants with their Facebook friends.

4.1.1 The survey instrument

The survey instrument for this study included 30 questions, with seven of those seeking demographic information. It was promoted in e-newsletters and via social media. Five different topic areas were explored in this survey: current giving habits and philanthropic motivation, attitudes towards the communication channels and fundraising techniques used by charities, social media consumption habits, engagement with charities via social media, and demographic information. Please see Appendix A.iii to view the survey instrument. The survey was pre-tested prior to its distribution.

i.   Current giving habits and philanthropic motivation

The first seven questions of the survey established participants' current philanthropic activities and motivations. This provided an overall context that explored how social media was positioned. These questions also linked directly to research questions 1, 2 and 4 to better understand from a stakeholder perspective motivations and barriers in relation to social media use and the dialogic expectations of stakeholders. Establishing current giving habits provided an insight into possible challenges that charitable organisations faced if they adopted social media as a technique for relationship management and dialogic communication. The data gathered in this section of the survey assisted in the exploration of stakeholder expectations of dialogic communication with charities. This was achieved through the examination of giving and volunteering habits and the reasons that motivated support for particular charities. This approach helped to gain an understanding of whether an expectation of dialogic communication with stakeholders' chosen charities exists. Underpinning these questions was the objective of assessing the dialogic theoretical components: commitment, mutuality, empathy and risk, plus levels of trust that existed in the charity–stakeholder relationship to support and motivate philanthropic activity. These questions explored relationship management techniques used by charitable organisations towards their stakeholders.

The first question of the survey assessed the frequency with which participants interacted with charities through donating goods and funds, volunteering or participating in a charity event. The next question gathered data exploring with which categories of charitable organisations the respondents interacted. The different categories of organisations were based on the Wirth Consulting (2012)

report into social media use in the Australian not-for-profit sector, one of the few studies available. Questions 3 and 4 were open-ended, with comment boxes for responses that firstly asked participants to list the names of the charities that they had donated to in the past 12 months and then to specify whether this donation was money, goods and/or time.

Question 5 asked participants to estimate the amount of their monetary donations per year by choosing one of seven dollar ranges. This question was included to gain a better understanding of donation levels and habits and led into questions 6 and 7, which aimed to establish whether respondents gave to the same charities each year and what their motivations were for doing so. This attempted to assess commitment levels shown by participants to giving to charities in general and to specific organisations. It also tried to gain an indication of the strength of the charity–stakeholder relationship. Assessing stakeholder motivations provided valuable information to charitable organisations in order to ascertain whether organisations have adequately addressed motivations in their attempts to engage with stakeholders using social media.

ii.   Attitudes towards the communication channels and fundraising techniques used by charities

Questions 8–12 used a number of different question formats that enabled participants to express their attitudes about the various communication channels and fundraising techniques charities used. Questions 8 and 9 used a scale from one (least) to five (most) to rate the media and fundraising techniques that most informed and secondly most encouraged the participants to give time, money or goods to charitable organisations..

The communication and fundraising options to be rated included traditional media channels; new media channels, including web-based channels such as email, websites and social media; and fundraising techniques such as direct mail and point-of-sale collection tins. Both of these questions provided data that informed Research Question 3 to better understand how charitable organisations were integrating social and traditional media in their stakeholder relationship management strategies from the stakeholder perspective. Questions 10 and 11 used a ranking format to classify the top 10 communication and fundraising methods used by charities that most deterred stakeholders from giving and those that most reminded them to give.

The data gathered from these questions provided insight into the methods used by charities that are most opposed by stakeholders, and provided valuable information that assisted in addressing all four research questions. The final question in this section of the survey, Question 12, used a multiple-choice format but allowed participants to choose more than one response if it applied, asking respondents why specific channels and fundraising techniques motivated them to give. The options ranged from acting as a reminder, making participants feel compelled and/or guilty, or engaging with their altruistic side. This question also gave participants the opportunity to provide their own answer if the options offered did not apply or to they needed to provide greater detail.

iii.   Social media consumption habits

Questions 13–17 established the social media consumption habits of the survey participants. The rationale behind this area of enquiry was to provide valuable information that addressed research questions 1, 2 and 4. Understanding social

media consumption rates and habits provided much-needed context. This allowed

a comparison of organisational activities with stakeholder social media usage. This

knowledge assisted in providing recommendations to the not-for-profit sector and

highlighted whether a need existed for an integrated social media communication

model.

The theoretical framework underpinning the questions in this section was the

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM); as such, each question was based on

those used in a study by Willis (2008) that used TAM to better understand social

networking behaviour (Davis, 1989). Questions 13 and 14 asked how often

participants frequented commonly used social networking sites and, next, the

likelihood that in the future they would visit commonly used social networking sites:

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest, and Google+. Questions 15 and

16 allowed participants to comment when asked how many hours per week they

spent using social media and the length of time they had been users.

The final question was in a single-answer multiple-choice format that asked

participants to estimate how much time they spent on social networking sites

compared to friends of the same gender and age. This ascertained whether the

respondent perceived their social media consumption habits to be within the

normal range of their peers. The assessment of respondents' overall social media

consumption habits provided a sound basis upon which to narrow the scope of this

investigation and explore how social media was used to interact with charitable

organisations.

iv.   Engagement with charities via social media

Questions 18 – 23 were devoted to investigating levels of stakeholder interaction with charities using social media and barriers preventing stakeholders from such interactions. All inclusions in this section provided valuable information to address research questions 2 and 4 and explicated, from the stakeholders' perspective, exactly what charities were doing on social media that resulted in responsiveness on their part and what deterred them. Furthermore, all questions in this part of the survey focused on assessing the theoretical elements of mutuality, commitment, propinquity and trust, an essential element for a positive charity–stakeholder relationship by measuring participant attitudes to interacting with charities on social media; more specifically, whether the stakeholder/charity relationship would extend to a social media environment (Kent & Taylor, 2002; McAllister & Taylor, 2007).

Question 18 used a scale with the options of "yes", "no" or "n/a" to ask respondents whether they followed, connected or subscribed to a charity on social media; donated to or volunteered for a charity; or participated in a charity event after reading about it on social media. These questions aimed to better understand support levels and rates of responses in terms of calls-to-action by charitable organisations on social media.

Question 19 also asked about the same social media activities as Question 18, but differed by asking respondents to attribute these actions to nine charities named "Australia's most trusted" in a study by Cavill + Co and Di Marzio Research (2011). The rationale behind this question was to assess the theoretical concept of trust in relation to social media activity with organisations that had some reputation for

trustworthiness (McAllister & Taylor, 2007). Question 20 was important to further

establish the social media sites used for this interaction and compare this

information with that collected from Question 21. This question used six of the

seven organisations in this study in the place of the "most trusted" charitable

organisations to see if these levels varied. Organisation G was not included in the

scale for Question 21 because it was not yet included in the study when the survey

was disseminated. The producer from Organisation G requested inclusion in the

study after learning about it in a not-for-profit sector publication. While not ideal,

permission was granted based on the organisation's relevance and fit with the

other sample organisations and strong appeal for social media knowledge.

Question 22 used a multiple-choice question format and asked respondents why a

call-to-action on social media by a charity had not prompted them to respond, in

order to understand attitudes surrounding levels of passivity. The final (open)

question asked participants to provide details of a social media campaign that had

inspired them enough to respond, which again aimed to assess levels of

propinquity and commitment (Jahansoozi, 2006; Kent & Taylor, 2002; McAllister &

Taylor, 2007). Furthermore, questions 19, 20, 21 and 22 included comment boxes

for additional qualitative data to be included. Responses to the open questions on

the questionnaire were coded using the criteria specified for the interview data.

v.   Demographic information

Demographic questions were limited to age, gender, education, income, marital

and employment status and were included at the very end of the survey to ensure

that respondents were not deterred if they encountered such personal questions at

the beginning. Except for the question about age, which was an open question, the

remaining questions were multiple choice and based on a template by Sue and

Ritter (2007, p. 170). The final question of the survey was multiple choice and

asked how participants found out about the study to indicate which channel was

the most effective in its dissemination –information that can be used in future

research.

4.2 Interviews with Public Relations Practitioners from Not-For-Profit Organisations

In-depth interviewing can return knowledge that is rich in detail and provides the

opportunity for researchers to gain an extensive understanding of what their

participants really think about particular topics (Daymon & Holloway, 2011;

Denscombe, 2007; Minichiello, Aroni, & Hays, 2008; Stacks, 2011; Weerakkody,

2009). Flexibility has been identified as a key advantage in using interviews as a

research method because they can be adapted for most topics and samples

(Daymon & Holloway, 2011; Travers, 2010). This flexibility lent itself well to this

study, as it enabled in-depth data to be gathered from two very different samples

(public relations practitioners and stakeholders) about the same topic, but from

different perspectives. Alternatively, interviews have been described as being

time-consuming, unreliable and an invasion of privacy (Denscombe, 2007).

Despite these criticisms, they were chosen over other methods such as

observations or focus groups as they were much more convenient to organise with

the interviewees, many of whom were restricted by time and geographical

boundaries.

Purposive sampling was used to identify the organisations in this study and invite

them to participate. The seven organisations in this study were chosen because

they met a number of specific criteria. Firstly, a section of each organisation or the entire organisation was devoted to providing support services to homeless youth located in Victoria, Australia. This criterion was set to ensure that there was a common theme linking the organisations in this study, so that like comparisons could be made as all entities functioned in the same segment and geographic territory of the not-for-profit sector.

 The staff members responsible for each organisation's social media presence were also based in Victoria. A varied sample in terms of organisational size and structure was deemed important for this study. The organisations cannot be named in the final thesis to adhere to the ethical requirements therefore, each is identified and referred to by a code letter. Also, the organisations have been categorised by size: small (A and B), medium (C and D) and large (E, F and G).

Of the 13 interviews conducted with public relations practitioners eleven were undertaken face-to-face at the premises of six out of the seven organisations in this study. This was the first choice of format for several reasons. Conducting interviews in person within the physical structures of the organisations under investigation provided an insight into the environments in which the interviewees must function, a benefit that cannot be experientially attained through telephone interviews (Maxim, 1999). Another benefit of face-to-face interviews is that they allowed body language to be assessed to ascertain whether it reinforced or contradicted the interviewee's verbal responses.

As the interviews were undertaken at the participants' workplaces, it was the interviewees' responsibility to find a quiet space on-site where the interview could be conducted with limited interruptions. This proved to be challenging at times, with meeting spaces being double-booked, interviews being positioned next to a

noisy meeting or an interviewee being called away from the interview to deal with an urgent matter because they were on-site and accessible.

Interviews with organisations C, E and G included two of the interview participants within the same interview. Pros and cons were experienced as a result of this. This format provided multiple perspectives and allowed the interviewees to bounce responses off each other to provide greater depth to their answers. A major disadvantage was that the more senior interviewee had the opportunity to influence their junior staff member, which may have limited any chance of contradictory responses being gathered, if they existed. The three remaining interviews with public relations practitioners were conducted via telephone.

4.2.1 Interview questions

The interview questions with the seven youth homelessness charities were developed in accordance with the theoretical framework underpinning this study and with the purpose of directly addressing the four research questions. Each interview was conducted with the members of each of the seven organisations: a total of thirteen people who were primarily responsible for their organisation's social media presence. The interviews ranged in length from 20 minutes to 90 minutes. The variation in interview length was related to the time constraints of the interviewee and how closely they adhered to the interview questions without seguing onto other topics. The interviews included descriptive, structural and contrasting questions. There were four main areas of enquiry: professional background, organisational approach to social media, social media practice and social media integration with traditional media (Weerakkody, 2009). Please see Appendix A.i. and A.ii. for the interview questions.

i.   Professional background

This was the first area of enquiry and the rationale for asking was to investigate

the qualifications and experience of each of the interviewees and how they related

to their social media expertise. Interviewees were also asked about their length of

service and role responsibilities at their current organisation. This line of

questioning particularly related to the dialogical theoretical aspects of trust and risk

(Kent & Taylor, 1998, 2002; Pieczka, 2011). In terms of trust, querying an

interview participant about their professional background and social media skills

aimed to highlight the different or similar ranges of skills and experience required

by each of the organisations in order for them to trust each participant with

responsibility for their social media presence. Additionally, the level of professional

experience and qualifications required of staff responsible for social media by

organisations may also have indicated the risk aversion of the organisations.

The data gathered in this section of the interview provided guidance in identifying

whether deficiencies in social media knowledge could be addressed through the

recommendation of further training for staff responsible for social media (Kent &

Taylor, 2002; Macnamara, 2011; Robson & Sutherland, 2012).

ii.   Organisational approach to social media

The goal of this interview section was to gain an understanding of the culture and

attitudes that existed within the organisation toward the use of social media as a

communication channel and related to the theoretical component of transparency

(Auger, 2010; Kent & Taylor, 1998, 2002; DiStaso & Bortree, 2012; Jahansoozi,

2006; Kent & Taylor, 1998, 2002). Reluctant organisations may be averse to

sharing what may have been traditionally perceived as sensitive information with their stakeholders.

Next, questions surrounding organisational social media policies and content approval processes similarly aimed to expose attitudes and culture relating to risk and trust. More specifically, gauging organisational attempts to minimise potential risk posed by staff social media use through the implementation of policy and the level of trust placed in supervisors and producers by senior management to allow the posting of organisational social media content. The final question in this section asked the participants to recommend any improvements or changes that they would make to the approach, policies and processes currently utilised by their organisation. The rationale behind this question was to investigate how satisfied participants were with the current environment within their organisation. The question intended to provide an understanding of how constrained the practitioners perceived they were by organisational approaches, policies and processes and to capture any innovative suggestions to assist other charities or the wider not-for-profit sector. This entire category relates to research questions 1, 2, and 3 by providing the organisational context within which each charity's social media activities work and from which a solid knowledge base could be developed on which recommendations to adopt.

iii.   Social media practice

This interview stage facilitated an environmental scan of each organisation and the different social media platforms used by each, and examined the rationale behind why each was chosen and how each platform was used. In this section of the interview, participants were asked to identify the benefits they perceived from

using social media to connect with stakeholders. The questions were posed in this way to determine if there were any links between the theoretical framework of this study and social media activity.

Other interview questions (see Appendix A.i) related to perceived success using social media to connect with stakeholders and how such success was measured, specifically relating to the number of stakeholders who donated, volunteered or attended an event as a result of content that the organisation had posted to its social media profiles. Attempting to ascertain tangible offline results related directly to the theoretical concept of propinquity (Auger, 2010; Kent & Taylor, 1998, 2002), with the motivation to ascertain whether it was a common practice (and, if so, the method employed) to measure how an online relationship via social media could evolve into an offline action requested by the charity.

The final question in this section prompted participants to consider how they would improve their organisation's social media presence if they had unlimited organisational resources and approval from senior management at their disposal. Again, the rationale behind asking this question was to expose current barriers within the organisation preventing the participant from implementing the proposed improvements and to bring to the fore the types of innovations or improvements that might be sought by the different organisations in this study if they had a public relations practitioner as part of the management team. This interview question category specifically addresses research questions 1, 2 and 4 by prompting interview participants to describe their organisation's social media activities.

iv.   Social media integration with traditional media

The final section of this interview attempted to discover how much importance was placed on social media within the organisation compared with traditional media channels such as newspapers, television and radio. This related directly to the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) as a measure to indicate whether the organisations had the same levels of acceptance in relation to social media as the more traditional communications channels already in existence before this newer technology was used to connect with stakeholders.

The next few questions sought to understand which traditional communication channels (television, radio, print media, newsletters etc.) were used by each organisation, the rationale behind their selection, and how each organisation's social media presence was situated within the suite of most commonly used traditional media channels. The aim of this questioning was to once again provide the context of each organisation's communication environment in which social media must perform. Next, participants were asked their opinions on whether social media could be better integrated by their organisation and how they would do this. Answers indicated how confident and satisfied the participant was with social and traditional media integration and generated ideas on how this integration could be improved to potentially benefit the not-for-profit sector at large. The line of questioning implemented in this final category directly addressed Research Question 3 by prompting interviewees to provide details on how social media supported the traditional media channels used by their organisations. This knowledge also aided in the establishment of recommendations to charities and the wider not-for-profit sector (See Section 6.2).

4.3 Interviews with Stakeholders

Social media was used to assemble the sample of 16 stakeholders who currently followed youth homelessness charities using social media. This process was implemented in two stages. The first stage involved snowball sampling (or referral sampling, whereby participants encourage others to take part in the research), with all seven organisations requested to post on their social media channels text written by the researcher seeking interview participants. Three out of the seven organisations complied and posted the request on their Facebook pages asking for prospective participants to email the researcher. While the post received a total of 33 comments and likes combined, only three emails were received from prospective participants. A further sampling approach was required to boost participant numbers.

The next stage involved using non-random sampling to send a Facebook message to every user who liked the post and/or who posted a positive comment to gauge their interest or availability in participating in the study resulting in 16 agreeing to participate in a telephone interview. Other social media platforms were not used for recruitment because the organisations believed that Facebook had the largest and widest audience, or they were reluctant to post in more than one location and did not want to saturate all channels with the same content.

4.3.1 Interview questions

The interview questions with 16 stakeholders currently following youth homelessness charities on social media were descriptive and structural in design and incorporated elements of the theoretical framework. The interview schedule could be categorised into five sections: social media consumption, social media

engagement with charities, propinquity, relationship management and charity performance critique. The interviews themselves varied in length between 6 and 19 minutes: briefer in duration than the practitioner interviews. Please see Appendix A.ii for interview questions.

i.   Social media consumption

To provide some context for stakeholder social media activities, interviewees were asked to disclose how long they had been using social media, the social networking sites they frequented, and the charitable organisations they currently followed through social media. These questions gauged social media expertise and the level of mutuality and commitment towards specific charitable organisations in a social media environment.

ii.   Social media engagement with charities

This line of enquiry established with the stakeholders which youth homelessness charities they engaged with and on which social media sites. This information was elicited in order to understand how discerning stakeholders were with the number of charities they engaged with, which organisations they were connecting with and which social networking sites they preferred to use. Social media engagement was defined to the interviewee as liking, commenting, sharing, following and retweeting (Pletikosa Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; Smith, 2010).

Other questions in this section of the interview enquired as to when this engagement began, why it originated, how often it occurred, what type of engagement the interviewee was most likely to undertake, what prompted them to

engage and what kept them committed to that particular organisation in a social media context. These questions were developed to assess how present the concepts of dialogic theory (Kent & Taylor, 2002; Taylor & Kent, 2014) were in the exchanges between charities and stakeholders on social media. This part of the interview probed further than the survey to articulate what charities could do to prompt reciprocal action from stakeholders. Comparative analysis of these findings was used to assess whether the social media activities of the charities in this study were in line with stakeholder perspectives and expectations, data that assisted in addressing Research Question 4.

iii.   Propinquity

The next question in the stakeholder interview attempted to address whether the charities' social media activities had ever resulted in a propinquital exchange that eventuated in a tangible result (Kent & Taylor, 2002). Interviewees were asked whether they had ever responded with an offline action (volunteering or event attendance) to a request from a charity on social media. This assessed the elasticity of the charity–stakeholder relationship between online and offline environments in relation to social media context. Furthermore, this section of the interview queried stakeholders to identify what had prevented such a propinquital exchange if one had not been experienced.

Also, this data assisted in answering research questions 1, 2 and 4, as it provided stakeholder perspectives on barriers that prevented engagement, viewed as possible challenges on behalf of the organisations, and the dialogic expectations in terms of communication with charitable organisations via social media.

iv.   Relationship management

The questioning in the stakeholder interviews then focused on relationship management theory from the stakeholders' perspective to provide an insight into what the interviewees perceived that charities could do to improve stakeholder relationships (Grunig & Huang, 2000; Leningham & Bruning, 1998). This enquiry asked interviewees to articulate how charities could use traditional media and social media to improve their relationships with current and prospective stakeholders. Overall, this part of the interview established how satisfied stakeholders were with how charities managed their relationships with them, what improvements could be made, and how media (both social and traditional) could be used to accomplish this. The data gathered informed research questions 3 and 4 and established the stakeholders' expectations of dialogic communication (Kent & Taylor, 2002) and their opinions on how charities utilised communication technologies to engage with them, or how they could be improved. This data was compared with those obtained from the organisations in this study and highlighted synergies and contradictions.

v.   Performance critique

The final questions of the interview assessed what social media mistakes stakeholders perceived charitable organisations made. This provided data that addressed research questions 2 and 4 and suggested possible challenges faced by charities, and how much social media use by youth homelessness charities was in line with the dialogic components expected by their stakeholders (Kent & Taylor, 2002). Asking for the stakeholder perspective on what charities were doing wrong on social media provided an insight into any gap between what

stakeholders saw charities trying to do in their attempts to engage with them and how successful stakeholders deemed those attempts to be. The final question of the interview encouraged the interviewees to provide advice to charities on how they could attract greater support from stakeholders, in order to understand how participants perceived charities failed to meet their expectations. The interviewees were also asked to provide further comment.

vi.   Demographic information

Once the interview questions were completed, stakeholders were encouraged to complete a brief and anonymous survey to gather demographic data relating to age, gender, educational qualifications, marital status and income to provide further insight into the interview sample. These questions mirrored those relating to the demographic characteristics the survey sample was asked to provide to ensure that consistent data was gathered across both samples of current and prospective stakeholders.

4.4 Interview Coding

The audio from the interviews conducted with the 13 representatives from charitable organisations and the 16 stakeholders was captured using a Zoom digital recorder and through field notes at the time of the interview. All interviews with the charitable organisations, with the exception of Organisation G, (12 interviews) were transcribed by the researcher. The remaining 17 interviews were transcribed using an online service called Rev.com (2014). Every transcription (including those from the researcher and Rev.com) was thoroughly checked against the audio file and amended to correct inaccuracies before each was

loaded into the NVIVO research computer program and coded. NVIVO was selected as a tool to use in this study to assist with organising the interview data into categories and then to visually analyse the relationships between different data sets.

Three stages were employed in the coding process: open-coding, axial coding and selective coding). The data from the practitioners and stakeholders were coded separately. In the first stage of open-coding initial categories were determined. As advised by Walter (2010, p. 326), each category fulfilled three core requirements: each was "exhaustive, exclusive and enlightening". Therefore, each category covered every aspect of the data being analysed; ambiguities between the categories were reduced wherever possible; and the category itself was determined to be worthwhile by providing new insights to the study.

In line with this framework, data was initially grouped from each of the respondents under the corresponding interview question. Both samples were asked to identify which social media platforms they used. The respondents' answers to this question were allocated to a category called "Social media platforms used" in their respective coding scheme. In the second stage of open-coding, these answers were organised further by creating subcategories (otherwise known as properties) for each of the social media platforms identified and allocating any response relating to the participants' use of the platform under this category (Robson, 2002). The third stage of open-coding involved the dimensionalisation of data, whereby the different aspects of each property were derived from the data analysis and then coded accordingly. While "Facebook" was a property under the "Social media platforms used" category, different uses for Facebook were identified in the data, and subproperties were created to accurately organise this data.

The second coding stage, axial coding, is so-named because it involves the intense analysis of each category, acting as the "axis" for the investigation (Robson, 2002; Strauss, 1987; Weearkoddy, 2009). The process of axial coding involves assembling the data in different ways to those used in the open-coding stage through the use of a coding paradigm that "identifies a central phenomenon, explores causal conditions, specifies strategies, identifies the context and intervening conditions and delineates the consequences," (Robson, 2002, p. 194). This process was integral in analysing data with which to answer the research questions, particularly when trying to identify the challenges that youth homelessness charities face when trying to engage with stakeholders on social media. The process enabled deep analyses of the data from stakeholders and charities in a systematic way.

The final coding stage involved selective coding, the process of integrating the different stages of the coding paradigm from the previous stage (Robson, 2002). It was at this stage that initial hypotheses began to emerge from which to develop theories (Robson, 2002). This stage was helpful in identifying relevant themes with which to address the research questions and on which to base the preliminary investigation of developing an integrated social media communication model for the not-for-profit sector.

4.5 Content Analysis

As the most commonly used method of examining media messages, content analysis is strongly identified as a qualitative technique that is helpful in identifying manifest and latent content to assist in the investigation of research questions (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 1998; Walter, 2010; Weerakkody, 2009). Conducting a content

analysis on social media activity provided an additional, and somewhat objective, perspective on the ways in which charities and their stakeholders interacted and engaged with each other in a social media environment.

In addition to providing a more objective perspective, this method did not directly involve any of the organisations or stakeholders because the content analysed was available in the public domain on the various social media platforms being explored (Denscombe, 2007; Robson, 2002; Walter, 2010). However, the dynamic nature of social media proved challenging when providing accurate content to analyse, as posts had the potential to be deleted before they could be captured by the researcher. Furthermore, it was difficult to precisely assess the propinquital influence of any calls-to-action made by the charitable organisations being investigated without directly contacting them for data detailing their outcomes. Such an action would have diminished the objectivity of the overall content-analysis method.

Wimmer and Dominick (2011) suggested content analysis be conducted in 10 steps. The first step is to define the research questions, which are the four research questions of the overall study. Next was to "define the universe," (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p. 67). As such, three weeks of content analysis were conducted to provide an insight into the social media activity of the charitable organisations in this study and the ways in which they interacted with stakeholders on their organisational social media profiles. The third step was "sampling" and, in line with this, the specific time period selected was the week before, the week during and the week after Homeless Persons' Week 2014 (28 July – 17 August, 2014), a campaign period common to all seven organisations (Winner & Dominick, 2011, p. 67). This allowed for the content to be analysed from a combined

historical and comparative perspective, an approach deemed to be highly valuable (Berger, 2000).

From an historical perspective, this specific time period allowed for data to be analysed from end-to-end of a high-profile and analogous campaign. It enabled the researcher to see how each organisation functioned and engaged with stakeholders on social media before, during and after such a prominent campaign. Analysing social media content from all organisations across the same timeframe and highly relevant campaign period allowed for relatively equal and consistent comparisons to be made between the organisations. Reinforcing the replicability of content analysis as a research method, this part of the study was based on similar projects by Grančay (2014) and Ramanadhan, Mendez, Rao and Viswanath (2013).

The Grančay (2014) study involved the analysis of content categories associated with the Facebook pages of 250 airlines. However, the method used was largely quantitative. The Ramanadhan et al. (2013) study used content analysis to investigate social media use by community-based organisations conducting health promotion. This study analysed content type, interactive features and audience response in terms of organisational social media activities. While it was not directly aligned to this study, its sound theoretical approach (in particular, its code book) was an extremely helpful resource on which to draw in this content-analysis design.

As informed by the Ramanadhan et al. (2013) study, all data capturing was undertaken within a single sitting and at the same time each day to avoid inconsistencies and inaccuracies. A software program called SnagIt12 was used to capture the content and save it for coding and further analysis in NVIVO (see

Appendix A.iv. for a copy of the code book). When conducting the process of Step

5 ("constructing coding categories"), each category was underpinned by the

theoretical framework of this study and developed with the objective of providing

valuable data with which to address the research questions (Winner & Dominick,

2011, p. 67). Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered. To satisfy the

fourth step, "selecting the unit of analysis," seven social media platforms were

analysed each day during the 21-day analysis period: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn,

Instagram, YouTube, Google+, and Pinterest (Winner & Dominick, 2011, p. 67).

These were specifically selected if two or more of the charitable organisations had

a profile on each site, ensuring a valid comparison could be made between their

activities (Berger, 2000).

The content analysis process continued according to the steps previously

suggested by Wimmer and Dominick, (2011, p. 67) and as endorsed by Weber

(1985) and Weearakkody (2009) – constructing content categories, assigning

levels of measurement of items and their content categories, conducting a pilot

study, coding the content and analysing the data. The coding pilot study resulted

in improvement of instruction clarity.

4.5.1 Coding categories

The coding categories developed for this part of the study were primarily a priori in

nature and related directly to the four research questions, the theoretical

framework, and the findings from the semi-structured interviews and survey data

(Weerakkody, 2009). This was to ensure that the analysis directly corresponded to

the overall focus of this study and scrutinised the claims made by the different

samples relating to their conduct and activity on social media.

The levels of item measurements and content categories were divided into three sections: organisational social media profile analysis, quantitative data and qualitative data. These were clearly defined in the coding instrument (or code book) in Appendix A.iv, along with matrices and coding sheets used to further simplify the process. The three categories can be explained as:

i. Organisational social media profile analysis

This section explored how each organisation represented its brand on its official social media profile on each platform on which it had a presence. Content such as brand imagery, descriptions of the organisation's location, its history and its services were analysed. This part of the analysis was important to better understand the overall image that each organisation portrayed in a social media context. This knowledge provided both a foundation and a context upon which to base deeper analysis of the organisations' social media activity and conduct.

ii. Quantitative data

This section of the analysis focused on gathering quantitative elements associated with the organisations' social media activities. For example, these elements included number of posts by the organisation, quantity of sharing by stakeholders and frequency of dialogic events between both parties, and provided statistical insight into the rates of engagement and activity occurring throughout the 21-day period of the analysis.

iii.   Qualitative data

This section of the analysis explored the qualitative social media activities undertaken each day by each organisation and its active users that occurred on the organisation's social media profiles. Such activities included posts, comments and replies. This data was coded against a number of factors. First, qualitative data was analysed to identify instances relating to the theoretical framework underpinning this study to better understand whether elements of relationship management theory, dialogic theory, two-way symmetrical communication and the mixed-motive model were being demonstrated in actuality and what these events resembled.

Next, various statements made in the interviews about each organisation's social media activities were compared to actual social media conduct occurring during the analysis period to ascertain whether consistencies or discrepancies existed compared with the claims. Other factors were gleaned from the interviews with stakeholders, specifically relating to the suggested ways in which charities could use social media to increase support and build stronger relationships with stakeholders and the various categories of calls-to-action that the charities used to garner a response. It was important to analyse whether organisations in this study were using any of these techniques to identify whether social media activities undertaken by the charities corresponded to stakeholder expectations as per Research Question 4. Please see Appendix A.iv. for full details on the coding scheme used for this part of the study.

4.5.2 Conducting a pilot study

The coding was based on two studies involving social media content analysis: those from Gardner (2013) and Ramanadhan et al. (2013) which both analysed Facebook activity in relationship to the public relations activities of various organisations. The first draft of the 22-page coding instrument was tested by a colleague not involved in this study to ensure that the instructions in the coding document were clear and comprehensible.

4.5.3 Coding the content and analysing the data

In order to carry out 21 days of social media content analysis, at approximately the same time each day the researcher checked every social networking site on which the organisation had a presence and documented quantitative and qualitative activities by taking screenshots and manually completing the matrices (see Appendix A.iv.) to document any changes from the previous day. Deeper analysis of the qualitative data was carried out at the end of the capture period.

The qualitative data was analysed against the elements and theoretical concepts contained in the code book. This approach was used to uncover implicit meanings along with those that could be defined as explicit (Denscombe, 2007). After coding against the a priori categories was completed, the data was further analysed to see whether any emergent coding categories could be identified (Weerakkody, 2009).

4.6 Conclusion

This section detailed the methodological approach of the overall study, the

research methods used to achieve this approach and the rationale behind why

each was selected. The following section will explore the results gathered from

each method used and how they relate to the four research questions.

4.6 Conclusion

5. RESULTS

5.1   Research Question 1: What Are The Motives For Youth Homelessness Charities In Using Social Media To Communicate And Engage With Their Stakeholders?

