Digital Fundraising

The idea of Digital Fundraising encompasses so many elements and possibilities it can feel a little overwhelming – we may ask ourselves *'where to begin, and what really works?'*

According to Matt Haworth, author of ***The Digital Fundraising Book*** and founder of [Reason Digital,](#) *"Digital fundraising is any kind of fundraising activity where you are collecting money digitally, or someone is collecting money digitally on your behalf."*

In fact, digital fundraising is not too dissimilar to traditional fundraising, so don't be disheartened! Matt states that, *"fundamentally it all boils down to questions like, 'Can I get more people to look at it? Can I make it more compelling, persuasive and simple for them to give me their money? Can I persuade them to give me more money than they would have done otherwise?'"*

This guide aims to break down a few methods of digital fundraising and highlight some key concepts. Products discussed will include:

- donate buttons
- crowdfunding pages
- text donations
- social media giving
- e-commerce
- cashless payments
- QR codes.

A sound digital fundraising strategy will incorporate a mix of tools and content, designed to reach your audience and provide a point of conversion.

Having reeled off that lengthy list of products, the expert advice is: **Don't try them all at once! Do experiment!**

Top 3 Digital Fundraising tips:

1. Make sure you have a Donate button on your website (these are great for single or regular donations. Always aim to convert single to regular by memberships, friend schemes or campaigns).
2. Launch a campaign and set up a Crowdfunding page (for both individual donations and peer to peer fundraising).
3. Promote content via your newsletter (i.e. Mailchimp), website and social media.

Donate Button

Have a donate button on your website to encourage single and regular donations.

CAF Donate allows you to embed a donation form into your website. Just Giving and PayPal also offer these services. Donate buttons will most often be provided when you sign up to an online donation platform.

Online Donation Platforms

These are great for campaigns and peer to peer fundraising.

The 'aim of the game' is often to get a large number of small donations. Popular platforms include JustGiving and Go Fund Me, though there are many others out there. As an example, JustGiving offers fundraising pages, campaign pages and donate buttons, plus insights and reporting. Charity Digital offer a helpful breakdown of key competitors in their Price Comparison Chart.

Local Giving focuses on helping grassroots charities make the most out of their fundraising opportunities. Their Insights and Advice page links to articles with advice on aspects of digital fundraising.

DONATE is the platform offered by The National Funding Scheme, which is a charity set up to help advise organisations on how to improve their digital fundraising. The platform combines contactless, SMS texting, QR codes and web apps as means of giving. Though a national charity, their head offices are based here in Richmond and they are funded to provide more extensive advice on digital fundraising as well as support with their DONATE platform. Get in touch for support with digital fundraising via the contact form on their website address, or at hello@nationalfundingscheme.org.

Text to Donate

Text to Donate can be especially good in live events and face-to-face campaigns where supporters can enter a short code to donate, without needing an internet connection or to go to a website. Donation texts also offer the opportunity for 'one-offs' to be transformed to regular donations. Charity Digital cite Donr as a good option, with instagiv and DONATE as alternatives.

Social Media

Social media should be used to create engaging content. Posts should include a clear call to action, though should never ask for money outright. Don't aim to re-create viral sensations such as the 'ice bucket challenge' but rather do utilise stories, hashtags and video content to create urgency and a compelling narrative. Don't forget to say thank you!

A number of platforms now have integrated fundraising tools for organisations. For example, Instagram has a donate button and TikTok has donation stickers, both of which can be clicked to take viewers to your fundraising page. Meta (Facebook and Instagram) offer a variety of tools through **Facebook Fundraising** – such as birthday fundraisers, personal fundraisers, stories, and GivingTuesday – as well as comprehensive guides on how to implement and make the most out of these tools.

On **Instagram**, you can create a fundraiser and add it to a post, Stories and Live. You can add a support button to your profile or create a Group Fundraiser to encourage supporters to raise money on your behalf. For more detail, see Meta's guide on how to Fundraise on Instagram. The Media Trust also offer an in-depth look at some of Instagram's fundraising features in this Instagram Fundraising Toolkit.

Facebook/Meta have released a charity-oriented interface – Meta Social Impact. Please note: to access this you need to have transferred your organisation's Facebook page to the New Pages Experience.

Email Marketing

Not to be forgotten, email marketing should be used alongside your website and social media. Use mailing lists on a platform, such as Mailchimp, to convert single donors to regular donors through engaging content, news and by thanking donors who have previously contributed.

E-Commerce and Online Auctions

If you have products to sell as part of a fundraising campaign, your organisation could create an account on eBay for Charity, Etsy or Depop, or set up an online store on Shopify, Square Online or Wix Ecommerce.

For ongoing fundraising, 'shop for good' platforms such as Easy Fundraising and Give as you Live allow customers to donate a little every time they shop. Don't expect massive donations from these platforms, but do push them at the times of year when people spend more, such as Christmas.

Online auctions can be used to drive an organisation's community, publicity and, of course, fundraising. Platforms like GalaBid and Givergy offer mobile bidding and payment tech. Don't forget those handy old tools Zoom and Microsoft Teams for the possibility of virtual events and classes, which could be ticketed or 'pay-as-you-feel'. Similarly, streaming options on social media platforms can be powerful tools. You can add a donate button when broadcasting on Facebook Live.

Cashless Payment Systems

Cashless payment methods offer another way of making it easier for individuals to donate. Some of the big names include Zettle (by PayPal), Square and SumUp.

QR Codes

Another valuable asset to your cashless payment system, QR codes can be used to quickly direct supporters to your charity's donation page. Like the 'tap-to-pay' methods mentioned above, a QR code relies on the presence of a person, though these are great to use in fundraising packs, posters and collection buckets. Charity QR codes are free for charities registered on JustGiving. To get yours, simply visit your Charity Profile on JustGiving and add "/qrcode" to the end of the web address.

Analytics

As digital fundraising is somewhat experimental by nature, it is important to analyse results to learn from for future campaigns. A number of the platforms mentioned above offer in-programme analytics so that you can really see what works and what could be done differently for next time.

Further Reading/ Resources

There are some great resources out there on digital fundraising, from webinars to e-Books, and even a free training course:

[Digital Fundraising for Small Charities (in a hurry)](#) is an eBook which includes a handy checklist for digital fundraising priorities at the end.

[Digital Fundraising Course](#) is a free series of six short video lessons, giving you a rundown of how to make the most out of digital fundraising.

[Fundamentals of Digital Fundraising for Small Charities](#) (40 min webinar), can be found on Charity Digital's account. This focusses on getting started in your digital fundraising journey.

Updated by Becky Daybell, Project Officer, March 2023.