



Stony Brook University

# A Brave New Digital World

Leveraging Digital Ads to Enhance Fundraising,  
Event Attendance, and Constituent Education

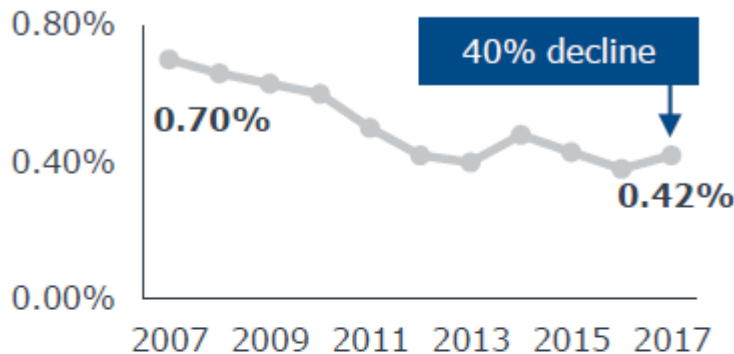
A.J. Nagaraj

Assistant Vice President for Advancement Strategy

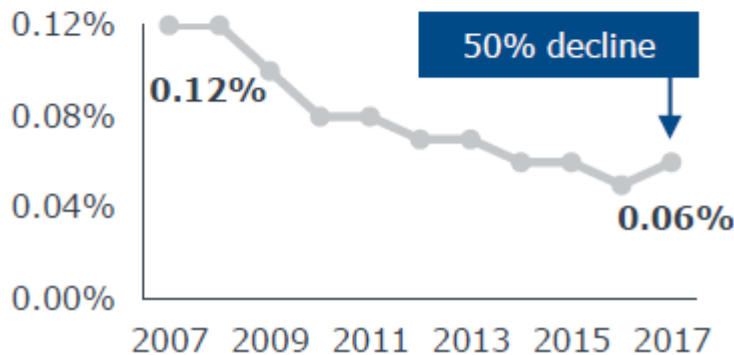
# Declining Dependence on Old Technology

Emails and Phone Calls no Longer Commanding Same Attention

Fundraising Email **Clickthrough** Rate



Fundraising Email **Response** Rate



**No Respite from Robocalls**

**30.5B**

Number of Robocalls  
Americans received in  
2017

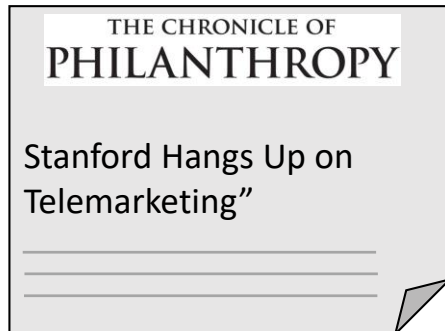
**12**

Average Number of  
Robocalls per person  
per month

Sources: Jason Wyatt Pro, "10 Marketing Trends to act on in 2018," *Become a Master Marketer*, 2018.; "2018 Nonprofit Benchmarks!," *M+R Benchmarks*, 2018, <https://mrbenchmarks.com/>.; "2010 Nonprofit Benchmarks!," *M+R Benchmarks*, 2010, <https://mrbenchmarks.com/>.; "Stanford Hangs Up on Telemarketing..." <https://www.philanthropy.com/article/Stanford-Hangs-Up-on/237968>; "Americans received over 16 billion robocalls so far this year—here's how to stop them", <https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/06/americans-got-16-billion-robocalls-this-year-heres-how-to-stop-them.html>. "Preparing for Advancement's Digital Future," EAB Global.

# Is the Era of Phone Dead?

## Phone-a-Thon Performance Declining



“Are we segmenting and communicating with donors in the channels they prefer? Phonathons don't fail because we can't find phone numbers, they fail because [they're] inefficient and don't respect donor preferences, a leftover relic from the days of the telethon and Jerry Lewis.”