This research question was posed to better understand the underlying factors driving the decisions of youth homelessness charities to use social media technology for the purposes of stakeholder communication and engagement. Investigating the rationale behind the charities' use of social media will provide a knowledge base on which two important factors can be assessed: whether the charities' social media activities are in line with their motives for using the technology, and how closely aligned the charities' motives are with those of their stakeholders. Such an analysis will provide a greater insight into the dynamics that currently exist within charity and stakeholder relationships played out within a social media environment.

5.1.1   Motives in using social media to communicate and engage with stakeholders

A thematic analysis of the practitioner interviews revealed six principal organisational motives underpinning the use of social media for stakeholder communication and engagement: to reach new networks of current and prospective stakeholders, to attract and engage with young people, to increase opportunities for two-way communication with stakeholders, to provide a vehicle for storytelling, to manage stakeholder relationships to foster ongoing support and to enhance organisational reputation. This section will present the results relating

to each of these six motives before providing further evidence of motives that directly relate to the dialogic components from the theoretical framework.

i.   To reach new networks of current and prospective stakeholders

The possibility that social media technology could provide greater access to new and extended networks of people was a motivator for its use by practitioners. Firstly, social media was seen as another method to reach networks of stakeholders with a pre-existing relationship with the organisation; as the Organisation E producer explained, "It's just another conversation that we can have through a different channel."

The perception that social media provided access to an unlimited bank of prospective stakeholders was a motivating factor. The producer from Organisation C explained the allure: "[I]t's about talking to a new audience that we might not have access to normally … Raising our profile is important for a small charity." This interviewee explained that being involved in a "friendraising" event (an event where people sponsor their friends to complete a particular activity, such as a running event) has resulted in an increase of 1,000 Facebook likes and access to a network of as many people. Organisation C did not measure the tangible outcomes of this social media activity; thus, it cannot be determined whether the spike in Facebook followers also resulted in an increase in donors.

The perception that social media facilitated improved access to new networks of prospective stakeholders could explain the number of social media platforms with an organisational presence documented in the three-week online content analysis. Another explanation may be that the charities were unsure on which platforms to

focus their efforts and adopted a scattergun approach. The content analysis found that all organisations had a presence on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube, and the majority also had a profile on Instagram, Google+ and Pinterest. However, during the 21 days of content analysis, Twitter and Facebook were the two most commonly used platforms by all organisations excluding Organisation G (Twitter 114 tweets and Facebook 63 posts in total), with Instagram and YouTube also being used by Organisation F (Instagram and YouTube, with four posts each).

The survey data suggested that the charities' focus on Facebook may be well placed, with 75% (129) of survey participants answering that they would visit Facebook within the next month. There was a discrepancy between the focus placed on YouTube by the charities and that of the survey participants. One organisation out of the seven uploaded content during the three-week data collection period, and these posts were not aimed at external stakeholders; they were induction videos for new employees. Yet 50% (86) of survey participants answered that they would visit YouTube within the next month. YouTube was the second-most popular social networking site with survey participants after Facebook. While the charities had a bank of existing content on their YouTube channels for stakeholders to view, it could be challenging to maintain interest and generate repeat visitations without new videos being produced and uploaded on a regular basis. The quantity of social networks being used and data on the topic from the practitioner interviews, three-week online content analysis and stakeholder surveys provided evidence to propose that charities were using social media in a bid to increase reach.

ii.   To attract and engage with young people

The interviews with 13 practitioners revealed a perception that social media is a technology most commonly used by younger people and this perception led to a motivation to engage with this group via that medium. The practitioners hoped that social media would assist in raising awareness of their organisation and its work with people under 30 years of age. The producer from Organisation F chose to target a younger age group because "[t]raditionally our donors are that bit older, and we need to extend that down to a younger age demographic, and this age group are engaging in that space every day, so we need to be where they are."

The perception that younger demographics accepted social media communication more than traditional channels was confirmed by the producer from Organisation C: "It just gives our new or our current donors another avenue to contact us, especially the young generation who probably wouldn't look at a tax appeal in the post" and again was reinforced by the Organisation F supervisor: "[T]he youngsters today, everyone is on social media … they're not going to read *The Age* [newspaper]."

Using social media to engage with clients (i.e. homeless youth rather than donors and other benefactors) was an additional rationale identified by interviewees. The Organisation D producer justified this motive: "[W]hen we're working with young people, particularly, you need to be on the platforms that young people are on, which are social media." This notion and a willingness to test social media technology with clients (homeless youth) was supported by the producer from Organisation F: "[T]hey [senior management] realised that young people in their target cohort [12 to 25 year olds experiencing homelessness] were really using

social media, so identified it as a space where we can communicate to them in, so let's try it." Organisation F's discovery of widespread social media use by homeless youth contradicts a study exploring information and communication technology use by homeless people in Madrid, Spain by Vazquez et al. (2015). The Vazquez et al. (2015) study found only 17% of the sample (188) used social media compared with 91% of internet users from the general population.

The perception that social media is a younger person's technology, and a more appropriate way of communicating with this stakeholder group, was not held by all of the participating organisations. While the interviewees from Organisation E focused on using social media to build relationships with younger people, they mentioned that it was the 35–55 age group that comprised their largest donor base and the fastest-growing demographic in terms of their Facebook followers – something the organisation considered when they developed social media content. The supervisor from Organisation G noted that the organisation's largest donor base was elderly, and social media was not a priority for the organisation. This lack of priority on social media was reinforced by limited activity on Organisation G's social media channels assessed during the three-week online content analysis. It seems that the motive of using social media to engage with younger people with the view of converting them into donors, volunteers and supporters may be at odds with the most active stakeholders being from an older demographic. Yet the charities may be looking at this engagement in the longer term: building relationships with younger people on social media now in preparation for when they will become part of the older demographic of stakeholders in the future.

Using social media to engage with older people was identified as a priority by only one of the charities (Organisation E), which may signify either a misguided perception that older people are not active social media users or simply a lack of consideration of the wider adoption of the medium. This may result in a missed engagement opportunity when considering the stakeholder samples used in this study show that older people are active social media consumers. Although snowball sampling was used, preventing generalisations from being made, it is interesting to note that 14 of the 16 stakeholders who followed charities on social media interviewed were over 30 years of age. Additionally, of the 116 survey respondents who identified themselves as over 30 years old, 54% (63) answered that they visited Facebook every day, and from the remaining 53 respondents, 36% (19) said they would definitely visit Facebook within the next month. Overall, 71% (82) of the survey sample aged over 30 could be classed as regular Facebook users, implying that it is a space that attracts diversity in age groups.

iii. To increase opportunities for two-way communication with stakeholders

While the ability to facilitate two-way communication is a key functional characteristic of social media, only two of the practitioner interviewees (both from Organisation G) highlighted this feature as a motive for using the technology. The topic of two-way communication via social media was raised by other practitioners, but more as a feature of the technology, not as a motivating factor for its use. The producer from Organisation G offered that two-way communication with stakeholders via social media should be a priority, but they had not witnessed any benefits from this part of the technology:

> Well in theory, I guess the real benefit of social media is promoting two-way
>
> communication; however, I really haven't seen the results of that so much
>
> on Facebook. We see it more on Twitter, I mean, if you can call or re-tweet
>
> two-way communication.

This response suggests a lack of understanding as to what constitutes two-way communication. Sharing, liking and retweeting are actions more closely related to content curation than dialogic communication.

A further reason cited by practitioners relating to this motive was to assist stakeholders when they sought information by posing questions to the organisations via social media channels. The producer from Organisation E advised that this was a common source of two-way communication with stakeholders: "Obviously people are coming to us for help through Facebook." A common theme emerging from the stakeholder interviews was that participants were more likely to share content than to comment on it or engage in dialogue with a charity via social media.

The content analysis supported this theme, though instances of stakeholders using social media to ask direct questions of the charities were rare, and none of these occurrences related to the issue of youth homelessness. Facebook was the only site where users posed questions, and was achieved by posting directly to the organisation's wall or by commenting on a post that was uploaded by either the organisation itself or another user. Two-way communication was also generated by the organisations' posts, as per Figures 3 and 4. This occurred 15 times between the organisations and stakeholders directly and on three occasions between the stakeholders themselves.

Figure 3 illustrates one of the few interactions between a stakeholder and

Organisation E resulting from a Facebook wall post. As the largest organisation in

this study, Organisation E's portfolio encompasses a wide area of services, with

youth homelessness being only one. Hence, the example below does not relate to

the issue of youth homelessness; however, it does depict social media being used

for two-way communication between organisation and stakeholder. In this case,

the stakeholder is a more unusual client in that they are not a recipient of

charitable services.
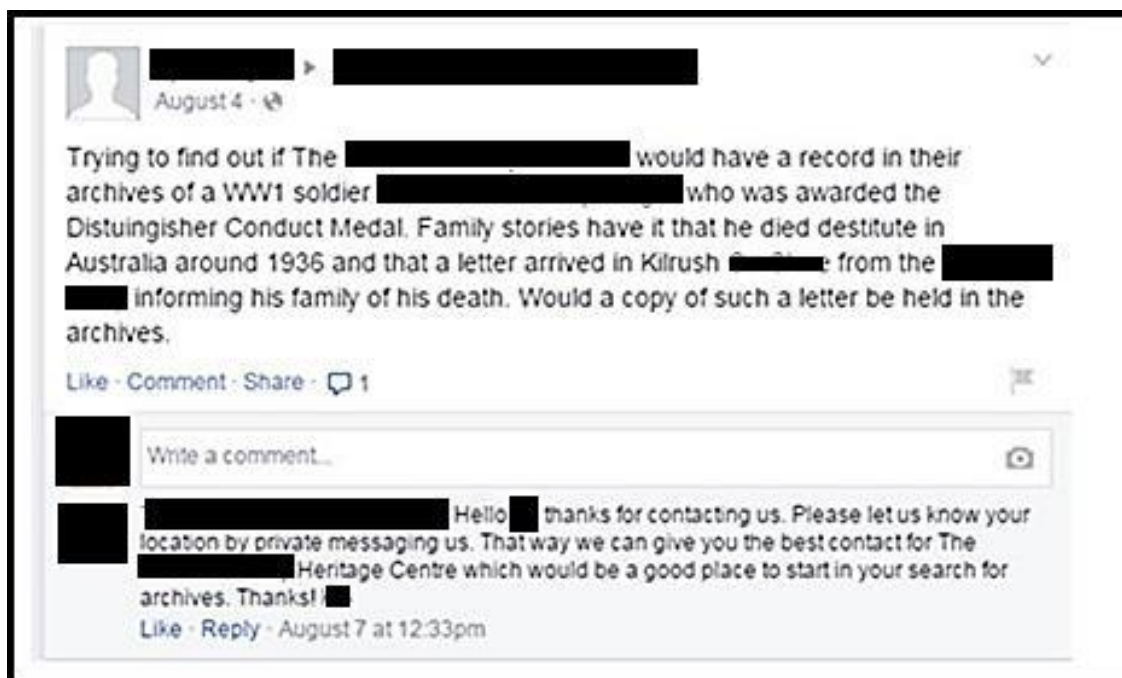
Figure 3. Example of stakeholder-generated two-way communication with charity.

Figure 4 depicts an interaction between a stakeholder and Organisation C

generated from a question posed in the comments section of an organisational

post. Organisation C is solely devoted to the issue of youth homelessness. The

interaction relates to a program where stakeholders donate used cars to be

auctioned, with the resulting funds used to assist homeless youth.

Figure 4. Example of two-way communication between stakeholder and charity.

It is challenging to confirm whether social media itself serves to increase two-way

communication between stakeholders and organisations, as exchanges illustrated

in Figure 3 and Figure 4 may still have occurred via email, telephone or mail.

Social media may provide stakeholders with an additional option to participate in

two-way communication and another opportunity for the organisations to field

stakeholder queries and build positive associations with them.

iv.   To provide a vehicle for storytelling

Using social media as a channel to share stories about the charities' activities was

another common motive highlighted in the practitioner interviews. "It lets us tell our

story. It lets us tell people about the work that we do," explained the Organisation

F producer. The benefit of storytelling via social media was highlighted by the

supervisor from Organisation F: "[W]e're getting people on board by writing more

engaging stories." However, the desire to tell stories on social media via video in particular was stymied by a lack of resources to facilitate the production of such content. Organisation E's supervisor lamented, "We've got so many stories to tell and so much stuff happening, but we need more people on the ground to tell them."

The survey data showed that 37% (26) of respondents had not seen any campaigns from charities on social media and, for the 29% (20) of respondents who had, these attempts from charities had not moved them enough to respond or share/forward the information to their own networks. Thus, potential exists for charities to use quality storytelling to cut through other content to resonate with stakeholders. The three-week online content analysis found that all organisations, excluding Organisation G, utilised their social media channels to tell stories in one form or another. Table 1 illustrates the number of instances each organisation employed storytelling methods using social media channels across the 21-day data-capture period.

Table 1.

New Instances of Storytelling on Social Media Channels by Youth Homelessness Charities Across a Three-Week Monitoring Window

Organisation	Instances of storytelling	% of total
A	6	8%
B	7	9%
C	4	5%
D	16	21%
E	16	21%
F	26	35%
G	0	0%
Total	**75**	**99%**

Organisation G was the only charity that did not post any social media content. It ran a Facebook advertisement to attract foster carers and thus used social media during the monitoring period, but not as a storytelling medium. Organisation F recorded the greatest number of instances of storytelling and, as one of the larger organisations in this study (and one of only two with a dedicated social media resource), it managed to post more stories than days of data capture: 26 instances within the 21 days. Most surprising was Organisation E recording the same number of storytelling instances as Organisation D (16).

As the largest organisation in the study and the second with a dedicated social media resource, Organisation E could be expected to utilise storytelling at a much greater capacity than Organisation D, whose practitioners had to juggle multiple marketing communications tasks in addition to their social media responsibilities. An explanation for this was apparent in the interview with the practitioners from Organisation E, where the main responsibility of the producer was to monitor the organisation's social media channels to proactively manage any activity that may have potentially risked the charity's reputation, with producing content a secondary focus.

Some attempts at storytelling attracted greater stakeholder responses than others in the form of likes, shares and comments. Both the storytelling examples (Figures 5 and 6) gathered as part of the three-week online content analysis (from Organisation A compared with Organisation E) were uploaded within the same hour of each other, yet the post in Figure 5 attracted 444 likes and 27 shares compared with a much smaller response to the post in Figure 5 of seven likes and two shares. The difference may have stemmed from Organisation E having a much larger following than Organisation A and therefore greater exposure to a

wider audience; on the date of posting, Organisation E had 35,248 Facebook

followers and Organisation A had 698. However, this may be refuted, as the

average likes-per-follower for Organisation A was 0.013 and for Organisation E

0.010, suggesting a similar rate of response.

Instead, the results proposed that a personal approach to storytelling was more

effective in generating social media engagement than a corporate news angle

approach. Organisation E shared the personal stories of two dedicated volunteers

(Figure 6), whereas Organisation A (Figure 5) depicted an orchestrated photo

opportunity with a politician and Australian Football League players. Figure 6

attempted to celebrate volunteers in a way that resonated with stakeholders, yet

Figure 5 announced a new partnership, communicated in a more traditional media-

friendly way.

More authentic personal stories may garner a stronger response (likes, shares

and/or comments) from stakeholders than stories blatantly staged for the camera.

While symbolic, a politician and football players assembling a table did not seem

to be a very natural activity for them to be undertaking and this may have been

reflected in the lack of engagement this story attracted. However, the photo in

Figure 5 displayed more activity than that in Figure 6 of the two volunteers

standing in front of a caravan. It may have been of interest to supporters of the

politician and the sportsmen, but did not translate into a measurable response in

terms of Facebook likes, shares and comments.

Figure 5. Example of corporate news story angle storytelling approach

Figure 6. Example of personal story angle storytelling approach.

While they possessed varying levels of expertise in social media storytelling, all organisations used the technology to share stories in this way, except for Organisation G, which utilised Facebook advertising instead.

v.   To manage stakeholder relationships to foster ongoing support

Another prevalent theme that emerged from the practitioner interviews was the motive of using social media as a tool for stakeholder relationship management with the goal of encouraging long-term support. The validity of this motive can be supported by the survey data, which showed that 72% of respondents (76) supported the same charities each year. Therefore, it would be a highly lucrative venture for charities to cultivate positive stakeholder relationships to improve the probability of continuing support and potentially increase the level of assistance or take a larger share of each donor's annual charitable work/support. Retaining

existing donors is more economically advantageous for charities than finding new ones (Greenfield, 1996).

After conducting some research with Facebook followers, the supervisor from Organisation E found that "half or a third were supporters of [Organisation E]. So, not just 'I like the work of or 'I am interested in the areas that you serve', but they were actually active supporters. So, there is quite a contingent there." Figure 7, captured during the three-week online content analysis, is an example of Organisation C using social media to encourage ongoing support through its workplace giving program, where donations are deducted directly from donors' salaries. Yet as the only example apparent during the data-capture period, it is more of an advertisement that could also be used in traditional communications channels such as print media. It does not highlight the issue of youth homelessness nor specifically utilise the characteristics of social media to engage with stakeholders to encourage further support; rather, it focuses on regular giving.

Figure 7. Example of a social media advertisement encouraging regular giving.

Developing a sense of connectedness was a motivation to use social media for the supervisor from Organisation D, "so that they feel close here and closer to us than they would to a bigger charity such as World Vision or Red Cross." The same interviewee suggested that social media could be used to nurture close emotional bonds with the charity:

> It's important that they know our staff, that they know me, that they know our young people. [In a way] we have to protect our young people, so that they feel connected intimately so that they would never consider not supporting us."

Using social media as a tool to assist with stakeholder relationship management was a theme emerging from the practitioner interviews as a motive for using the technology.

vi.   To enhance organisational reputation

Using social media to enhance organisational reputation was a motive shared by all of the practitioners in their interview responses. The supervisor from Organisation F summarised this with the following statement:

> It enhances our reputation. It protects our reputation. We certainly find more supporters and people interested in what we do and it ultimately builds our profile. I really do think that if we weren't there [on social media], we would be missing out.

Apart from uploading positive content about the charities themselves (as demonstrated by the three-week online content analysis), the interviewees

presented two alternative methods to enhance organisational reputation. The first method of augmenting reputation related to using social media to position the organisation as a relevant and authoritative information source within the not-for-profit sector. The supervisor from Organisation B, a charity that trains homeless youth to work in the hospitality industry, believed social media was essential to maintain an image of currency in the hospitality space: "I think Twitter and that [other social media] keeps you relevant, keeps you fresh and keeps you seen as being an up-to-date food-and-coffee-savvy business."

Organisation E used social media to strengthen its reputation by increasing its transparency and governance with stakeholders, reaffirming their commitment to the organisation:

> It's really critical to be able to illustrate to donors too how their money is being used and what sort of support that it's been able to render. Being able to share news of a new centre opening or whatever on Facebook is a really nice quick way of being able to keep people updated. I think it's [social media] got benefit in not only showing people why they should support but reaffirm their decision to.   Organisation E Supervisor

The survey data indicated that 83% (71) of respondents gave to the same charities each year if they believed that the organisation was a good cause. This suggests the importance of reputation and trust in influencing ongoing support by stakeholders. If stakeholders lose faith in a cause (or the organisation supporting it) they may withdraw their assistance and refocus it elsewhere. Therefore, the opportunity for social media to be able to present an organisation in a positive light

was a clearly identified motive for its use from the practitioner interviews, which

was validated by the stakeholder survey results.

5.1.2 Conclusion

The results presented in this section provided evidence to support the notion that

extending greater reach to new networks, attracting and engaging with young

people, increasing opportunities for two-way communication between stakeholders

and charities, storytelling, managing stakeholder relationships to foster ongoing

support and enhancing organisational reputation are the six key themes

underpinning social media use by public relations practitioners working at youth

homelessness charities. This section also suggested a link between the motives

and dialogic components from the theoretical framework, proposing that the

overall motivation for social media use by youth homelessness charities is to

support organisational and stakeholder dialogue. The next section will explore the

challenges faced by youth homelessness charities when using social media to

engage and communicate with stakeholders.

5.2 Research Question 2: What Are The Challenges For Youth Homelessness Charities In Using Social Media To Communicate And Engage With Their Stakeholders?

The operational environment of the not-for-profit sector differs from that of the public or private sectors, and such disparity may also be reflected in the challenges faced by the public relations practitioners working for charities. Identifying and analysing challenges impeding the charities' social media practice is the first step in the process of developing potential solutions to overcome them. When analysing the data, it became clear that the public relations practitioners experienced challenges not only within their organisations, but when attempting to use social media to represent their organisations to the outside world. It seemed most relevant to categorise the extrapolated data into two segments: challenges experienced internally within the organisations, and challenges that existed in the external environment.

5.2.1   Internal challenges

Analysis of the practitioner interviews employing the methods of open-coding, axial coding and selective coding implied five key internal organisational challenges for youth homelessness charities using social media for stakeholder communication and engagement: lack of social media resources, lack of support from decision-makers, bureaucracy impeding streamlined approval processes, unworkable or non-existent social media policies and inconsistent social media measurement.

i.   Lack of social media resources

Lack of social media resources was a common challenge highlighted in the practitioner interviews and was identified in three different areas: scarcity of human resources, funding, and training. Two of the seven organisations in this study provided funding to employ a practitioner completely devoted to social media. The practitioners from other charities were expected to manage their organisation's social media presence in addition to a range of other competing responsibilities. This was a phenomenon experienced by both producers and their supervisors. The producer from Organisation C described how social media responsibilities impinged on their other professional duties: "My role is events and community fundraising and I have recently taken over social media as well ... It's [social media] probably 50% of my time at the moment. It's only supposed to be about 10%." Additionally, the supervisor from Organisation G explained that, while being responsible for most of the organisation's publications, they were also required to manage its social media presence: "I also look after our content calendar, especially for social media. So maintain that and work with colleagues, as well as to generate information for social media updates." This may be a potential explanation for the limited content uploaded by Organisation G throughout the three-week online content analysis.

The practitioners from each of the organisations identified a lack of funding to support the production of quality social media content, particularly video, suggesting this dearth was perceived as a significant challenge when attempting to communicate with and engage stakeholders on social media. The perception may be warranted, given that 50% of the survey respondents (86) answered that they would definitely visit YouTube within the next month, with a further 21% (36)

stating they would also probably visit the site within the same timeframe. YouTube was the second-most popular social media site chosen by survey respondents after Facebook (75% [129] would definitely visit Facebook within the next month). This proposes a notable stakeholder demand for video content. Throughout the three-week online content analysis period, nine videos in total were posted by four of the organisations (B, D, E and F). However, only four of those videos were produced by organisations E and F, the only charities with dedicated social media staff. The remaining videos were produced by other organisations and shared by organisations B, D, E and F, suggesting a possible solution to providing video content without having the resources to produce it, although someone at the charity would still need to find and evaluate external videos before sharing them with stakeholders.

There was also paucity in funding allocated to training to enable the practitioners to update their social media skills. Two of the interview participants had training at a tertiary level. Others attended presentations or were "self-taught", as the supervisor from Organisation G explained: "Yeah, I would say that would be my main source of information and training about it [social media] would be reading," or they learned everything "on the job", as in the case of the Organisation D supervisor. With the majority of charities using existing public relations staff to manage social media activities, it would be advantageous to ensure that public relations practitioners' skills remain current. However, neglecting to train staff may be due to a scarcity of funds that also restricts charities from employing a staff member solely dedicate to social media management. Overall, the attitude toward regular social media training was that it was nice to have, but not absolutely necessary or economically viable. Yet the lack of social media resources identified from the results may constrain public relations practitioners from being able to

experience social media's full potential due to unmanageable workloads, limited

emphasis on social media professional development, and an inability to produce

quality and compelling content that encourages stakeholder engagement.

ii.   Lack of support from decision-makers

A further challenge for public relations practitioners from youth homelessness

charities using social media was the lack of support for the communication

platform by decision-makers in senior management positions. This manifested in

several ways. Senior management were unaffected by the timeliness required in

responding to issues that presented themselves on their organisations' social

media channels. This posed a significant challenge for the supervisor from

Organisation E when an issue arose on social media, resulting in negative

repercussions: "Things had to go upstairs to our leadership and we weren't timely

in our response and the horse had bolted. So, it was already out there." The

Organisation F producer confirmed a similar situation within their organisation: "I

think it's important that the decision-makers at a higher level realise that

speediness and the requirement for commenting in real time." The three-week

online content analysis found that Organisation E was the only charity to attract

negative comments on its social media profiles, yet this may be due to the other

organisations not being at the centre of any controversy throughout the same

period. Organisation E did not consistently address negative stakeholder posts.

Some posts were never responded to, and the timeframes for replying to those

posts the charity selected to address ranged between a few minutes for some and

more than four days for others. This suggested the issues highlighted by

practitioners from Organisation E could be a reality.

In addition to slowness in responding to social media issues, the public relations practitioners posited that social media was not a priority for senior management, which contributed to an overall lack of support in relation to organisational use of the technology. This was definitely the case at Organisation D, where the producer described a contradiction between what senior management said and did in relation to the organisation's social media activities: "They're [senior management] saying back to us, keep doing what you're doing, but at the same time their focus isn't on the social media. It's on the goals that they've set elsewhere." The same view was reinforced by the practitioners when 11 of the 13 answered that more emphasis was placed on traditional media than social media within their organisations. The survey results imply it to be a valid approach by senior management, with online donations and websites (both 21%, 34), collectors at intersections and television (both 17%, 28) being chosen before social media as the communications methods most likely to encourage stakeholders to give. However, this may be because the charities' current focus on traditional media is greater than that on social media; a shift in focus could potentially drive stakeholder preference in the other direction over time.

Additionally, current processes officially approved by senior management had not been amended with social media in mind; therefore, the processes were completely out of step with the technology they were trying to support. The practitioners from Organisations A, C, D, F and G reported that their organisations' protocols did not provide any specific advice on how to deal with social media issues or crises; instead, they were expected to apply guidelines developed for traditional media.

iii.   Bureaucracy impeding streamlined approval processes

The practitioner interviews highlighted a further common challenge faced by the organisations in relation to the use of social media: bureaucracy. It seemed that public relations practitioners could be obstructed from posting social media content by unnecessary or ineffectual approval processes.

The Organisation E supervisor confirmed this was a common occurrence when discussing an instance that required senior management approval to post content in response to a serious complaint about the organisation posted on one of its social media profiles: "We were bogged down in unnecessary red tape and all of that kind of bureaucracy stuff that you have to work through."

As well as red tape hampering the social media activities of practitioners, there was confusion within some organisations regarding what the approval processes actually were for posting social media content. This was the case for Organisation D, where the producer believed that content could be uploaded as long as it had first been viewed by another colleague: "It's really just a peer thing. There really isn't a formal person you need to pre-check your post." However, the supervisor from Organisation D was adamant that they approved all social media content before it was posted. They said, "I'm the approver, I'm the approver." This response indicates the supervisor required a particular level of bureaucracy, which seemed to be at odds with a more casual and collaborative approach described by the producer from the same organisation.

The size of an organisation may also impact the degree of bureaucracy impeding social media activities. This was apparent in interviews with practitioners from Organisation E. The size and complexity of the charity resulted in two teams with

very different approval processes being responsible for its national social media presence. The supervisor from Organisation E described the challenging nature of collaborating on the same Facebook profile with a team that had very different ideas and approaches to the technology:

> They tend to not want to step into discussions and are more inclined to delete posts. Whereas we really desire to be proactive and to answer things, even if it's a tricky question that we don't want to talk about. Rather than ignoring things, we'd prefer to be in the conversation.

At the other end of the spectrum, the practitioner from Organisation A, a much smaller organisation, had complete freedom to post any content on the organisation's social media channels without gaining approval from senior management. Certain degrees of empowerment were also provided to producers in organisations C, E and F, enabling practitioners to post content and interact with stakeholders in a timely manner in accordance with the organisation's social media policy. When serious social media issues arose, all supervisors were required to refer matters to a colleague with greater seniority, despite the experience and knowledge level of the supervisor. It seemed that the larger and more complex the organisation, the greater the number of people required to be involved to approve social media content, posing a considerable challenge to the organisations' ability to perform in line with the rapidity of the technology. Furthermore, 63% (108) of the survey sample answered that they visited Facebook every day, implying an appetite for fresh content.

iv.   Unworkable or non-existent social media policies

The development, implementation and application of social media policy was challenging for all interviewees in various ways. Organisation A did not have a policy in place, nor plans to develop one. The reason offered was that it was not a high priority, with only one staff member posting content on behalf of the organisation. The other six organisations had policies in the development phase, policies that were outdated and initially developed as a kneejerk reaction, or policies that were not being upheld by senior management. The producer from Organisation F, who was currently developing a social media policy in collaboration with each area of the charity, described the process as a "minefield", particularly in view of the sensitivities surrounding interactions with vulnerable clients such as homeless youth: "It's a really big job in developing the procedures and guidelines. It touches on everything … how do I protect the young person that I am communicating with?"

At the time of the interview, Organisation B's social media policy was under review to enable employees from different locations to contribute social media content on behalf of the charity. The supervisor from Organisation B explained:

> [W]e're all keen to have people doing more and keen to have people writing blogs and writing views around social enterprise and cafes that are relevant, but they have to have guidelines on that if they are writing on behalf of [Organisation B] or writing on behalf of themselves.

The policy provided tips relating to the main social media platforms used by the organisation. It covered topics such as who has the authority to post on behalf of the organisation and how to attain this authority, and guidelines on how to post

while adhering to the principles of "representation, responsibility and respect"

(Organisation B, 2013). It should also be noted that such an approach was directly

in line with the collaborative nature of social media and may also assist in

addressing many of the issues faced by other organisations in relation to

shortages of staff to produce content and maintain profiles. However, the three-

week online content analysis found that Organisation B did not allow stakeholders

to post to its Facebook profiles, so it did not completely embrace the dialogic

characteristics of the medium.

An open approach to social media policy was not experienced by the producer at

Organisation D. They indicated that their policy was outdated and created as the

result of a kneejerk reaction by senior management in order to be perceived as

keeping in line with their competitors: "[I]t was like 'quick, let's get some policies in

place because everyone else is doing it'. Everybody wants it and it is useful, but

it's really not that great."

Challenges were also experienced within larger organisations such as

Organisation E, which had the most advanced, organised and social-media-

friendly approach to social media governance in comparison to the other six

charities: a four-minute animated YouTube video communicating to employees a

set of social media guidelines based on its policy. This was an initiative adopted

from the Victorian Department of Justice (2011).The main challenge experienced

by Organisation E was a lack of commitment from senior management to enforce

the social media policy. The supervisor from Organisation E detailed the issue of

staff and volunteers from other geographical locations setting up Facebook profiles

that are a clear breach of the organisation's social media policy: "The policy does

say that they're not meant to have all of these different pages. So, I'd really like to see our policies being adhered to at a higher level than what they are."

Out-of-date and impractical social media policies posed a major challenge to public relations practitioners at youth homelessness charities. Yet with the survey results illustrating that the majority of respondents (51%, 88) did not follow charities on social media, it is possible that some senior managers may not deem social media policy to be an important issue until a greater number of stakeholders connect to their organisation using the medium. This may take considerable time if stakeholders are not being attracted or inspired to interact with charities via social media, as the survey findings suggest.

v.   Inconsistent social media measurement

Social media measurement presented an additional challenge to all of the organisations in this study, particularly when attempting to measure the tangible outcomes (donations, volunteers, event attendance) of calls-to-action using the platform. The producer from Organisation F admitted that they "don't really have a process for that. No, we should, but we don't." This was a similar scenario to organisations B and D, which suggested that attempting to measure the tangible outcomes of social media was problematic. The producer from Organisation B commented that such measurement was "[v]ery hard to do. We haven't got down to that level of stalking yet." This sentiment was reinforced by the producer from Organisation D, who believed that "[i]t's very difficult to measure. It's not simple. We are looking at ways to measure it, but we haven't at this current moment." None of the practitioners reported attempting to track such outcomes, only the difficulty in doing so.

