Message appeals used by nonprofits on Twitter to increase public engagement

Lilliana Laura Lopez
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, lillianallopez@gmail.com

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MESSAGE APPEALS USED BY NONPROFITS ON TWITTER TO INCREASE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
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in

The Manship School of Mass Communication

by

Lilliana L. Lopez
B.A., University of Texas – Pan American, 2012
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I dedicate this thesis and the work entailed to my parents, T and Irene Lopez, who have demonstrated the importance of persistence, drive and honest hard work in everything I do. You two are my biggest supporters and most faithful encouragers. You mean everything to me and I thank God for you every day. Everything I work for is to make you two proud. I love you.
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ABSTRACT

As social media becomes a more prominent tool for mass communication, nonprofit organizations are using social networking sites as a means to communicate with their target audiences and recruit supporters. This study explores how nonprofits are using Twitter, a microblogging website, to communicate with their audiences during the year-end charitable giving period and investigate which messaging acquires audience engagement. This was determined by investigating nonprofit organizations’ use of Twitter’s multimedia features and the different types of message appeals used when tweeting about their organization’s year-end campaign. Another aim of this study was to identify which message appeals in online charitable giving campaigns are most successful at engaging Twitter users.

A content analysis was conducted to determine which multimedia features and message appeals nonprofits are using on Twitter in their year-end tweeting. Tweets were sampled from five nonprofit organizations: United Way, American Red Cross, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Salvation Army and American Heart Association. These organizations were chosen, because of their top-rated efforts in online fundraising. The study investigated which multimedia features and message appeals were used by these nonprofits in year-end tweets and which multimedia features and message appeals stimulate the most user engagement. Interactions between an organization and Twitter users are considered engagement; thus, engagement increases awareness of the nonprofit organization’s mission.

This study found that rational appeals were more frequently used among nonprofits organizations and were more likely to increase engagement than emotional appeals. The sample nonprofit organizations appeared to differ in their use of rational and emotional message appeals on Twitter. Results also showed differences in nonprofits’ use of multimedia features. Nonprofit
organizations tend to use hashtags and links more frequently than photos and videos; however photos and hashtags seem to be more likely to increase engagement.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Nonprofits are continuously trying to figure out the best methods for raising funds. While many organization depend on grants for development, there is much more opportunity for fundraising that goes beyond traditional approaches. Because of the imperative role public support plays in nonprofits, building support through compelling communication and public relations practices is crucial (Auger, 2013). By including the use of alternative resources, development teams can create a steady flow of income for their nonprofit by communicating their goals and mission to potential donors and volunteers. Nonprofits are financially supported most often through government funds, donations and gifts. Nonprofits also rely heavily on volunteers and in-kind donations to keep programs open. Social media, specifically social networking sites, offers nonprofits cost-effective outlets for communicating their mission, goals, programs and services, and needs (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Social media has provided nonprofits with a cost-effective channel for communicating with constituents (Ivana Mamic & Almaraz, 2013). Social media has centralized the process from announcing the message to audience investment. If communication is successful, the message will be heard and may instigate action from the message receiver.

According to Pew Internet Project’s research (2013), 72% of online adults are using social networking sites. Use of social media has changed the way organizations communicate with their audiences and has created an opportune platform to increase public support and awareness. Companies and organizations use social media to create a brand personality, engage their target audiences, and learn more about their opinions. “Social media has provided an extensive new marketplace in which [nonprofit] organizations can give voice to their ideas” (Auger, 2013). Social media can be used to give face to the populations served by nonprofit
organizations and can arouse helping behavior if social media users develop a liking for the showcased beneficiaries (Hung & Wyer, 2009).

Since nonprofit organizations do not typically sell products, it is necessary to communicate the organization’s mission and fundraising efforts to potential donors and volunteers online. These organizations ask for time and money, so communicating the worth of their investment is essential. Nonprofits have seen the value in communicating to supporters through social media in recent years, especially during major fundraising campaigns and in the last three months of the year when more than a third of overall charitable giving occurs annually (MacLaughlin, 2014). Social media acts as a platform to listen to online communities’ concerns and interests regarding the organization’s mission and cause. It provides a place to experiment with different messaging to understand which appeals are most effective at getting online users to understand and engage.

Considering the existing research concerning message appeals used in advertising and marketing, this study focused on rational and emotional appeals, the most prominently referred to message types and, seemingly, most diverse. These two categories of appeals offer a wide variety of subcategories through which nonprofits are able to study and put to practical use online. Using social media to drive year-end campaigning is important for nonprofit development strategists to incorporate in their communication plans and message appeals are the foundation for fostering user engagement.

Research investigating how nonprofits use message appeals in social media to increase user engagement is limited. While branding through social media has been the focus of many studies, for-profit companies have reaped the most benefit. Nonprofits can learn from this research; however, communication strategies for these organizations differ because of their
contrasting goals, limiting the extent at which nonprofits can fully utilize this information to their advantage. Twitter is a prime example for these differences. When skimming the timeline of a for-profit company, users may see product links, sale specials, and photography showcasing consumer items brought to Twitter users in brief messages of up to 140 characters. Nonprofits rarely sell products. The end goal is not to provide products to consumers, but to increase support of an organization from the public. Tweets from these types of organizations are significantly different in their content and purpose.

The multimedia features on Twitter have given Twitter users a range of ways to share information. In particular, nonprofits conducting year-end campaigns often have collateral to use and share concerning their fundraising efforts. These multimedia features offer the chance to present their campaign goals in a more direct and responsive way along with a corresponding message appeal (Lovejoy, Waters, & Saxton, 2012). A content analysis was conducted using tweets posted by nonprofits’ on their Twitter accounts during the last five weeks of 2013. Findings from this analysis provide an understanding of how nonprofits are using multimedia features and message appeals in their tweets. Included in the message appeal categories are appeals referring to campaigning (campaign) and to ask appeals (year-end ask) to promote year-end giving. The last few weeks of the year, typically the last five weeks, is the time when most organizations really push for fundraising, whether through a specific campaign or through general campaigning. While most year-end campaigning has historically been conducted through email messaging, with the dawn of social media and its usefulness to brands, many organizations have taken to social media to conduct their campaigns in addition to email their regularly fundraising efforts through email marketing.
While most research on message appeals and social media use focuses on marketing and advertising by for-profit companies, this research concentrates on communication by nonprofit organizations to understand how effective these five nonprofits are at engaging their online audiences, whether through nonspecific messaging, nonspecific advocacy appeals or through year-end giving campaigns.

Year-end giving campaigns have seen a surge in success over the last few years through social media. Convio, a major software company tailored to nonprofit marketing and business management, offer best practices to organizations looking to increase funds through social media endeavors. A practice reiterated by the company’s experts is to build an online community of supporters through social media (Bressie, 2010). The end of the year is also when nonprofits see an increase in donations (Bressie, 2010; MacLaughlin, 2014). Reports suggesting this year-end increase build a case for focusing this study on nonprofit’s year-end messaging on Twitter. The study looks specifically at the message appeals that nonprofits have chosen to use in their year-end online communications through their Twitter pages along with the multimedia features they have paired with their messages. The level of audience engagement with nonprofits messages on Twitter takes into account any multimedia features used in the tweet, the message appeal used, the total favorites and retweets, and the amount of replies a tweet received.

An examination of nonprofits’ social media use and user engagement is important because of the great opportunity social media offers these organizations (Auger, 2013). While it is important to use these interactive platforms to create brand communities, it is even more vital to understand what methods of communication work in engaging users in order to prompt them to invest time and money into an organization (Waters & Feneley, 2013).
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media

Researchers have defined social media as web-based platforms for users to create and exchange User Generated Content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media began as a network for discussion offering users the ability to share messages, but quickly turned into a means for information gathering, social networking, interacting in virtual worlds, news consumption and entertainment (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). While social media encompasses a wide range of online applications and capabilities, social networking sites have seen some of the highest numbers in users. Social networking sites offer users the opportunity to connect with each other online, share and view information about themselves and each other with personal profiles. Online users are also able to chat with each other or send instant messages. Information in the Web 2.0 era can be shared in a number of ways. Blogging, status updates, linking, video or photo sharing, integrated newsfeed updates from web-based applications and acknowledging other users shared information or content with likes, favorites and/or comments have all become standard practices in this new age of web-based media.