Lynne Wester  
Principal and Founder, Donor Relations Guru



“Revenue from phone-call transactions from roughly 140 colleges from 2012 to 2015 dropped by about 17%.”  
–Target Analytics

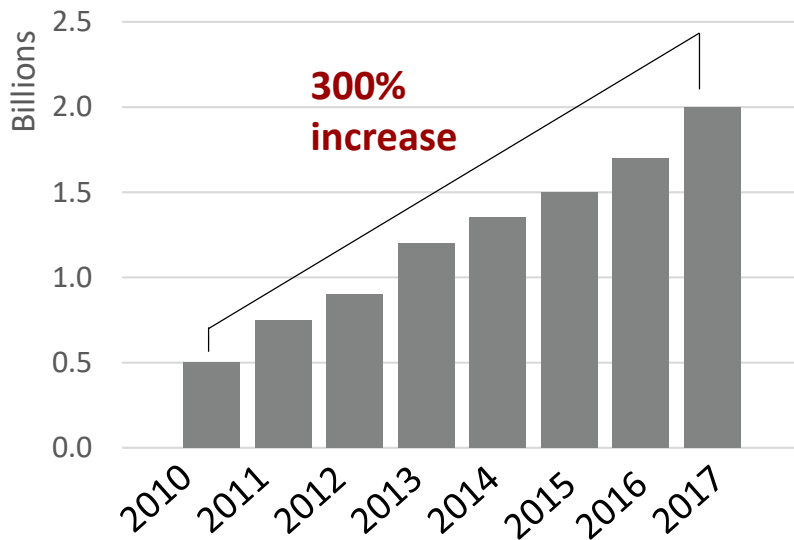
# Your Reach Isn't as High as You Think

User Count Increase and Algorithm Changes Spell Trouble

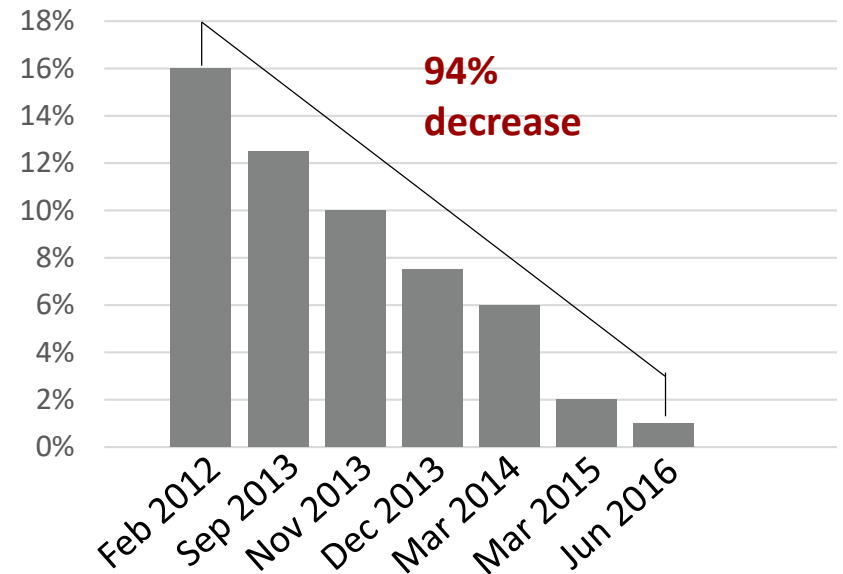
Social Media Use Has Exploded...

...But Organic Reach is Decreasing

### Facebook Monthly Active Users



### Facebook Page Organic Reach



# The Digital Ad Landscape

## Major Ad Platforms



facebook  
Ads



## Ad Placements



News Feed



Audience Network



Right-column

**\$94B** Size of US Ad Market

**214M** Monthly Active Users in US

**\$22B** Ad Spend on Facebook (2018)

# Who Can You Reach?

## **Predictive Targeting (Prospective Constituents)**



Target users based on alma mater, interests, hobbies, online behavior, industry, location, and more

## **Retargeting (Existing Constituents)**



Target users based on website pixel (e.g., non-converting visitors) or customer file (export from fundraising CRM) containing Name, Email, ZIP code, etc.