All organisations used Google Analytics as their prime method of measuring online activity. However, some interviewees defended their moderate approach to social media measurement. The Organisation E supervisor proposed that it was unrealistic to expect such metrics from social media activities when the same expectations had not been placed on the outcomes of traditional media:

> "[Y]ou can kind of get caught up with web because you can get these amazing metrics and analytics and you can drill down into the data so far, but we never apply that kind of rigour to TV or radio because you can't."

While measurement continues to be a contentious issue in public relations practice, the media monitoring industry continues to thrive on the confusion surrounding the challenge.

Consequently, being unable to track the success of social media activities posed a challenge for public relations practitioners, as it prevented them from using such data to inform future activities and facilitate continuous improvement. The survey results showed that participants responded in tangible ways to calls-to-action posted by charities on social media sites: 40% (69) had donated money or goods, 34% (58) had attended a charity event, and 20% (35) had volunteered. The charities regularly posted calls-to-action on their social media profiles; 58 instances were recorded during the three-week online content analysis. It seemed the charities were taking a scattergun approach in terms of using social media to appeal to stakeholders for a positive reaction without seriously attempting to accurately measure the success of such appeals.

5.2.2 External challenges

The greatest external challenges highlighted by the interviews, survey data and content analysis related to stakeholder apathy towards interacting with charities on social media platforms and the risk of negative interludes between stakeholders and organisations via the technology.

i.   Stakeholder apathy toward social media interactions with charities

Three levels of stakeholder apathy emerged from the data. These can best be described as being present for the charities when:

- attempting to gain stakeholder following

- encouraging stakeholder engagement

- overcoming "slacktivism".

All interview participants from the charities mentioned a need to increase stakeholder following across their social media channels and perceived that it was not a simple goal to achieve. This was identified in the interview with the Organisation F supervisor: "Clearly what we need, and this is the challenge, is that we need more followers. We need more likes, we need more people engaging with us on social media." The survey data echoed the same notion. As per Table 2, more than half of respondents did not follow a charity on social media, proposing that connecting with a charity through using the medium was not a preference for the majority of people.

While attracting followers was identified as a challenge by the public relations practitioners, the three-week online content analysis recorded that each charity

gained an average of 152 new followers across its social media channels throughout the data-capture period. Organisation E gained the greatest number of followers (602) and Organisation A the least (34). Interestingly, Organisation G managed to attract 121 new followers during this time without posting any content except for a Facebook advertisement seeking foster carers. The data suggests that a charity's social media following has potential to increase even without a great deal of effort being made to engage with stakeholders.

It is important to note that while the practitioners focused on increasing their organisation's social media following, the interviews revealed little emphasis on strategies to convert followers into ongoing donors, supporters and volunteers. As such, a further challenge could be identified when encouraging stakeholders to interact with the content posted on organisational social media profiles. The stakeholder interview results indicated that social media users following organisational profiles does not always indicate active involvement with the organisation. One stakeholder advised that they often viewed content without engaging with it by liking, commenting or sharing it: "No, I don't do any of that really. I do look at their photos". Some of the survey results supported this theme. Of the 78 respondents who followed charities on social media, 60% (47) said that they had not volunteered after reading an appeal on social media, yet 67% (52) said that they had donated money or goods and 56% (44) had attended an event after being prompted by social media content. This suggests that roughly half of stakeholders following charities on social media do not engage in a tangible way with the organisation after reading its social media content.

This result directly corresponds to the third level of stakeholder apathy, described by the supervisor at Organisation E as "slacktivism": when a stakeholder engages

with social media content, but does so as a substitute for engaging in a more

tangible offering such as a donation or volunteering effort. Organisation E's

supervisor explained their reluctance to include references to social media on its

traditional media channels to avoid confusion with stakeholders as to what

constitutes actual support:

> When our call to action is donate, I'd be a bit nervous that people would
>
> think that by liking [Organisation E] they can kind of tick that off and 'I've
>
> done my bit'; whereas, we actually need money to keep the operations
>
> going.

The survey data highlighted the number of stakeholders who engage with a charity

as a result of something that they have seen about it on social media.

Table 2.
Stakeholder Engagement with Charities Using Social Media

Answer options	Yes	No	N/A	Response count
Do you follow, like, connect with or subscribe to charitable organisations on social media?	78 (45%)	88 (51%)	7 (4%)	173
Have you ever donated money or goods to a charitable organisation after reading about it on social media?	69 (40%)	95 (55%)	9 (5%)	173
Have you ever volunteered time to a charitable organisation after reading about it on social media?	35 (20%)	127 (73%)	11 (6%)	173
Have you ever participated in a charity event after reading about it on social media?	58 (34%)	105 (61%)	10 (6%)	173
			Answered question	**173**
			Skipped question	**4**

Table 2 indicates that less than half (45%) of the online survey respondents

followed a charity on social media, 40% have donated money or goods, 33% have

participated in a charity event and 20% have volunteered as a result of something

they have seen on social media. The three-week online content analysis

supported this theme, with only a small proportion of followers interacting with

each charity's social media content. The survey also attempted to ascertain

reasons behind stakeholder apathy from the practitioners' interviews. The results

in Table 3 suggest that the greatest barrier to social media stakeholder

communication and engagement with charities was stakeholders not using the

technology to perform either of those functions. Please note that participants could

choose more than one answer.

Table 3.
Reasons Underpinning Stakeholder Apathy Towards Charities on Social Media

Survey question: If social media has not prompted you to donate to, volunteer with or support a charitable organisation, it is because:	
Answer options	**Response count**
I haven't seen any social media campaigns from charitable organisations.	43 (38%)
I use social media to connect with friends and family, not to give to charity.	65 (58%)
The campaigns that I have seen have not moved me enough to respond.	26 (23%)
All of the above	12 (11%)
Other (please specify)	21 (19%)
Answered question	**113 (100%)**

Comments from the survey free-text questions and stakeholder interviews

confirmed these results:

"[Charities] easily ignored. More interested in friends' photos etc." (Female, 35

years, occasional donor and volunteer)

"Not interested in using social media in that way." (Female, 47 years, annual donor)

"That's not the way I connect with charities." (Female, monthly donor, occasional volunteer)

"I'm not too sure as to why I don't follow charities. I just feel that it would be just in your face all the time." (Female, 24 years, follower of Organisation E on social media).

Charities face a challenge in communicating and engaging with stakeholders using social media when a significant percentage of stakeholders remain resistant or apathetic to using the technology to support not-for-profit organisations.

ii.   Stakeholder negativity

A further barrier to stakeholder communication and engagement on social media was negativity or the potential for negativity that could be displayed by social media users on organisational profiles. Interviewees from organisations B, C, E and G mentioned that they had experienced negative posts left on their organisation's social media profiles. The supervisor from Organisation G discussed a client using the organisation's Facebook page to complain about not receiving a payment: "Just because she can't get hold of the case manager, posting on Facebook isn't going to resolve it any faster." The complaint was moved offline and resolved there. Organisation B experienced similar negativity as the organisation began to expand. The producer from Organisation B described an 18-month strategy that it implemented to remove stakeholders critical of the charity from posting on its social media profiles:

The ones who were carping and complaining and outright hostile we would

not respond to or we would ignore and block at Twitter level and they went

away. We had to, because it was just a whole bunch of negative energy we

didn't need.

Throughout the content analysis period, while six out of the seven organisations

did not experience negative comments or posts by stakeholders, Organisation E

attracted comments, complaints and sometimes blatant reputational attacks on 15

occasions by 15 different individuals. This may be the result of a number of

factors, such as its size, its geographical breadth and the diversity of services that

it provides to a range of stakeholders. In some instances, a stakeholder's negative

comment (see Figure 8) generated long and equally negative discussions between

stakeholders. While this example was not centred on the issue of youth

homelessness, it provides an insight into negative stakeholder posts and how such

negativity can be perpetuated when other stakeholders participate and contribute

to the potentially damaging discussion. Such situations presented significant

challenges to organisations trying to communicate and engage with stakeholders

who were actively opposing their attempts and who possibly influenced other

stakeholders' opinions of the organisation by sharing their unflattering views about

the charity.

Figure 8. Example of negative stakeholder discussion on Facebook.

5.2.3 Conclusion

The public relations practitioners from youth homelessness charities faced multiple challenges, both internal and external to their organisations, when using social media for stakeholder engagement and communication. Internally, lack of social media resources, lack of support from decision-makers, bureaucracy impeding streamlined approval processes, unworkable or non-existent social media policies, and inconsistent social media measurement influenced their social media activities and performance when using the technology to interact with stakeholders. However, external to the organisations, stakeholders themselves also posed significant challenges for youth homelessness charities. These challenges were demonstrated by stakeholder reluctance or apathy to engage with charities via social media and negative stakeholder posts on social media profiles that had the potential to damage organisational reputation. The next section investigates how youth homelessness charities used social media in conjunction with traditional communications methods.

5.3 Research Question 3: What Is The Frequency Of Social And Traditional Media Integration And What Are The Social Media Techniques Utilised By Youth Homelessness Charities To Support And/Or Complement The Traditional Methods Already In Use?

Integrating social and traditional media activities may benefit not-for-profit organisations by increasing reach and key message exposure plus reducing costs through repurposing content. One example of social and traditional media integration could include a public relations practitioner sharing a newspaper article about the organisation on its Facebook page. However, limited focus has been placed on exploring social and traditional integration techniques. Understanding the methods public relations practitioners from these charities use to integrate their social and traditional media efforts and how often this practice is prioritised will assist in addressing a current research gap. The knowledge gained from this analysis will also inform and assess the overall aim of this study in working towards an integrated social media communication model for the not-for-profit sector. To achieve these aims, data from the interviews, survey and content analysis was evaluated to better understand what is occurring in terms of social media's integration with traditional media. This section will investigate how often the organisations attempted to integrate their social media activities with their traditional media efforts before identifying the types of techniques being used to assist with integration. It is also important to understand the types of traditional media channels being used by the charities as illustrated in Table 4, so that potential opportunities for integration can be better understood.

5.3.1 Frequency of social media integration with traditional media

The three-week online content analysis indicated that the charities integrated

social media with traditional media at varying levels. Figure 9 illustrates the

frequency with which each organisation integrated some form of traditional media

(including website links) on its social media profiles throughout the 21-day data-

capture period.
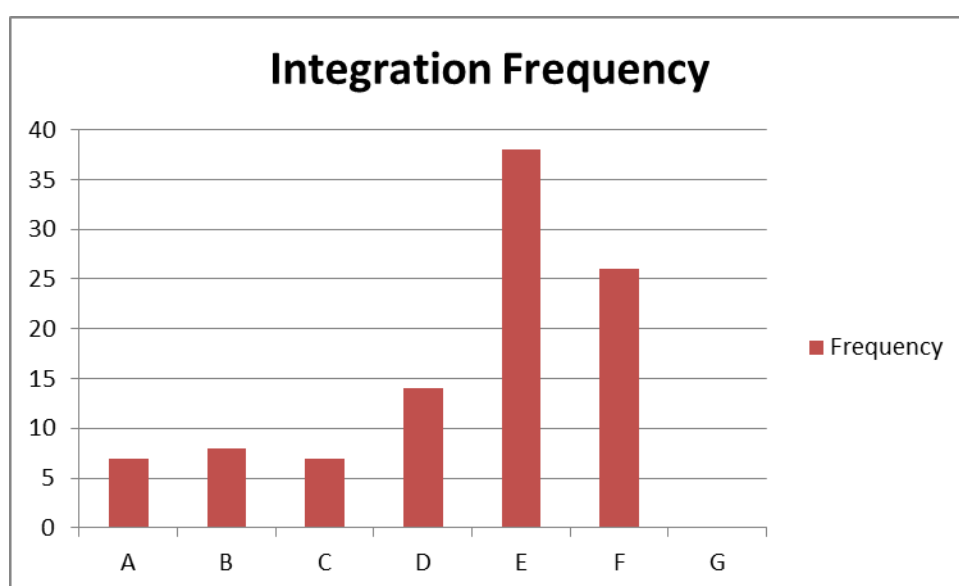
Figure 9. Frequency of social and traditional media integration by youth

homelessness charities.

The two organisations with staff members dedicated to social media (E and F)

integrated traditional media into their organisation's social media efforts at a

greater frequency than the others. This may be a direct result of having human

resources devoted solely to the organisations' social media efforts; the staff may

not have competing priorities. Instead, they can allocate time to better integrating

their organisations' social and traditional media activities, a benefit not afforded to

the other charities. Organisations A and C used integration at the same level,

despite Organisation C having greater resources to devote to social media.

Organisation B's incidence of integration was only slightly greater than organisations A and C. Yet in comparison, it seems that Organisation D paid an increased amount of attention to ensure the integration of traditional media, with almost double the frequency compared with organisations A, B and C. However, Organisation G did not post any content during this period, apart from a Facebook advertisement; therefore, it did not have any content to integrate.

The interviews with practitioners found that all but one (Organisation D producer) were aware of the concept of social and traditional media integration. The supervisor from Organisation D commented that their efforts could "always be better integrated". Despite a strong level of awareness among the practitioners, a lack of preparedness in implementing integration was apparent. The common view was that integration would improve in the future. The Organisation F producer commented that "there is definitely the potential for us to be more integrated and that's the plan." Again, the notion that integrating social and traditional media was more of a future focus was supported by the producer from Organisation C: "I mean certainly we will be obviously getting better as we go on ... We're learning."

Due to the lack of preparedness, the adoption rate of an integrative approach was relatively low among the practitioners. The supervisor from Organisation B suggested that this was due to the dynamism with which the organisation was evolving, which resulted in limited time to devote to such activities: "It's an evolving organisation, so the things that we do, we never have enough time to do these things." However, the producer from Organisation B commented that taking an integrative approach did not align with the organisation's reputation: "Part of the charm is that it's chaotic. I hate nice, clean, sanitised. It turns out, so does our audience."

5.3.2 Methods used by youth homelessness charities to integrate social media with traditional media efforts

The practitioners also highlighted some of the methods they used when attempting to integrate social media with traditional media efforts. These included distributing a media release, uploading it to the organisation's website, and linking it to the webpage via social media. The supervisor from Organisation F kept the momentum after this stage: "[W]hen the coverage appears, you can link into that and just keep the story bubbling along." Similarly, the supervisor from Organisation D explained how they integrated newsletter (hardcopy and email) and social media content: "[Q]uite a lot of that content has already been used for the first time in social media, as it should be. It's the up-to-date. It's the 'this just happened today'."

Promoting upcoming coverage or appearances on traditional media channels via social media was a common practice at Organisation B. Its practitioners would post again after the event: "If it's out there, we can link to it. [On radio], when it was over when they put the link of the MP3, you could download and listen to it." However, a lack of communication between those responsible for traditional media and social media and organisational structure were also highlighted as barriers against integration. In relation to a missed opportunity for integration raised by the researcher in the interview, the supervisor from Organisation E responded: "They have their own Comms team … so from my understanding, I don't think the Sydney guys even knew that was happening."

5.3.3 Traditional communications channels used by youth homelessness charities

As highlighted by the practitioners, Table 4 illustrates that traditional communications methods such as direct mail, print media, radio and television were the methods most consistently used by the charities in this study. Websites were the most commonly used communication channel among the organisations. The charities greatly relied on donated or heavily discounted print media space and air time from traditional media outlets, as the smaller organisations did not have the budget to pay for advertising and coverage. This was due to a lack of resources to spend on advertising and the possible fear of stakeholder criticism about misappropriation of donated funds. Table 4 details the traditional media methods the interviewees identified as being used by their organisation in a 12-month period. The ticks signify the traditional communication methods used by the charities.

Table 4.

Traditional media channels used by each organisation

Organisation	Traditional media channels used											
	Advertising	Cinema advertising	Outdoor advertising	Brochure	Direct mail	Newsletter	Print media	Radio	TV	Street collector	Telemarketing	Web
A												✓
B							✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
C	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
D				✓	✓	✓	✓					✓
E	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
F	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
G	✓				✓	✓	✓					✓

The survey results positioned traditional media as having greater influence on informing stakeholders about charities and causes than social media. The results indicate that websites were deemed the most informative by survey participants, with television, direct mail and radio also included in the top five most informative communication methods. Survey participants ranked the communication methods that most inform them about charities in the following order:

1. Websites: 25% (42 respondents)

2. Television: 21% (34 respondents)

3. Social media: 20% (33 respondents)

4. Direct mail: 19% (31 respondents)

5. Radio: 10% (17 respondents).

This suggests that traditional and digital media (websites and social media) are equally important to use when communicating with stakeholders, as both categories appear in the top five most informative communication methods as ranked by survey respondents. The stakeholder interviews supported the survey findings, particularly in relation to the perceived effectiveness of television in conveying information about charities: "I think if more of it was probably put on TV, just showing how people are sleeping in cars … ". Similarly, one stakeholder expressed how television content could be better integrated with social media: "I think traditional media [television] could be used really well, and I think the videos from these put on YouTube and put up on their [charities'] website." These results confirm that traditional media remains an important method for stakeholder communication from the perspective of survey and stakeholder interview participants. However, categories of digital media such as websites and social media were also viewed as important information sources.

5.3.4 Frequency of specific social and traditional media integration techniques used

Figure 10 below illustrates which integration techniques each organisation used, and the extent to which each was used. Note that some posts contained more than one integration technique; therefore, the overall total may not align with the overall integration frequency in Figure 9.
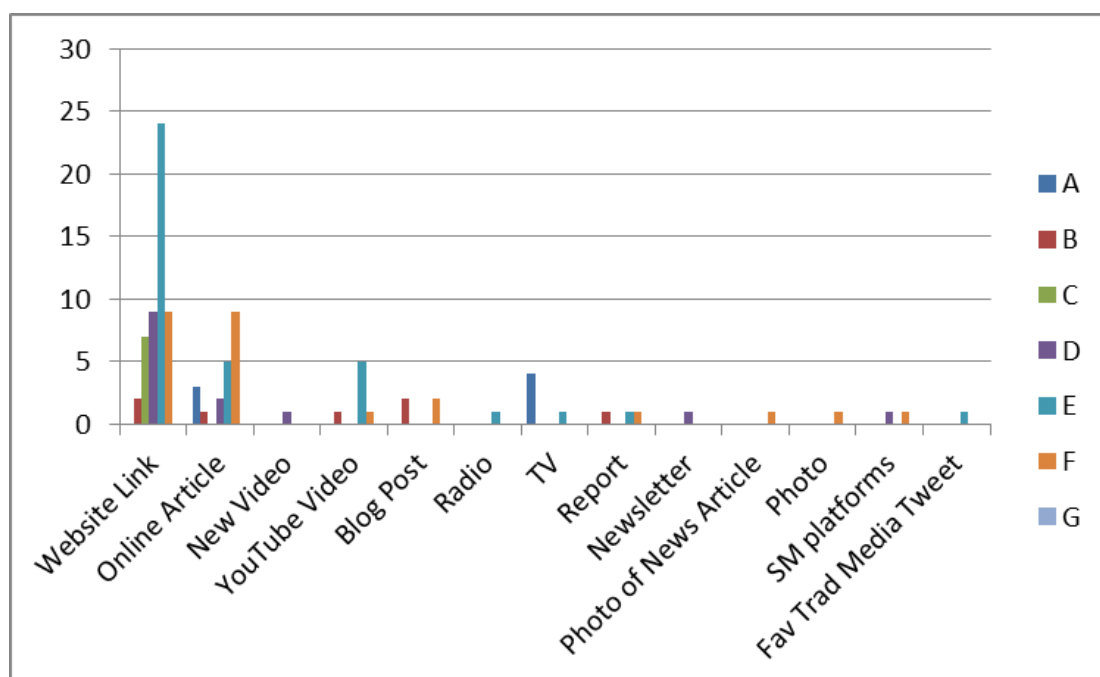

Figure 10. Types and frequency of specific social and traditional media integration techniques used by youth homelessness charities.

These results rank linking to a website, followed by linking to an online news article and then a YouTube video as the most commonly used integration techniques selected by the charities. Integrating other traditional media sources such as television and radio was not a common practice. The charities used a range of techniques to integrate traditional media into their social media activities. These included embedding website links into posts, linking to articles on the sites of traditional media outlets, linking to blog posts, sharing YouTube videos, linking

to reports, promoting upcoming appearances on radio and television, and, in one

instance, posting a photo taken of an article in a hard-copy newspaper.

Organisations D and F also used integration of some content across their social

media profiles on different platforms. An example of this included tweeting about a

photo gallery on Facebook and linking to this Facebook webpage on Twitter. The

figures below display examples from Twitter and/or Facebook of each of the most

frequently used integration methods:

i. Linking to a website

Figures 11 and 12 display how the charities used the two most commonly used

social media platforms to implement the method of linking to a website. On Twitter,

a link was shortened to stay within the 140-character limit and to track the number

of clicks it received. Figure 12 is from Facebook. Although it is not related to the

topic of youth homelessness, it was included to illustrate how charities post links

on this particular social media platform to promote upcoming events and faciliate

ticket sales.

Figure 11. Linking to a website using Twitter.

Figure 12. Linking to a website using Facebook.

ii. Linking to an online news article

Figures 13 and 14 display the second-most prevalent integration technique used by the charities: linking to an online news article from a traditional media source. Figure 13 shows how Organisation A linked to a report from *The Age* newspaper about homelessness in Melbourne. The media outlet was tagged in the post as a secondary link to the source. A shortened link was also used. Figure 14 shows a post from Organisation E that embeds an online newspaper article about a formerly homeless man who has dedicated the last 20 years to volunteering with the charity to assist others experiencing homelessness. This was also the most successful post throughout the three-week data-capture period in terms of likes, shares and positive comments. The post included a link to an online article, but, in

similar fashion to Figure 13, it also contained commentary from the organisation

about the article.

Figure 13. Linking to an online news article using Twitter.

Figure 14. Linking to an online news article using Facebook.

iii. Linking to a YouTube video

Figure 15 illustrates how Organisation B linked to a YouTube video sharing the personal stories of homeless people produced by the Council of Homeless Persons Victoria. The post includes a slogan that aims to create awareness of what homelessness is and links to further information. The post also tags the Council of Homeless Persons Victoria as the video producer in order to promote Organisation B's affiliation with the organisation.

Figure 15. Linking to a YouTube video using Twitter.

5.3.5 Conclusion

The results presented in this section in response to Research Question 3 indicate that there is a correlation between organisations having a staff member solely dedicated to social media and the frequency with which social media is integrated with traditional media; limited human resources resulted in fewer occurrences of integration. The three most popular techniques of traditional and social media integration used by the charities were linking to a website, linking to an online article from a traditional media outlet, and linking to a YouTube video. The results also supported the use of a combination of traditional and new media by stakeholders. The focus on stakeholders will continue in the next section, where the dialogic expectations of stakeholders will be compared with the social media activities of the organisations.

5.4 Research Question 4: To What Extent Is Social Media Use By Youth Homelessness Charities In Line With The Dialogic Components Expected By Their Stakeholders?

The following analysis involves a comparison between the dialogic components from the theoretical framework (mutuality, commitment, empathy, risk, propinquity, transparency and trust) in order to identify their presence in the social media activities of the charities with those highlighted as a priority by stakeholders. Such juxtapositions will assist in identifying discrepancies between the charities' current social media practice and stakeholder demand. Articulating these gaps – if they exist – will help inform public relations scholarship and assist the not-for-profit sector in identifying areas requiring further attention, to ascertain if reconciling the highlighted issues is feasible and to identify strategies to achieve improvement.

To address this research question, the stakeholder survey and interview results were first analysed to identify dialogic components from the theoretical framework underpinning stakeholder expectations. Next, the data from the practitioner interviews and content analysis were scrutinised to establish which dialogic components were present in the organisations' social media practice and dialogic exchanges with stakeholders. The presentation of results is structured to reflect the comparative process used. This section concludes by summarising any disparities between the charities' social media practice and dialogic expectations of stakeholders.

5.4.1 Dialogic components underpinning stakeholder expectations

Analysis of the stakeholder survey and interview data indicated that, while the samples rarely referred to the exact titles of the dialogic components (commitment,

mutuality, risk, empathy, propinquity, transparency and trust), the principles these

titles represented were a priority for participants when engaging with charities on

social media. All dialogic components from the theoretical framework were

identified in the stakeholder interviews and survey data. The data indicated the

strongest themes relating to the dialogic components expected by stakeholders

were mutuality, empathy and propinquity. Commitment, transparency and trust

were also present, but at lesser levels.

i.   Commitment

The survey data suggested that ongoing commitment to a charity can stem from

an emotional connection or a decision based on how well the participant perceived

the organisation was performing. The belief that a cause was "good" was the

number one reason stakeholders gave for supporting the same charity every year

(81%, 116). A personal experience with the cause was the second-most frequent

reason for annual support (57%, 82 respondents), and stakeholders' support

resulting in their feeling "good" was the third (31%, 34). The interview data with

stakeholders showed that a strong commitment to the charity or the issue of

homelessness was the main motivation for following the organisation on social

media. However, none of the interviewees shared any expectation that the

organisations should reciprocate commitment on social media, except by being

active and providing current content in the space to keep them informed. One

stakeholder advised that a charity having a social media presence was not

enough; it needed to be actively involved in the space, showing commitment to the

upkeep of its profiles, which would in turn reflect a commitment to those following

the organisation:

[T]here definitely does need to be a commitment to active engagement in

social media, and the charity requires somebody to be directly responsible

to manage that page. Otherwise it becomes less effective … then they

contradict the reasons why they started it ... I think that's very important,

that there is a regular update"

According to stakeholders, simply having a social media profile does not display a

sense of commitment to those following the organisation. Stakeholders define

commitment on social media as how charities use their profiles to engage them

and maintain relationships with them.

ii.   Mutuality

The stakeholder interviews suggested a sense of mutuality with the charity is what

prompted the stakeholders to engage with its social media content by liking,

commenting or sharing. One stakeholder believed that liking or sharing a post was

a gesture signifying connection to the organisation and was an acknowledgement

of the efforts of the person posting the content:

[I]t just makes you feel like you're actually connecting with people ... if I

can't do anything, there's no harm in me sharing whatever their information

is … it's probably a funny way of showing it, but someone spent time putting

that post up.

Another stakeholder was so supportive of Organisation E that they did not

discriminate between the posts that they interacted with. They interacted with

every single post on their newsfeed by liking it, but displayed greater discernment

in relation to sharing the content: "I like every single one without fail because I just

think [Organisation E] can do no wrong, and I will share only if I think it's worth

sharing." Displaying mutuality by commenting on a post was not as popular as

liking or sharing it, but was an option for one stakeholder if it deeply resonated with

them:

> If it's something that really gets to me in a good way I might make a
>
> comment saying, 'Yes, I agree with that,' or not. Yes, yes, but mainly if it
>
> sort of looks like they are doing a good job, I like it.

Some stakeholders displayed greater selectiveness in their displays of mutuality

with charities on social media. For one stakeholder, this was so that people within

their networks would see that their interactions with charities were considered and

meaningful:

> "I'm not somebody who likes everything, because that comes up in
>
> everyone's newsfeeds and they'll see that I'm liking all these things. I need
>
> to make sure that I actually really do like it in order to do that."

For another stakeholder, only content that related to them personally would elicit a

mutual response: "I won't just blanket like everything they do. It's only when it

might be a program I am supporting or something else I'm involved in with them."

Some stakeholders believed that the charities should display deeper mutuality by

acknowledging the work of their donors and volunteers and "[t]hanking them

[donors and volunteers] for [making] contributions quickly and often." One

stakeholder suggested that showing the work of other stakeholders publicly

acknowledged such work and had the potential to inspire others to contribute:

I think that's good to show, because it shows that people are doing small

things that make a difference and then somebody else might be doing

something bigger. Really showcasing what they are doing to make money,

for the organisation I think that's really important.

Stakeholders suggested that charities could leverage mutuality with their

stakeholders by asking them directly to share content within their personal

networks to increase awareness and support, a tactic that one stakeholder

believed was not currently being implemented by charities and was a missed

opportunity: "They don't say 'This is coming up,' or 'We're trying to reach more

people, can you share us?' … that's a simple request."

iii.   Risk

The interview data suggested that stakeholders would not risk their reputation by

interacting (liking, sharing, commenting) on negative content posted by charities.

Instead, the interviews highlighted a preference from stakeholders for positive

social media content from charities, as they would be more likely to express

mutuality by sharing positive content within their own networks. Negative content

posted by charities risked not being shared or engaged with by stakeholders or

deterring them completely from following the profile. One stakeholder commented

that they used social media to relax and connect with friends and family, and that

negative or tragic content did not have a place in the space. This was a sentiment

echoed by 58% (65) of the survey participants:

Make it really positive. I'm not likely to go into something that really upsets

me … I tend not to read them. I'm there to have a bit of a relax [*sic*] and

catch up. So trying not to do too much of the sad and sorry tales.

A common request among the stakeholders was for more fun and interactive activities to be included on the social media profiles of charities, particularly in the form of competitions with prizes to reward stakeholder participation: "I'd say promote fun activities … promote prize things … like competitions where you can have a word game or something that captures people's intellect as well as their interest". Another stakeholder recommended that competitions and prizes could also be linked with donations or the promotion of charitable events:

> When they're asking for donations, make it something where there can be also a prize attached or promote an event that they're having … people put these great events on, but they're not always accessible. You don't know about them till ages later.

Such requests seem to be in opposition to the altruistic nature of offering support to charities and a contradiction to the concern highlighted by some stakeholders regarding misappropriation of donated funds.

iv.   Empathy

Stakeholders strongly believed that charities must use social media to create a sense of empathy between them and those suffering from homelessness to be successful in improving levels of support. To achieve this, the interview data suggested that stakeholders expected charities to tell the personal stories of their clients, with a particular focus on how the organisations' work had changed their clients' lives for the better. A common theme was that to stakeholders "personal stories are really important", and that it was important for charities to "write personal stories about people who are homeless that comfort your heart, rather

than just saying, you know, we need some money". Again, the emphasis on highlighting the human condition and creating empathy between stakeholders and people experiencing homelessness was by far the most passionate topic for discussion throughout the stakeholder interviews:

> [I]t has to be something that highlighted the common human condition, that people might read and develop some empathy towards humans who are less well off than them … seeing the story behind the person being homeless, what happened before that to get them to that stage, would help people become aware that it could happen to anyone.

One stakeholder commented that it is important for charities to also show how people can help and what their contribution would do to assist someone experiencing homelessness:

> … how it feeds someone, or brings a homeless person in for shelter and then changes their life, actually gets them back off the street back into a position where they get a job, and show some of those stories … that might help people touch the emotional strings and help them donate a bit more.

Another mentioned a charity that "put up personal stories of people with progress or success stories".

Stakeholders suggested that charities sharing stories of progress or positive transformation directly affected their levels of empathy and prompted them to offer greater support to the charity. A stakeholder commented that knowing that their contribution is making a positive difference was a key motive behind their decision to assist: "[P]eople like to feel they're making a difference … It's got to be factual,

but it's got to have some sort of meaning for an end result saying how they're improving people's lives."