Social media have reshaped the way we communicate and created a new means for creating relationships (Pezzolla, 2013). Pezzolla pointed out that computer-mediated communication (CMC) has made social media a customary form of social behavior and social media is largely responsible for this technologically dependent frame of social interaction. By means of social media in particular, CMC has become a convenient, first-stop option for communicating with others (Pezzolla, 2013). While this has many effects on interpersonal relationships, this type of communication also offers brands, specifically nonprofit organizations, great opportunity to listen to their audiences. This can help nonprofits understand their audience
and create messaging that can lead to philanthropic behavior (Pezzolla, 2013). The properties contributing to social media’s development, what some researchers call the “social media ecosystem,” are led by multimedia features (Hutton & Fosdick, 2011). These multimedia features include videos, photo, commenting, linking, and sharing abilities. With the ability to share more information through these added features on social media and the ability to discuss shared information, the social media ecosystem seems to be ever expanding. Hutton and Fosdick (2011) note that social networks have particularly become a central component in social media and these social networking sites act as a summit for online users to create, gather and share with each other. The world of social media has become globalized with users from all over the world sharing experiences, opinions and recycled information on the web (Hutton & Fosdick, 2011).

Social networking sites are not just for individual users. Companies, organizations and public figures are taking advantage of the many features these sites offer. Focusing on organizations, social networking sites are used to create brand personality, foster brand communities and market to target audiences (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). Muniz and O’Guinn explored the idea of brand community describing it as specific populations that have been formed through the common interest in a brand without regard to geographic location, but positioned in a “mass-mediated” environment. Since 2005, when Facebook began including more than just college students and eventually introduced Facebook Pages, companies and organizations have taken the opportunity to connect with their audiences and engage their brand communities (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). Soon after, Twitter began seeing a rise in brand accounts.
Blogging/Microblogging

Blogging and microblogging are forms of social media that offer a stage for users to create content relative to their interests. Formerly known as “weblogs,” blogs were at the forefront of User Generated Content sharing (Blood, 2004). Before the millennium, a number of companies capitalized on the growing blog community and offered up blogging software that made online journaling easier to produce and share content. These software evolved to include capabilities to not only publish written entries, but to also include links to other blogger’s pages and websites on the World Wide Web. Blood (2004) chronologically details the evolution of blogging and suggests that blogging’s nature of including a variety of information resources through the writer’s own words and through linking within blog posts presents an alternate medium for discussion. Most blogs encourage discussion by allowing other online users to comment and further information sharing. Blood (2004) explains that blogging has become such a widespread practice because software providers and serious bloggers are constantly improving capabilities and have made great efforts to integrate blogging elements into social networking. Twitter is likely the most notable social networking site having accomplished the integration of the two media in a successful way.

After the introduction of social networking sites and “social software,” the term “Web 2.0” was coined to encompass information sharing and social applications on the Internet (Barnes & Böhringer, 2011). Microblogging, referring to the practice of very concise and character limited web sharing, is one of Web 2.0’s more recent developments. Twitter, following the unofficial guidelines of microblogging and establishing many, is the most popular microblogging site and has continued to increase in user numbers since its birth in 2006 (Barnes & Böhringer, 2011). Twitter limits users to 140 characters per post or “tweet.” This forces users
to be strategic in what they share with their followers. If a user wants to share a link, video or photo, he or she must account for the characters used to attach a multimedia feature as well.

**Nonprofits’ Use of Social Media**

This modern form of socialization creates new communities within the World Wide Web and as prior research suggests, brands can tap into these communities and create brand communities of their own (Hutton & Fosdick, 2011; Willi et al., 2013). Interpersonal communication is key in social media. Companies and organizations must engage their audiences to create a community of followers and supporters. Interactivity in the messaging can help tremendously (Hutton & Fosdick, 2011; Willi et al., 2013). Hutton and Fosdick (2011) explain that while visits to a company’s website fell considerably between 2008 and 2010, this is not necessarily a bad thing. The study suggested that marketers have made more effort in driving traffic to their brand’s social media profiles rather than the website, which offers much more opportunity for interaction and the two-step communication process (Hutton & Fosdick, 2011; Willi et al., 2013). Willi et al. noted that companies, nonprofits in this case, must understand how to interact with their audiences and must learn to “facilitate conversation” not only through their messaging, but through the multimedia features made available through social media. A Convio study reported major success for The National Wildlife Federation, a nonprofit using Convio software. In addition to email marketing, The National Wildlife Federation uses social networking sites, including Twitter, in their year-end campaigning (MacLaughlin, 2013). The organization frequently shares photos and reports that their use of social media is mainly to engage their supporters. MacLaughlin (2013) reported the organization had seen a 10% growth in online giving annually and attributed that increase to social media use.
This shift from traditional communities, such as church groups and classmates, to communities built on social networks reflects that people are beginning to form social groups based on common interests with the Internet serving as their meeting ground (Willi et al., 2013; Yuqing et al., 2012; Cova & Cova, 2002). Li and Bernoff (2008) coined the term “groundswell” to define this social phenomenon. People are using online tools to connect with each other. Suggesting that this evolving trend in communication is “irreversible,” Li and Bernoff (2008) argued that while at first, organizations creating a Web 2.0 presence is not so intuitive, it quickly becomes apparent how necessary it is to adopt these new technologies. Tools that provide online users the ability to collaborate across platforms make the groundswell stronger. Organizations that can master the use of “groundswell” tools including social networking sites have a leg up on engaging their audience. Twitter is one of the most prevalent social networking sites used by organizations. It is apparent when some are conducting their social media presence effectively and others are not. Participation within these online communities is necessary for retention and member attachment (Preece, 2001; Yuqing et al., 2012). Creating interpersonal relationships in these online communities can be achieved by showing community members that they are like each other leading to “bond-based attachment” (Yuqing et al., 2012).

Creating communities online can be accomplished to increase support of an organization. People put themselves into groups based on categories that reflect them, and online tools make it easier to build relationships, because of their ease of use and accessibility (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Willi et al., 2013). Nonprofits can use their brand to create communities of people who care about the mission their organization broadcasts, not only on their website, but through their social media pages.
Nonprofit organizations are not successful in engaging stakeholders when using just the organization’s website as a strategic tool (Kent et al., 2003; Saxton, Guo, & Brown, 2007). This is because other kinds of websites do not offer as many capabilities as social media sites. The “built-in interactivity” that social media sites offer brands provides nonprofit organizations with the opportunity to build a larger list of constituents (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Interactivity should be considered a necessary component in effectively communicating messages. Kent et al. (2003) argue that interactivity is key in building relationships with audiences. According to Saffer, Sommerfelt and Taylor (2013), interactivity is present when sites offer users multiple ways to interact with one another. Increased public awareness of organizations is very important for nonprofits to foster. Nonprofit organizations depend on their publics to keep their organizations alive through donations and volunteering (Auger, 2013). Thus, it is imperative for organizations to investigate what motivates people to become charitable givers (Peloza & White, 2009).

Social media offers companies and organizations of all varieties a chance to communicate with their target audiences. In order to better engage their target audiences, organizations began looking for new means to engage online users in discussion following the upsurge of social media in the mid-2000s (Hopps, 2013). Hopps explains that social media profiles offer much more than a method for information access. It offers the opportunity for two-way communication and interactivity with brand and user and the potential to sustain an organization through shared ideas, conversations and “social capital” (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

According to Joseph and Lee’s study (2012), 72% of $290.89 billion dollars donated to nonprofit organizations were given by individuals in 2010. For organizations depending solely on donations and public support, fundraising through online resources offers less costly methods
of gathering funds from their target audiences. Nonprofits should take advantage of their ability to reach these audiences instantly through online media (Joseph & Lee, 2012).

**Twitter Features and Engagement**

Twitter is a leading social networking site when it comes to microblogging and has proven its value since its inception in August 2006. Because of the site’s many features, it has rapidly become the second most used social networking sites in 2013, second to Facebook (Duggan & Smith, 2013).