# Who Can You Reach?



First Name	Last Name	City	State	ZIP	DOB	Email	Phone
James	Smith	Chicago	IL	60007	11/15/1976	jsmith@gmail.com	312-476-7634
Sue	Kim	Orlando	FL	32789	1/8/1968	skim@gmail.com	407-896-5897




Hashed (encrypted) version of CSV file uploaded to Facebook, which matches your constituents with FB user accounts

# Sample Ads




## Facebook and Instagram News Feed Placements




 **Stony Brook Foundation** Sponsored ·  ⋮

18,000+ alumni and friends support students like Shane



stonybrook.edu/supportscholars...  
**Together, let's change more lives** [LEARN MORE](#)

   30 1 Comment

 Like  Comment  Share

Instagram

 sbuseniorclasslegacy Sponsored ⋮



I'm giving back to Stony Brook because it made me the leader I didn't know I could be.

[Learn More](#) 

sbuseniorclasslegacy



# Other Areas of Higher Ed Already Experimenting

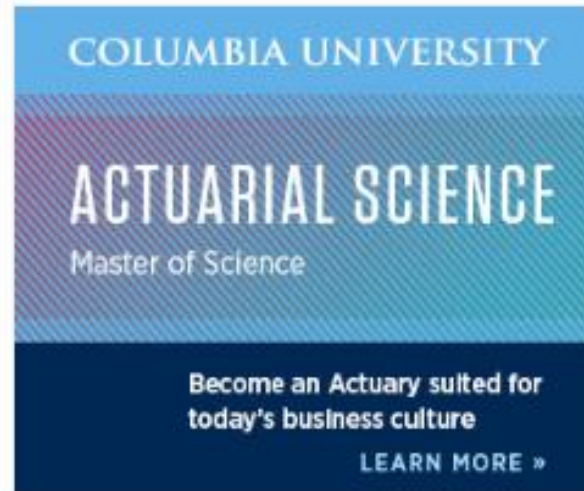
## Enrollment Management and Athletics on Cutting Edge



**NYU | STEINHARDT**

**Ready to Advance Your Career?**

Graduate Programs In Music and Performing Arts



**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**

**ACTUARIAL SCIENCE**  
Master of Science

Become an Actuary suited for today's business culture

[LEARN MORE »](#)

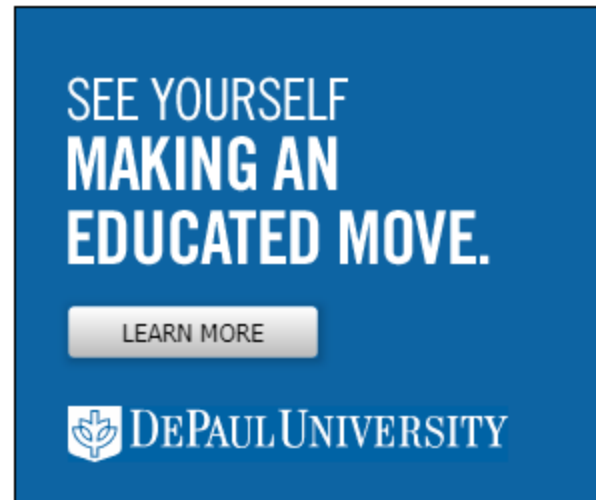


**EARN A MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK ONLINE**

- Ranked in the top 12
- Full time and part time
- No GRE required
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**USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck**  
School of Social Work



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[LEARN MORE](#)

**DEPAUL UNIVERSITY**



**TICKETS**

**I STATE** SAT. 11.17

[CLICK HERE TO BUY](#)