The survey results also highlighted the impact of charities not creating a sense of empathy with stakeholders on social media; 23% (26) of participants answered that they were not prompted to donate to, volunteer for or support a charity on social media because the campaigns that they had seen had not moved them enough to respond.

v.   Propinquity

Propinquity involves the elements of immediacy of presence, temporal flow and engagement. In the context of this research, it relates to the elasticity of the charity–stakeholder relationship between online and offline environments. The results showed that propinquity was also a common stakeholder expectation emerging from the interviews. Of the 16 participants, 14 had some variety of offline affiliation with one of the charities, such as participating in volunteering activities or attending events. For some, this was an event they were informed about by social media. Á stakeholder described how they found out about a rally on social media: "It was put through one of [Organisation E's] Facebook pages, and we had about 70 [Organisation E] volunteers all turn up." Another supported a charity by signing up for a bicycle race: "I am doing the Great Cycle Challenge and it is raising money for [Kids' Cancer Charity] research. I saw that online [social media] and it caught my eye … it's something that I can be actively involved in."

This offline affiliation was also viewed by some stakeholders as an obligation to follow the charity on their social media channels. One stakeholder who regularly

volunteers with Organisation E expressed that they felt that it was their duty to follow the organisation on social media because of their existing offline connection: "I thought, well if I'm volunteering, I should follow them on Facebook".

Social media was viewed by some stakeholders as an effective way for them to be kept informed about organisational happenings in between their offline interactions with the charity, particularly as a volunteer. The general feeling was that charities could improve relationships and encourage greater support from stakeholders by using social media to inspire participation in offline events. One stakeholder suggested that a charity showing evidence on social media of its offline activities may inspire greater volunteerism and participation in events: "[B]eing active certainly promotes a positive image to the organisation. People will get on board if it looks like they are doing things in the community." Other stakeholders shared the view that building relationships through offline events would assist in both raising awareness about youth homelessness and in continuing the relationship in a social media environment: "Potentially, having more events for the soup kitchens and having more awareness of when the events are [via social media], when you can help out".

There was an expectation for balance from charities when promoting offline events via social media. Stakeholders agreed that "[p]romoting active involvement is really good, and I think a lot of people would support causes easy to get involved with." However, charities were advised to engage stakeholders by "subtly promoting the cause, without pushing it down your throat." The survey findings illustrated that 34% (58) of respondents participated in a charity event and 20% (35) of people had volunteered after reading about volunteering on social media.

vi.   Transparency

A common theme presented in the stakeholder interviews was the expectation that charities show the destination and outcomes of donated goods and funds through social media. Stakeholders expected transparency, disclosure and honesty from charities on social media. One stakeholder expressed their desire for Organisation D to display greater transparency: "[Organisation D] encourages kids to stay at school, but there's nothing to show where the money actually goes." Another deemed a display of tangible outcomes to be an effective method of garnering support by commenting that "people respond to other people and case studies or really tangible examples of success stories or where the money is being spent and really humanising".

Yet some charities that disclosed how funds were spent were then penalised by stakeholders for not devoting 100% of donations to the cause and spending a proportion on administrative operations:

> [H]ow do you get people to donate a specific amount of money which 100% of that money goes to a project … we don't want to give to [large international charity] because we know only 30 to 40% of our money goes on administration, and we don't want that.

Some stakeholders suggested that charities providing detailed breakdowns of how funds were spent on particular projects would assist in satisfying the expectation for greater transparency on social media and encourage support. A stakeholder believed that it could be achieved by "[u]sing really good facts and figures that sort of surprise you" as social media content. Another stakeholder shared the example

of a children's charity that breaks down donations into the number of children that

it can feed:

> [I]t says that the cost is about 34 cents a meal. It sounds cheap, but multiply
>
> by 500 children by 7 days a week: it adds up. Then it says if you donate
>
> $20, you feed 58 of these children."

Stakeholders thought that if charities were transparent in showing the direct effects

of support by breaking them down, they could make more informed decisions

about where to divert their support. Again, this highlights a contradiction between

those stakeholders who want confirmation that funds are going to the people who

most need them and those who want to win prizes in competitions run by the

charities.

vii.   Trust

The stakeholder interviews suggested that participants were very discerning in the

charities that they trusted and followed on social media and that a positive

reputation was a fundamental characteristic when making this decision: "I mean,

there are a lot of charities out there asking for money, but at least we know that

[Organisation E] are reputable. You can trust them." Furthermore, a strong track

record assisted in building trust between an organisation and its stakeholders, as

one of the stakeholders explained: "[T]hey've proved themselves over the years.

They are reliable, they are honest and they are not there to rip people off."

However, some stakeholders identified particular practices of charities as being

untrustworthy, such as breaching privacy when using clients' stories to encourage

support. Such an attitude could be seen as directly at odds with some of the other

stakeholders' views shared in relation to the dialogic component of empathy:

> I don't like it when they use real stories with real names … that's an
>
> infringement on people's privacy; that is, a disadvantaged person, they
>
> might say it's okay to do that now, but they are not in a powerful enough
>
> position to make a valid judgment.

Another stakeholder criticised the tactic that many charities used in adding donors'

details to a database from which it seemed impossible to be removed: "It is also

annoying that once you give, you are put on their mailing list and you can't get off

it." The survey results showed that 73% of respondents (125) gave to the same

charities each year, implying a degree of trust supporting the decision to provide

ongoing support. Alternatively, this may also be the result of stakeholder apathy by

continuing with the same annual giving habits, rather than seeking change.

5.4.2 Organisational motives for social media use containing dialogic components

This part of the section explores the various ways in which the six motives for

organisational social media use relate to the dialogic components from the

theoretical framework. The aim of the comparison is to provide an insight into how

closely the motives align with dialogic theory to better understand whether

dialogue is the overall motivation for social media use by charitable organisations.

i.   Commitment

Three of the motives that emerged from the practitioner interview data

corresponded to the dialogic component of commitment. These motives were:

- Show your commitment (reputation).

- Form a commitment from stakeholders (ongoing support).

- Stick to your commitment (engage with younger people).

The first motive directly corresponds to commitment, as it is the outcome the

practitioners were aiming to develop between stakeholders and their organisation

through the use of social media as a relationship management tool. The

quotations presented previously confirm this as a common goal with practitioners.

Next, by attracting and engaging with a younger demographic, the underlying aim

is again to foster commitment between younger stakeholders and the charity to

encourage long-term support. Finally, the motivation for gaining greater reach to

vast networks of current and prospective stakeholders also relates to increasing

opportunities for practitioners to deepen commitment with current stakeholders

and to cultivate new committed relationships with prospective stakeholders.

Therefore, commitment was a prevalent theme in half the organisational motives

for social media use highlighted in the practitioner interviews.

ii.   Mutuality

The dialogic component of mutuality was inherent in the motive practitioners

raised of using social media to increase opportunities for stakeholder and

organisational interaction. Interaction between stakeholders and organisations via

social media suggests an active exchange and an open display of mutuality

between both parties. The producer from Organisation B described how mutual

interests between the organisation and its stakeholders provide a solid foundation

on which to build and maintain a relationship: "[W]e're talking to people who like

[Organisation B], who want to stop homelessness, who like food, who like coffee,

who like what we're doing. That relationship can be, and is in a lot of cases, a one-

to-one."

iii.   Empathy

A theme that emerged from the practitioner interviews was the motive of using

social media as a vehicle for storytelling. This motive relates to the dialogic

component of empathy, as the practitioners aimed to increase empathy with and

awareness and understanding of their organisation, its work and its clients through

the communication of compelling stories. The supervisor from Organisation C was

committed to educating users about youth homelessness through compelling

social media content: "It's also about educating people about youth homelessness,

the issues that the young people face and what's happening in the news."

Furthermore, the interviewee from Organisation A reported that the tweets

attracting the greatest number of retweets and favourites "are always ones about

homelessness issues, which was pretty exciting for me." This proposes that the

practitioners aim to evoke empathy in stakeholders by sharing stories about the

issue of homelessness via social media.

iv.   Risk

The dialogic component of risk (or, more specifically, risk aversion) is the

underlying goal supporting the use of social media by practitioners to enhance

organisational reputation. As the interview quotes already presented illustrate, by

using social media technology to present their organisation in a positive light,

practitioners were trying to bolster the charity's reputation in the minds of their

stakeholders. Risk aversion was present in some of the practitioners' descriptions

of senior management not responding in a timely fashion to social media issues,

suggesting an approach of ignoring the situation in the hope that it would subside

or not be further exacerbated.

v.   Propinquity

The dialogic component of propinquity also corresponded to the practitioner

motive of using social media to increase opportunities for two-way communication

between stakeholders and the organisations, as such interactions could occur both

on and offline. As the supervisor from Organisation C explained,

> [W]e're involved in Run Melbourne, where people sign up to run and
> fundraise, so when they post on their Facebook page that they're
> supporting us, all of their friends are able to see [Organisation C] and then
> they might like us.

The producer from Organisation B described a very strategic and targeted

approach to the use of propinquity in order to strengthen existing relationships with

influential stakeholders on social media:

> There are supporters out there that when we did the launches up at
> Melbourne Central, they were invited personally, not through Twitter. They
> were invited. They came along. They took photos. We didn't tell them what
> to do. They just did what they wanted to do. Their audiences, we picked up
> a ton of them

This suggests that propinquity is an important and beneficial consideration by practitioners when using social media to communicate and engage with stakeholders.

vi. Transparency

Transparency directly related to the practitioner motive of using social media to enhance organisational reputation. However, the supervisor from Organisation E was the only interviewee from the practitioner sample to raise this dialogic component. Their quote illustrated the fundamentally important requirement for charities of using social media to be transparent with stakeholders regarding where donated funds are spent, which programs they support and which clients they assist. Figure 4 is a further example of the use of transparency whereby Organisation C honestly answers a stakeholder query about the condition of auctioned cars.

vii. Trust

Finally, trust as a component underpinning the entire theoretical framework also corresponded to the motive of using social media to enhance organisational reputation. Increasing organisational trust in the minds of stakeholders was considered as a product (or result) of successfully using social media to improve the charities' reputations. This was also evident in the quotation from the supervisor of Organisation E previously mentioned, in which they recommended that by being transparent and showing the results of support on social media, this *"reaffirms their decision to …"* support the organisation or galvanise stakeholder trust in the charity.

5.4.3 Dialogic components contained within social media practice

The content analysis data confirmed the existence of all dialogic components contained within the charities' combined social media efforts; however, some featured more prevalently than others. This section of Research Question 4 will illustrate the frequency of each dialogic component in the content analysis data, provide examples of the form each assumed in social media practice, and include any relevant data from the practitioner interviews. Figure 16 details the instances when each dialogic component appeared on the organisations' social media profiles during the three-week online content analysis.
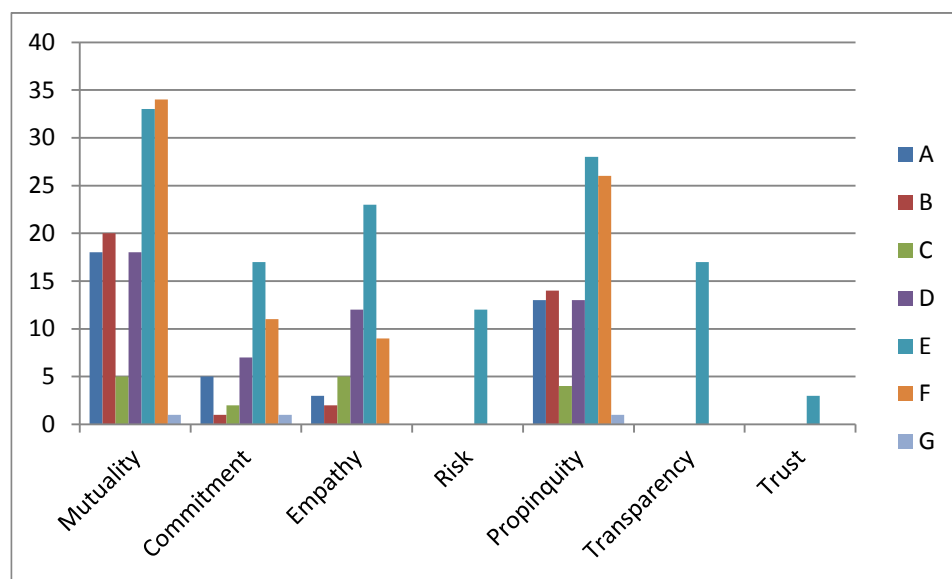
Figure 16. Frequency of dialogic components within social media activities of youth homelessness charities.

Figure 16 indicates that mutuality and propinquity were the most commonly used dialogic components, suggesting an emphasis on strengthening partnerships and relationships in both on- and offline environments. Risk was the least present component, which may be deemed to be a positive result considering its negative connotations. More concerning, considering its importance to stakeholders, is the

limited incidence of transparency. This was also reflected in the practitioner interviews, where only one participant (Organisation E's supervisor) mentioned the importance of transparency. Only three of the 13 interviewees mentioned risk, and the dialogic component of commitment was not mentioned at all. The next section will provide further commentary and examples of each of the dialogic components identified from the content analysis.

i.   Mutuality

Mutuality was the dialogic component that featured most frequently in the content analysis data (129 instances). This component was presented using various techniques as per the code book instructions (see Appendix A.iv.) Mutuality was also mentioned prevalently throughout the practitioner interviews. The supervisor from Organisation D embedded mutuality into their organisation's stakeholder management strategy: "[W]e promise all of our partners and corporate partners that we will acknowledge their support on social media and we use Facebook for that." This statement was proven to be true throughout the three-week online content analysis period. However, it was not the case with Organisation F, whose producer identified LinkedIn as an effective way to "connect with corporates and through corporate partnerships and even through recruiting volunteers", yet did not post any new content during the data-capture period.

An example of mutuality can be seen in Figure 17, which announces a new corporate partnership between Organisation A (a charity solely devoted to the issue of youth homelessness) and an Australian Football League Club.

Figure 17. Mutuality example: corporate partnership.

Sharing, retweeting and tagging stakeholders' content and names also constituted an act of mutuality. However, the practice may not be welcomed by those stakeholders harbouring privacy concerns. While this particular post does not directly relate to the issue of youth homelessness, Organisation B used this method (see Figure 18) to maintain a relationship with a traditional media outlet, *The Age*, by retweeting its content.

Figure 18. Mutuality example: retweeting content.

Thanking stakeholders was a further example of mutuality in social media practice.

In Figure 19, Organisation C thanks two volunteers who assisted in its office for

the day. The post also acknowledges the company they usually work for, adding a

further element of mutuality to the content.

Figure 19. Mutuality example: thanking volunteers.

ii.   Commitment

The dialogic component of commitment was not mentioned at all during the practitioner interviews, but was evident 44 times throughout the data-capture period. As Figures 20 and 21 indicate, commitment was most often displayed through the stories of stakeholders with a deep commitment to the organisation or by the organisation professing its commitment to a particular cause or issue.

Figure 20 shares the story of a group of volunteers and donors who provide pizza to homeless people using one of Organisation E's service centres. This post details the group's commitment to assisting people in need. It also displays mutuality, through participants tagging their home organisation in the post, and propinquity, by showing a photo of an offline event.

Figure 20. Commitment example: stakeholder commitment.

Figure 21 expresses the commitment of Organisation F to helping others by

commemorating its 160th birthday and sharing that it is the longest-functioning

charitable organisation in Melbourne:
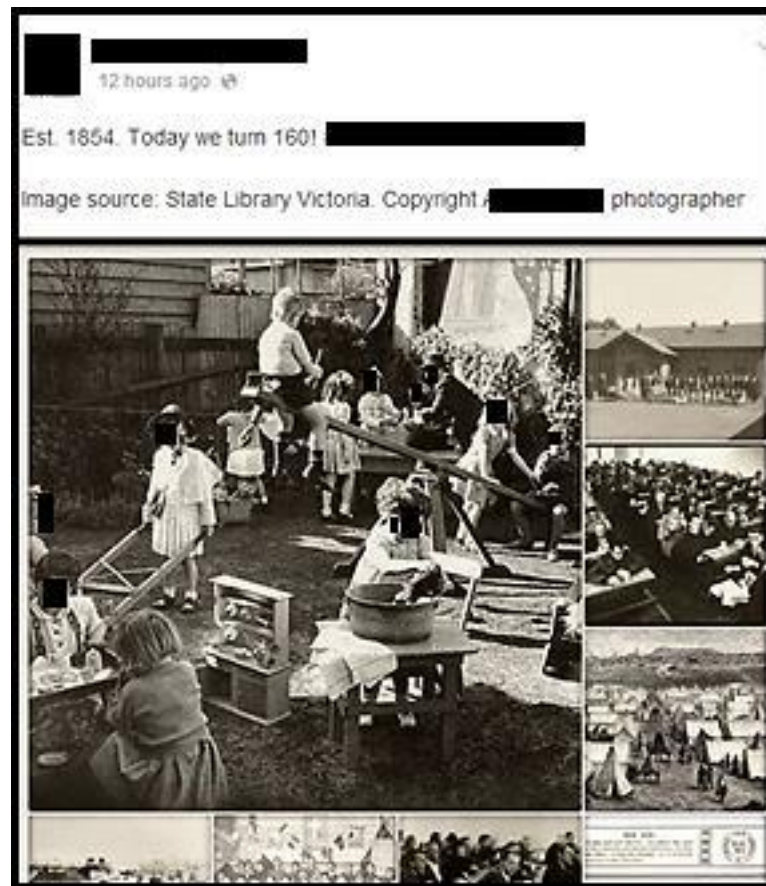
Figure 21. Commitment example: organisational commitment.

iii.   Empathy

The results indicate that empathy was not a major concern as a dialogic

component for the practitioners, and was rarely mentioned. But the supervisor

from Organisation F placed some emphasis on the importance of storytelling:

"What's really going to help to frame our success, is that we've got to have the

good stories to tell and to put out on social media". In actuality, the dialogic

component of empathy appeared 54 times and was used most prevalently by

Organisation E (23 instances). Empathy generally appeared in social media

practice as appeals for support or attempts to raise awareness with stakeholders

regarding particular issues.

Figure 22 illustrates an appeal by Organisation E on Facebook seeking

stakeholder support in a fundraising promotion to assist with the issue of

homelessness.

Figure 22. Empathy example: appeal for support.

Figure 23 from Organisation E attempts to create empathy with stakeholders by

raising awareness of the far-reaching effects that homelessness has on the entire

community, not only on those directly affected.

Figure 23. Empathy example: raising awareness.

iv.   Risk

It could be argued that all social media practice on behalf of the charities was undertaken to enhance organisational reputation while minimising risk; therefore, aligning every organisational post to the dialogic component of risk would be futile. Instead, instances where stakeholders directly attacked the reputation of the organisation via social media were recorded, as these better encapsulate the mechanics of this dialogic component and fulfil the requirement of risk. Three practitioners raised the dialogic component of risk in their interviews, as they had all experienced one or more incidents in relation to their organisation's social media presence. The supervisor from Organisation C noted that "[i]t [social media] has also opened us up to people with negative comments as well." The practitioner interviews showed that Organisation E had experienced the most

frequent occurrences of negative stakeholder comments through its social media

channels – a realised risk that was supported by the data from the three-week

online content analysis. Organisation E was the only charity in this study to

experience attempts at reputational damage from stakeholders in this way,

attracting 15 negative stakeholder posts throughout the data-capture period.

Figure 24 illustrates two of the negative posts left by stakeholders on Organisation

E's Facebook wall. The posts relate to an investigation taking place during the

data-capture period into child abuse allegations made against the organisation

from decades before. These posts presented a degree of risk in terms of

reputational damage towards Organisation E. Although not specifically related to

the issue of youth homelessness, they provide examples of the type of negative

content that can be posted by stakeholders on charities' social media profiles.

Figure 24. Example of risk being realised.

v.   Propinquity

Propinquity was recorded at the second-highest frequency (99 instances) in the content-analysis data results in comparison with the other dialogic components. It was also mentioned prevalently in the practitioner interviews. The supervisor from Organisation D mentioned that they regularly used social media channels to encourage engagement in offline activities: "We got two volunteers to help specifically from our social media postings about it … Many of our events are only now promoted through social media. There's no mail out. Now, those events are running successfully." This was a similar scenario for the supervisor from Organisation B: "We've run various events, and we've run them on Eventbrite, so we use Twitter and other things to promote those."

In comparison to the data from the three-week online content analysis, this particular component was identified in posts that encouraged, promoted or showed evidence of online activity evolving into an offline environment. An example of propinquity in social media practice is illustrated in Figure 25, which shows the promotion of an offline fundraising event by Organisation D (a charity devoted to addressing youth homelessness) and an exchange between the organisation and a stakeholder regarding event participation.

Figure 25. Example of propinquity.

vi.   Transparency

Organisation E's social media channels were the only ones analysed that

contained content that corresponded with the dialogic component of transparency;

17 instances were recorded. Furthermore, it was the only organisation to mention

its importance during the practitioner interviews. These actual attempts at

transparency predominantly involved Organisation E providing details as to where

donated funds were being allocated, as Figure 26 demonstrates. Transparency

was also displayed when engaging in conversations with stakeholders about

resource allocation, as Figure 27 depicts.

Figure 26 shows the way in which Organisation E provided some detail about

where the funds from a coffee fundraising promotion would be spent, rather than

the post purely seeking stakeholder support.

Figure 26. Example of transparency on Twitter.

Figure 27 illustrates a social media conversation between Organisation E and a stakeholder who has posted a complaint on the charity's Facebook page about their perception that used items for sale in the organisation's retail outlets are too costly. Instead of ignoring or deleting the post, Organisation E instead engages in the mixed-motive model of communication and transparently responds to the complaint, providing details about how prices are set and how the stakeholder can receive support.

Figure 27. Example of transparency on Facebook.

vii.   Trust

The dialogic component of trust featured three times throughout the data-capture

period, but was rarely mentioned during any of the practitioner interviews. The few

times that trust was mentioned were in relation to trust in employees internal to the

charities. The data from the three-week online content analysis showed that all

three mentions of trust could be attributed to Organisation E; yet the organisation

did not post about the component. Instead, its association was negative, with

stakeholders questioning the trustworthiness of the organisation, as Figures 28 and 29 indicate.

Figure 28 includes a stakeholder comment in response to an unrelated post made by Organisation E. The stakeholder questions the honesty of the charity by providing a link to an online newspaper article as proof of the organisation's untrustworthiness. The organisation responds by directing the stakeholder to a website to read its full response to the issue.

Figure 28. Example of trust A.

This is the example of a stakeholder comment posted directly to Organisation E's

Facebook wall that also links to an online newspaper article criticising the charity

for unscrupulous dealings. In a similar fashion to Figure 28, in Figure 29

Organisation E responded by directing the stakeholder to a website to read their

"side of the story".

Figure 29. Example of trust B.

5.4.4 Conclusion

When comparing the results presented in this section, it is clear that charities are

addressing, to some degree, most of the dialogic components expected by their

stakeholders. In particular, charities are performing best in terms of mutuality and

propinquity. Yet there seems to be a disparity between the ways that stakeholders

perceive risk compared with how risk is defined by the public relations practitioners

from not-for-profit organisations. Stakeholders view risk as charities posting

content that is not positive enough to share within their own networks or that may

deter them from following organisations. The charities view risk as attempts from stakeholders to use social media to damage organisational reputation. According to both views, the frequency of risk was low. The results also indicated that while the organisations are addressing commitment and empathy in their social media content, much greater emphasis needs to be placed on these dialogic components for them to adhere closer to stakeholder expectations.

However, the results suggest that it is the dialogic component of transparency (linked directly to the development of trust) that requires considerable attention from charities. While the stakeholders specified transparency from charitable organisations on social media was of major importance to them, only one of the organisations made this a priority. The other organisations did not include this component in any of their posts, which was not in line with stakeholder expectations. Overall, the results propose that social media use by youth homelessness charities is not in line with the majority of dialogic components expected by their stakeholders, and greater effort is required by charities to diminish this disparity.

The results presented in this section have addressed Research Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 by displaying relevant data from the stakeholder survey and interviews, practitioner interviews, and content analysis. The next section of this thesis will focus on discussing the main findings drawn from these results and will use these findings to offer recommendations as to how not-for-profit organisations can use social media to communicate with their stakeholders.

6.   DISCUSSION

6.1   Key Findings and Context

The goal of this study was to explore whether gaps exist between what

stakeholders and charitable organisations expect from each other when interacting

via social media. This information would provide the foundation to develop an

integrated social media communication model for not-for-profit organisations. As

such, this section will explore the wider implications of the research results on

youth homelessness charities and the not-for-profit sector at large. This will be

achieved by dividing the areas of discussion into two main categories: Internal

Organisational Operations and External Stakeholder Engagement. The rationale

for splitting the key findings in this way was to reflect the public relations function

of managing relationships and communication (both social media and traditional)

with internal and external stakeholders (Clark, 2000). These two main categories

are also directly derived from the key findings of this study.

The next section (6.2) will provide recommendations to address each of the

findings. There were five main findings from this research that warrant further

discussion:

1. Social media adoption does not equate to organisational acceptance.

2. Dialogue between not-for-profit organisations and stakeholders is not the main

    motivation for social media use.

3. Inspiration encourages action from stakeholders.

4. Propinquity is important in that social media relationships need an offline

    component.

5. Social and traditional media integration is currently an ad hoc practice and a

    neglected opportunity.

Each of these findings will be addressed in turn.

6.1.1 Internal organisational operations

6.1.1.2 Social media adoption does not equal organisational acceptance

One of the main findings from the public relations practitioner interviews was that social media adoption did not equal acceptance from internal members of their organisations. Although a charity may be using the technology to improve stakeholder engagement, this in itself is not an indication that its use has been supported or accepted as valid by other areas within the organisation. All of the practitioner interviews identified a distinct lack of support by senior management in relation to resource allocation in the following areas: staffing, training, content production and governance. Even organisations E and F, which had a dedicated social media practitioner, also reported a lack of support in terms of assets allocated to produce video content.

The practitioner interviews suggested a lack of senior management and organisational acceptance stemmed from the deep-seated notion that social media technology is invalid in comparison with more traditional communications methods. This was confirmed by all of the practitioners interviewed, and was also evident in deficiencies in the way that the practitioners measured the outcomes of their organisations' social media efforts. It was clear that measuring return on investment of social media efforts was neither a requirement nor a priority for senior management. This differed from the strong focus placed on gathering metrics about traditional media activities, possibly because investment in social media was minimal across most of the organisations. The lack of social media

support by the charities' senior management seemed to mirror a dearth of confidence and an expectation held by those same decision-makers that social media could achieve tangible outcomes in line with organisational objectives. It seemed to be a situation of no expectation, no investment and no loss; but this also resulted in limited successes or failures, or these not being measured if they existed.

Social media adoption by the not-for-profit sector is only the very first stage of its integration into public relations practices, and adoption on its own is not enough. Integration must also extend to an understanding and acceptance of social media from other areas within the organisations: particularly senior management, who have the power and influence to drive such acceptance (Osterman Research Inc., 2014). Without buy-in from the rest of the organisation, it will be extremely challenging for public relations practitioners to progress past merely using the technology to completely realising social media's potential in building and maintaining positive stakeholder relationships.

In line with the literature, the public relations practitioners in this study perceived themselves as being underprepared to adequately cope with their social media responsibilities (Avidar, 2009; Fitch, 2009; IBM, 2011; Zerfass et al., 2011). This perception prevailed even though expectations from senior management were low. The confusion associated with social media measurement highlighted in the literature was apparent in the practitioner interviews and was an example of the lack of preparedness experienced by the sample (Fitch, 2009; Luo & Jiang, 2012). Also evident were serious deficiencies in current key performance indicators (Verhoeven et al., 2012; Zerfass et al., 2011) and social media policies (Macnamara, 2011b; Verhoeven et al., 2012).

The fact that the findings from this study are comparable to those in the literature suggests two outcomes. Firstly, these challenges are experienced by organisations from a range of sectors. Next, these challenges may exist because social media technology has not been completely accepted as an effective relationship-management tool within organisations, particularly those in the not-for-profit sector. Resource allocation, key performance indicators, governance and training requirements are typically set by senior management; yet if social media is not deemed worthy enough to warrant substantial attention or effort in these areas, challenges are likely to remain.

Two components of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) are perceived usefulness and ease of use. The practitioner interviews did not allude to senior management viewing social media as complex to use. However, it was clear the practitioners perceived strong doubt existing within levels of senior management regarding the usefulness of social media and its effectiveness in helping to achieve organisational objectives. Perceived doubt and caution surrounding social media displayed by senior managers are understandable responses when the responsibilities of organisational reputation and ethical allocation of donated funds reside firmly within their jurisdiction. Yet, buy-in from senior management is a critical antecedent factor influencing the ability for public relations practitioners to build relationships and communicate with external stakeholders. This finding differs from the research of Grunig and Huang (2000) by demonstrating that internal support and relationships are equally as important as those with external stakeholders, especially in the not-for-profit sector.

While scepticism is justifiable, it could be a major barrier preventing senior management from completely accepting and embracing social media. Lack of

acceptance has had a direct impact on the level of resources allocated to social media activities. Not-for-profit organisations tend to have limited budgets for marketing and communications, and it seems that, in most cases, allowances have not been made to financially support social media as an additional tool within the existing mix. Instead, practitioners are expected to use current resources to support social media until it proves itself. It seems that to improve acceptance by senior management, social media must indicate that it can achieve a return on investment without there being any significant investment. This seems a challenging expectation for public relations practitioners to overcome, particularly given the lack of a systematic evaluation of social media use and measurement of its influence on organisational success in the not-for-profit sector.

Public relations practitioners have an integral role to play in improving social media acceptance within not-for-profit organisations through educating and communicating successes to the dominant coalition: organisational decision-makers. In order to increase support for social media, practitioners must communicate the reasons why it is beneficial and provide solid evidence – from their organisation and from others – to reinforce their case. Social media activities alone are not effective tools of persuasion. Their value must be articulated through targeted communication to decision-makers within the organisation. As boundary spanners, public relations practitioners are the direct link between social media communication and engagement with both stakeholders and senior management. This is potentially a position of great responsibility and power, which public relations practitioners can leverage to become a conduit for change within their organisations.

6.1.3 External stakeholder engagement

6.1.3.1 Dialogue between not-for-profit organisations and stakeholders is not the main motivation for social media use

The results indicate that dialogic exchanges between not-for-profit organisations and stakeholders via social media do not constitute the main motivation for social media use by either party. While social media can easily facilitate two-way communication between stakeholders and public relations practitioners from not-for-profit organisations, the results support the notion that the ability to use this functionality is a value-adding proposition for both parties, rather than a driving force underlying its use. For public relations practitioners, dialogue with stakeholders via social media was one of six other motives for using the technology. The interviews showed that most stakeholders were more likely to simply share content from a not-for-profit organisation or not respond to it at all, rather than engaging in two-way communication on a charity's social media profile.

A reluctance to engage in dialogue with charities was also apparent among survey participants. The survey results illustrated that, of the 64% (113) of respondents who had not responded to a charity's call-to-action for donations, volunteers or support via social media, 58% (65) did not respond because they used social media to connect with friends and family, not to give to charity. This suggests that a significant proportion of stakeholders are not interested in engaging in dialogue with charities via social media. Next, 23% (26) answered that a lack of connection with content had not moved them enough to respond, proposing that, for those stakeholders open to viewing not-for-profit content, some content may potentially impel an emotional reaction.