Prior to Web 2.0, organizations relied on their websites to inform audiences online. Social media and built-in interactivity licensed newer, more responsive ways for communication practitioners to create two-way communication (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Twitter allows organizations to listen to their audience in real-time and respond directly in real-time (Li & Bernoff, 2008; Ivana Mamic & Almaraz, 2013). As the popular social networking site advertises, “Twitter connects the planet to a global conversation,” (Discover Twitter, n.d.). By combining technology and user-generated content, Twitter is able to host a never-ending stream of information that can be shared through its many features, including its multimedia capabilities. On Twitter, users can interact not only through text tweets, but through photo and video sharing, the use of hashtags and links. User engagement should be a goal for organizations advocating for support. However, creating user engagement is a challenge communication strategists face (Chia, 2011; Lyon, 2008). The Twitter features available create potential for increased interactivity and user engagement. Twitter offers its users this interactivity in a distinctive way by streamlining conversations and condensing them to a viewable timeline.

Twitter offers a glossary of terms on the website to help new users and interested businesses better understand how it works and how features are used. Terms were also provided
by past studies using Twitter in content analyses (Edman, 2010; Kulkarni, 2009). A retweet is a re-send of another user’s original message. The original message is shown to all of your followers. A retweet means another Twitter account or user has chosen to share a tweet by another account to their followers and also display the retweet on their personal Twitter profile. Favorites are similar in that they acknowledge a tweet in a positive way by another Twitter user. Favoriting a tweet sends a positive notification to the message’s author showing that a user has liked a tweet. A favorite is shown as a star symbol. These definitions are further explained in Table 1.

Table 1: Twitter Terms Used in Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tweet (noun)</td>
<td>A message posted via Twitter containing 140 characters or less.¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tweet (verb)</td>
<td>Tweet, tweeting, tweeted. The act of posting a message through a Tweet.¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mention</td>
<td>A tweet including a user’s @username. This is called a mention and will appear to the @username you mentioned as well as to all of your followers. The “@” character denotes a mention or at reply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retweet</td>
<td>A re-send of another user’s original message. The original message is shown to all of your followers. A highlighted green symbol of two looping arrows denotes a retweet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hashtag</td>
<td>The hashtag symbol (#) can be inserted before words or phrases in a Tweet to organize conversations about a particular topic. Hashtags are clickable and will display similarly themed Tweets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>A photo can be included in a tweet and will expand in users’ twitter feed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>A video can be included in a tweet and can play right in a users’ twitter feed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link</td>
<td>A link can be added to a tweet and will take up the necessary character space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorite</td>
<td>Favoriting a tweet sends a positive notification to the message’s author showing that a user has liked a tweet. A favorite is shown as a star symbol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quoted Tweet</td>
<td>A tweet that shows the original message of another user using quotations and includes and @mention. Quoted tweets can also be modified by shortening the original text, removing multimedia features or adding more text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Year-end Campaign Messaging

Communicating with target potential donors and volunteers effectively is required to successfully carry out a year-end campaign. Nonprofits usually have a common goal in mind and that is to alleviate issues in society. Communication strategists working toward nonprofit development use various message appeals, often emotional, to persuade constituents to donate time or money to their organization. Bagozzi and Moore (1994) established that prosocial behavior, such as acts of giving, and emotional persuasive appeals are correlated.

Giving campaigns have shifted a lot of fundraising processes to online methods. Donation forms are now available online, electronic payments, information about the campaign, information on where and how funds will be spent and annual reports including service descriptions can all be found online, typically on a nonprofit’s website. This has made the act of giving less time consuming for the donor and much easier to conduct. Shier and Handy (2012) explained how online global fundraising has played an important role in providing aid and relief to communities recovering from natural or manmade disasters. For example, sending out a message to an online community provides opportunity for urgency. The process is almost immediate, from message construction to message receipt. Cutting out the time it takes to craft and send a thorough email with all information at a constituent’s inbox, driving campaigns through social media messages with added multimedia features makes the process quicker and easier. Shier and Handy focused on the engagement of the consumer and the cause and frequently reference Bekkers’ and Lee’s work in the areas of philanthropic giving, where mechanisms that can be used to instigate donors and volunteers to become active philanthropists are suggested for use as development strategies. (Bekkers & Bowman, 2009; Lee et al., 1999; Shier & Handy, 2012). Bekkers and Wiepking (2011) collected mechanisms that spark
philanthropic behavior. After reviewing more than 500 scholarly papers pertaining to the subject, they came up with eight mechanisms that can be used by professionals in the field to leverage philanthropic behavior, such as donating and volunteering.

There seems to be a link between the mission and brand of a nonprofit, the people who support it, and prosocial people (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). Message appeals tailored to a community of prosocial people with the same values as a nonprofit should lead to loyal constituents. Building an online community of supporters can lead to more support for an organization, and it provides an added degree of convenience for frequent online social networking users. These communities meet and gather online. While they are already connected, online giving campaigns can make users’ donation processes quicker with a central location for all campaign information and donation forms. Web-based platforms for receiving donations have simplified the act of donating down to a few clicks. Internet fundraising sites, such as GlobalGiving, DonorsChoose.org, and donor database software available to nonprofits as a tool for web-based fundraising, such as Salsa Labs and Convio Blackbaud, have made Internet campaigns not only easier, but they are now standard practice in nonprofit development strategies (Shier & Handy, 2012).

In 2012, year-end campaigning through social media saw a significantly large increase in participation with the introduction of #GivingTuesday (About Us, n.d.). #GivingTuesday is the Tuesday after Thanksgiving and advertises itself as a “new day for giving back.” In the same vein as Black Friday and Cyber Monday, #GivingTuesday aims to spark action and increase revenue, though for the greater good. In its first year, #GivingTuesday helped an estimated 2,600 nonprofits raise funds (Lewis, 2013). This has encouraged many more nonprofits to participate in year-end giving campaigns through #GivingTuesday appeals (MacLaughlin, 2013).
#GivingTuesday is described as a national day of giving encouraging charitable acts. The day has been branded with a hashtag, #GivingTuesday making it trackable on social media sites by using the multimedia capability and it allows users to follow #GivingTuesday conversations.

**Message Appeals**

Social media offer nonprofit organizations platforms for communicating their campaign goals, how earned funds will be used, and how the audience can contribute to the mission. Social media managers must learn to provide persuasive messaging to their potential donors that simultaneously asks for a donation and informs them that the organization is worth an investment in the cause (Apinunmahakul & Barham, 2012). Mueller (1987) suggests that the message receiver’s self-interest, goals, needs and wants should be related in a message appeal to make it effective. It is important for nonprofit organizations to evaluate which types of message appeals speak to their audiences, communicate their brand, and encourage consumers to participate in online giving.

A considerable amount of research has been conducted on message appeals used in advertising and marketing (Panda et al., 2013). One of the biggest obstacles pertaining to this research is the ongoing struggle to clearly define message appeals and to categorize them as rational or emotional (Copeland, 1924; Panda et al., 2013). The style in which a message is crafted and delivered will have an influence on how the message receiver will interpret it (Copeland, 1924; Preston, 1968). An earlier study acknowledges that there are many types of message appeals, however they can be categorized under single indicators that umbrella a more comprehensive list of terms (Ruechelle, 1958; Preston, 1968). This study categorized messages based on theoretical deduction and presented emotional, intellectual and rational appeals as the main typologies. According to Holmes and Crocker (1987) an appeal is meant to persuade, either
through logical or emotional tone. By asking the person delivering the message the degree of emotion or intellect he or she felt was used, the researchers found that audience interpretation of the message did not always align.

The further explanation of message typology suggested that there is overlap, based on how audience members interpret a message. Associations are made after hearing a message and it is suggested that the audience will make these associations either inherently or arbitrarily (Ruechelle, 1958; Preston, 1968). If a message includes “sign-relevant” indicators or reasonable characteristics for the brand, it is considered rational. A message may become arbitrary if a product is advertised with something having no connection to the product itself. For example, a player in the NBA may encourage fans to donate to a specific nonprofit organization, but the player does not have any direct connection to the cause. However, if someone is a big fan of the NBA player and decides that the nonprofit organization is a worthy cause, then chooses to donate based on the endorsement, this becomes arbitrary. The donor has acted on emotional and rational bases; feelings toward the endorser and reasoning that the cause is worthy of a donation. This explains that not all messages will be categorized as just rational or just emotional.

**Emotional and Rational Appeals**

Previous research suggests it is imperative for organizations to trigger emotion in their target audiences through message appeals. In one study, researchers found that sympathy promotes attention to the needs of others and caretaking (Kemp et al., 2013). While all message appeals must be examined, research has placed particular emphasis on rational versus emotional appeals (Panda et al., 2013).