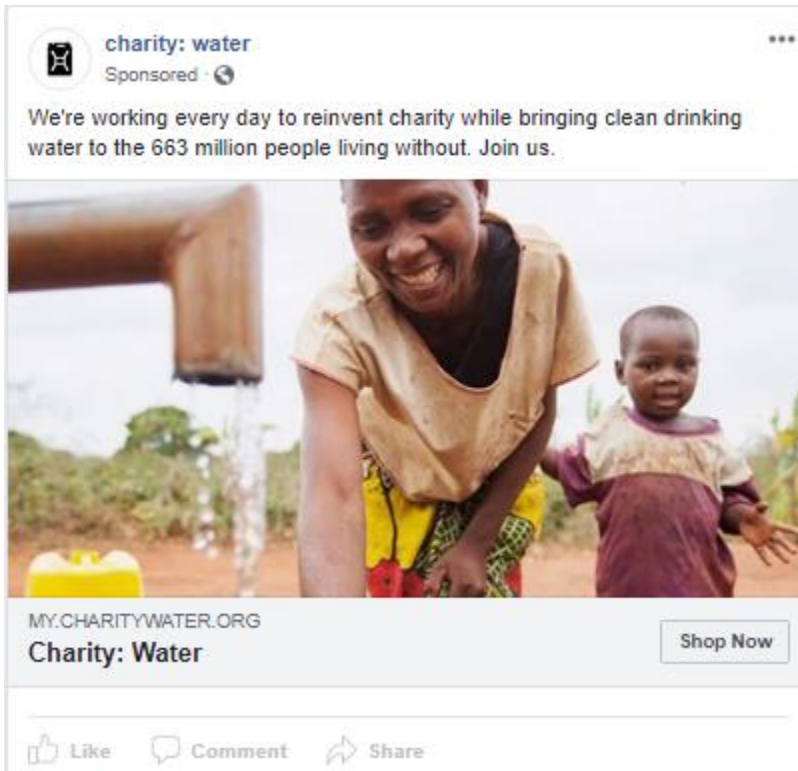
PRESENTED BY  
EQUIPPED TO SERVE  
**EQUIPMENT DEPT.**

# Nonprofit Sector Ahead of Higher Ed Advancement

## Charities Incented to Innovate on Bottom-of-Pyramid Giving




**Your support brings hope.**  
👉 Donate today.



**charity: water**  
Sponsored · 🌐

We're working every day to reinvent charity while bringing clean drinking water to the 663 million people living without. Join us.



MY.CHARITYWATER.ORG  
**Charity: Water**

Shop Now

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share



**World Wildlife Fund**  
Sponsored · 🌐

🍰 + 🐼 = 🎉!

Celebrate your birthday or special event by asking your friends to give to WWF! It's a fun way to share your passion with the people who matter to you, and it's a simple way to help us protect our living planet.



**GET STARTED**

WORLDWILDLIFE.ORG/PANDANATION  
**Donate Your Birthday to WWF**  
Make WWF part of your special day.

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share

# To What End?

## Three Major Use Cases for Digital Ads in Advancement



### Fundraising

- Direct mail appeal support
- Day of Giving
- Giving page abandonment
- Senior class giving campaigns



### Event Promotion

- Homecoming
- Reunions
- Galas
- Alumni gatherings out of state



### Constituent Education and Engagement

- Donor profiles
- Gift announcements
- Student profiles (e.g., scholarship recipient stories)
- Stewardship content



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# Use Case #1: Fundraising

# Sometimes, Donors Need a Nudge

Giving Page Pixel Enables Identification of Non-Converting Page Visitors

Prospective Donor Visits Giving Page...

...And Advances to Payment Screen...

## MAKE A GIFT

**HOW MUCH WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE?**

*One-time gift*  *Recurring Monthly Gift*


**WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUPPORT?**

**Or search for other Stony Brook programs:**

**TRIBUTE INFORMATION (OPTIONAL)**

Secure Payment Method

## PAYMENT INFO

Item	Amount
Stony Brook Fund for Excellence	\$ 25 (one-time) 
<a href="#">Add Another</a>	<a href="#">Clear</a>

**BILLING INFORMATION**

Title

First name  Last name

United States

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City


NY

ZIP:

Phone (Optional)