Interviews with stakeholders also highlighted reluctance to engage in dialogue with not-for-profit organisations using social networking sites. The reasons behind this hesitance need to be explored further, but some stakeholders advised that the very public nature of social media discouraged them, and they preferred to keep their discussions with organisations one-on-one. Direct messaging using social media was not mentioned. Stakeholders suggested that, rather than participating in a conversation, they would be more inclined to share a charity's content if they found it to be worthwhile and of interest to people within their own networks. This was also identified as fulfilling an altruistic need on behalf of the stakeholders by assisting the charity through "getting the message out". The view that following a charity on social media and sharing its content was another way for a stakeholder to show support for the charity was evident throughout the interviews. This further confirms the finding that dialogue with not-for-profit organisations was not a strong motivator from the perspective of the stakeholder when following such organisations on social media; instead, they did so as a gesture of their support.

This was also evident from the practitioner interviews, where two-way communication was one of six motivations highlighted, but was viewed as a lower priority in terms of attention or strategic communication management compared to using social media to:

- engage with a younger audience

- build new networks

- tell stories

- improve reputation

- manage stakeholder relationships to garner ongoing support.

Only one of the practitioners, a supervisor from Organisation E, mentioned their promptness in responding to stakeholders as a measure of their success in using the medium. The general attitude among practitioners was that stakeholder dialogue via social media was just one feature of the technology that they needed to deal with as it occurred. None of the practitioners mentioned attempting to instigate stakeholder dialogue; instead, they merely responded to it. This suggests that public relations practitioners at the charities are using social media in the same way that they would use more traditional communications methods such as letters and telephone when responding to stakeholder queries. Rather than actively embracing social media's dialogic functionality to deepen stakeholder relationships via conversations, practitioners were taking a more reactive approach.

A lack of dialogic exchange between stakeholders and charities was also evident from the three-week online content analysis, further supporting this finding. On the few occasions that dialogue occurred, its instigation by a stakeholder was presented in two forms: a direct question to the organisation, or a provocative comment to discredit the organisation and/or generate a reaction from other stakeholders or the organisation. In both cases it seemed that stakeholders possessed a specific agenda that motivated them to attempt to engage in dialogue with the charity, rather than participating in conversation as a source of entertainment. However, these occurrences were limited, proposing that stakeholders may not need to engage in dialogue with charities and may be using other methods if required. Similarly, the charities rarely instigated a dialogic exchange with stakeholders by posting a direct question requesting a response via a comment or message. The organisations generally adopted a broadcast approach when posting without proactively attempting to generate dialogue. This

was in line with the results of previous studies from Kaplan and Haenlein (2010),

Macnamara (2010a) and Robson and James (2013). However, dialogue was, in

most cases, addressed if a stakeholder instigated it in response to an

organisational post.

The results also suggested that, in terms of dialogic components, stakeholders

required greater transparency from charities to illustrate where donated funds

were being spent and the results of programs being supported by donors and

volunteers. However, this was not being addressed by the majority of the

organisations. The deficiency in transparency may have influenced stakeholder

trust in the organisations, resulting in a lack of dialogue taking place. As Kent and

Taylor (2002) and Taylor and Kent (2014) theorised, dialogue was inadequately

supported without all of the dialogic components (commitment, mutuality, risk,

propinquity and transparency) in place. Using social media to transparently show

the work of donors and volunteers may help charities to fulfil organisational

motivations for using the medium and generate stakeholder discussion. Yet the

results propose that charities would be better placed concentrating their efforts on

producing shareable content, as stakeholders were more receptive to this activity

than engaging in dialogue with charities via social media. While sharing content

does not constitute dialogue, it can be defined as a form of interaction. Leveraging

an interactive process stakeholders find more acceptable could possibly

strengthen the stakeholder–organisational relationship to further encourage other

forms of interaction, such as dialogic interactions. A similar result was reported by

Saffer et al. (2013) in relation to social media interactivity positively influencing

stakeholder perceptions of its relationship to an organisation. Social media

interactivity does not always have to involve the process of dialogue, despite a

strong focus in the literature on the functionality of social media for facilitating two-way communication (Grunig, 2009; Solis, 2007).

Grunig (2009) wrote that two-way symmetrical communication using social media has not yet been realised between public relations practitioners and stakeholders. This may be due to lack of interest by stakeholders and organisations in achieving the idealised pinnacle of social media interaction. Rather than public relations practitioners being fearful of a perceived loss of control from the dialogic nature of social media as described by Bernoff and Li (2008) and Grunig (2009) – although still existing in some cases, as detailed by the supervisor from Organisation E in relation to interstate counterparts – the results suggested that public relations practitioners from not-for-profit organisations used social media for dialogue only when stakeholders expected or required it. Therefore, the charities may be focusing purely on fulfilling stakeholder expectations of a dialogic exchange when a request arises, rather than actively retreating from the prospect of dialogic interaction. If stakeholders do not require dialogue to take place, charities do not try to impose it. Social media was approached as an additional method for stakeholder enquiry, and dialogic interactions were, in most cases, stakeholder-centric interludes.

This raises a number of questions for public relations social media practice. Firstly, should public relations practitioners in the not-for-profit sector proactively focus their limited resources on attempting to build and strengthen stakeholder relationships through dialogic interaction via social media, or should they continue as they have been: responding to stakeholders if they instigate and expect such interactions? Taylor and Kent (2014, p. 390) advised that the latter cannot be viewed as true examples of dialogue, stating that "[d]ialogue is the product of a

particular type of relational interaction, not just any communicative interaction."

Dialogue needs to be strategic and planned, and organisations must continue

participating in the dialogue even after their needs have been realised (Taylor &

Kent, 2014). Using social media to strengthen stakeholder relationships through

planned and strategic dialogue may result in ongoing support, a key motivation for

its use. But this seems to be a long-term investment and one that may be out of

the reach of many not-for-profit organisations, particularly those with limited

organisational support for such an investment in social media. A longitudinal study

has not yet been undertaken to recommend that ongoing dialogue between

stakeholders and not-for-profit organisations using social media has any influence,

positive or negative, on relationships between them. Therefore, public relations

practitioners from not-for-profit organisations may be justified in not placing greater

emphasis on dialogue when it is not a priority for many stakeholders, it requires

resources to adequately generate conversation and reciprocate when

stakeholders respond, and there is limited evidence to suggest what the benefits

are, if there are any at all.

Yet if stakeholders do not deem dialogue via social media with not-for-profit

organisations to be a priority, it is important for public relations practitioners to

ascertain what – and if – stakeholders are communicating with them using other

methods. This will allow public relations practitioners to better understand their

stakeholders. Such analysis would uncover what communications methods

stakeholders prefer, so that practitioners could develop targeted strategies

accordingly. This analysis would also determine whether any underlying issues

deter stakeholders from engagement, or whether dialogue is absolutely necessary

to guarantee ongoing support. Finally, stakeholders communicated that their main

motivation for following a charity on social media was to display support, not to

engage in dialogue. A greater focus could be placed on leveraging stakeholder altruism via not-for-profits' social media use, rather than concentrating on dialogue generation.

6.1.3.2 Inspiration encourages action from stakeholders

Stakeholders were very clear in the interviews when responding to the question of how they believed the charities could use social media to encourage support: use greater transparency, share stories of positive transformation, and tell the stories of other stakeholders. In short, they were looking for a more personal experience. Stakeholders wished charities would use social media to provide them with evidence of the results of their support. They were seeking proof that their investment of time, money and/or goods had been used appropriately and that it had achieved a positive impact. For new stakeholders, showing the results of support confirmed that the not-for-profit organisation was trustworthy; for existing stakeholders, it validated the decision to provide long-term support. The stakeholder survey also showed that belief that a cause was "good" was the main motivation in giving to the same charity every year for 81% (116) of respondents. Therefore, it is clear that stakeholders required regular reassurance throughout their relationship with a charity and needed to build or reinforce trust in an organisation in order to encourage them and remind them of the value of their continued support.

However, the three-week online content analysis showed that only one of the organisations (Organisation E) was committed to using social media as a platform to show stakeholders the results of their support. The supervisor from Organisation E was also the only person to mention the importance of this

approach in the practitioner interviews. The results from this study suggest that showing the impact of support via social media may be an effective way to inspire stakeholder support; however, it is evidently an area that requires attention by public relations practitioners in the not-for-profit sector.

The stakeholders also advised in their interviews that charities could greatly inspire them by telling stories detailing the positive transformation of their clients as a result of stakeholders' work and support. Stakeholders deemed it to be the method of providing evidence of value of support that would most resonate with them. The stakeholders wanted to see how their donations or volunteerism could transform someone's life for the better: a juxtaposition of before and after. This notion was supported by the three-week content analysis, where stories of positive transformation attracted the greatest positive response (likes, comments, and/or shares) compared with other posts made during the same period. However, measuring the tangible results of such posts was not a priority for the organisations and, as such, solid evidence of their impact cannot be provided.

The appetite for positive personal stories extended to charities' preference to share the experiences of other stakeholders. Stakeholders wanted to learn more about people just like them: other donors, supporters and volunteers. There were four main reasons provided by the stakeholder interviews. Firstly, stakeholders wanted to learn about what their counterparts personally gained through providing support. This was to reconfirm their motivations and to inspire them to continue. Next, reading the stories of other stakeholders created a sense of belonging: of being part of a community of like-minded people connected through their support of the same organisation. Charities were also viewed as showing their appreciation of their stakeholders by sharing their stories on their social media

profiles, which again validated stakeholders' decision to assist them, and helped to strengthen stakeholders' relationship with the organisation. Stakeholders also highlighted that reading the stories of other donors, supporters and volunteers allowed them to learn about what was involved with other opportunities to help, and inspired them to seek additional ways to support the organisation or cause.

The three-week online content analysis showed that Organisation E was the only charity committed to demonstrating transparency by using posts as opportunities to provide evidence of support and to share stories of positive transformation. Treating social media posts as opportunities to display transparency was an approach not taken by the other charities. The other organisations, with the exception of Organisation G, devoted themselves to content relating to their stakeholders: either thanking them for their efforts, or sharing their personal stories. The two types of posts attracting the greatest response in terms of shares, comments and likes were stories about clients who had improved their lives with the support of the charity, and posts about the work of donors and volunteers. The post attracting the greatest response during the data-capture period contained both elements. It was a story about a formerly homeless man who had turned his life around with the assistance of Organisation E and devoted the last 20 years to volunteering to help other people experiencing homelessness. While these are only two examples, the response that each post generated with stakeholders suggests that sharing stories of this type resonates with stakeholders enough to inspire a reaction by many, and it confirms what the stakeholders said in their interviews regarding the types of content that most inspires a response. Further work is needed, though, to determine whether online engagement increases the number or size of donations.

To date, there is a scarcity of research delving into the topic of inspiration via social media, particularly in a not-for-profit context. However, storytelling has been shown to have the potential to increase stakeholder engagement (Boyce, 1996; Gill, 2011; McKee & Fryer, 2003). The stakeholders' need to feel a sense of belonging to a community corresponded directly with research by Choi and Chou (2010) and Sokolowski (1996) that highlighted the positive influence that feeling part of a community had on repeat giving and volunteerism. Furthermore, the increased incidence of sharing stakeholder stories on social networking sites reinforced Hong and Yang's (2011) finding that fostering a strong sense of community increased the likelihood of positive word-of-mouth.

The influence of inspiration on stakeholder motivation directly relates to five components from the theoretical framework: transparency, empathy, mutuality, commitment and trust. In terms of transparency, stakeholders requested that charities should be open and forthcoming in using social media to communicate the results of their support. As a fundamental component of relationship management theory identified by Grunig and Huang (2000), the influence of transparency on organisational trust in the not-for-profit sector has been confirmed in studies by Auger (2010), Ledingham and Brunig (1998) and McAllister and Taylor (2007). It is not surprising that trust would be highlighted as a priority by stakeholders, particularly when charities are under regular scrutiny for misappropriation or mismanagement of funds.

Stakeholders classified stories of positive transformation on social media as a source of inspiration, which corresponds to the dialogic component of empathy. Stakeholders have identified a need to feel empathy with a client who has improved their life after being assisted by a charity and have expressed a

preference to be inspired by an uplifting story rather than charities attempting to prompt empathy through a tragic tale. This also corresponds with previous studies that place empathy as an essential ingredient in community building (Kent & Taylor, 2002; Stark & Kruckeberg, 2001).

The preference for stakeholder stories on the charities' social media profiles relates to the dialogic components of mutuality and commitment. The fact that stakeholders were keen to see stories about their counterparts, coupled with willingness by the charities to post them, constitutes mutuality as defined by Auger (2010) and Kent and Taylor (2002). Posting stories about stakeholders' commitment to the cause or organisation was identified by stakeholders as reconfirming their own commitment and constituted a display of reciprocal commitment on behalf of the charities. According to Kent and Taylor (2002), commitment is a cornerstone of dialogic communication and, in this context, an integral ingredient in the level of trust that a stakeholder places in a not-for-profit organisation.

The demand for stakeholder stories may impact public relations practitioners in the not-for-profit sector in three fundamental ways. Firstly, a new approach may need to be taken in terms of social media content. Stakeholders were very clear in their preference for positive content on their social media newsfeeds and their aversion to negative content. According to this study's results, tactics using tragic images and desperate appeals to invoke stakeholder guilt and prompt support are not welcome on social media. Instead, stakeholders seek to be inspired and uplifted with stories of how their support, and that of others, is having a positive impact. This is where practitioners need to be creative with their content to respond to stakeholder demand. Charity:Water provides half-yearly updates to donors on

what their contribution was used for and how many people it assisted to address the desire from stakeholders about seeing how their support has made a positive difference.

There must be a stronger emphasis on inspiring stakeholders through the art of storytelling. The results demonstrate stakeholders use social media as a source of entertainment and a diversion from their everyday lives. It is essential for public relations practitioners at not-for-profit organisations to appreciate this and craft content around the public's motivations for social media use. The survey and stakeholder interview findings highlighted a preference for video content, a point that should be heeded by not-for-profit organisations given the greater potential of such a medium to engender empathy in viewers. While video content may prove to be more costly, it may also be more likely to resonate with stakeholders and thus be more likely to be shared to reach wider networks of people.

Public relations practitioners do not need to focus all of their content on the plight of their clients or cause. Such an approach can often prove to be problematic when trying to avoid compassion fatigue with stakeholders, and issues relating to ethics and privacy must be considered when sharing clients' stories. Instead, stakeholders want to read about other donors, supporters and volunteers. Telling stakeholders' stories can prove to be an attractive option for practitioners, as it provides a wealth of new sources on which to develop content and can alleviate the sensitivities sometimes associated with telling clients' personal stories. Inviting active donors and volunteers to share their stories is a further endorsement of a not-for-profit organisation if these experiences are positive. Stakeholders are seeking inspiration from charities via social media, and the results indicate the majority of organisations have not yet adopted this approach.

6.1.3.3 Propinquity: social media relationships need offline experiential interactions

The dialogic component of propinquity – in particular, temporal flow – was used to describe the elasticity of a relationship between the online social media environment and offline interactions between stakeholders and not-for-profit organisations. What was apparent from the results, particularly those gathered from the stakeholder interviews and three-week online content analysis, was that when a stakeholder had an existing offline relationship with a charity, they were more likely to be open to continuing that association in an online environment (such as on a social media platform) than a stakeholder without that previous offline connection. This is an important finding for not-for-profit organisations, as it suggests that existing offline relationships can be leveraged and maintained in a social media space, and stakeholder relationships developed via social media should include an offline element to further strengthen the association that a stakeholder has with a not-for-profit organisation. In short, stakeholder relationships with not-for-profit organisations can be stronger when based on propinquity and when they include both online and offline components.

To date, there is a scarcity of research that applies the dialogic component of propinquity to social media in a public relations context. At the time of writing, only one study could be found examining the relationship between social media use and offline stakeholder engagement in a not-for-profit context. Paek et al. (2013) found that during a campaign period, stakeholders who interacted with a not-for-profit organisation online using Facebook, Twitter and/or blogs were more likely to carry out desired behaviours such as communicating about the campaign offline and volunteering. Similarly, Vesnic-Alujevic (2012) found a link between the

Facebook interactions of political party supporters and their attendance at offline events. The only other comparable study found explored the way in which social media can be used as part of experiential marketing (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013). Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013) found that online and offline experiences were an important component in consumer decision-making. Creating positive online and offline experiences may result in stronger stakeholder relationships with charities and, in turn, increased (or at least continuing) support.

Specific results from each of the research methods employed in the current study supported the importance of propinquity to stakeholder relationships involving social media. The stakeholder interviews showed that the majority of participants had an existing offline relationship with a charity before following it on social media. While most used it as another way to display their support for the cause or the organisation, the connection via social media was also used to continue their link with the organisation until the next offline interaction. Volunteers would keep up-to-date with relevant local information, such as rosters, until the next time they were due to assist at the charity. The concept of propinquity was also highlighted in the interviews when stakeholders were asked how charities could increase support. Some participants stated their preference for an offline event, such as a tour of a soup kitchen – a connection that could then be leveraged using social media. However, ethical implications and privacy issues need to be carefully considered when organising an event of this nature to ensure that the clients of charities are not exploited for a fundraising opportunity.

The survey showed that 53% (93) of respondents had participated in some form of offline activity with a charity, such as volunteering or participating in an event, after reading about it on social media. This suggests a willingness on behalf of

stakeholders to move between online and offline environments in their interactions with not-for-profit organisations. The results from the three-week online content analysis illustrated that propinquity was the dialogic component with the second-highest frequency (99 instances), also proposing that an openness to engage with stakeholders between social media and offline contexts was reciprocated by the charities. This sentiment was reinforced by the interviews with public relations practitioners, with some explaining how social media was used to promote offline events and volunteering opportunities. Yet the effectiveness of the use of social media was not measured by the practitioners. The results emphasised that social media should not be used in isolation in terms of stakeholder relationship management. Instead, it should bridge the gap for stakeholders between offline interactions with charities. The data suggested that a proportion of stakeholders are open to spreading their relationship with a charity between online and offline contexts and that these not-for-profit organisations are focusing their efforts on providing such opportunities.

Kent and Taylor (2002) highlighted the three prominent characteristics of propinquity: immediacy of presence, temporal flow, and engagement. Applying these features to this finding, it is clear that while all three characteristics could be facilitated by social media, the charities relied on some more than others when drawing on propinquity to interact with stakeholders. Social media can facilitate real-time discussion on topics between stakeholders and charities in which organisations can use social media to appeal for an offline response, such as volunteers or donations. However, this technique was rarely used and did not seem to be a main focus for the organisations. It was also rarely used by stakeholders. The results propose that both parties appear to benefit from the propinquital element of temporal flow in their social media interactions. There was

an understanding of the history of the relationship, where the stakeholders

interviewed had an existing offline relationship with the charity; a commitment to

building the present condition, where all were happy to offer support and respond

via social media when addressed; and an enthusiasm by both sides to consider

the relationship's future well-being through interactions in both online and offline

environments. These propinquital elements are echoed by Taylor and Kent (2014,

p. 390), who stated that "dialogue is only possible when people spend time

together interacting, understanding the rules of interaction, trusting the other

person/people involved in an interaction." The stakeholders and the charities

engaged – and displayed a willingness to engage – in both online and offline

environments rather than focusing on one setting. The fact that immediacy of

presence is not as strong as the other components supports the finding that

suggested two-way communication via social media was not a strong motivator for

its use by both stakeholders and charities.

6.1.3.4 Social and traditional media integration is currently an ad hoc practice and a neglected opportunity

The results from the practitioner interviews suggest that, in most cases, not-for-

profit organisations are taking a limited approach to integrating their social media

and traditional media activities. While the most common forms of social and

traditional media integration were in the form of sharing links, online news articles

from traditional media outlets and YouTube videos, the overall attitude from

practitioners was that integrating social and traditional media was not top-of-mind

when developing social media content; instead, it was generally articulated as an

afterthought. Failing to proactively integrate social and traditional media efforts

where appropriate could impede not-for-profit organisations from engaging with wider audiences of current and prospective stakeholders.

While the frequency of integration was greater for organisations E and F, all of the organisations seemed to take a relatively ad hoc approach to this practice. When questioned about this, many of the practitioners admitted that taking an integrated approach was not really considered before posting social media content, or was avoided due to lack of resources or concern that such an approach would confuse messages for stakeholders. The practitioners from organisations B, F and G attempted to be more proactive in integrating social and traditional media by having regular meetings with different areas within the organisation that were responsible for each communication channel; but in many cases, meetings were not always the answer. The fact that Organisation E had two separate teams in two different geographical locations meant that often communication was not forthcoming and opportunities for integration were missed.

The rapid pace of social media was identified as a factor underpinning this ad hoc approach to integration. When the public relations practitioners were required to post social media content quickly, their focus remained on that particular task, instead of how that content could be adapted and disseminated across the range of communications channels available. None of the practitioners advised that there was a process in place to guide and support them in proactively integrating social and traditional media content. Therefore, the non-strategic approach to integration seemed to stem from a lack of vision, limited resources and deficiencies of communication management. Such a finding suggests a distinct need for an integrated social media communication model to assist not-for-profit organisations in leveraging the greatest impact from their social and traditional media efforts.

Improving the way social and traditional media integrate in the not-for-profit sector should be a priority for public relations practitioners, but the results indicate that it currently is not. Integration improves opportunities for public relations practitioners to leverage existing media appearances and content to potentially increase exposure across a range of platforms and devices. The lack of integration is in direct opposition to the media consumption habits of stakeholders. The survey results indicated that the majority of stakeholders were reluctant to engage with charities using social media. Results from the same survey also showed that stakeholders are most informed by charities via a combination of traditional and digital media, including social media. With technology evolving rapidly, it will become integral (and expected) for public relations practitioners to be adept in communicating using the range of social and traditional media tools available. By mastering social media and traditional communication as part of their usual practice, public relations practitioners at not-for-profit organisations will be able to leverage free and paid social and traditional media in order to generate awareness, engagement and relationship-management opportunities with stakeholders.

i.   Integrated Social Media Communication Model for the Not-For-Profit Sector

The benefits of strategic integration underpinned the development of Hallahan's (2001, 2010) Integrated Public Relations Media Model (see Figure 2). While interactive media such as social media were included, the complexity of social media technology in terms of its uses and functionality was not addressed. Figure 30 denotes the first stage in the development of an integrated social media communication model for the not-for-profit sector and a potential extension of

Hallahan's (2001, 2010) model. It is a simplification that requires greater investigation, but it attempts to illustrate communication flow related to a not-for-profit organisation (internally, externally and between environments); show the potential for integration between social media, other online channels and traditional media; and suggest how the dialogic components may be achieved throughout these processes. On a macro level, the model aims to convey how these elements (communication flow, integration and the dialogic components) could work together in a functional way to maintain and strengthen relationships between not-for-profit organisations and their stakeholders.
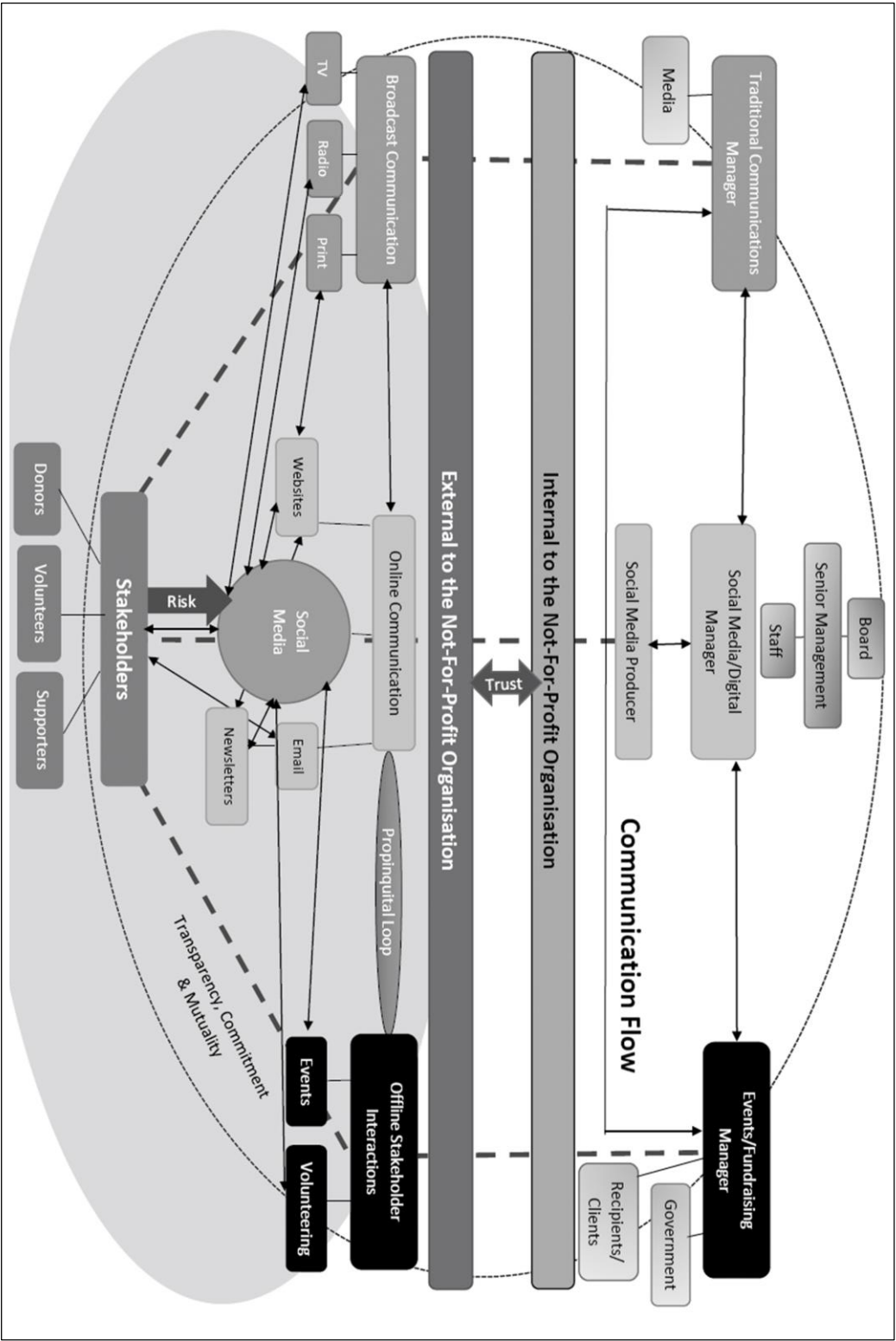
Figure 30. Integrated social media communication model for the not-for-profit-sector.

The top section of the model (Figure 30) represents the communication dynamics

at play within a not-for-profit organisation. At the top of the diagram sit three types

of internal stakeholders: the board, senior management and staff. The

stakeholders investigated as part of this study are denoted by a solid rectangle,

and the translucent blocks signify stakeholders who require further research

(media, government, recipients/clients). The traditional communications manager

is located at the top left-hand corner of the model. All references to traditional

communication are represented in the same shade of grey and are on the left of

the model. The media is linked directly to the traditional communications manager

as a stakeholder. In the top middle section of the model is the social media or

digital communications manager, also known as the supervisor in this study, and

linked directly to the social media producer. Please note that all references to

online communication are located in the centre of the model.

To the top right of the model sit the events and/or fundraising manager, with

government and recipients or clients of the not-for-profit as relevant stakeholders.

Similarly, all references to offline stakeholder interactions are coloured black. It

must be noted that not all not-for-profit organisations are structured in this way;

roles and responsibilities often overlap. This model proposes a structure in the

most uncomplicated and idealised form. It is recommended that there is a direct

flow of communication from the board to senior management and to staff,

including the traditional communications manager, social media/digital manager

and events/fundraising manager. Next, as suggested in this research, a regular

flow of communication must occur between the traditional communications

manager, the social media/digital manager, and the events/fundraising manager

for integrated social media communication to occur. This research showed that

opportunities for integration were often missed due to a lack of communication between the staff members responsible for each organisational area. This model proposes that by maintaining a steady communication flow, each of the managers will know about opportunities ahead of time, leading to a greater possibility for integration to be achieved across the various communications channels that they oversee.

The bottom section of the model represents the elements at play that are external to the not-for-profit organisation. To the left is broadcast communication. This represents communication delivered by traditional media outlets such as television, radio and print media, including online newspapers; it also includes predominantly uncontrolled communications channels. Next to broadcast media is online communication. Social media features prominently in this category, as it is a major focus of the model. Websites, email and email newsletters are also represented. On the far right sits offline stakeholder interactions. Linked under the broader category are events and volunteering as examples of the types of in-person, experiential interludes stakeholders can have with a not-for-profit organisation; there are bound to be many more, but these need to be identified through more extensive research. The black arrows symbolise potential communication flow between the three main types (broadcast, online and offline stakeholder interactions) and their subsets.

It is advised that television and radio content can be integrated with social media. For example, a clip from a television or radio program that is available online can be linked via social media. Social media content regularly becomes a topic for discussion on traditional media outlets such as television, radio and the print media. Print media is often represented online through the websites of media

outlets, which can then be linked to social media platforms, a common technique identified in this study. This is also the case for other websites, including a not-for-profit organisation's own website and those of its partners. Social media can also be integrated with websites if links to an organisation's social media profiles or newsfeeds of its content are visible to website visitors. The situation is similar with email, where an email address can feature on a social media profile as a contact for further information or links to social media profiles appear in email signatures. Yet there is a greater opportunity for integration between social media and newsletters. This was apparent in the findings, which showed that Organisation D integrated content between these two channels by tweaking it to suit each medium, or uploading online newsletter stories to its website and using the same links in the email newsletter and on its social media channels. Organisation D also used online newsletters to encourage stakeholders to engage via social media. The communication flow also extends to events and volunteering, whereby such opportunities for offline engagement can be promoted via social media and stakeholders can be encouraged, in person, to continue their engagement with the organisation via social media until their next offline interaction.

Stakeholders as a general group are positioned at the bottom of the diagram, and are linked to the subgroups of donors, volunteers and supporters. The two-way arrow between stakeholders and email and social media components represents the ability for two-way communication to take place between stakeholders and the not-for-profit organisation. The thickly dashed lines running from the three managers to the three communications types and on to the stakeholders signify the managers' involvement in content, communication or experiences to which the stakeholder may potentially be exposed.

In terms of the dialogic components, as has been apparent in this study moving stakeholders between online and offline environments increases the possibility of creating a propinquital loop. Drawing on propinquity in such a way may strengthen a stakeholder's relationship with a not-for-profit organisation by improving the relationship's elasticity as it moves through the two different spaces. As such, a propinquital loop is represented in this model by linking the components of online communication and offline stakeholder interactions. In the stakeholder interviews, some respondents said that empathy can be evoked within them through traditional communication channels (particularly television), online communication (most specifically through the use of video) and in person at charity events or when volunteering. Empathy in this model is represented by a grey sphere, and encapsulates all of the communications channels. This suggests to public relations practitioners in the not-for-profit sector the breadth of opportunities available to create or influence content with the potential to resonate with stakeholders on an emotional level using the range of communication channels available. The arrow pointing from stakeholders to social media signifies the potential risk that social media poses to the reputation of a not-for-profit organisation when stakeholders can communicate freely in a public online forum, as Organisation E experienced throughout the three-week online content analysis. The thin dotted line proposes that transparency, commitment and mutuality are dialogic components that must be inherent within a not-for-profit organisation and lived as part of its culture, beginning at the board level. It is recommended that when an organisation is genuinely guided by these principles, the principles will eventually become intrinsic to the organisation's communication and offline interactions with stakeholders. Ultimately, communication guided by these principles will provide stakeholders with the experiences that they identified as most preferable throughout this

research: seeing the results of support, feeling that the organisation values and acknowledges their support and that of others, and feeling part of a community committed to the same cause. It must be noted that trust must first exist to provide the foundation for the advised communication flow to occur. A lack of trust would impede the movement of communication between the not-for-profit organisation, stakeholders and integrated channels. However, the model also hypothesises that with communication flowing as recommended, the social media integration techniques being applied and the dialogic components understood and enacted, the eventual result will be increased trust. It is advised that trust within the internal not-for-profit organisational environment (and how trusted the organisation is by its external stakeholders) will be facilitated through its communication channels and offline stakeholder interactions.