This study’s interest in message appeals stems from the idea that emotion-based messaging creates stronger support of online users. Specifically in advertising, “emotional...”
appeals attempt to stir up either negative or positive emotions leading to purchase motivation” (Panda et al., 2013, p. 9). While nonprofits are not typically selling products to gain support, they are asking for investments that will help their clients, which is a backing by the consumer.

Emotions, as explained by Franke et al. (1999), deal with internal processes by each individual consumer. Emotional appeals include all messages that aim to instigate a positive or negative emotion in order to motivate action. These emotions are “interconnected and hardwired” (Panda et al., 2013, p. 9). Highly researched in experimental psychology, the feeling of empathy has been determined to be a great motivator in inspiring people to help those in need. The more a person is portrayed as suffering or in a vulnerable, helpless state, potential donors become more empathetic and inclined to help “victims” (Einolf et al., 2012). The concept of emotional appeals is to inspire a target audience to empathize with the clients of nonprofits. Other categories of emotional appeals allow for increased chance of creating online communities, such as showing thanks to users (Auger, 2013). Most of the literature on this topic pays close attention to emotional message appeals. Because of its strong research backing, it was pertinent to include emotional message appeals as a main category for this study.

Not all appeals contain emotional triggers, so it is imperative that focus is placed on other types of message appeals as well. Panda et al. (2013) proposed that emotional message appeals and rational appeals, sometimes referred to as logical appeals, are the two main frames for marketing and communication. Previous research states that consumers act based on either emotional or rational reasoning (Panda et al., 2013). Lee’s research (2013) on the influence of message appeals on social behavior examined both personal and situational factors that can lead to varying responses depending on the message appeal. Lee examined guilt appeals, “environmental hyperopia” or the degree of people’s concern for environmental issues based on
whether the issue is local or global, and the influence of individual differences in environmental locus of control. The locus of control applies to the level at which people feel they “have the ability to affect outcomes through their own actions (Lee, 2013; Rotter, 1966). These researchers have explored message appeals used in advertising and the affective nature of message appeals on social behavior.

Based on the literature and past research, audiences are anticipated to engage more when exposed to emotional message appeals compared to other message types (Bagozzi & Moore, 1994; Kemp et al., 2013). However, one study found that nonprofits use rational appeals more often on social media (Auger, 2013). Another study exploring advertising message appeals found rational appeals produced more positive attitude levels compared to advertisements including emotional appeals (Stafford & Day, 1995). In advertising, rational appeals are defined under the notion that consumers make decisions through rational comprehension (Panda et al., 2013). Using this information, the current study builds from previous research and attempts to view how these concepts in advertising reflect message appeals used in online communication practices used in the nonprofit sector.

This study explores message appeals, categorized as either rational or emotional, tweeted by top fundraising nonprofits, which are well known for their online fundraising efforts. Their missions are significantly different; however, their goals to raise funds for their services make them similar. Judging by past observation, human services organizations try to “pull at the heartstrings” in order to engage their audiences and bring “attention to the needs of the weak and suffering” (Kemp et al., 2013, p. 70). It is important to understand which types of messages create engagement, since emotional appeals are not the only ones being used. Observing marketing and communication strategies of organizations doing online fundraising right may be
beneficial for future research and for organizations looking to sharpen their online communication strategies, especially on social networking sites.

**Research Questions**

This study is mainly exploratory in that the researcher attempted to identify which message appeals garner more engagement from Twitter users that could lead to a cultivation of relationships between potential donors or volunteers and nonprofit organizations during online year-end giving campaigns. Twitter is a popular social network that has been adopted by many organizations to reach out to these audiences in recent years. The features and capabilities offered through Twitter bring up questions that could be investigated to better understand how and why nonprofits are using this social networking site to promote year-end giving campaigns.

RQ1: Which multimedia features in Twitter posts are used by nonprofits in year-end tweets?

RQ2: Which types of rational and emotional message appeals are nonprofits using in year-end tweets?

In order to discover which multimedia features and message appeals are most effective in cultivating engagement in Twitter users, this study asked the following questions:

RQ3: Which multimedia features used by nonprofits on Twitter in year-end tweets garner the most favorites, retweets and replies?

RQ4: What message appeals used by nonprofits on Twitter in year-end tweets garner the most favorites, retweets and replies?
CHAPTER 3: METHODS

The objective of this study was to understand which message appeals nonprofit organizations are using in their year-end tweets and communications through Twitter and which types of messages are garnering the most engagement. A content analysis was used to identify message categories and multimedia features used in year-end tweets during the 2013 holiday season.

Sampling

A sample of 737 tweets were gathered from five of the leading online fundraising nonprofit organizations in the United States: United Way, American Red Cross, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, American Heart Association and Salvation Army. These five nonprofit organizations were chosen because they had continually topped lists for earning sizable donations through online communications. Specifically, these five nonprofit organizations topped the npENGAGE list, “25 Largest Online Fundraising Nonprofits in 2010.” npENGAGE is a resource for nonprofit “news, trends, and best practices” organized and kept up-to-date by professionals in the sector (MacLaughlin, 2011). These nonprofits have met criteria necessary to conduct this content analysis by tweeting a minimum of 30 times between November 26 and December 30, 2013, and they have included appeals pertaining to year-end giving. These organizations provided a moderately broad sample of tweets being that three are categorized as social service organizations and the other two are health organizations. The content analysis was done using all of the tweets posted by nonprofit organizations during the last five weeks of 2013.
Variables and Coding Scheme

The coding scheme comprised three parts: (a) basic descriptive information about the organization and its use of Twitter multimedia features, (b) message appeals used in the tweet, and (c) user engagement variables.

Basic descriptive information about each organization was gathered from each organization’s Twitter profile page. Each organization’s name and Twitter handle were recorded along with the number of accounts each organization follows and the number of accounts following each organization.

The message appeal is the tone of the content used by nonprofits in their tweets. In this study, message appeal categories include (1) emotional, (2) rational, or (3) both. In this study, emotional message appeals are those that are intended to invoke an emotional reaction from the reader. For example, a tweet could include phrases like, “A family’s happiness is the greatest gift,” or “You can change a young child’s life.” Tweets including emotion-related verbiage, such as “happy, cheer, sympathy, pride, praise, thanks” or synonyms are all considered to be using an emotional message appeal. Rational message appeals are practical messages designed to encourage logical decision-making. For example a rational message appeal might sound like this, “For every dollar donated to our organization, 90 cents goes straight to our programs serving the community.” Tweets using a rational message appeal may present useful information to users, news or facts about the organization or a donation, such as event information or opening of new programs. Tweets including an emotional appeal and a rational appeal are categorized as “both,” for example, “By donating online directly through our donation form, you are making a positive impact on suffering families.”
A set of message appeal subcategories was developed based on examination of a 10 percent subsample of tweets randomly selected from these organizations and past research using rational and emotional appeals as main categories for analysis. The codebook includes 26 subcategories defined using the subsample of tweets by United Way, American Red Cross, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Salvation Army and American Heart Association during the year-end period. The coders categorized message appeals in each organization’s tweets based on the text in a nonprofit’s tweet, including the text of a hashtag if present. Rational messages included call to action appeals, which included an appeal to click on a multimedia feature or participate in an action, news appeals and factual reasoning appeals, which presented information about the organization or gave statistics or facts about organization, such as services, amount of people served or types of programs offered. Other tweets included rational appeals with an appeal for urgency, which explained great need requesting immediate aid.

Since there are disparate definitions of emotional and rational appeals, some categories are listed as being arbitrary, because they can be used as emotional or rational appeal depending on the content or context of a message. Campaign appeals and endorsement appeals could be categorized as either rational or emotional. Campaign appeals could be presented with a rational appeal such as, “Donate to our “Change” campaign through our online donation form,” or presented using an emotional appeal. For example, “Give the gift of change to families in need of cheer this holiday season.” Likewise for endorsement appeals used by organizations. Since an endorsement includes the participation of another party to promote a message, this can have an emotional affect or none at all, and it is up to interpretation of the reader. These were coded based on which assignment, rational or emotional, the coder decided fit best. Retweets were not used in the content analysis, however modified tweets were used. For example, if an organization
retweeted another Twitter account’s tweet, whether the source is an individual or brand, this will not be measured. However, quoted tweets with additional text by the organization or modified tweets belonging to other users with modifications made to the original by the organization were measured. Only tweets belonging to the organization were measured in this content analysis. In this study, modified tweets are considered belonging to the organization, since organizations often repost tweets of their followers or local affiliates’ Twitter accounts when they are relevant to the organization’s goals online. The added text of modified tweets was coded.