Email

**PAYMENT INFORMATION**

 **SECURE PAYMENT METHOD**

I am using my company credit card for this donation

Cardholder's Name

Credit Card Number

Card Type

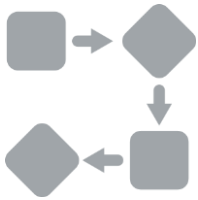
Exp. Month  Exp. Year

Card Security Code

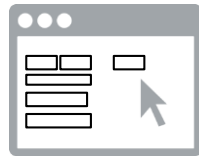
# Sometimes, Donors Need a Nudge

Giving Page Pixel Enables Identification of Non-Converting Page Visitors

...But Doesn't Make a Gift



Too many steps



Too many form fields



Doesn't have credit card nearby



Gets distracted

**Cart Abandonment  
All Too Common**

**76%**

Average Cart Abandonment rate

**83%**

Cart Abandonment Rate for nonprofit industry

**16%**

Increase in Cart Abandonment rate from 2006 to 2017

# Sometimes, Donors Need a Nudge

Giving Page Pixel Enables Identification of Non-Converting Page Visitors






The image shows a Facebook post from the Stony Brook Foundation. At the top left is the foundation's logo and name, followed by the text "Sponsored - Paid for by Stony Brook Foundation". Below this is the text "We still need your help." and a video player. The video features a woman with long braids and a red scarf, with a play button icon overlaid. The video text reads: "SO THAT STUDENTS IN NEED HAVE ACCESS TO SCHOLARSHIPS" and "- Lydia Senatus '18". Below the video is the URL "alumniandfriends.stonybrook.edu" and the text "Join the 47,000+ donors who have given..." with a "DONATE NOW" button. At the bottom, there are icons for Like, Comment, and Share, with a "2" next to the Like icon.


- **Targeting Criteria:** Giving page visitors who advanced to payment screen but didn't make a gift (approx. 100 people per month)
- **Results:** \$8,093 raised via 51 gifts, \$536 spent on ads. ROI = 1,409%.

# The Experiment

A Randomized Controlled Trial to Evaluate the True Efficacy of Digital Ads

 **Stony Brook Foundation** Sponsored ·  

18,000+ alumni and friends support students like Shane



stonybrook.edu/supportscholars...  
**Together, let's change more lives** [LEARN MORE](#)



   29

1 Comment 4 Shares

 Like

 Comment

 Share

 **Stony Brook Foundation** Sponsored ·  

More than 7,500 Stony Brook University students have unmet financial need.




stonybrook.edu/supportscholars...  
**Join the 18,000+ alumni and friends who support...** [DONATE NOW](#)