With technology moving so rapidly, both Figure 30 and Hallahan's (2001, 2010) model need to be regularly reviewed to ensure they meet the demands of public relations practitioners and their responsibilities. An important – though unsurprising – factor to note was that none of the public relations practitioners interviewed in this study referred to Hallahan's (2001, 2010) model when the topic of integration was discussed. This implies that even with a model available, public relations practitioners have not been exposed to this tool or have opted not to adopt it to support and inform their practice While all the public relations practitioners struggled with integrating social and traditional media efforts, this suggests an integrated social media communication model might help guide their practice – particularly in the not-for-profit sector, where the operational environment differs greatly from the public or private sectors. Yet encouraging the adoption of such a tool in reality is definitely another hurdle that will need to be overcome if the practical use of Hallahan's (2001) model is any indication.

Therefore, when developing such a tool, TAM (Davis, 1989) should be taken into account when considering what model public relations practitioners in the not-for-profit sector should adopt; the model chosen must be simple to implement and useful. The IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum (IAP2 International Federation, 2014) may also be a helpful resource to consider when attempting to streamline Hallahan's (2001) model and incorporate social media in order to develop a framework of greater workability for the not-for-profit sector. The spectrum uses the following five pillars: "inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower", which may prove invaluable both when developing the tool for and encouraging its adoption by public relations practitioners representing not-for-profit organisations. The spectrum is also highly recognised in the not-for-profit sector for community engagement. The aim of further developing this model to guide integrated social media communication is to increase the potential that it will be widely used among social media managers from not-for-profit organisations. While such a model may contribute to this area of scholarship, its benefits must be communicated to practitioners in an effective way to encourage its incorporation into everyday public relations practice. Involving practitioners in the development process may assist in generating buy-in.

6.1.4 Conclusion

This section discussed the five main findings from this research as they related to internal organisational operations and external stakeholder relationship management. The discussion addressed the overall goal of this research. Three of the findings (social and traditional media integration is currently an ad hoc practice and a neglected opportunity, inspiration encourages action from stakeholders, and propinquity: social media relationships need offline experiential interactions)

discussed the gaps, apparent in the results, between what stakeholders and

charitable organisations expect from each other in relation to social media. The

findings that social media adoption does not equal organisational acceptance and

dialogue between not-for-profit organisations and stakeholders is not the main

motivation for social media use highlighted deficiencies that could be impeding

social media practice by public relation professionals in not-for-profit organisations.

6.2 Recommendations

Four key themes emerged when considering the practical implications of this research in relation to the use of social media for stakeholder communication and engagement by not-for-profit organisations. The level of social media competency possessed by the not-for-profit organisations in this study seemed to be tied to the following concepts: the organisation itself, dialogue, relationships, and content. This section will explore each of these four themes in detail and provide recommendations based on the research findings in relation to each.

6.2.1 Evidence-based social media use to increase organisational acceptance

The results of this study suggested that structures and policies within the organisation are critical antecedent factors that can impede the use of social media as a relationship management tool. In particular, a lack of support and/or understanding from senior management about social media can hamper its use when attempting to employ the technology as a tool for stakeholder communication. Increasing senior management support has the potential to be achieved through education by public relations practitioners regarding the importance and benefits of using social media to build relationships and engage with stakeholders. To achieve this, public relations practitioners must appeal to what senior management rates most highly: results, or proof of return on investment.

This in itself presents a challenge. It is difficult for charities to achieve results using social media without the resources to support their efforts. It is also challenging to

communicate results to senior management when current social media activities are not assessed. For public relations practitioners to present a case to senior management for increased social media resources, it is essential that they provide evidence. This could be achieved through several methods. Improving social media metrics within the organisation is one recommendation. Leveraging the success of other not-for-profit organisations by including successful case studies could also assist, and would show the returns that can be achieved through social media when ample resources support its facilitation. Stakeholders suggested that they wanted to see results of investment from charities on social media, and public relations professionals should approach senior management in the same way. If using social media is relevant to an organisation its value of social media must be validated for senior management before the likelihood of an increase in resource allocation may be achieved. It is largely the responsibility of the public relations practitioners in charge of social media within their organisations to develop and implement an achievable strategy. With improved measurement and greater support from senior management, not-for-profit organisations may be provided with a stronger foundation on which to base their social media activities, and in turn improve stakeholder communication.

Improved measurement of current social media activities could include the most commonly used metrics such as "likes" and "shares", using free tools such as Facebook "Insights" (Facebook, 2015) or Hootsuite (Hootsuite, 2015), but should also attempt to track conversion rates or propinquital elements. For example, when an offline event is promoted on social media, how many people who attended the event chose to do so after being influenced by that social media content? Other metrics that may also be helpful include a rate of conversion, measuring how social media interactions convert into tangible outcomes such as

donations, the number of people who saw the post and did not attend the event, and how stakeholders viewed the original post (on the charity's page, on their newsfeed, shared by a friend). At present, such metrics are not being used by the charities in this study.

Furthermore, increasing the number of staff allocated to manage social media at not-for-profit organisations may have a dramatically positive effect on success in using the technology to communicate with stakeholders. Organisations E and F in this study had staff allocated solely to the management of their organisations' social media activities, resulting in more social media channels being used, more content being generated and uploaded, increased stakeholder engagement, faster response times to stakeholder queries, and better integration with traditional media. At the other organisations, public relations professionals managed social media in addition to a range of other competing tasks and therefore missed opportunities to improve social media communication with stakeholders.

An increase in staffing dedicated to social media would not improve communication unless the public relations professionals responsible for its use were adequately trained upon commencing employment and received ongoing training. Only two of the interviewees, one from Organisation E and one from Organisation F, had received any formal social media training. The remaining interviewees used the knowledge gained through their personal use of the technology to represent their organisation on its social media channels. This approach may have provided limited knowledge from a very narrow perspective. Using social media to represent an organisation and engage with its stakeholders is very different from personal use. With social media technology evolving so rapidly, none of the interviewees mentioned an ongoing training strategy for staff

to ensure that their knowledge remained as current as possible. Training a greater number of staff on organisational use of social media for stakeholder engagement and communication may also assist in addressing the staffing issue. This is a strategy used by Organisation B to share the social media load across the organisation; yet its strategy also raises challenges in terms of organisational voice and content consistency. Organisations E and F's social media presence performed at a much higher level than the other organisations, and while it may be because they had dedicated staff members, the level of expertise gained through formal training may have also played a part in this success. Increased and ongoing staff training may directly improve social media stakeholder communication. Alternatively, mentoring and reverse mentoring may also assist in improving the social media expertise of public relations practitioners at not-for-profit organisations.

Mentoring from social media specialists from public relations agencies or other organisations in the public and private sectors may be highly beneficial for practitioners in the not-for-profit sector. Rather than offering to perform pro bono social media work, the specialists could provide mentorship over an extended period to share their knowledge and skills in order to improve the currency of those possessed by the not-for-profit sector practitioner. Reverse mentoring could also provide additional assistance for public relations practitioners in contemporising their social media skills, whereby skills and knowledge could be leveraged from university student interns undertaking relevant social media pedagogy as part of their degree programs.

Additionally, improvements in social media governance and approval processes will have a positive impact on the organisations' social media performance. As the

findings show, social media policy is extremely problematic, with the main

deficiencies described as being non-existent, outdated or unenforceable policies.

While Organisation E had the most innovative example of a social media policy,

senior management did not enforce the policy when breaches occurred, rendering

it ineffective. Support from senior management is integral for a workable policy to

be developed, implemented and upheld to assist with stakeholder communication.

In addition, such support must extend to an improvement in response times within

the organisations themselves, particularly by senior management. Most of the

interviews with public relations professionals mentioned that senior management

did not completely understand the timeliness required for social media

communication specifically relating to sensitive issues raised by stakeholders. This

is symptomatic of the lack of knowledge on behalf of senior management about

social media: both as to what is involved in, and the benefits of, effective

communication with stakeholders.

Overall, if social media is a viable option for their specific organisation, public

relations professionals at not-for-profit organisations must focus on improving

senior management's understanding and support of all aspects relating to social

media stakeholder communication and engagement. The aim of increasing

support is to improve resource allocation in terms of staffing and training, policies

and processes that will assist in improving social media stakeholder

communication.

6.2.2 Embracing dialogic communication with internal and external stakeholders

When considering the research findings, three main recommendations are apparent that related to dialogic communication. Dialogic communication on an organisation's social media profile (between an organisation and stakeholders and between the stakeholders themselves) is largely self-perpetuating in terms of organisational involvement. Based on the results of this study, the instance of dialogic communication is greater when an organisation encourages it and participates in such exchanges. Organisation E's social media profiles, particularly Facebook, attracted dialogic communication at a greater rate than the other charities. The organisation's size and profile definitely had an influence over this. However, the content that it posted, its participation in discussion and the fact that it allowed stakeholders open access to post their opinions, even on matters that were potentially damaging to its reputation, also played an integral role. By embracing and encouraging dialogic exchange with its stakeholders, Organisation E provided the most conducive environment for it to flourish. On the opposite end of the scale, Organisation G did not encourage dialogic exchange in any fashion and thus did not provide any impetus for it to occur. Social media can indeed be used to effectively communicate with stakeholders only if the resources are in place to support and facilitate such dialogue.

i.   Real-time and stakeholder expectations

Stakeholders expected a response in the form of a comment or a message from the charities when they posed direct questions to the organisations on their social media profiles. The real-time nature of social media directly influences stakeholder

expectations in terms of organisational response. If a stakeholder poses a question on an organisational social media profile, they expect a timely response from that organisation. To improve stakeholder communication using social media, not-for-profit organisations must be aware of and address these expectations within the capabilities that their resources allow. This can be facilitated using a number of strategies. Organisation E aimed to respond to stakeholder questions within 24 hours and complex issues within 48 hours, although it was not always achieved. Alternatively, Organisation G included in its Facebook information section the hours that its profile would be monitored in an attempt to manage stakeholder expectations regarding its response times to their posts and questions. While both approached stakeholder communication differently, there was no organisational or stakeholder activity recorded across any of Organisation G's social media profiles during the three-week data-capture period apart from page likes on Facebook. It seems that being responsive to stakeholder questions encourages further stakeholder interaction, and not-for-profit organisations need to have the correct structures in place to attend to stakeholder queries in order to further improve and strengthen this form of communication via social media.

ii.   Openly addressing stakeholder negativity

Another aspect of dialogue that presented itself on Organisation E's Facebook profile was the way in which negative stakeholder posts were addressed. Luoma-aho (2015, p. 12) referred to negatively engaged stakeholders as "hateholders" who hate or dislike the brand and purposively attempt to damage it. At times Organisation E was either negligently or discerningly unresponsive, an approach to "hateholders" that Luoma-aho (2015) did not support; instead, Luoma-aho

suggested that "hateholders" should be actively engaged by public relations practitioners and viewed as an opportunity to convert a negative interaction into a positive experience for both parties.

Yet when Organisation E responded to a post that attacked its reputation, it seemed to utilise the mixed-motive model of communication (Murphy, 1991). This was achieved by first acknowledging the stakeholder's opposing view or complaint, and then providing further information related to the organisation's position on the issue, either through offering to further investigate the issue and responding later, or by providing a link to a webpage containing a more in-depth statement addressing the issue. These types of interactions were played out transparently, in full view of stakeholders visiting the profile, and were only encouraged to be moved into a more private or one-to-one environment (e.g. personal message, email or phone call) if the discussion contained or would involve the sharing of personal contact information. Addressing stakeholder communication in such a transparent and open way, even when it had the potential to damage organisational reputation, was an obvious example of a not-for-profit organisation encouraging and facilitating effective stakeholder communication using social media technology. However, not all opportunities were undertaken, and may be even more prevalent in organisations where resources are limited and response times are hampered by lack of senior management support.

6.2.3 Using social media to improve stakeholder relationship management

Two elements were most apparent from the findings in this study directly related to relationships and their influence on effective stakeholder communication via social media: the importance of propinquity and the fact that the not-for-profit organisation–stakeholder relationship is still being redefined in a social media environment.

i.   Creating a propinquital loop between online and offline experiences

The organisations that took a propinquital approach to using social media to engage with stakeholders seemed to achieve greater rates of stakeholder interaction than the organisations that did not. The stakeholder interview and survey data confirmed a preference to engage with charities on social media as an extension of an existing relationship. Rather than focusing on social media in isolation, not-for-profit organisations need to approach it as a bridge that maintains and strengthens relationships between online and offline experiences. This can be achieved through using such strategies as the inclusion of offline content, such as photos taken at events where stakeholders can tag themselves; promotion of offline activities; sharing news relevant to volunteers; or illustrating the offline results of a call-to-action via social media. An example of this could be requesting a donation of goods and subsequently posting a photo to show how the donated goods assisted someone in need, including a thank-you note to the donors. By moving between online and offline spaces, the charity–stakeholder relationship can be strengthened and communication improved for a number of reasons. As

the survey and stakeholder interview data revealed, social media users are more likely to follow a not-for-profit organisation on social media if they already have an existing connection to the organisation.

This suggests the group is most likely to pay some attention to attempts made by relevant not-for-profit organisations attempting to engage with them on social media. Then, by leveraging this connection to encourage offline engagement and posting examples of engagement on social media profiles, the potential exists to create a sense of community, involvement and participation through celebrating and nurturing the relationship in both online and offline environments. Using a propinquital approach may also increase the likelihood that stakeholders will share such content within their own networks as it is directly relevant to them, thereby increasing the prospect that the not-for-profit organisation will increase its overall reach. Overall, not-for-profit organisations must not forget the power of face-to-face communication and should use social media to maintain and strengthen relationships (or cultivate new ones) that can be further developed through offline interactions with their brand. The research findings propose propinquity to be a vital part of effective social media stakeholder communication.

The positive effects of a propinquital approach to the use of social media by not-for-profit organisations are evident in successful campaigns such as the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge. This campaign strategically moved between online and offline environments and leveraged donors' own networks to raise millions for the cause. It involved a donor pledging an amount, nominating the participation of someone from their social network, then videoing themselves dumping an ice bucket filled with water on their head. The video was uploaded to social media with the nominated person tagged in the post. This campaign worked, as it allowed the

offline to move online and back again. It leveraged social connectedness and a need by stakeholders to feel included in a larger experience to successfully fundraise. It also harnessed the power of video to encourage participation and, above all, such participation was accessible to anyone with a smart phone and access to the internet. This suggests that a propinquital approach to social media has a greater likelihood of being successful when not-for-profit organisations provide a simple and accessible way for stakeholders to move between online and offline environments, along with a motivation for doing so.

The importance of taking a propinquital approach to social media has three main implications for public relations practitioners working in the not-for-profit sector. Initially, it proposes that public relations practitioners need to focus on the overall stakeholder experience, both on- and off-line, as a holistic entity rather than two isolated interactions. The research implies that while focus must be placed on optimising both online and offline experiences for stakeholders, emphasis must also be directed to how online interactions can be converted into offline experiences and vice versa. Encouraging stakeholders and providing accessible conditions for them to move their interactions between the differing environments increases the likelihood that relationships may be strengthened to encourage ongoing support: a key motivation for social media use by not-for-profits.

To achieve propinquity, it is important for public relations practitioners at charities to be strategic when developing social media content in order to consider how each post can be crafted to encourage offline interaction. Effort should be placed on bringing the online offline and vice versa to reinforce stakeholder relationships through informing and encouraging a feeling of belonging to a wider community connected with the organisation. In both instances, public relations practitioners

need to focus on maintaining the momentum of interactions. An event could be advertised using social media; photos could be taken at the event, which could then be shared online with attendees tagged (with their permission) and encouraged to comment about it. This would create a propinquital loop, whereby stakeholders may feel a greater connection to the organisation by interacting with it on- and offline. The activity may also support appreciation and endorsement from the charity in relation to the stakeholders by including them in their highlights from the event. While this is definitely an area for further research, the results in this study suggest that paying greater attention to propinquity may aid not-for-profit organisations in strengthening their relationships with stakeholders.

ii.   Organisational–stakeholder relationship redefinition

The lack of stakeholder interaction and dialogue with the content posted by the majority of organisations in this study suggests that the relationship between not-for-profit organisations and stakeholders is still being defined. The survey results also highlighted a relationship redefinition, with the majority of respondents answering that they do not use social media to connect with charities. The research proposes that stakeholders viewed their social media feeds as sacred personal spaces used for communicating with family and friends: sites to escape and be entertained. This implies that not-for-profit organisations need to focus on recreating their relationships with stakeholders in the space in order for them to be able to earn their place and be accepted by the people with whom they are trying to communicate and interact. Public relations practitioners at not-for-profit organisations must be cautious not to be perceived as invading this personal space; a sensitive strategy is required. The stakeholder interview data also

illustrated that participants were very discerning about the charities that they

followed on social media, with most connecting with no more than three. It also

suggests that not-for-profit organisations have a challenge ahead to ingratiate

themselves enough with stakeholders to be one of the chosen charities allowed to

grace their sacred social media space and then to ensure that their activities do

not irritate stakeholders enough for them to be ejected.

This may be achieved by public relations practitioners from not-for-profit

organisations changing their approach to social media from using it as a free

broadcast tool to employing it for more targeted communication, particularly with

existing stakeholders. It may be beneficial for not-for-profit organisations to

consider the Pareto principle (Pareto, 1896), which suggested that 20% of loyal

customers generate 80% of the profit for an organisation. If applied to existing

stakeholders, public relations practitioners should aim to position their not-for-profit

organisation's brand as top-of-mind in a social media context through the

implementation of a long-term relationship management strategy.

Not-for-profit organisations must approach stakeholder communication using

social media with a strategy, but one that can evolve along with the technology.

They must also ensure that their expectations are in line with those of their

stakeholders. As will be discussed, content and the frequency with which it is

presented all play an integral role in effective stakeholder communication on social

media. This also relates to the way in which dialogic exchanges occur. Most of the

interviewees from the organisations in this study admitted that they are still

learning and finding their way in terms of representing their organisation on social

media, and so too must stakeholders. A similar paradigm shift occurred when

websites became vital communication tools and online giving was presented as an

option for stakeholders. As the survey findings indicated, these are now tools

positioned by stakeholders as those most informing them and most encouraging

them to give. Such acceptance has grown alongside the overall acceptance of

technology, and not-for-profit organisations have worked extremely hard to assist

with the process. This focus must now also include social media communication in

terms of increasing knowledge through training and experience, and learning from

success – both their own and that of others– to hone and improve social media

activities and stakeholder interactions. This is fundamental for effective

stakeholder communication using social media technology.

6.2.4 Content creation recommendations for greater stakeholder response

The findings from this research have confirmed that social media content plays a

key role in effective stakeholder communication and that integration of social and

traditional media content is a sporadic undertaking by the charities. When

interpreting the content analysis data and the data from the stakeholder interviews

and surveys, very clear concepts were apparent in relation to the type of social

media content that generates the greatest response.

i.   The impact of visual content on stakeholders

Video and images seem to have the greatest impact on stakeholders. This can

also be confirmed by the survey data, which places YouTube as the second-most -

visited social media platform (50%, 86), and television as the communication

channel having the second-greatest influence over informing stakeholders (21%,

34) and reminding them to give (15%, 25), and the third-greatest influence in

encouraging giving (17%, 28). The results from the content analysis also

supported the preference of stakeholders for visual content such as images and

video, whereby posts using images and video attracted the greatest stakeholder

response.

Furthermore, the organisations' YouTube views all continued to increase steadily

throughout the data-capture period, as stakeholder appetite for video content was

evident. As such, the use of video and images is highly recommended for not-for-

profit organisations to attract stakeholder attention and increase the likelihood of

stakeholders sharing them with their own networks above a purely text-based

post. This increases opportunities for not-for-profit organisations to distribute their

messages and engage with a greater number of people. Limited resources seem

to be the main barrier preventing not-for-profit organisations from producing

greater volumes of video content. Acquiring the resources necessary to generate

video content is reliant on the overall decisions and understanding of senior

management on the benefits of engaging with stakeholders in this particular way.

ii.   The four content categories that most resonate with stakeholders

The content analysis and interviews suggest that stakeholders are most attracted

to content that falls into four main categories: stories of transformational change,

content showing the results of donations, stories about and thanking donors and

volunteers, and an approach where the not-for-profit organisations do not

continually seek support. Organisation E had great examples of such stories.

However, the results indicated that sharing stories of transformational change,

thanking donors and volunteers and sharing their stories or the results of

donations through social media content did not seem to be a high priority for the

majority of organisations in this study. Organisation E incorporated each element

into its content more frequently than any other organisation and generated greater

levels of stakeholder interaction, engagement and dialogic episodes than the

others; however, it also had the largest social media following. Organisations D

and A displayed some capacity for the incorporation of these stakeholder-

preferred elements into their content, but stakeholder response (likes, shares,

comments, retweets) was much lower than for Organisation E. Based on these

findings, it is recommended that not-for-profit organisations consider including

these elements in their social media content to meet stakeholder demand.

Furthermore, these findings also advocate embedding these principles into the

production of compelling video content to achieve maximum impact with

stakeholders.

iii.   The three benefits of social and traditional media integration for
not-for-profit organisations

The results illustrated that the charities did not have a clear process or strategy in

place to better integrate their social and traditional media efforts, yet the public

relations practitioners all possessed a desire to improve in this area. Not-for-profit

organisations that do not take an integrated approach to their social and traditional

media activities are not taking advantage of three main benefits that such a

method provides: repurposing existing content, reaching wider networks of current

and prospective stakeholders, and improving consistency across communications

channels. Not-for-profit organisations traditionally must work with reduced

budgets. Taking an integrated approach does not have to involve organisations

creating new content for each communication channel and may provide an opportunity to lower costs. Instead, core content can be refashioned and tweaked to suit the characteristics of the channel being used. This will benefit not-for-profit organisations, as it will enable much greater mileage from the same content than if it was used for only social or traditional platforms in isolation.

Wider networks of people have a greater possibility of being reached by taking an integrated approach, an outcome that corresponds to a motive for social media use highlighted in the practitioner interviews. Different stakeholders consume a range of media, both traditional and social. Restricting content to one or the other limits the number of people with whom not-for-profit organisations can engage and communicate. There exists a greater likelihood that stakeholders are consuming media from multiple sources and devices simultaneously (for example, using social media on a tablet device while watching television), and integrating content will increase the opportunities for not-for-profit organisations to reach stakeholders through a variety of touch points. Integrating content across traditional and social platforms may improve the probability that stakeholders will be exposed to consistent, clear and identifiable messages and approaches to engage with them from not-for-profit organisations, instead of ad hoc attempts.

Figure 31 provides an extension of the Integrated Social Media Communication Model for the Not-For-Profit Sector (Figure 30) and the IPA2 Public Participation Spectrum (IAP2 International Federation, 2014). The IAP2's Spectrum is widely used within the not-for-profit sector. The suggested spectrum is for the use of social and traditional media for communication practitioners in this sector to follow and recommends a strategic approach to address the current sporadic nature of

social and traditional media integration experienced by the charities' public

relations practitioners.

	Increasing long-term stakeholder relationship building					
Motives for using social media	**To reach new networks of current and prospective stakeholders**	**To attract and engage with young people**	**To provide a vehicle for storytelling**	**To increase opportunities for two-way communication with stakeholders**	**To manage stakeholder relationships to foster ongoing support**	**To enhance organisational reputation**
Dialogic components	Commitment	Commitment	Empathy	Mutuality Propinquity	Commitment	Commitment Risk Transparency Trust
Social and traditional Media integration examples	Linking to a video of a positive news story about the NFP and encouraging stakeholders to share it within their own networks.	Using traditional media celebrities popular with young people as spokespeople of the NFP, advocating for the organisation through their personal social media channels.	Linking to online articles and videos depicting inspirational stories of positive transformation as a direct result of the NFP's work.	Instigating (and actively participating in) discussions about the NFP's traditional media appearances.	Regularly thanking stakeholders and telling stakeholder stories that can be used in email newsletters and on social media and pitched to traditional media.	Encouraging stakeholders to share their positive stories about the NFP on their personal social media channels. Being transparent about the results of stakeholder support in all communication, traditional and new.

Figure 31. Integrated social media and traditional media spectrum.

The integrated social media and traditional media spectrum has the potential to guide public relations practitioners to support their motivations for using social media technology and provide guidance on which dialogic components underpin these integrative processes. At this stage, the spectrum requires extensive testing. It is based on the motivations for not-for-profit social media use highlighted in this study and associated dialogic components, as well as integration practices identified from the three-week online content analysis, practitioner interviews and stakeholder preferences revealed in the survey and interviews. Furthermore, the characteristics of each channel were considered to ensure that synergies existed to facilitate integration. This spectrum also assumes that the communication flow between Traditional Media Managers, Social Media/Digital Managers and Events/Fundraising Managers occurs as advised in Figure 30.

In some instances, social and traditional media integration may address multiple motivations for social media use and dialogic components for the charities. The following example displays how such integration can potentially reach new networks, use social media as a storytelling vehicle, and enhance organisational reputation while utilising propinquity and mutuality as a public relations strategy. The CEO of a charity is scheduled to appear on a morning television program the following day. The Traditional Media Manager informs the Social Media/Digital Manager immediately so that they can direct the Social Media Producer to promote the details of the appearance (date, time, channel, program, etc.) on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn by tagging the program and tweaking content so that it is relevant for each platform. The aim of this step is to encourage stakeholders ahead of time to tune in to the appearance. As the appearance is being broadcast, the Social Media Producer would use suggested social media platforms to remind stakeholders once again about the appearance, possibly

including a photo that has been taken from the set (propinquity) and tagging the show and the names of the presenters if they are in the photo (mutuality). If a video of the appearance is made available online after the appearance, the Social Media Producer would share the link on the recommended platforms so that stakeholders who missed the piece are provided with the opportunity to see it and are encouraged to potentially share it within their networks.

A further example addresses the motivations of reaching new networks and enhancing organisational communication, while drawing on the dialogic components of propinquity, mutuality, and commitment. In the lead-up to an offline event, all three managers work together to ensure promotion before the event can occur through social media and traditional communication channels. During the event, photos and video are taken and shared on social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. After the event, stakeholders are encouraged to tag themselves in the photos and share them within their own networks (propinquity, mutuality, commitment). This also displays integration across social media and traditional communications channels.

While a simplification of the integration process, this research indicated that the public relations practitioners did not have any such strategy, process or guide to inform their practice, which resulted in integration opportunities being lost. An example arose at Organisation E, when a television appearance was not promoted on social media due to the supervisor and producer being unaware that it had occurred. This spectrum is the first step in attempting to formalise the process with the aim of improving social media and traditional media integration for the not-for-profit sector, an area this study (and the practitioners themselves) emphasised as requiring greater attention and improvement.

Using strategic integration as a vehicle to facilitate this consistency may result in stakeholders associating a charity with being more organised, professional and stable in its attempts to communicate and engage with them, which may also assist in strengthening stakeholder trust in the organisation. Again, this highlights the need for a workable integrated social media communication model for the not-for-profit sector, suggesting that it is a valid area for further research and directly addressing one of the key aims underpinning this study.

6.2.5 Conclusion

The research findings suggested that social media adoption does not equal organisational acceptance, social and traditional media integration is ad hoc and a neglected opportunity, dialogue between not-for-profit organisations and stakeholders is not the main motivation for social media use, inspiration encourages stakeholder action and propinquity is important recommends that when approaching social media, not-for-profit organisations require support from senior management to assist their activities from an organisational level. Public relations practitioners must also focus on using social media to build relationships with stakeholders by using the technology as a bridge between online and offline interactions with their organisation. Next, it is important for not-for-profit organisations to embrace the dialogic nature of social media, as long as there are the resources to support it, and to focus social media content on captivating and inspiring stakeholders through the concepts and techniques to which they are most responsive. Finally, a focus on social media integration with traditional media will enable not-for-profit organisations to repurpose existing content, reach wider networks and improve communication consistency, but further research is required to develop a sound and workable model to potentially improve this practice. The

following section (6.3) will detail the limitations experienced throughout this project

and the possible implications of each on the outcomes of this research, before

identifying potential areas for future research.

6.3 Limitations of the project and further research

6.3.1 Limitations of the project

The overall study aimed to detect gaps between the ways in which not-for-profit organisations used social media to engage with stakeholders and what stakeholders expected from charities via social media. This research also aimed to assess the validity of developing an integrated social media communication model for the not-for-profit sector. An online survey, semi-structured interviews and online content analysis were used as methods to gather data. Limitations with each of the methods used in this study, its findings and interpretations became apparent along this research journey. While these limitations could not be considered major flaws in the research, the triangulated approach taken, particularly the associated methods, aimed to counteract them as much as possible. It is recommended that each limitation is addressed when developing the research design for further investigation into this topic.

6.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

i. Influence of the charities' supervisors on producers' interview responses

A limitation occurred with three of the organisations (C, E and G), where it was requested that the supervisor and producer be interviewed at the same time. While this was efficient in terms of time constraints, it meant that there was less chance of contradictions between the responses of participants in each role – this did occur in organisations B, D and F, where the supervisor and producer were interviewed separately. The differing opinions and perceptions between the

interviewees at organisations B, D and F provided another level of depth to the exploration, where the answers appeared to be more from an individual perspective rather than polished organisational ones. In some interviews, the producers criticised organisational processes and spoke more candidly alone than when a supervisor was present. Conducting tandem interviews also reduced the opportunity for each role to speak candidly without the other being present.

ii. Sample sizes

The interview sample was limited in size, ranging from 13 to 16. The narrow scope of the study offered only a glimpse into the social media practice of public relations professionals at not-for-profit organisations and attitudes of stakeholders in relation to their interactions with charities via social media. Additionally, while a range of organisations, in terms of both size and complexity, were included in the study, the sample was limited to seven organisations and thirteen interviewees in total across these organisations. Larger interviewee pools for both public relations professionals and stakeholders would have increased the depth of this investigation; yet strong similarities were present in the data, suggesting that a point of saturation may have been imminent. The study also selected organisations from only one category of social cause to provide a consistent theme to link the selected charities. Therefore, this may impede the findings from being generalisable to other causes, because each has slightly different positioning in the socio-political-cultural environment in Australia in comparison to other countries. Organisation G's late inclusion in the study may also represent a limitation in that it could not be mentioned in the online survey unlike the other sample organisations. The stakeholder sample was sourced solely through the

Facebook pages of three of the participating organisations, and may also have influenced the interview findings in some way; stakeholders from all charities and from all social media platforms used were not equally represented.

A.   Online survey

While a sample size of 177 provided some indication of participants' views, a much larger sample may have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. The majority of survey sample participants were female university graduates, which narrowed the breadth of responses that may have been gathered from a sample more representative of the wider population. Further research in this area would implement stratified sampling for a greater depth of knowledge into the differences between current and prospective stakeholders, as would leveraging the databases of not-for-profit organisations to better understand current stakeholders**.**

B.   Online content analysis

While the three-week data-capture period provided some insight into the social media activities of the seven charities, conducting the analysis over a longer period would provide a much more comprehensive understanding. Gathering data over one month every quarter for a 12-month period would provide greater knowledge as to the rhythm and flow of each organisation's social media efforts and stakeholder interactions throughout an average year.

While there were limitations, this research design provided some comprehension of the issues under investigation and some insight into where improvements can be made with future research.