Multimedia features were included for measurement, because they can either increase or decrease interactivity and engagement from Twitter users. For example, a multimedia feature may earn more favorites, but a different multimedia features may spark more conversation and earn more replies or retweets. Multimedia features were operationally defined using the terms provided by Twitter and Edman’s (2010) thesis study (See Table 1). The exact text of each tweet was provided as well as a description of the multimedia features used in the tweet if present. The type of multimedia features (link, hashtag, photo and video) were coded as “1” for yes when present, and “0” for no when absent. Since messages can include more than one multimedia feature, the primary coder included all multimedia features used in a single tweet. The primary coder did not record the message or content of a multimedia feature, but provided a description of each in the dataset for reference if the message appeal(s) was not completely clear through just the text content.

**Coding Procedures and Intercoder Reliability**

The primary coder trained the secondary coder for a total of four hours. The secondary coder was briefed on each message appeals definition as it was recorded in the codebook, as well as given instructions on how to code each variable. Since multimedia features are not interpreted,
each feature included in a tweet was recorded only by the primary coder to determine which multimedia features are being used by these five organizations. The coding procedure was conducted on Microsoft Excel.

Intercoder reliability was measured using a primary coder and secondary coder code for each message appeal included in 10% of the tweets in the dataset (n = 77). After both coders completed coding, intercoder reliability was tested using dfreelon.org, a free online service that calculates intercoder reliability coefficients, including nominal data (Freelon, 2010). Scott’s pi was used to test for intercoder reliability of all message appeal variables. Three out of 26 message appeal variables had a 100% agreement and perfect Scott’s pi of 1. Eight variables scored with Scott’s pi of .551 to .660. Thirteen message appeal subcategories provided a Scott’s pi between .540 and .306. Three variables provided Scott’s pi scores of .701 and .736.

Statistical Analysis

Park et al.’s (2011) research on health organizations’ use of Facebook for advertising and promotion and Ivana Mamic and Almaraz’ (2013) analysis of brand Twitter activity as a means for communicating with stakeholders were referenced as guidelines for conducting the content analysis of this study. Chi-square tests and ANOVA tests were conducted to answer the four research questions on SPSS.

To answer RQ1, frequency tests were conducted to determine which multimedia features the five nonprofit organizations included in their Twitter posts over the year-end period. To answer RQ2, a frequency test was run to determine which types of rational and emotional appeals each of the five organizations were using in their year-end tweets. For both RQ1 and RQ2, a series of chi-square tests were also conducted. The organization name served as the
independent variable, and dependent variables were the message appeals, main categories and subcategories.

For RQ3 and RQ4, a series of ANOVA tests were conducted to examine differences between group means and to determine which message appeals and multimedia features were more likely to gain user engagement during the year-end period on Twitter.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Nonprofit communication strategists have placed more emphasis on incorporating Twitter, the popular social media site, into communication plans. Twitter is a platform that allows nonprofit organizations to directly engage their audiences online in real time and has proven to be a necessary tool for conducting digital communications and nonprofit development.

To explore how nonprofit organizations are using Twitter as an engagement tool, a content analysis was conducted with tweets from five nonprofit organizations. This section outlines and details the research findings from the content analysis of these nonprofits using Twitter in their year-end tweets.

Before running statistical analyses, all general data from each organization was collected and recorded. Each organization’s Twitter handle, Twitter followers and following were documented (see Table 2).

Table 2. Organization Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Twitter Handle</th>
<th>Followers</th>
<th>Following</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Heart Association</td>
<td>@American_Heart</td>
<td>109,000</td>
<td>5,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leukemia &amp; Lymphoma Society</td>
<td>@LLSusa</td>
<td>11,900</td>
<td>998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Red Cross</td>
<td>@RedCross</td>
<td>1,230,000</td>
<td>40,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
<td>@SalvationArmyUS</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>6,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Way</td>
<td>@UnitedWay</td>
<td>26,100</td>
<td>6,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The number of tweets each organization posted during the five-week period were used as the dataset (n = 737). American Heart Association posted 21% of the tweets in the dataset (n = 155), Leukemia & Lymphoma Society posted 40.4% (n = 298), American Red Cross posted 5.2% (n = 38), Salvation Army posted 28% (n = 206), and United Way posted 5.4% (n = 40). Some organizations posted large percentages of their tweets on single days. American Red Cross posted 55.3% of their tweets (n = 21) on #GivingTuesday. Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, the nonprofit that provided the largest sample of tweets to the dataset, posted 62.8% of their tweets (n = 187) on #GivingTuesday. United Way posted 23.9% of their tweets (n = 11) on November 26, 2013, just before the Thanksgiving holiday.

While coding each organization’s tweets, patterns were observed in tweeting and message types for each organization. American Heart Association tweeted frequently using the rational appeals news in 32.3% of its tweets (n = 50) and useful information in 60.6% (n = 940). They also included links in a large portion of their tweets (94.8%, n = 147). American Heart Association rarely used emotional appeals (3.9%, n = 6), while Leukemia & Lymphoma Society used more emotional message appeals (55%, n = 189) in its year-end tweets than rational (24%, n = 82). Leukemia & Lymphoma Society provided the largest sample of tweets during this period, because the organization replied to Twitter users who expressed support for the organization, especially on #GivingTuesday.

**RQ1: Which multimedia features in Twitter posts are used by nonprofits in online year-end Tweets?**

Each organization used multimedia features differently. Results using the full dataset (n = 737) showed that all five of the organizations included links (n = 389), hashtags (n = 526), and photos (n = 68) in their year-end tweets. However, links and hashtags were included in tweets far more than photos and videos (n = 23). American Heart Association used links more frequently
than any other organization and included links in 94.8% of its tweets (n = 147). Leukemia & Lymphoma Society used links in only 23.5% of its tweets (n = 70), but used hashtags much more frequently (See Table 3). While each organization tweeted at different rates per week during the year-end period, the nonprofits, with the exception of Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, incorporated links in more than 59% of their tweets. American Heart Association was most likely to use links in tweets than any other organization (94.8%; n = 147). Videos were used by all organizations, except for United Way. A chi-square test revealed differences among organizations in their use of links ($\chi^2(4, N = 737) = 220.419$, p < .05). Hashtags were used by all five organizations. A chi-square test revealed significant differences among organizations in the use of hashtags ($\chi^2(4, N = 737) = 34.350$, p < .05). Chi-square tests also revealed significant differences among organizations in the use of photo ($\chi^2(4, N = 737) = 32.305$, p < .05) and video ($\chi^2(4, N = 737) = 21.861$, p < .05), which was the least likely used multimedia feature by all five organizations.

**American Heart Association**

American Heart Association utilized multimedia features in more of its year-end tweets than any other multimedia features (94.8%; n = 147). Conversely, the organization used hashtags in 56% of tweets (n = 87), less than any other organization. Also used less frequently than the other four organizations, American Heart Association included photos in 2.6% of tweets (n = 4), as well as video in 2.6% of its tweets (n = 4) (See Table 3).

**Table 3: Multimedia Features in Tweets**

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Link</td>
<td>147 (94.8%)</td>
<td>70 (23.5%)</td>
<td>23 (60.5%)</td>
<td>122 (59.2%)</td>
<td>27 (67.5%)</td>
<td>389 (52.8%)</td>
<td>220.419*</td>
<td>220.419*</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
(Table 3 continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multimedia Feature</th>
<th>Organization 1</th>
<th>Organization 2</th>
<th>Organization 3</th>
<th>Organization 4</th>
<th>Organization 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hashtag</td>
<td>87 (56.1%)</td>
<td>207 (69.5%)</td>
<td>34 (89.5%)</td>
<td>165 (80.1%)</td>
<td>33 (82.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>526 (71.4%)</td>
<td>34.350*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>4 (2.6%)</td>
<td>21 (7.0%)</td>
<td>10 (26.3%)</td>
<td>31 (15.0%)</td>
<td>2 (5.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>68 (9.2%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.305*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>4 (2.6%)</td>
<td>3 (1.0%)</td>
<td>5 (13.2%)</td>
<td>11 (5.3%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23 (3.1%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21.861*</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\[ df = 4, *p < .05. \]

**Salvation Army**

Links were included in 59.2% (n = 122) of Salvation Army’s tweets. The organization used hashtags in 80.1% of tweets (n = 165), more than any other multimedia features used by the organization. Photos were used less frequently in 15% of its tweets (n = 31). However, Salvation Army was more likely to use photos than three other organizations. Videos were included in 5.3% (n = 11) of Salvation Army’s tweets (See Table 3).