 4

 Like

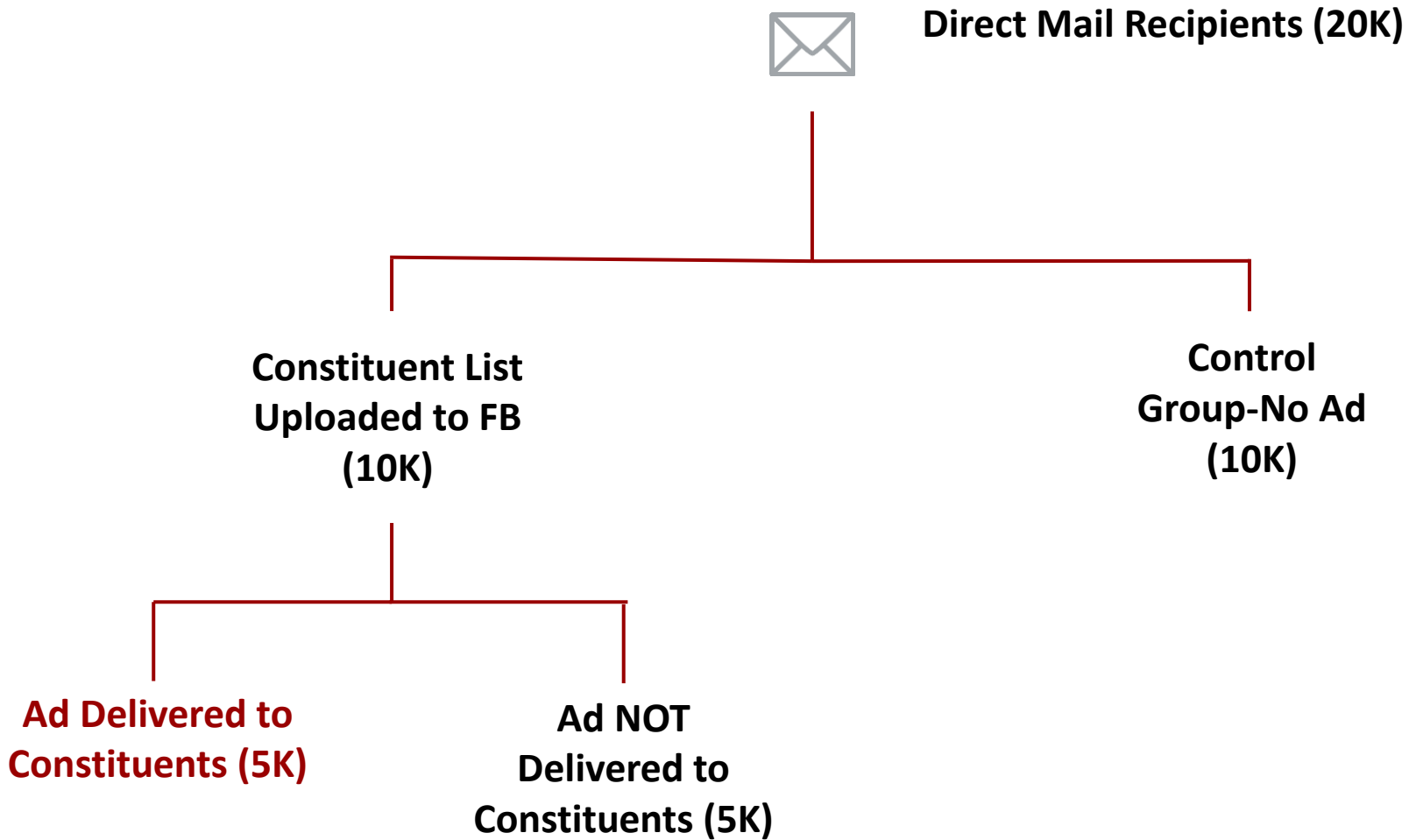
 Comment

 Share



# The Experiment

A Randomized Controlled Trial to Evaluate the Efficacy of Digital Ads



# The Results (Engagement)

## Performance on Engagement Metrics



People Reached: 4,975



# of Ad Impressions: 42,325 (video) and 24,486 (photo)



Ad Impressions Per Person: 8.51 (video) and 12.44 (photo)



Link Clicks: 121



Video Watches at 75%+: 1,097

# The Results (Conversions)

## Performance on Conversion Metrics



Incremental (Ad-attributed) donors: 59



Incremental (Ad-attributed) revenue: \$21,901



Ad Spend: \$1,058



Gross return on ad investment: 2,070%

In other words, **for every \$1 we spent on ads, we generated \$20.78 in gifts that we would not have otherwise received without the ads.**


# Additional Examples of Fundraising Digital Ads

 **Stony Brook Foundation** Like Page

Written by AJ Nagaraj [?] · December 5, 2018 ·

Thanks to your support, our students have so much to be thankful for as they head home for the holidays.

Renew your gift and continue to help our students go far beyond.



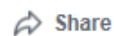
ALUMNIANDFRIENDS.STONYBROOK.EDU

**Make Your Year-end Gift Now**

For more information about giving to Stony Brook or the impact of your gift...

Pat Chavez, Hilikka I. Fadgen and 36 others

- **Targeting Criteria:** Recipients of End-of-Year direct mail appeal
- **Results:** 70 Clicks (2.90% CTR) at \$3.46 per click. **165 gifts totaling \$37,800.**



# Additional Examples of Fundraising Digital Ads

 **Stony Brook Foundation** Sponsored · 

Can we count on you again? Renew your gift to Stony Brook.



ALUMNIANDFRIENDS.STONYBROOK.EDU  
**Make Your Year-End Gift Now**  
For more information about giving to Stony Brook or t...