6.3.3 Further research

This research has highlighted four areas worthy of deeper analysis. Each has the potential to make a further valuable contribution to the area of social media research in public relations scholarship and to greatly benefit the not-for-profit sector.

i. Towards an integrated social media communication model

As per the title of this thesis and as discussed extensively in Chapter 6.1, deeper analysis of the impact of integrating social media and traditional communication activities is required to assist in the development of an integrated social media communication model that can be used by the not-for-profit sector to guide social media activity. Further exploration is also required to better understand the impact that organisational structure may have on the facilitation of integrated social media communication. To deepen this line of research, it is integral that the different elements proposed in Figure 30 be further investigated. Specifically, the black arrows signifying communication flow between the managers within the not-for-profit organisations, stakeholders and communications channels need to be examined to better understand the correlations and predictive relationships that potentially exist as part of this communication process. This may be achieved through a range of research methods, such as observation of internal operations within not-for-profit organisations, content analysis of integrated social media and traditional communication activities, and further interviews and surveys with stakeholders and not-for-profit staff.

The influence of integrative techniques in generating the dialogic elements with stakeholders and how these affect preferred behaviours such as donating and volunteering also warrant closer consideration. Surveys, interviews and content analysis may be worthwhile methods to gather data around this research topic. With technology evolving so quickly, this is a dynamic area of exploration and one that will address a current gap in the literature and in public relations social media practice.

ii. Propinquital influence

Another area highlighted by this study that merits further exploration is the dialogic component of propinquity and its influence on social media practice and stakeholder relationships. To date, this theoretical component has not been directly applied to social media activity as a method of analysis, and most studies have explored online and offline environments as separate entities. Increasing understanding of the way relationships and content move in both directions between online and offline environments, or how the environments blend, and the impact of this would provide a valuable contribution to social media research. Firstly, it would attempt to describe the phenomenon, and then attempt to develop a way to provide evidence of and measure its influence, such as through the innovation of a propinquital quotient, a tracking system or some other relevant measurement tool.

iii. The dynamics of organisational social media acceptance and resistance

While the main focus of this research has been on social media *adoption* by not-for-profit organisations, further research is required to better understand the dynamics involved with organisational *acceptance* and *resistance.* As this study found, social media adoption by a not-for-profit organisation does not necessarily mean that its use has been embraced, accepted or supported throughout the organisation, particularly by senior management; a finding identified as a critical antecedent factor to the development and management of relationships using social media. By investigating the knowledge levels and attitudes of decision-makers in relation to organisational social media use, public relations practitioners in the not-for-profit sector may be better informed to identify barriers to acceptance and to educate decision-makers, with the aim of prompting an increase in support and resources in the process. One recommendation for further investigation could involve a comparative analysis investigating senior management's attitudes and understanding from social-media-progressive organisations, in contrast with those where its use is less supported. Such research would provide an insight into this particular stage of social media's evolution.

iv. The components of inspirational social media content

This study suggested that inspirational content, particularly in the form of video, has a positive effect on stakeholders, with a greater likelihood of prompting responses to calls-to-action. Such an investigation could be undertaken via framing analysis on storytelling through video in the digital platforms and would involve identifying the best social media messaging and content that respects

those for whom it is supposed to all be about: donors, supporters and volunteers.

It is conducive to make stakeholders the centre of this research, since that is

whom most social media content is aimed at, in order to garner donations and

encourage volunteerism. Exploring exactly what constitutes inspirational social

media content is, indeed, an important area for further research. This research

could be conducted in the form of content analysis to assess the common

components of social media campaigns from not-for-profits that resulted in

significant stakeholder response rates, such as large sums of funds being raised,

increased volunteerism and event attendance, or high frequency of the content

being shared. While challenging, attempting to deconstruct inspirational content

may provide a greater understanding for public relations scholars on what

constitutes inspirational social media content and inform public relations

practitioners in the not-for-profit sector about elements to consider including when

attempting to produce such content.

Social media research in the field of public relations in the not-for-profit sector is

still emerging, and while these four proposals for further research are extremely

ambitious (a research career could be devoted to exploring each), providing some

insight about them would assist in contributing to the scarcity of knowledge that

currently exists in this field.

7. APPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

Public relations is a highly applied, professional field of practice. The model of social media engagement proffered here is a useful, but somewhat academic, output that can be further developed and tested. A more applied and directly beneficial outcome can be advice to the specific not-for-profit organisations involved in the project and to the sector more broadly. This is a less academic offering and so is discussed here rather than earlier.

A set of specific and accessible suggestions were prepared for and offered to each of the participating charities. Those briefing documents can be perused in their entirety in Appendix B, and share many aspects in common. These common characteristics can be summarised as three recommended actions to support public relations practitioners to respond to the significant challenges influencing social media performance in the not-for-profit sector; and respond they must as the media landscape is changing rapidly.

7.1 Focus social media efforts to build trust, inspire support and foster community

With so many not-for-profits seeking support, stakeholders expect more than a direct appeal for help. Stakeholders want to be inspired to give and they want evidence that their support can make a positive difference. Developing trust with stakeholders by providing evidence of the results of their support is recommended. Sharing stories of the difference an organisation and its people make to the lives of others, preferably through video, can instil trust in a not-for-profit and inspire stakeholders to offer their support. Strengthening a sense of community between

stakeholders and a not-for-profit organisation should also be a priority for public

relations practitioners in the sector. Using social media as a bridge between online

and offline interactions with an organisation can help to build community.

Encouraging interaction in Facebook groups for volunteers or requesting

stakeholders to share photos from an event can strengthen the

stakeholder/organisational relationship. One of the ways of sustaining community

is the expression of gratitude, especially if it is specific and individual. Due to the

positive impact such appreciation generates, this in turn is likely to lead to further

donations and volunteerism.

7.2 Build your case for improved social media resources from senior management

This research highlighted the existence of indifference and resistance on behalf of

some senior managers in relation to their organisation's social media practices. If

public relations practitioners in the not-for-profit sector seek to change the status

quo, they must play a fundamental role in building a strong case to attract senior

management support. Measuring the tangible results of social media activities

(such as donations or volunteerism) will add to the case, in conjunction with

sharing successful social media case studies from other organisations and tactfully

educating senior management as to how the organisation can benefit from

increased social media resources. Being proactive and consciously gathering

evidence (to present social media as a valuable tool and quell fears) and

presenting it to senior management on a regular basis may assist to shift attitudes

opposing its use.

7.3 Maximise available resources

Building a case for increased social media resources may be a long-term initiative for public relations practitioners and a challenging task in the traditionally under-resourced not-for-profit sector. Therefore, it is vital that public relations practitioners achieve as much as possible with available resources. Sharing relevant content created by other agencies in the sector (and crediting them), sourcing content from internal and external stakeholders, integrating social media and traditional communication activities, and leveraging professional networks (such as LinkedIn) can assist public relations practitioners to better utilise accessible resources.

One overarching conclusion can be drawn this project; social media is not being approached or utilised with the intention of being used as a tool for connection, except in the limited and one-dimensional sense of increasing social media following through Facebook page likes or Twitter followers. Rather than leveraging the connective characteristics of social media technology, this research showed that it is being approached and used in an isolated way. It must be acknowledged that constraints relating to budget, resources and policy within a not-for-profit organisation may influence its approach to social media practice. Yet this research indicated that social media was not being integrated with traditional communication in a strategic way and was not being used to create a propinquital loop to bridge online and offline interactions between stakeholders and the not-for-profit organisations. The limited approach to social media was also apparent in the use of social media to focus on young people rather than the wide range of social media users and in measurement where tangible outcomes of social media efforts were not recorded.

When used on its own, social media may not achieve the results necessary for it to

be deemed a valid relationship management tool by public relations practitioners

in the not-for-profit sector and their stakeholders. Yet when social media is

combined with other public relations techniques, such as traditional

communications channels and offline stakeholder interactions, practitioners have a

greater chance of experiencing its benefits and counteracting its deficiencies.

Social media is a social networking tool. Its connective capabilities need to be

redefined and understanding of its applicability broadened before these qualities

can be leveraged and incorporated into other aspects of public relations practice,

particularly stakeholder relationship management.

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9. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Research Instruments

i. Public Relations Practitioner Interview Questions

Thank you for participating in this interview today. The aim of my study is to explore how youth homelessness charities in Victoria are using social media to build relationships with their donors, supporters and volunteers. This interview will go for approximately 30 minutes and you can be as detailed as you feel comfortable with in your responses. Your responses will remain confidential and we can stop the interview at any time.

Firstly, tell me a little about yourself.
1.   How long have you worked for the organisation?
2.   How long have you worked in the not-for-profit sector?
3.   What does your role involve?
4.   What qualifications have you attained? Have these included formal social media training?

Now tell me about your organisation's overall approach to social media
1.   How would you describe your organisation's approach to social media?
2.   Does your organisation have a social media policy? If so, may I please have a copy?
3.   What is the approval process within your organisation for posting content on social media?
4.   How could your organisation's social media approach, policies and processes be improved?

Social media practice
1.   What social media platforms does your organisation use?
2.   Why did they choose those particular ones?
3.   What do you use each platform for?
4.   What do you think are the benefits for your organisation in using social media to connect With donors, supporters and volunteers?
5.   How would you describe your organisation's success using social media to do this?
6.   How do you monitor how many people donate, volunteer and/or participate as a result of something
posted on your organisation's social media profiles?
7.   If you could do anything to improve your organisation's social media presence and outcomes, what would you do?

Social media vs. traditional media
1.   How much importance is placed on social media by your organisation compared with traditional media?
2.   How does your social media presence fit in with other traditional media channels?
3.   What traditional media channels are used by your organisation?
4.   Why were these traditional media channels chosen?
5.   Could social media be better integrated with the use of traditional media channels at your organisation? Why/why not?
6.   Can you suggest anyone else in your organisation relevant to speak to about the topics raised in this interview?

ii. Stakeholder Interview Questions

1. How long have you been using social media?
2. What social networking sites do you use and what do you use them for?
3. What charities do you follow on social media and on which social networking sites?
4. What homeless charities do you engage (like, comment, share etc) with and on what social networking sites?
5. Why did you begin engaging with each homeless charity on social media?
6. In what ways and how often do you engage with each one?
7. Why do you continue to engage with each one?
8. What is it that usually prompts you to engage with a homeless charity using social media?
9. Do you ever (or have you ever) donated money, attended an event or completed some other offline activity as a result of seeing something on social media? If so, please tell me about that. If not, why do you think that is?
10. What do you think homelessness charities should do to build better relationships with donors/supporters/volunteers in general? Using traditional media (newspapers, radio, television, newsletters etc)? Using social media?
11. What do you think homelessness charities (and other charities) are doing wrong in relation to social media?
12. As a donor/support/volunteer what advice would you give to homelessness charities (charities in general) how they could attract more support from these groups?

iii. Survey instrument

Survey Questions as they appeared on Survey Monkey

MONASH University

Australian charities social media survey

1. How often do you participate with charitable organisations in the following ways?

	Weekly	Twice per month	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	Occasionally	Never
Donating money	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Donating goods	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Volunteering time	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Participating in charity events	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

2. What types of charity organisations do you...

	Aid(Red Cross etc)	Youth	Animal welfare	Conservation & environment	Disaster funds	Homeless charities	Medical research	Mental Health charities	Disability charities	Education	N/A
Donate money to	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Donate goods to	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Volunteer time to	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participate in events with	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify)

3. What are the charities that you have donated to in the past 12 months?

4. How much have you donated to charity in the past 12 months (time, money, goods etc)?

5. Approximately how much money do you donate to charity each year?

- ○ $0-$25
- ○ $25-$50
- ○ $50-$100
- ○ $100-$250
- ○ $250-$500
- ○ $500-$1000
- ○ $1000-$5000
- ○ $5000+

6. Do you support the same charities each year?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ N/A

Other (please specify)

7. If so, what makes you give to the same charity organisations?

- ☐ Personal experience with the cause
- ☐ They keep in regular contact with me
- ☐ It's a good cause
- ☐ It's a habit
- ☐ My family has always donated to this charity
- ☐ It makes me feel good
- ☐ To impress others
- ☐ It's tax deductible
- ☐ I know some people involved in the charity

Other (please specify)

8. Please rate from 1 - 5 the types of media that inform you about charitable organisations. (1 = least informs you and 5 = most informs you).

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Newspapers	○	○	○	○	○	○
Radio	○	○	○	○	○	○
Television	○	○	○	○	○	○
Direct Mail	○	○	○	○	○	○
Websites	○	○	○	○	○	○
Email	○	○	○	○	○	○
Social media (Facebook, Twitter etc)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Telemarketing	○	○	○	○	○	○
SMS	○	○	○	○	○	○
Street Marketers	○	○	○	○	○	○
Point-of Sale Collection	○	○	○	○	○	○
Collectors at intersections	○	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

[   ]

9. Please rate the types of media and collection techniques that encourage you to give (time, money or goods) to a charitable organisation. (1 = least likely to encourage you and 5 = most likely to encourage you).

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Newspapers	○	○	○	○	○	○
Radio	○	○	○	○	○	○
Television	○	○	○	○	○	○
Direct Mail	○	○	○	○	○	○
Websites	○	○	○	○	○	○
Email	○	○	○	○	○	○
Social media (Facebook, Twitter etc)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Telemarketing	○	○	○	○	○	○
SMS	○	○	○	○	○	○
Street Marketers	○	○	○	○	○	○
Point-of Sale Collection	○	○	○	○	○	○
Collectors at intersections	○	○	○	○	○	○
Giving online	○	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

[   ]

10. Please rank the top 10 types of media and collection techniques that deter you from giving (time, money or goods) to a charitable organisation. Please note that the options will change position as per the order that you rank them.

▼	Newspapers
▼	Radio
▼	Television
▼	Direct Mail
▼	Email
▼	Social media
▼	Telemarketing
▼	SMS
▼	Street Marketers
▼	Point-of Sale Collection
▼	Collectors at intersections
▼	Giving online

11. Please rank the top 10 types of media and collection techniques that remind you to give (time, money or goods) to a charitable organisation. Please note that the options will change position as per the order that you rank them.

1 ▾	Newspapers
2 ▾	Radio
3 ▾	Television
4 ▾	Direct Mail
5 ▾	Email
6 ▾	Social media
7 ▾	Telemarketing
8 ▾	Street Marketers
9 ▾	Point-of Sale Collection
10 ▾	Collectors at intersections
11 ▾	Giving online

12. How do these types of media encourage you to regularly support charitable organisations?

☐ Reminds me to give
☐ Makes me feel compelled to give
☐ Engages with my altruistic nature
☐ Makes me feel guilty
☐ N/A

Other (please specify)

[   ]

13. How often have you visited the following social media websites?

	Never	Only once	Sometimes	Often	Every day
Facebook	○	○	○	○	○
Twitter	○	○	○	○	○
Linked In	○	○	○	○	○
You Tube	○	○	○	○	○
Pinterest	○	○	○	○	○
Google+	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

[   ]

14. In the next month how likely are you to visit the following social media websites?

	Definitely won't	Probably won't	Might	Probably will	Definitely will
Facebook	○	○	○	○	○
Twitter	○	○	○	○	○
Linked In	○	○	○	○	○
You Tube	○	○	○	○	○
Pinterest	○	○	○	○	○
Google+	○	○	○	○	○

15. On average, how many hours per week do you visiting social networking websites?

[   ]

16. What length of time (in years) have you been visiting social networking websites?

[   ]

17. Compared to your friends who are the same gender and age as you, how much time do you spend visiting social networking websites?

○ Much more time than most
○ More than most
○ About the same amount
○ Less than most
○ Much less than most

18. Please answer the following questions:

	Yes	No	N/A
Do you follow, like, connect with or subscribe to charitable organisations on social media?	○	○	○
Have you ever donated money or goods to a charitable organisation after reading about it on social media?	○	○	○
Have you ever volunteered time to a charitable organisation after reading about it on social media?	○	○	○
Have you ever participated in a charity event after reading about it on social media?	○	○	○

19. Please specify the charity/ies that you:

	The Salvation Army	(Australian) Red Cross	Cancer Council	St Vincent de Paul	RSPCA	World Vision	Guide Dogs	Royal Children's Hospital	Oxfam	Other
Follow, like, connect with or subscribe to on social media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Donate to after seeing a campaign on social media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Volunteer with after seeing a campaign on social media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participate in its event(s) after seeing a campaign on social media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify)

[   ]

20. Please specify the social media websites that you are using to connect with the following charities

	The Salvation Army	(Australian) Red Cross	Cancer Council	St Vincent de Paul	RSPCA	World Vision	Guide Dogs	Royal Children's Hospital	Oxfam	Other
Facebook	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Twitter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Linked in	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You-Tube	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pinterest	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Google+	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
N/A	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify)

[   ]

21. Please answer the following questions in relation to these specific charitable organisations:

	The Lighthouse Foundation	Streat	Melbourne Citymission	Kids Undercover	Salvation Army	Ladder
Follow, like, connect with or subscribe to on social media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Supported through donations, volunteering or participating in events	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Donated after reading about organisation on social media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Volunteered after reading about organisation on social media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participated in an event after reading about organisation on social media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22. If social media has not prompted you to donate to, volunteer with or support a charitable organisation, it is because:

☐ I haven't seen any social media campaigns from charitable organisations

☐ I use social media to connect with friends and family, not to give to charity

☐ The campaigns that I have seen have not moved me enough to respond

☐ All of the above

Other (please specify)

[   ]

23. If a social media campaign has prompted you to donate to, volunteer for or support a charitable organisation, what was it and why did it work on you?

[   ]

24. Gender:

○ Male

○ Female

25. What is your age?

[   ]

26. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, highest degree received.

○ Some secondary school

○ Secondary school graduate, diploma or the equivalent

○ Some University

○ Trade/technical/vocational training

○ Associate degree

○ Bachelor's degree

○ Master's degree

○ Doctorate degree

Other (please specify)

[   ]

27. What is your marital status?

○ Single, never married

○ Married or domestic partnership

○ Widowed

○ Divorced

○ Separated

28. What is your employment status?

◯ Full-time
◯ Part-time/casual
◯ Self-employed
◯ Unemployed
◯ Full-time student
◯ Retired
◯ Unable to work

Other (please specify)

[   ]

29. What is your current annual income in $AUD:

◯ $0 - $20k
◯ $21k - $40k
◯ $41k - $60k
◯ $61k - $80k
◯ $81k - $100k
◯ More than $100k
◯ I would prefer not to say

Other (please specify)

[   ]

30. I found out about this survey from:

☐ An email from the Office of Alumni Relations
☐ Alumni News
☐ Monash Memo
☐ Monash Alumni Linked in Group
☐ Facebook
☐ Twitter
☐ Word-of-mouth
☐ Not-for-profit newsletter
☐ Not-for-profit website

Other (please specify)

[   ]

iv. Content Analysis Code Book

Analysis Overview

All seven of the youth homelessness charities in this study will have their social media use analysed in a channel specific manner according to the social media platforms that they are currently using on the first date of the analysis. This analysis will be conducted from 12:00am on Monday, 28 July, 2014 – 11.59pm Sunday 17 August, 2014; a total of three weeks (21 days). These weeks cover the week before, the week of and the week after 'Homeless Persons' Week 2014' a significant campaign period common to all organisations in this study. SnagIt12 software will be used to capture the social media profiles each day. Only new posts and activity will be captured each day during the analysis period.

The social media platforms under analysis include: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Google+ and Pinterest. Organisation F also used Flickr, but this has not been included in this analysis because its use cannot be compared to the activities of any of the other organisations in the study and it is difficult to track organisational activity on this platform. In line with the pragmatic approach of this overall study, both quantitative and qualitative data will be analysed to provide a more comprehensive view of social media activity and levels of stakeholder engagement during this time period.

Note: Each organisation's social media activity per day will be coded in the one sitting to avoid inaccuracies. Also, you need to be logged into an account on each of the social media platforms under analysis to be able to take screen grabs of the organisations under review. If you do not feel comfortable using your personal account for this study, please set up an account for this purpose. While the classification of some content is the same across the various social media platforms in this study, there are channel specific characteristics that have also been included in this analysis. These distinctions are detailed in the analysis matrices within this code book.

The analysis has been divided into the following three sections:

- **Section 1: Organisational social media profile analysis**
  This section will explore, on each day of the analysis, how the organisation represents its brand using its social media profile. Please refer to the coding matrices in this section for the parameters of each social media channel being recorded. Analysing the profile is important as it will provide an insight on the way that an organisation represents itself, whether this changes over the course of the campaign period and whether there is an increase in following during this time.

- **Section 2: Quantitative data**

  This section of the analysis will focus on gathering quantitative elements associated with the organisations' social media activities on each day of the investigation. For example: number of posts by the organisation and number of engagement types on behalf of the stakeholder will provide a statistical insight into rates of engagement and activity. It is important that quantitative data be recorded to keep in line with the mixed-methods approach of the overall study and to be able to statistically analyse social media activities on behalf of the organisations being studied and the people who engage with them on social media. Please read the coding matrices in this section for elements of each platform that will be recorded.

- **Section 3: Qualitative data**

  This part of the analysis will explore the qualitative social media activities being undertaken each day by the organisation and their stakeholders occurring on each of the organisations' social media profiles. Such activities may include posts, comments and replies. This data will be coded against a number of factors. Firstly, qualitative data will be analysed to see if any instances relating to the theoretical framework underpinning this study can be identified. This is to better understand whether elements of relationship management theory, dialogic theory, two-way symmetrical communication and the mixed-motive model are being demonstrated in actuality. Next, various statements made in interviews with the organisations about their social media activities will be compared to their actual social media conduct during the analysis period, to ascertain whether there are consistencies or discrepancies with their claims. Other factors to be analysed have been gleaned from the interviews with stakeholders, specifically relating to their suggestions on the ways in which they believe charities could use social media to increase support, build stronger relationships and the various categories of calls-to-action that they use to garner a response. It is important to analyse whether the organisations in this study are using any of these techniques to ascertain if what these charities are doing is in line with stakeholder expectations as per research question four. Full details of the codes are available in section three of the code book

Section 1: Organisation Social Media Profile Analysis

The following coding matrices will comprise of information relating to the way in which the organisations in this study represent their brand on the social media platforms that they have chosen to use. Each of the platforms used by the seven organisations in this study will be viewed and characteristics recorded on each of the 21 days of analysis. The following matrices have been created to gather this data:

- **Facebook:** This sheet gives an overview of the Facebook accounts of organisations being analysed.
- **Twitter :** This sheet gives an overview of the Twitter accounts of organisations being analysed.

- **<u>LinkedIn:</u>** This sheet gives an overview of the LinkedIn accounts of organisations being analysed.

- **<u>Instagram:</u>** This sheet gives an overview of the Instagram accounts of organisations being analysed.

- **<u>YouTube:</u>** This sheet gives an overview of the YouTube accounts of organisations being analysed.

- **<u>Google+:</u>** This sheet gives an overview of the Google+ accounts of organisations being analysed.

- **<u>Pinterest:</u>** This sheet gives an overview of the Pinterest accounts of organisations being analysed.

Please note that after the first day of the analysis, the organisations will resume with their assigned codes of A to G and only those profile characteristics that have changed from the previous day will be recorded to avoid duplication and unnecessary coding.

<u>All platforms:</u>

Date of page grab: The date of when you are taking the screen grab needs to be entered.

Time of page grab: The time of when you are taking the screen grab needs to be entered.

Organisation code: Please enter the organisational code:

- **A :** Organisation A
- **B :** Organisation B
- **C :** Organisation C
- **D :** Organisation D
- **E :** Organisation E
- **F :** Organisation F
- **G :** Organisation G

Organisation name: Please write the organisation's name as it appears on the profile. For example, for a Twitter profile, please write the handle: @ and the organisational name as it appears.

Profile picture

1. **Logo**: If the profile includes the organisation's logo enter: **1**
2. **Branded Image:** If the profile includes an image other than the logo, but is clearly branded as belonging to the organisation enter: **2**
3. **Unbranded image**: If the profile includes an image that is unidentifiable as being associated with the organisation enter: **3**

Platform specific profile coding:

Facebook:

Organisational info

- **Description of organisation:** Does the social media profile include a description about the organisation that owns the profile? Enter**: Yes or No**

- **Description of product/service:** Does the social media profile include a description of any products or services that it offers to stakeholders? Enter: **Yes or No.**

- **History of organisation:** Does the social media profile contain any information about the history of the organisation? Enter**: Yes or No**

- **Contact details:** Does the social media profile contain any contact details of the organisation? These can include email addresses, website addresses, phone numbers, physical addresses. Enter**: Yes or No**

- **Other info included:** Please provide a brief description of any other organisational information that has been included on the profile that does not already fall within any of the categories above.

- **Number of fans:** Please enter the number of people that have liked the profile. Please do not include likes of specific posts in this section.

- **Other pages liked by the org:** Please list the number of other Facebook pages that the organisation has liked.

- **Apps installed on page:** Please list the applications that the organisation has installed on this profile page.

Twitter

Organisational info

- **Description of organisation:** Does the social media profile include a description about the organisation that owns the profile? Enter**: Yes or No**

- **Location:** Does the social media profile provide the location of the organisation? Enter**: Yes or No**

- **Website:** Does the social media profile include an organisational website address? Enter**: Yes or No**

Twitter stats

- **Location:** Please enter the organisational URL that is displayed on the social media profile.

- **Joined:** Please enter the date in which the organisation joined Twitter.

- **Tweets:** Please enter the number of tweets from the organisation

- **Photos/videos:** Please enter the number of photos or videos that the organisation has uploaded.

- **Following:** Please enter the number of people/organisations that the organisation is currently following.
- **Followers:** Please enter the number of people currently following the organisation on Twitter.

LinkedIn:

Organisational info

- **Description of organisation:** Does the social media profile include a description about the organisation that owns the profile? Enter: **Yes or No**
- **Location:** Does the social media profile provide the location of the organisation? Enter**: Yes or No**
- **Website:** Does the social media profile include an organisational website address? Enter**: Yes or No**
- **Industry:** Please enter the industry as listed on the organisation's LinkedIn profile.
- **Type:** Please enter the organisational type as it appears on the organisation's LinkedIn profile.
- **Headquarters:** Please enter the Headquarters as it appears on the organisation's LinkedIn profile.
- **Company Size:** Please enter the Company Size as it appears on the organisation's LinkedIn profile.

LinkedIn stats

- **Followers:** Please enter the number of followers as the figure appears on the organisation's LinkedIn profile.

Instagram:

Organisational info

- **Description of organisation :** Does the social media profile include a description about the organisation that owns the profile? Enter**: Yes or No**
- **Location:** Does the social media profile provide the location of the organisation? Enter**: Yes or No**
- **Website:** Does the social media profile include an organisational website address? Enter**: Yes or No**

Instagram stats

- **Posts:** Please enter the total number of posts made by the organisation.
- **Followers:** Please enter the number of people following the organisation.
- **Following:** Please enter the number of people/organisations that the organisation is following.

YouTube:

Organisational info

- **Description of organisation:** Does the social media profile include a description about the organisation that owns the profile? Enter**: Yes or No**
- **About:** Does the social media profile include an 'About' section? Enter**: Yes or No**
- **Location:** Does the social media profile provide the location of the organisation? Enter**: Yes or No**
- **Website:** If there is an organisational URL included, please enter it as it appears on the profile. Enter**: Yes or No**
- **Other social networks connected:** Are other connected social networks visible? Enter**: Yes or No**
- **Videos:** Is there a 'Videos' section? Enter**: Yes or No**
- **Channels:** Is there a 'Channels' section? Enter**: Yes or No**
- **Playlists:** Is there a 'Playlists' section? Enter**: Yes or No**
- **Discussion:** Is there a 'Discussion' section? Enter**: Yes or No**

YouTube stats

- **Subscribers:** Please enter the number of subscribers to the organisation's channel.
- **Views:** Please enter the number of overall views of the channel. This can be found in the 'About' section.
- **Featured channels:** Please write the featured channels that are listed on the organisation's YouTube profile.

Google+:

Organisational info

- **About:** Does the social media profile include an 'About' section? Enter**: Yes or No**
- **Introduction:** Does the social media profile include an Introduction about the organisation? Enter**: Yes or No**
- **Tagline:** Does the social media profile include a Tagline? Enter**: Yes or No**
- **Location:** Please enter the location as it appears on the organisation's Google+ profile.
- **Website:** Does the social media profile include the organisation's URL? Enter**: Yes or No**
- **Other links:** Please enter any other links listed on the organisation's Google+ profile.

Google+ stats

- **Followers:** Please enter the number of followers as they appear on the organisation's Google+ profile.

- **Views:** Please enter the number of views as they appear on the organisation's Google+ profile.

Pinterest:

Organisational info

- **About:** Does the social media profile include an 'About' section? Enter**: Yes or No**
- **Location:** Does the social media profile provide the location of the organisation? Enter**: Yes or No**
- **Website:** If there is an organisational URL included. Enter**: Yes or No**

Pinterest stats

- **Boards:** Please enter the number of boards owned by the organisation.
- **Pins:** Please enter the number of times that the organisation has pinned.
- **Likes:** Please enter the number of likes that the organisation has received.
- **Followers:** Please enter the number of Pinterest followers that the organisation has.
- **Following:** Please enter the number of Pinterest users that the organisation is following.

The coding matrices to record the organisational social media profiles are as follows:

Facebook

#	Category	Description	Coding ID
1.	Date of page grab		00/00/00
2.	Time of page grab		00:00am/pm
3.	Organisation code		
4.	Organisation name		[Text]
5.	Organisational info	Description of organisation	yes/no
		Description of product/service	yes/no
		History of organisation	yes/no
		Contact details	yes/no
		Other info included	(text)
6.	Number of fans		00000
7.	Profile picture	Logo	1
		Branded Image	2
		Unbranded image	3
8.	Other pages liked by the org		00
9.	Apps installed on page		(text)

Twitter

#	Category	Description	Coding ID
1.	Date of page grab		00/00/00
2	Time of page grab		00:00am/pm
3.	Organisation code		
4.	Organisation name		[Text]
5.	Organisational info	Description of organisation	yes/no
		Location	yes/no
		Website	yes/no
6.	Twitter stats	Location	[Text]
		Joined	[Text]
		Tweets	00
		Photos/videos	00
		Following	00
		Followers	00
7.	Profile picture	Logo	1
		Branded Image	2
		Unbranded image	3

LinkedIn

#	Category	Description	Coding ID
1.	Date of page grab		00/00/00
2.	Time of page grab		00:00am/pm
3.	Organisation code		
4.	Organisation name		[Text]
5.	Organisational info	Description of organisation	yes/no
		Location	yes/no
		Website	yes/no
		Industry	[Text]
		Type	[Text]
		Headquarters	[Text]
		Company Size	00
6.	LinkedIn stats	Followers	00
7.	Profile picture	Logo	1
		Branded Image	2
		Unbranded image	3

Instagram

#	Category	Description	Coding ID
1.	Date of page grab		00/00/00
2	Time of page grab		00:00am/pm
3.	Organisation code		
4.	Organisation name		[Text]
5.	Organisational info	Description of organisation	yes/no
		Location	yes/no
		Website	yes/no
6.	Instagram stats	Posts	00
		Followers	00
		Following	00
7.	Profile picture	Logo	1
		Branded Image	2
		Unbranded image	3

YouTube

#	Category	Description	Coding ID
1.	Date of page grab		00/00/00
2.	Time of page grab		00:00am/pm
3.	Organisation code		
4.	Organisation name		[Text]
5.	Organisational info	Description of organisation (About)	yes/no
		Location	yes/no
		Website	yes/no
		Other social networks connected	[Text]
		Videos	yes/no
		Channels	yes/no
		Playlists	yes/no
		Discussion	yes/no
			yes/no
			yes/no
6.	YouTube stats	Subscribers	00
		Views	00
		Featured channels	[Text]
7.	Profile picture	Logo	1
		Branded Image	2
		Unbranded image	3

Google+

#	Category	Description	Coding ID
1.	Date of page grab		00/00/00
2.	Time of page grab		00:00am/pm
3.	Organisation code		
4.	Organisation name		[Text]
5.	Organisational info	About	yes/no
		Introduction	yes/no
		Tagline	yes/no
		Location	[Text]
		Website	yes/no
		Other links	[Text]
6.	Google+ stats	Followers	00
		Views	00
7.	Profile picture	Logo	1
		Branded Image	2
		Unbranded image	3

Pinterest

#	Category	Description	Coding ID
1.	Date of page grab		00/00/00
2.	Time of page grab		00:00am/pm
3.	Organisation code		
4.	Organisation name		[Text]
5.	Organisational info	About	yes/no
		Location	yes/no
		Website	yes/no
6.	Pinterest stats	Boards	00
		Pins	00
		Likes	00
		Followers	00
		Following	00
7.	Profile picture	Logo	1
		Branded Image	2
		Unbranded image	3

Code Book Section 2: Quantitative Content Analysis

Posts (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Google+ and Pinterest)
- **Text:** Please enter the number of text-based posts made by the organisation that day.
- **Image:** Please enter the number of posts made by the organisation on that date that included an image.
- **Video:** Please enter the number of posts made by the organisation on that date that included a video.