**American Red Cross**

American Red Cross used links in 60.5% (n = 23) of its year-end tweets, similar to Salvation Army (59.2%). Hashtags were more likely to be used by American Red Cross, showing up in 89.5% of tweets (n = 34) and photos were included in 26.3% of its tweets (n = 10). The organization tweeted using the #GivingTuesday hashtag in most of its tweets on December 3 (n = 21). While the four other organizations were less likely to use videos, American Red Cross included the most percentage of videos with 13.2% (n = 5) of tweets including the multimedia feature. American Red Cross was most likely to use photo (n = 10, 26.3%) and video (n = 5, 13.2%) in its year-end tweets (See Table 3).

United Way used links in 67.5% of tweets (n = 27) and included hashtags in 82.5% of tweets (33). United Way was less likely to use photos and included the multimedia feature in
5.0% (n = 2) of their tweets. United Way was the only organization to not include video in any of its year-end tweets (See Table 3).

**Leukemia and Lymphoma**

Leukemia and Lymphoma used links least frequently in only 23.5% of tweets (n = 70). Hashtags were more frequently used in tweets by this organization and more likely to show up during the year-end period. A total of 207 of Leukemia & Lymphoma Society’s tweets (n = 69.5%) included hashtags. Leukemia & Lymphoma Society were not likely to use videos in year-end tweets. Videos were included in 1% of its tweets (n = 3).

**RQ2: Which types of rational and emotional message appeals are nonprofits using in their year-end tweets?**

To gain a better understanding of how nonprofit organizations are communicating with their audiences on Twitter, rational and emotional message appeals used were analyzed. Overall, rational message appeals were used most in the total sample of year-end tweets (52.8%, n = 389). The results showed that 34.9% of tweets included only emotional appeals (n = 257) and that 12.3% of tweets included both rational and emotional appeals.

A chi-square analysis was conducted to examine if the sampled organizations differ regarding the use of emotional and rational appeals. The American Heart Association tends to use rational appeals more frequently (90.7%, n = 137) than emotional appeals (3.9%, n = 6) or a mixture of emotional and rational appeals (4.5%, n = 7). However, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society used mostly emotional appeals in its year-end tweets (58%, n =170) and used rational appeals nearly half as frequently as emotional appeals (27.6%, n = 81) The American Red Cross, Salvation Army and United Way tweeted using rational appeals in 55.3%, 59.7%, and 59.1% of tweets and emotional appeals in 31.6%, 24.8%, and 27.3% of tweets, respectively. A chi-square
analysis showed that differences among the organizations in the use of rational and emotional message appeals were statistically different ($\chi^2(4, N = 737) = 180.078, p < .05$).

Subcategories of message appeals were also diverse among organizations. While there were 26 subcategories, six subcategories stood out among the rest reporting significant differences between organizations.

The message appeal subcategory, campaign, was used in 24.4% (n = 181) of the tweets in the dataset. These tweets included at least one mention of a campaign, whether it was a publicly used campaign such as #GivingTuesday, or a campaign specifically conducted by the organization. Since the content of a hashtag was also included in the message interpretation during coding, tweets including hashtags referring to a campaign were considered. For example, “The 2012 #RedKettle campaign collected a record $150 million nationwide & helped serve millions!” is a mock tweet that includes a hashtag referring to Salvation Army’s annual Red Kettle campaign. United Way did not conduct a unique campaign during year-end giving, but did participate in #GivingTuesday. United Way tweeted “It’s about change, not charity. Get involved with @UnitedWay TEAM NFL! #GivingTuesday http://bit.ly/17C7HUc,” which provides a campaign appeal with the use of the “#GivingTuesday” hashtag (United Way, 2013).

The Salvation Army and American Red Cross used campaign appeals more than the other organizations. Salvation Army included campaign appeals in 59.7% of its tweets (n = 206) and American Red Cross included a campaign appeal in 60.5% of its tweets (n = 23). Compared to these two organizations, American Heart Association (3.5%, n = 5), Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (6.0%, n = 18) and United Way (25%, n = 11) were less likely to use the campaign appeal. A chi-square analysis showed significant differences among organizations in the use of the campaign message appeal ($\chi^2(4, N = 730) = 252.940, p < .05$).
While messages with rational appeals including useful information scored 14.8% (n = 110) of tweets in the total sample, the majority of those tweets came from American Heart Association, which tweeted using a useful information appeal in 59.7% of its year-end tweets (n = 86). The useful information appeal was less likely used by Salvation Army (n = 2, 0.5%), American Red Cross (18.4%, n = 7), Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (0.3%, n = 1), and United Way (15.9%, n = 7). A chi-square analysis showed significant differences among organizations regarding their inclusion of useful information appeals ($\chi^2(4, N = 730) = 323.911, p < .05$).

The call to action appeal showed significant differences in organizations ($\chi^2(4, N = 730) = 93.124, p < .05$). American Heart Association (27.1%, n = 39), Salvation Army (29.1%, n = 60), United Way (25%, n = 11), and American Red Cross (23.7%, n = 9) used the call to action appeal in approximately a quarter of their year-end tweets, while Leukemia & Lymphoma Society used the appeal in less than 1% (n = 2).

The news message appeal was more likely to be used by American Heart Association (33.3%, n = 48) and United Way (31.8%, n = 14) than Salvation Army (16.5%, n = 34), American Red Cross (13.2%, n = 5), and Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (0.3%, n = 1). The organizations appeared to differ regarding the use of the news appeal ($\chi^2(4, N = 730) = 103.786, p < .05$). Chi-square tests revealed significant differences among organizations in tweets with question appeals ($\chi^2(4, N = 730) = 127.432, p < .05$). Tweets using the question appeal ranged from less than 1% in Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (n = 2) and up to 36.1% in American Heart Association (n = 52).

The most used emotional appeal in the dataset was gratitude. A chi-squared revealed significant differences among organizations using the gratitude appeal ($\chi^2(4, N = 730) = 231.519, p < .05$). The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society used gratitude in 60.4% of its tweets (n = 180). As
previously mentioned, the organization tweeted to its followers frequently on #GivingTuesday and through the year-end period to thank its supporters. American Red Cross (23.7%, n = 9) and United Way (20.5%, 9) also thanked its supporters on Twitter for their year-end contributions, and Salvation Army included gratitude in 10.7% of its tweets (n = 22).

Fear and humor appeals were not used by any organization. Messages including appeals of inspiration were used by less than 3% of each organization, providing a 1.2% in the collective dataset (n = 9). American Red Cross was the only organization to utilize the mascot appeal, with 7.9% (n = 3) of tweets including a reference to a character created by the organization (See Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4: Message Appeals in Tweets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nonprofit Organization</th>
<th>Emotional</th>
<th>Rational</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Heart Association</td>
<td>8 (5.3%)</td>
<td>174 (58.4%)</td>
<td>12 (31.6%)</td>
<td>12 (27.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leukemia &amp; Lymphoma Society</td>
<td>174 (58.4%)</td>
<td>82 (27.5%)</td>
<td>21 (55.3%)</td>
<td>123 (59.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Red Cross</td>
<td>12 (31.6%)</td>
<td>21 (55.3%)</td>
<td>5 (13.2%)</td>
<td>25 (12.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
<td>51 (24.8%)</td>
<td>123 (59.7%)</td>
<td>32 (15.5%)</td>
<td>36 (16.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Way</td>
<td>12 (27.3%)</td>
<td>26 (59.1%)</td>
<td>6 (13.6%)</td>
<td>11 (27.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>257 (34.9%)</td>
<td>389 (52.8%)</td>
<td>89 (11.9%)</td>
<td>737 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X² (8, N = 737) = 182.595, p < .05.