 Janet Friello Masini and 8 others

 Like    Comment    Share

- **Targeting Criteria:** Recipients of End-of-Year direct mail appeal
- **Results:** 26 Clicks (1.26% CTR) at \$3.43 per click. **78 gifts totaling \$14,100.**



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# Use Case #2: Event Promotion

# Sample Event Promotion Ads



**Come Back to the Brook**

Join Alumni, Family, and Friends for SBU's annual Homecoming celebration  
Stony Brook University



**Stony Brook University Alumni Association** ...  
Sponsored · 🌐

Join fellow alumni and friends in New Jersey on Wednesday, March 28 for a conversation with President Samuel L. Stanley Jr. about how Stony Brook has emerged as a national leader among public research universities.



alumniandfriends.stonybrook.edu

**Beyond The Status Quo**

An evening with Stony Brook Un...

LEARN MORE

👍❤️ 49

1 Comment 3 Shares

👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share

- **Targeting Criteria:** Prior homecoming attendees and all alumni within 25 miles of campus
- **Results:** 799 Clicks (7.26% CTR) at \$0.21 per click.

- **Targeting Criteria:** Alumni and non-alumni donors within 50 miles of venue in New Jersey.
- **Results:** 242 Clicks (2.35% CTR) at \$0.62 per click.



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# Use Case #3: Constituent Education and Engagement



# Increasing Engagement Among Alumni and Other Constituents

 **Stony Brook University Alumni Association** ...  
Sponsored · 🌐

When Frances Brisbane arrived at Stony Brook nearly 50 years ago, she met Elsie Owens, a custodian who became a lifelong friend.

Brisbane went on to become Dean of the School of Social Welfare and recently made a \$1 million pledge to the university—designated to benefit the custodial staff.



news.stonybrook.edu  
**For University Vice President Frances Brisbane, a Lifetime of Service and...**

👍❤️👀 357    63 Comments    44 Shares

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share


- **Targeting Criteria:** School of Social Welfare alumni and non-alumni donors
- **Results:** 1,579 Clicks (12% CTR) at \$0.20 per click.

# Increasing Engagement Among Alumni and Other Constituents

 **Stony Brook University Alumni Association** ...  
Sponsored · 🌐

The American Mathematical Society (AMS) awarded two Stony Brook University faculty and one former faculty member with the 2019 Oswald Veblen Prize in Geometry.

Considered the premier international award in geometry, the Veblen Prize is given for outstanding research work in geometry or topology.



NEWS.STONYBROOK.EDU  
**Mathematics Faculty Awarded 2019 Oswald Veblen Prize in Geometry**

  78

1 Comment 13 Shares



Like



Comment



Share

- **Targeting Criteria:** Math and Physics alumni and donors
- **Results:** 203 Clicks (9.53% CTR) at \$0.79 per click. **20 gifts totaling \$3,900.**

# Increasing Engagement Among Alumni and Other Constituents

 **Stony Brook University Alumni Association** ...  
Sponsored · 🌐

On Friday, November 9, Stony Brook University conferred its first endowed chair in American history, as Paul Kelton was installed as the inaugural Robert David Lion Gardiner Endowed Chair in American History.



NEWS.STONYBROOK.EDU

**First Endowed Chair in American History at Stony Brook University Officially Conferred**

  94

3 Comments 3 Shares

 Like



 Comment

 Share


- **Targeting Criteria:** History alumni and donors.
- **Results:** 129 Clicks (4.74% CTR) at \$0.89 per click. **12 gifts totaling \$1,480.**

# Not Just Likes, Clicks, and Gifts




Ancillary Benefit of Digital Retargeting Includes Organic Reach Increase



 **Stony Brook University Alumni Association** ...  
Sponsored · 

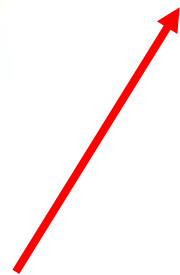
Start spreading the (US) News.





news.stonybrook.edu  
**Stony Brook Achieves Highest-Ever US News Ranking | | SBU News**