Likes (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube): Please enter the overall number of likes the organisation received on their posts for that day.

Shares (Facebook, LinkedIn, Google): Please enter the overall number of shares that the organisation received on their posts for that day.

Comments (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Google+): Please enter the overall number of comments that the organisation received on their social media profile on that day.

Dialogue (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Google+): Please look out for instances where dialogue is occurring on the social media platform. This could be a brief exchange (one comment/question and one response) or a longer exchange (multiple interactions on the same topic). Please enter the number of instances that occur each day on the social media profile where:
- Someone comments on a post and the organisation replies.
- Someone posts a question and the organisation replies.
- Someone comments on the post and another user replies.
- Someone asks a question and another user replies.

Twitter

Tweets
- **Text:** Please enter the number of text-based tweets made by the organisation that day.
- **Image:** Please enter the number of tweets made by the organisation on that date that included an image.
- **Video:** Please enter the number of tweets made by the organisation on that date that included a video.

Retweets: Enter the overall number of retweets that a tweet made by the organisation received on that day.

Favourites: Enter the overall number of favourites that a tweet made by the organisation received on that day.

Replies: Please look out for instances where dialogue is occurring on the organisation's Twitter profile in the way of 'Replies'. This could be a brief exchange (one comment/question and one response) or a longer exchange (multiple interactions on the same topic). Please enter the number of instances that occur each day on the social media profile where:

- Someone comments on a tweet and the organisation replies.
- Someone tweets a question and the organisation replies.
- Someone comments on a tweet and another user replies.
- Someone tweets a question and another user replies.

YouTube

Dislikes: How many 'Dislikes' did the organisation receive on their posts for that day? Please enter the number.

Google+
+1: Please enter the number of '+1' received by posts, that are made by the organisation on that day.

Pinterest

Repins: Please enter the number of 'Repins' received by posts, which are made by the organisation on that day.

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Section 2: Quantitative Data Coding Matrix

Organisation Code:

Date:

Platform Facebook	Posts (text)	Posts (Img)	Posts (vid)	Likes	Shares	Comments	Dialogue
Twitter	**Twts (text)**	**Twts (img)**	**Retweets**	**Favourites**	**Replies**	**Dialogue**	
LinkedIn	**Posts**	**Likes**	**Comments**	**Shares**		**Dialogue**	
Instagram	**Posts**	**Likes**	**Comments**			**Dialogue**	
YouTube	**Posts**	**Likes**	**Dislikes**	**Views**	**Comments**	**Dialogue**	
Google+	**Posts (text)**	**Posts (Img)**	**Posts (vid)**	**+1**	**Shares**	**Comment**	**Dialogue**
Pinterest	**Posts**	**Repins**					

Section 3: Qualitative content analysis

In this section, please closely analyse all posts, images, tweets, comments and videos that are posted throughout the 21 days to identify whether they contain any of the elements identified in detail below. Some posts may be coded to multiple categories, so please keep in mind that a single post may display elements of a number of different codes. Also, the code words included are a guide and different variations (and synonyms) should also be coded if they apply. Please use the coding protocol below to label occurrences. For example: A3 = Empathy relating to the study's theoretical framework.

CODE: A - Analysis relating to theoretical framework

Quick keyword reference

Theoretical concept	Keywords
1. **Mutuality**	Mutual Relationship Partnership Interest Investment Friendship
2. **Commitment**	Commitment Loyalty Dedication Devotion Support
3. **Empathy**	Empathy Altruism Compassion Consideration Assistance Help Trust Support
4. **Risk**	Risk Danger Vulnerability Exposure Uncertainty Accident, Helplessness
5. **Propinquity**	Donation Volunteer Support Attend Participate Action
6. **Transparency**	Transparent Open Honest Forthcoming

Theoretical concept	Keywords
7. **Trust**	Trust Faith Hope Belief Certainty Assurance Confidence
8. **Two-way symmetrical communication**	Conversation Exchange Communicate Dialogue Comment
9. **Mixed-Motive Model**	Conflict Negative Complaint

1. *Mutuality*

- ***Code words:*** *mutual, relationship, partnership, interest, investment, friendship*

Mutuality relates to two parties having a positive and mutual interest in the activities of the other. Any comments relating to relationships between an organisation and stakeholders will fall into this category. The interests of both parties must be highlighted for it to constitute mutuality. For example: A post detailing a corporate partnership.

2. *Commitment:*

- ***Code words:*** *commitment, loyalty, dedication, devotion, support*

Posts containing elements of commitment highlight and/or laud the strength of the charity/stakeholder relationship. An example could be a post thanking a long-term volunteer. Kent & Taylor (2002) also suggest that commitment comprises of three essential components: genuineness and commitment to conversation and interpretation. If you can identify any of these three factors in the posts, please code them as well. Genuineness may be difficult to identify, but an organisation answering a user's question could be coded as a commitment to conversation and a post seeking clarification could be coded as a commitment to interpretation.

3. *Empathy*

- ***Code words:*** *empathy, altruism, compassion, consideration, assistance, help, trust, support*

Kent and Taylor (2002:27) define empathy as the "atmosphere of support and trust that must exist if dialogue is to succeed." Empathy is comprised of supportiveness, a sense of community and confirmation of the other's value. A post containing empathetic elements may include comments of support and thanks from stakeholders about post or a post by the charity that details the support that they provide to homeless youth.

4. *Risk*

- ***Code words:*** *risk, danger, vulnerability, exposure, uncertainty, accident, helplessness*

Risk can be identified as any content that illustrates or draws on the code words above, particularly if it highlights the vulnerability of either party. Coders should pay close attention to any instances where dialogic exchanges become negative or where organisational reputation may be undermined or at risk. These are also instances of risk. An example of this may be a complaint posted by a stakeholder.

5. *Propinquity*

- ***Code words:*** *donation, volunteer, support, attend, participate, action*

Propinquity describes the elasticity of a relationship between online and offline environments. It is very similar to the elements in Code E and constitutes any posts that encourage, promote of show evidence of online activity transcending into an offline environment. Examples of this could be photos of an event posted on Facebook where participants have tagged themselves or commented or a request for volunteers or goods to be donated.

6. *Transparency*

- ***Code words:*** *Transparent, open, honest, forthcoming*

Transparency relates to how open and forthcoming a charitable organisation is with its information. Charities have come under fire in the past for not disclosing misappropriation of funds. As such, transparency has become an essential feature in building trust between a charity and its stakeholders. Transparent posts could include promoting the organisation's annual report, detailing the cost of a service or event, even admitting to a stakeholder that they do not know the answer to a question. Post displaying transparency will seem honest even if it does not put the organisation in the most positive light.

7. *Trust*

- ***Code words:*** *trust, faith, hope, belief, certainty, assurance, confidence*

The charity/stakeholder relationship relies heavily on trust. Similar to transparency, posts that assist in fostering that may include financial reports, stories of positive transformation as a result of stakeholder support or testimonials from stakeholders expressing their level on trust in the organisation.

8. *Two-way symmetrical communication*

- *Code words:* conversation, exchange, communicate, dialogue, comment

Two-way symmetrical communication relies on mutual respect, honest and open communication between both parties involved. It also constitutes a willingness to engage, negotiate and compromise for the benefit of both parties. Instances of such exchanges may first involve a polite complaint and then a willingness to further discuss the issue through a more private channel such as via private message, email or on the telephone.

9. *Mixed-Motive Model*

- *Code words:* conflict, negative, complaint

The mixed-motive model is an exchange where both parties are open about their personal agendas and embrace conflict in order to achieve a mutually satisfying result. Evidence of such occurrences could include a discussion between a charity and a stakeholder that is the result of a complaint in which is not moved to a more private channel, and is instead plays out on the social media profile where it is highly visible.

CODE: B - Analysis relating to interview data with organisations

In the interviews with the charitable organisations each discussed the following topic areas and detailed how they were performing in each. The coding below will compare what was said in the interview with what the charities are doing in reality to analyse the two for any differences.

1. *Successes:*

Please make a note of which of the organisations experienced the following identifiers of "success" per day and write a sentence with the details (who, what, where & when) of each:

- Being followed, liked or subscribed to by a corporate partner/supporter
- Support for a Pozible campaign (likes, shares, pledges)
- Stakeholder comments requiring a response addressed within 48 hours of posting
- Increase in followers
- Retweets/shares by high profile people
- Increased response rates to competitions

2. *Use of each platform:*

Interviewees from the charities also attested to using each social media platform for specific purposes and to interact with particular audiences. This part of the analyses will try

to identify instances that correlate with those mentioned in the interviews. Please code the: who, what where and when of each instance:

- **Facebook:** General audience interaction. Structured content. Photo focused. Positive visuals of outcomes. Used by Org B's cafes. Older demographic (40–65). Case studies, nostalgia, trivia, volunteer profiles and attending to stakeholder queries.

- **Twitter:** Conversations within not-for-profit sector, donors and supporters. Raising awareness of youth homelessness. Cross promotion with other organisations. Specific campaigns with relevant hashtag. Refashioned Facebook content. CEO's perspective. Promoting events.

- **LinkedIn:** Showcasing organisation. Building corporate partnerships

- **Instagram:** Sharing photos from events and specific campaigns. Nostalgia.

- **YouTube:** Repository for corporate videos. Some videos made specifically for YouTube. CSAs, animated infographics of report data, vox pops.

3. *Organisational voice:*

Most of the charities interviewed discussed which voice they use to represent the organisation on their social media profiles. Please make a note of which variations exist for which organisations and on which profiles:

       i.   One voice posing as the organisation.

      ii.   One voice on the organisation's account with staff member's name identified.

     iii.   Multiple voices posing as the organisation (changes in tone and sentence structure evident of multiple people)

     iv.   Multiple voices with name of person posting identified.

4. *Social media integration with traditional media:*

This section of the coding related to research question three. Please look for evidence of social media integration with other communications channels, particularly traditional media. This could resemble a link to an online article about the organisation or a radio or television interview posted on a social media profile. Please look for evidence of the organisation using social media to promote content from other communication channels and please detail the: who, what, where, when, how and why of each instance.

CODE: C - Analysis relating to interview data with stakeholders

Ways of increasing support: (Commitment, Transparency, Trust)

This section of the analysis needs to focus on evidence of seven methods suggested in the stakeholder interviews of ways in which charities could use social media increase support from current and prospective donors, supporters and volunteers. Please note the: who, what, where and when of any of the content posted by the charitable organisations falls under any of the following categories:

1. *Volunteer stories*
2. *Results of donations*
3. *Results of volunteers' work*
4. *Showing where funding goes*
5. *Stories of positive transformational change*
6. *Stories of rewards of altruism*
7. *Competitions*

CODE: D – Ways of building stronger relationships (Relationship Management Theory)

This section of the analysis needs to focus on evidence of seven methods suggested in the stakeholder interviews of ways in which charities could use social media to build better relationships with current and prospective donors, supporters and volunteers. Please note the: who, what, where and when of any of the content posted by the charitable organisations falls under any of the following categories:

1. *Personal stories of homeless people*
2. *Thanking volunteers*
3. *Thanking donors*
4. *Educating/raising awareness about homelessness*
5. *Events taking place at support services (soup kitchens, drop in centres)*
6. *Case Studies showing successes*
7. *Promoting active involvement/participation with the organisation*

CODE: E – Calls-to-action on social media (Propinquity)

This section of the analysis relates very closely to code A5 in that it will analyses instances where an organisation posts an appeal to its current and/or prospective donors, supporters and volunteers on its social media profile/s to extend their involvement and interaction from an online environment into an offline activity. Please analyse the posts each day to identify any posts from the charities that prompt stakeholders to respond by participating in any of the following activities. Please record the: who, what, where, when, how and why details of any instances.

1. *Volunteering*

2. *Donations (money, goods)*

3. *Fundraising*

4. *Participating in a charity event*

Appendix B – Recommendations to Participating Organisations

i. Organisation A

Introduction

At the time of the interview, Organisation A had one practitioner responsible for its social media presence in addition to the organisation's other marketing, communications and fundraising responsibilities.

Strengths

- Managing to be active on most days throughout the three-week online content analysis despite being understaffed.
- Using images in social media content.
- Thanking stakeholders regularly.

Areas for Consideration

- Incorporating video into social media content.
- Sharing personal stories, particularly of positive transformation as a result of the charity's work.
- Producing engaging and shareable content. Currently, it seems that social media is being used to transmit messages rather than as a way for these messages to spark discussion and travel through the network of its followers.
- Measuring the tangible results of social media efforts to increase understanding and assist in improving performance.

Recommendations

- Investigate low-cost video production or relevant videos produced elsewhere that can be shared.
- Discontinue the traditional media angle for social media. Instead, use a personal story angle of the people being affected by the organisation in a positive way.
- Continue thanking donors, volunteers and supporters, and tell their stories too.

Conclusion

Overall, Organisation A is doing what it can with the limited resources allocated for social media. However, it is suggested that the organisation tries to incorporate the recommendations where viable.

ii. Organisation B

Introduction

Organisation B had multiple people in charge of its social media presence, and this was a task additional to their other responsibilities. The organisation planned to allow greater access to other staff members across the organisation to also contribute.

Strengths

- Employing a progressive approach to social media policy.
- Scheduling regular meetings between staff responsible for social and traditional media.
- Using social media metrics to inform content schedule.
- Demonstrating excellent use of propinquity in strengthening relationships with stakeholders.
- Employing innovative use of social media for fundraising via crowdsourcing platforms.

Areas for Consideration

- Utilising other social media platforms more regularly, such as Facebook and LinkedIn. Currently, there is a stronger emphasis on Twitter than the other sites.
- Placing greater emphasis on integrating social media and traditional media. This was being addressed, but could be improved to ensure that the organisation is benefiting as much as possible from its content.
- Telling personal stories of the positive transformation of its clients, stakeholders and staff.

Recommendations

- Improve presence on Facebook to engage with the organisation's vast network and use LinkedIn to increase relationships with corporate donors.
- Try to extend measurement to better understand the tangible outcomes of its social media activities.

- Concentrate on storytelling, particularly through video, and on regularly thanking donors and other supporters.
- Be more transparent. Show the results of support through social media content.

Conclusion

Organisation B approached social media in one of the most innovative ways of organisations in this study, particularly in using social media to fundraise, approaching social media policy as an ever-evolving process and understanding the importance of propinquity.

iii. Organisation C

Introduction

Organisation C had two staff members responsible for social media in addition to their other responsibilities.

Strengths

- Being active on Facebook.

- Thanking donors and volunteers regularly and using calls-to-action in its content.

- Responding to stakeholders instigating dialogue with the organisation on Facebook.

- Sharing volunteers' stories.

Areas for Consideration

- Improving the measurement of tangible outcomes of social media efforts.

- Using video content.

- Sharing stories of positive transformation (clients, donors, supporters and volunteers).

- Increasing focus on other platforms (strong emphasis on Facebook).

- Improving relationships via propinquity.

Recommendations

- Embed a measurement mechanism into every call-to-action via social media.

- Investigate ways to produce cost-efficient videos or share relevant videos produced elsewhere.

- Learn more about how to use platforms such as LinkedIn to build corporate partnerships. More could have been attempted during Homeless Person's Week 2014.

- Add an offline element to social media content and a social media component to offline interactions with stakeholders.

- Be more transparent. Show the results of support through social media content.

Conclusion

Overall, Organisation C performed reasonably well in comparison with the other organisations, despite the limited resources they could devote to social media. It is also suggested that the practitioners attempt to improve understanding among senior management in order to lobby for greater resources to improve the organisation's social media outcomes.

iv. Organisation D

Introduction

The researcher has been privy to the workings of this organisation both on a professional and personal level. When previously adopting the role of "big sister" for the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, the researcher was assigned to a "little sister" who lived in an Organisation D home and therefore observed the work of Organisation D whenever visiting her. On a professional level, from 2012 - 2014 the researcher has also coordinated the internship program at Monash University for public relations students and Organisation D has been a host organisation each semester of the program. While this organisation's work places it directly in the youth homelessness charity category, the researcher's prior experience with it must be declared in the interest of research transparency and integrity, especially when a similar prior connection does not exist with any of the other charitable organisations being investigated in this study. Organisation D had two staff members responsible for social media in addition to their other responsibilities.

Strengths

- Posting content that encouraged a positive response from followers.
- Using visually compelling imagery in its content.
- Thanking its volunteers and donors regularly.
- Using social media to try to evoke empathy with stakeholders about youth homelessness.
- Using propinquity – particularly in relation to event promotion – and then following up afterwards with photos from the event.

Areas for Consideration

- Clarifying the content approval process. The interviews highlighted confusion between staff members.
- Updating the social media policy. It was described as out-of-date and produced as a "knee-jerk reaction".
- Incorporating more video content.

Recommendations

- Define and communicate the social media content-approval process to all staff.

- Update the social media policy.

- Investigate ways to produce cost-efficient videos or share relevant videos produced elsewhere.

- Learn more about how to use platforms such as LinkedIn to build corporate partnerships. More could have been attempted during Homeless Person's Week 2014.

- Continue to add an offline element to social media content and a social media component to offline interactions with stakeholders.

- Be more transparent. Show the results of support through social media content.

Conclusion

Organisation D was the best-performing of the charities without a staff member allocated solely to its social media activities. There were some deficiencies in its internal processes, but these were generally acknowledged and the supervisor was dedicated to educating senior management about social media to improve resource allocation and the organisational approach.

v. Organisation E

Introduction

The researcher had an experience with Organisation E's youth homelessness service in secondary school when researching how to write a play about that topic. This experience left a profound impression on the researcher and, while it occurred more than twenty years ago, it should be mentioned so that the association is divulged and to provide a greater insight into where the motivation for this entire study originated.

Organisation E was one of only two organisations in this study with a staff member solely dedicated to its social media presence. It was the best-performing organisation in terms of stakeholder engagement, but also the only organisation to attract negative posts by stakeholders.

Strengths

- Using compelling video and images to tell stories of clients and stakeholders that resonate with followers enough to generate a positive reaction via comments, shares and likes; regularly sharing stories of transformational change.
- Employing an innovative approach to social media policy.
- Being generally responsive to stakeholders who instigate dialogue, both positive and negative.
- Celebrating and thanking donors, volunteers and supporters regularly.
- Being transparent. Detailing the results of support through social media content.

Areas for Consideration

- Making response times more consistent – they currently range from minutes to up to four days.
- Increasing communication between offices to improve integration between social and traditional media.

- Amending current social media policy in consultation with senior management to ensure that it is being enforced throughout the organisation. Currently, staff breach the policy without consequence.
- Measuring the tangible outcomes of social media activities may help to inform future practice and provide proof to senior management of performance.

Recommendations

- Keep producing content of the same quality. It currently works well. Incorporate more video where possible.
- Develop a process to integrate social media with traditional media.
- Embed a measurement mechanism into all social media efforts.
- Focus on better educating senior management about the importance and potential impact of social media.

Conclusion

Organisation E was a leader in social media performance among the charities in this study, but faced its own specific challenges due to the size of the organisation and its geographical spread. While it had a fantastic handle on the style of content that most resonated with stakeholders, there were some internal issues that, if addressed, had the potential to further improve its social media performance.

vi. Organisation F

Introduction

Organisation F was one of only two of the organisations in this study with a staff member solely dedicated to its social media presence.

Strengths

- Being the only charity to be active across four social media channels throughout the three-week online content analysis.
- Using propinquity well to promote offline events.
- Sharing stories of donors, supporters and volunteers and thanking them.

Areas for Consideration

- Measuring tangible outcomes of social media efforts.
- Increasing social and traditional media integration.
- Using video more in social media content.
- Inspiring stakeholders by sharing stories of positive transformation about clients and other stakeholders in relation to how the organisation has changed their life for the better.
- Ending the practice of uploading internally focused videos to the organisation's YouTube channel, or stopping such videos from being publicly available.

Recommendations

- Develop a process to integrate social media with traditional media.
- Embed a measurement mechanism into all social media efforts to gauge tangible outcomes.
- Investigate ways to produce cost-efficient videos or share relevant videos produced elsewhere.
- Learn more about how to use platforms such as LinkedIn to build corporate partnerships. More could have been attempted during Homeless Person's Week 2014.
- Keep adding an offline element to social media content and a social media component to offline interactions with stakeholders.

- Be more transparent. Show the results of support through social media content.

Conclusion

Overall, Organisation F's dedicated social media resource clearly had a positive impact on its performance. However, there remain some areas that require focus to further improve, particularly in relation to measuring social media use, refining content and integrating social media and traditional media efforts.

vii. Organisation G

Introduction

The final organisation in this study, Organisation G, was not initially selected by the researcher. Rather than the researcher seeking participation as they did with the aforementioned organisations, a representative from Organisation G contacted the researcher directly and sought to be considered for inclusion in the project after reading about it in *Pro Bono News* (2013b), an online industry publication for the not-for-profit sector. This occurred after the researcher had already completed the necessary interviews with the organisations originally chosen for the study. This particular article prompted emails from several not-for-profit organisations in Australia and the United States seeking to be involved in this research. However, as Organisation G was the only organisation initiating communication that provides services to homeless youth in Victoria – as well as a range of other services to other sections of the community in a similar method to organisations E and F – it seemed as though its inclusion would be highly relevant to this investigation. The interest in this study shown by the not-for-profit sector, as seen through the emails sent to the researcher after appearing approximately monthly in *Pro Bono News* from August to December in 2013, should be noted, as it may indicate the existence of a deficit in current social media research and validate the importance of this exploratory study.

Organisation G had two staff members responsible for social media, but did not place much emphasis on its social media activities compared with traditional methods. The reason provided was that donors and volunteers were from older age brackets and did not use social media.

Strengths

- Advertising via Facebook. Organisation G was the only charity to use this Facebook functionality during the three-week online content analysis.
- Achieving a steady increase of followers without uploading any new content apart from the ad.
- Putting processes and policies in place in terms of content approvals and governance.

Areas for Consideration

- Using social media to develop relationships with new and younger donors and volunteers. Currently, the focus seems to be on existing stakeholders from an older age group without any emphasis on building new and younger connections.

- Widening the social media following to include people other than staff.

- Regularly creating and uploading compelling and engaging content. Apart from the Facebook ad, no social media activity was recorded or generated by Organisation G throughout the three-week online content analysis.

Recommendations

- Develop and implement a succession strategy for donors and volunteers that utilises propinquity (social media coupled with offline interactions). This strategy should provide the framework to build relationships with new and younger stakeholders who are not employed by the charity.

- Update current social media policy, as it was described as being outdated.

- Measure all social media activity to gauge the tangible outcomes achieved through the organisation's efforts

Conclusion

Organisation G managed to increase its following without actively engaging with stakeholders on its social media channels. However, the organisation may be missing an opportunity to develop new relationships and maintain existing relationships by neglecting to engage in this space apart from paid advertising. While existing stakeholders may rely on traditional communications methods, this may not always be the case. Therefore, it is recommended that Organisation G's public relations practitioners learn as much as they can about social media best practice by actively using the technology now, so that Organisation G can adapt quickly if the needs of stakeholders change in the future.

Appendix C – Ethics

i. Explanatory Statements

MONASH University

Public Relations Practitioner Explanatory Statement

Project: Australian Not-For-Profit social media engagement – an exploratory study: interviews

Assoc Professor Joy Chia
School of Applied Media and Social Sciences

██████████████
██████████████████

Karen Sutherland

██████████████
████████████████████████████

You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before deciding whether or not to participate in this research. If you would like further information regarding any aspect of this project, you are encouraged to contact the researchers via the phone numbers or email addresses listed above. Your participation in this 30-45 minutes interview will provide much needed knowledge for the not-for-profit sector (NFP), in this case, Victorian charities assisting homeless youth. The questions will discuss your organisation's approach, policies and processes in relation to social media to gain an insight into how charitable organisations can build better relationships with donors, volunteers and supporters while improving the services that it offers to underprivileged members of our community.

You were chosen for this study because you are involved with the social media presence of an organisation that provides services to homeless youth in Victoria. Your details were obtained from your organisation's website or you were encouraged to participate in this study by someone within your organisation and provided with the researchers' details. The interviews will be conducted in person at your office, another mutually convenient place or by phone.

Being in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participate. If you do consent to participate you may withdraw at any stage but you will only be able to withdraw data prior to the publication of the thesis, which is due to be published in March 2015. Confidentiality is assured. Only the researchers will see your responses and you will not be identified in any publication that may arise from the project, which will include a thesis, possibly a journal or conference paper, and summary made available for general access. Data collected will be stored in accordance with Monash University regulations, which means keeping the data secure for five years and then destroying it. We may wish to use the data in combination with other data we may collect for related projects, but at no time will you be identifiable from anything that is published. Results will be available by contacting Karen Sutherland, ██████████
████████████████████████

Complaints
Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics (MUHREC):

Executive Officer
Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC), Room 111, Building 3e
Research Office, Monash University VIC 3800

████████████████   ████████████████████   ████████████████

Assoc Professor Joy Chia

Stakeholder Explanatory Statement

MONASH University

Project: Australian Not-For-Profit social media engagement – an exploratory study

Assoc Professor Joy Chia
School of Applied Media and Social Sciences

███████████████

████████████████████

Karen Sutherland

█████████████████

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You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before deciding whether or not to participate in this research. If you would like further information regarding any aspect of this project, you are encouraged to contact the researchers via the phone numbers or email addresses listed above.

Your participation in this 25 minutes interview will provide much needed knowledge for the not-for-profit sector (NFP), in this case, Victorian charities assisting homeless people, about how its members can build better relationships with donors, volunteers and supporters while improving the services that it offers to underprivileged members of our community.

You were chosen for this study because you are involved with the social media presence of an organisation that provides services to homeless youth in Victoria. Your details were obtained from your organisations website.

A letter of permission has been provided by your organisation for participation in this study, however, being in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. Your decision to participate will remain confidential. However, if you do consent to participate, you may withdraw from further participation at any stage but you will only be able to withdraw data prior to the publication of the research paper. Confidentiality is of supreme importance in this project. Only the researchers will see your responses and you will not be identified in the research paper without your permission. Data collected will be stored in accordance with Monash University regulations.

Results are available by contacting Karen Sutherland, ████████████████████████

Complaints
Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics (MUHREC):

Executive Officer
Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Room 111, Building 3e
Research Office
Monash University VIC 3800

████████████████   ██████████████████   ████████████████

Thank you,

Assoc Professor Joy Chia

Survey Explanatory Statement

MONASH University

Title: *Australian Not-For-Profit social media engagement – an exploratory study*

Your participation in this survey will provide much needed knowledge for the not-for-profit sector (NFP), particularly in Australia about how its members can build better relationships with donors, volunteers and supporters while improving the services that it offers to underprivileged members of our community. My name is Karen Sutherland and I am conducting a research project with Associate Professor Joy Chia, the Head of School in the School of Applied Media and Social Sciences (SAMSS) towards a Doctor of Philosophy at Monash University. You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before making a decision. Although it is a very individual and personal decision, Monash staff and alumni were chosen as a group for their capacity to give (time, money and/or resources) to charitable organisations and for their capacity to use social media. The aim of this study is to investigate and to understand the way that not-for-profit organisations, particularly charities, use social media and how they can do so more effectively to connect with donors, volunteers and supporters to achieve their objectives in helping others. The possible benefits of this study may provide much needed knowledge for the not-for-profit sector (NFP), particularly in Australia about how its members can build better relationships with donors, volunteers and supporters. Limited research currently exists in this field and this study will assist the NFP sector in better supporting the sections of the community that it aims to help.

To clarify, the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission (ACNC) defines a charitable organisation as one that must:

1. be a not-for-profit (any profits must be used for the organisation's purpose)

2. have a charitable purpose, (e.g. relieving poverty) and

3. be for the public benefit, (it must benefit the general community)

This study involves an online survey that can be completed at a time that suits you. It will take approximately 15 minutes. As an incentive, I will donate $100 to the charitable organisation that features the most prevalently in these research results. Participating in this study is voluntary. You do not need to answer all the questions, but once you have submitted your response online you cannot withdraw your answers, as responses are anonymous. The survey data is completely anonymous and your responses will not be identifiable in any way. Data collected will be stored online on a secured server in accordance with Monash University regulation. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Karen Sutherland on ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇. The findings are accessible for three months.

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:

Associate Professor Joy Chia, School of Applied Media and Social Science, Monash University, Gippsland, Northways Road, Churchill Victoria 3842, ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇ ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇

If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research CF13/883 - 2013000415 is being conducted, please contact: Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC), Building 3e Room 111, Research Office, Monash University VIC 3800, ▇▇ ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇

Thank you.

Karen Sutherland

ii. Consent Forms

Public Relations Practitioners

MONASH University

CONSENT FORM

Communications professionals involved with social media at Victorian youth homelessness charities

Project: Australian Not-For-Profit social media engagement – an exploratory study

Chief Investigator: Associate Professor Joy Chia

I have been asked to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement and I hereby consent to participate in this project.

I consent to the following:	Yes	No
Audio recording during the interview	☐	☐

Name of Participant _____

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Stakeholders

MONASH University

CONSENT FORM

Donors, supporters and volunteers engaging homelessness charities using social media

Project: Australian Not-For-Profit social media engagement – an exploratory study

Chief Investigator:

Assoc Professor Joy Chia	**Karen Sutherland**
School of Applied Media and Social Sciences	Phone : 9904 7217
Phone: 9902 6575	email: karen.sutherland@monash.edu
email: joy.chia@monash.edu	

I have been asked to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement and I hereby consent to participate in this project.

I consent to the following:	Yes	No
Audio recording during the interview	☐	☐

Name of Participant _____

Participant Signature _____ **Date**

iii. Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee Approval

MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date: 25 March 2013

Project Number: CF13/883 – 2013000415

Project Title: Australian Not-For-Profit social media engagement – an exploratory study

Chief Investigator: Assoc Prof Joyleen Chia

Approved: From: 25 March 2013   To: 25 March 2018

Terms of approval

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. **Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.**
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

Professor Ben Canny
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Ms Karen Sutherland, Dr Mark Symmons