Table 5: Message Appeal Subcategories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nonprofit Organization</th>
<th>Call-to-Action</th>
<th>Leukemia &amp; Lymphoma Society</th>
<th>American Red Cross</th>
<th>Salvation Army</th>
<th>United Way</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>X²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call-to-Action</td>
<td>39 (27.1%)</td>
<td>2 (0.7%)</td>
<td>9 (23.7%)</td>
<td>60 (29.1%)</td>
<td>11 (25%)</td>
<td>121 (16.6%)</td>
<td>93.124*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Table 5 continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message Appeal</th>
<th>American Heart Association</th>
<th>Leukemia &amp; Lymphoma Society</th>
<th>American Red Cross</th>
<th>Salvation Army</th>
<th>United Way</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>48 (33.3%)</td>
<td>1 (0.3%)</td>
<td>5 (13.2%)</td>
<td>34 (16.5%)</td>
<td>14 (31.8%)</td>
<td>102 (14.0%)</td>
<td>103.786*</td>
</tr>
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<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
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<td>25 (12.1%)</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>33 (4.5%)</td>
<td>47.460*</td>
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<td>9 (1.2%)</td>
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<td>2 (5.3%)</td>
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<td>80 (11.0%)</td>
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<td>9 (23.7%)</td>
<td>26 (12.6%)</td>
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<td>44 (6.0%)</td>
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<td>7 (15.9%)</td>
<td>103 (14.1%)</td>
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<td>9 (20.5%)</td>
<td>220 (30.1%)</td>
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<td>Leukemia &amp; Lymphoma Society</td>
<td>American Red Cross</td>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
<td>United Way</td>
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<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
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<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>5 (0.7%)</td>
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<td>3 (0.4%)</td>
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<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
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<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>11 (1.5%)</td>
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<td>23 (3.2%)</td>
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<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>3 (6.8%)</td>
<td>11 (1.5%)</td>
<td>12.854*</td>
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<td>151 (100%)</td>
<td>298 (100%)</td>
<td>38 (100%)</td>
<td>206 (100%)</td>
<td>44 (100%)</td>
<td>730 (100%)</td>
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</table>

\( df = 4, *p < .05. \)
RQ3: Which multimedia features in year-end tweets garner the most favorites, retweets and replies?

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to understand which multimedia features increase user engagement. Multimedia features included links, hashtags, photos and video. Engagement was measured using retweets, favorites and replies. Four separate ANOVA tests were conducted to understand which multimedia features were most effective at increasing engagement on Twitter across all organizations. ANOVA tests showed the inclusion of links in tweets significantly increased the number of retweets received (M = 18.343; F (2, 726) = 18.234, p < .05) and replies (M = 1.144; F (2, 726) = 15.239, p < .05). When links were not present, engagement was less frequent through retweets (M = 6.933) and replies (M = .614). No significant differences were found for favorites between tweets with links (M = 11.073) and those without links (M = 4.573; F (2, 726) = 2.115, p = .146).

No significant differences were found between tweets with hashtags and those without for retweets (M_{present} = 13.790; M_{absent} = 10.890; F(2, 726) = .944, p = .331), favorites (M_{present} = 9.754; M_{absent} = 3.656; F(2, 726) = 1.526, p = .217), or replies (M_{present} = .950; M_{absent} = .751; F (2, 726) = 1.732, p = .189). Tweets with photos appear to significantly increase the number of retweets (M_{present} = 27.333, M_{absent} = 11.528; F(2, 726) = 11.455, p < .05), favorites (M_{present} = 22.818, M_{absent} = 6.531; F(2, 726) = 4.400, p < .05), and replies (M_{present} = 1.394, M_{absent} = .843; F(2, 726) = 5.393, p < .05) compared to tweets without photos. No significant differences were reported between tweets with video and those without in retweets (M_{present} = 15.273, M_{absent} = 12.887; F(2, 726) = .091, p = .763), favorites (M_{present} = 8.273, M_{absent} = 7.997; F(2, 726) = .000, p = .983) or replies (M_{present} = .364, M_{absent} = .909; F(2, 726) = 1.871, p = .172) (See Table 6). These results suggest that links and photos are more likely to help increase public engagement
with nonprofit organizations on Twitter compared to hashtags and links.

Table 6. Multimedia Features and Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom (df)</th>
<th>Mean Square (M)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Link</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1297.090</td>
<td>18.234</td>
<td>.000*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Favorites</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Replies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.334</td>
<td>15.239</td>
<td>.000*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>727</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>1327.896</td>
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<td>3.396</td>
<td>1.732</td>
<td>.189</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>727</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>Retweets</td>
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<td>1308.996</td>
<td>11.455</td>
<td>.001*</td>
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<td>Favorites</td>
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<td>3618.681</td>
<td>4.400</td>
<td>.036*</td>
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<td>3.379</td>
<td>5.393</td>
<td>.020*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>727</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Video</td>
<td>Retweets</td>
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<td>1329.454</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>.763</td>
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<td>.000</td>
<td>.983</td>
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<td>Replies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.396</td>
<td>1.871</td>
<td>.172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>727</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

\( df = 1, *p < .05 \)

**American Heart Association**

A series of one-way ANOVA tests were performed to examine if the number of retweets, favorites and replies received differs when Twitter features (link, hashtag, photo or video) are present compared to when they are not. ANOVA tests using American Heart Association
compared the number of retweets, favorites, then replies received when a link was present in year-end tweets. Links were marginally significant at increasing retweets (M_{present} = 19.089, M_{absent} = 11.375; F(2, 152) = 3.298, p < .10). No significance was found for favorites and replies (See Table 7). No significant differences were reported between tweets with hashtags and those without in retweets (M_{present} = 18.00; M_{absent} = 19.582; F(2, 150) = .681, p = .411), favorites (M_{present} = 4.644, M_{absent} = 5.313; F(2, 150) = 1.351, p = .247) or replies (M_{present} = 1.40, M_{absent} = 1.359; F(2, 150) = .018, p = .893). No significant differences were reported between tweets with photos and tweets without in retweets (M_{present} = 19.750, M_{absent} = 18.660; F(2, 150) = .033, p = .856), favorites (M_{present} = 2.750, M_{absent} = 4.993; F(2, 150) = 1.562, p = .213), or replies (M_{present} = 1.00, M_{absent} = 1.392; F(2, 150) = .683, p = .683). Finally, an ANOVA showed no significant differences between tweets including video and those without video in retweets (M_{present} = 11.00, M_{absent} = 18.893; F(2, 150) = 1.756, p = .187), favorites (M_{present} = 4.750, M_{absent} = 4.490; F(2, 150) = .011, p = .916), or replies (M_{present} = .00, M_{absent} = 1.419; F(2, 150) = 2.228, p = .138). See Table 7.

Table 7. American Heart Association – Multimedia Features and Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom (df)</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square (M)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<td>.071†</td>
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(Table 7 Continued)

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\[ df = 1, *p < .05, †p < .10 \]

**Salvation Army**

ANOVA tests using Salvation Army’s year-end tweets were conducted to determine which multimedia features in tweets had an effect on engagement. No significant differences in tweets with links and those without links were found in retweets \((M_{\text{present}} = 16.975, M_{\text{absent}} = 10.964; F(2, 204) = .576, p = .449)\), favorites \((M_{\text{present}} = 22.645, M_{\text{absent}} = 8.702; F(2, 204) = .772, p = .381)\), or replies \((M_{\text{present}} = 1.083; M_{\text{absent}} = 1.214; F(2, 204) = .166, p = .684)\). No significant differences in tweets with photos and tweets without were found in retweets \((M_{\text{present}} = 26.548, M_{\text{absent}} = 12.297; F(2, 204) = 1.737, p = .189)\), favorites \((M_{\text{present}} = 33.871, M_{\text{absent}} = 13.834; F(2, 204) = .851, p = .357)\), or replies \((M_{\text{present}} = 1.581, M_{\text{absent}} = 1.051; F(2, 204) = 1.436, p = .232)\). Tweets with videos and tweets without also resulted in no significant differences in retweets \((M_{\text{present}} = 11.091, M_{\text{absent}} = 14.631; F(2, 204) = .042, p = .838)\), favorites \((M_{\text{present}} = 8.091, M_{\text{absent}} = 8.091; F(2, 204) = .042, p = .838)\), or replies \((M_{\text{present}} = 1.083, M_{\text{absent}} = 1.214; F(2, 204) = .166, p = .684)\).
= 17.344; F(2, 204) = .071, p = .789), or replies (M_{present} = .455, M_{absent} = 1.169; F(2, 204) = 1.033, p = .311). However, hashtags included in year-end tweets showed marginally significant differences replies (M_{present} = 1.274, M_{absent} = .585; F(2, 204) = 3.044, p < .10), but not in retweets (M_{present} = 16.104, M_{absent} = 8.146) or favorites (M_{present} = 19.970, M_{absent} = 4.780). (See Table 8).