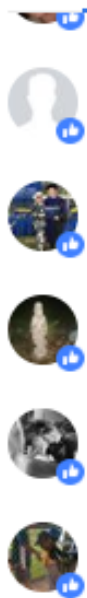
   789    46 Comments    149 Shares






 Like     Comment     Share



Invite to Like Stony Brook University Alumni Association    X

All 50     48     2



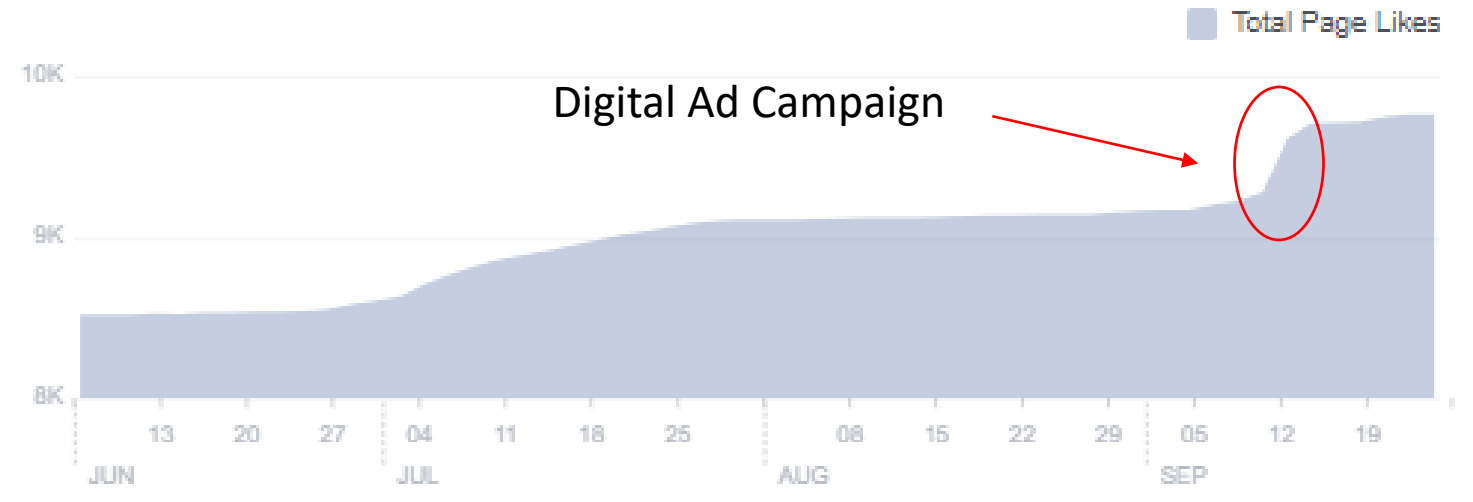
				
Invite	Invite	Liked	Liked	Invited

# Not Just Likes, Clicks, and Gifts

Ancillary Benefit of Digital Retargeting Includes Organic Reach Increase

September 8 (before campaign)  
9,224 Page Likes

September 14 (after campaign)  
9,709 Page Likes (5.3% increase)



# Top Tips to Implement Digital Ad Campaigns

- Start simple—choose just one platform (e.g., Facebook)
- Don't simply run independent digital solicitation campaigns—make sure to also pair digital ads with direct mail and/or phone solicitations
- Measure return on investment using randomized, controlled trials
- Update your giving page's privacy policy to reflect that data provided by donors may be used to deliver targeted ads to them
- Assign staff with the right skill set (data and analytics proficiency); digital ads are **not** the same thing as social media management

# Top Tips to Implement Digital Ad Campaigns

- Perform highly segmented targeting
- A good rule of thumb is that it costs about \$0.10 to reach a constituent  
Institutions that will yield the best results given the time investment are those with a larger number of constituent records and a high field population rate for contact data
- Invest heavily in major news-based campaigns (e.g., big jump in USNWR, faculty member wins Nobel Prize)
- Create a scrapbook for donors containing comments from ad campaigns