Table 8. Salvation Army – Multimedia Features and Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom (df)</th>
<th>Mean Square (M)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>.449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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(Table 8 continued)

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<th>F</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<tbody>
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$df = 1, \; ^{†}p < .10$

**American Red Cross**

ANOVA tests were conducted using American Red Cross’s year-end tweets to determine an increase in engagement when multimedia features were used in year-end tweets. ANOVA tests showed no significant differences between tweets with links and those without in retweets ($M_{\text{present}} = 74.870, M_{\text{absent}} = 73.714$), favorites ($M_{\text{present}} = 28.522, M_{\text{absent}} = 44.286$), or replies ($M_{\text{present}} = 2.913, M_{\text{absent}} = 2.857$) (See Table 9). Tests found marginally significant differences in retweets ($M_{\text{present}} = 33.000, M_{\text{absent}} = 80.906; F(2, 36) = 3.064, p < .10$) and replies ($M_{\text{present}} = .60, M_{\text{absent}} = 3.250; F(2, 36) = 3.009, p < .10$) between tweets including video and tweets not including video. No significance was found in favorites regarding the use of videos ($M_{\text{present}} = 14.800, M_{\text{absent}} = 37.563$). See Table 9.

**Table 9. American Red Cross Multimedia Features and Engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom (df)</th>
<th>Mean Square (M)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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(Table 9 continued)

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<td>.008</td>
<td>.928</td>
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<td>.089†</td>
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$df = 1$, †$p < .10$

**Leukemia & Lymphoma Society**

An ANOVA test showed that the use of links in year-end tweets was statistically significant in gaining retweets ($F(2, 291) = 53.723$, $p < .001$) and marginally significant at increasing favorites ($F(2, 293) = 3.347$, $p < .10$). Another ANOVA test showed that the use of photos in year-end tweets was statistically significant in gaining retweets ($F(2, 291) = 95.959$, $p < .001$), favorites ($F(2, 291) = 101.690$, $p < .001$) and replies ($F(2, 292) = 4.082$, $p < .05$). Tweets without a photo showed less engagement in retweets ($M = 1.403$), favorites ($M = .513$), and replies ($M = .266$). No significance was found for any engagement variable when Leukemia & Lymphoma Society used hashtags or videos in tweets (See Table 10).
Table 10. Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Multimedia Features and Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom (df)</th>
<th>Mean Square (M)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Retweets</td>
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<td>12.747</td>
<td>53.723</td>
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<td>3.347</td>
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<td>Replies</td>
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<td>.415</td>
<td>.520</td>
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<td>.483</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Retweets</td>
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<td>11.356</td>
<td>95.959</td>
<td>.000*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>Favorites</td>
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<td>2.987</td>
<td>101.690</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>Replies</td>
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<td>.508</td>
<td>4.082</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Video</td>
<td>Retweets</td>
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</table>

$df = 1, p < .05, \dagger p < .100$

**United Way**

A one-way ANOVA test found no significance for United Way’s use of links or hashtags (See Table 11). The test found that photos had statistically significant effects in gaining retweets
(F (2, 39) = 6.143, p < .05) and replies (F (2, 39) = 7.595, p < .05). When photos were not present, retweets (M_{absent} = 6.289 vs. M_{present} = 18.500) and replies (M_{absent} = .289 vs. M_{present} = 3.500) occurred less often. United Way did not use videos in its year-end tweets (See Table 11).

Table 11. United Way Multimedia Features and Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom (df)</th>
<th>Mean Square (M)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Link Retweets</td>
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<td>.114</td>
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<td>.485</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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*df = 1, *p < .05

**RQ4: What message appeals used by nonprofits on Twitter in year-end tweets garner the most favorites, retweets and replies?**

When looking at all organizations, a one-way ANOVA test showed that differences between emotional message appeals and rational message appeals were statistically significant in increasing retweets (F(1, 734) = 8.584, p < .001) and replies (F(1, 734) = 8.295, p < .001). No
significance was found for these main categories in increasing favorites (F(1, 734) = .980, p = .376). Tweets with rational appeals received the most retweets (M = 17.819) and replies (M = 1.119). Emotional Appeals were least likely to receive retweets (M = 5.832) and replies (M = .523). Tweets including both a rational and emotional appeal also earned more retweets (M = 12.198), favorites (M = 6.835), and replies (M = .967) than tweets with only emotional appeals.

The use of message appeal did not make any significant difference in receiving favorites (M_{emotional} = 5.999, M_{rational} = 18.924, M_{both} = 10.296) (See Table 12).

Table 12: Message Appeals and Engagement (All organizations)

<table>
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<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom (df)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<td>Retweets</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Retweets</td>
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<td>12.198</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>12.941</td>
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<td>Favorites</td>
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<td>Favorites</td>
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<td>6.835</td>
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<td>7.963</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Replies</td>
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<td>.1119</td>
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</table>
The use of rational and emotional message appeal subcategories in year-end tweets were tested for effect on user engagement. Reported are the appeals that comprised more than 5% of the overall dataset.

A one-way ANOVA found that tweets using a call-to-action appeal were statistically significant at increasing retweets ($F(1, 734) = 12.218, p < .05$), favorites ($F(1, 734) = 9.517, p < .05$), and replies ($F(1, 734) = 6.692, p < .05$). When call to action appeals were not present, tweets were less likely to receive retweets ($M_{\text{present}} = 23.063$ vs. $M_{\text{absent}} = 10.804$), favorites ($M_{\text{present}} = 22.766$ vs. $M_{\text{absent}} = 4.837$), and replies ($M_{\text{present}} = 1.273$ vs. $M_{\text{absent}} = .812$).

A one-way ANOVA found the campaign message appeal was also statistically significant at increasing retweets ($F(1, 734) = 13.872, p < .001$), favorites ($F(1, 734) = 11.695, p < .05$), and replies ($F(1, 734) = 19.831, p < .05$). Tweets without a campaign appeal were less likely to receive retweets ($M_{\text{absent}} = 10.130$ vs. $M_{\text{present}} = 21.659$), favorites ($M_{\text{absent}} = 21.223$ vs. $M_{\text{present}} = 3.686$), and replies ($M_{\text{absent}} = .722$ vs. $M_{\text{present}} = 1.417$). Tweets including useful information were found statistically significant at increasing retweets ($M_{\text{present}} = 23.982$, $M_{\text{absent}} = 10.995$; $F(1, 734) = 12.132$, $p < .05$) and replies ($M_{\text{present}} = 1.486$, $M_{\text{absent}} = .788$; $F(1, 734) = 13.539$, $p < .001$), but no significance was found in favorites ($M_{\text{present}} = 6.164$, $M_{\text{absent}} = 8.280$; $F(1, 734) = .116$, $p = .734$) (See Table 13).

<table>
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<th>Both</th>
<th>Replies</th>
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<th>.967</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>8.295</td>
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Table 13: Subcategories and Engagement (All organizations)

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<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom (df)</th>
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<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<td>Favorites</td>
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<td>9.517</td>
<td>.002*</td>
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<td>Call-to-Action</td>
<td>Replies</td>
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<td>6.692</td>
<td>.010*</td>
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<td>.971</td>
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<td>.876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday</td>
<td>Replies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.159</td>
<td>1.604</td>
<td>.206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign</td>
<td>Retweets</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21.659</td>
<td>13.872</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These message appeals all fell under the rational message appeal main category.

Under emotional appeals, an ANOVA test showed no significance in tweets with a gratitude appeal for increase in retweets ($M_{\text{present}} = 3.160, M_{\text{absent}} = 17.101; F (1, 734) = 23.318, p < .001$), replies ($M_{\text{present}} = .457; M_{\text{absent}} = 1.078; F (1, 734) = 17.862, p < .001$), or favorites ($M_{\text{present}} = 2.575; M_{\text{absent}} = 10.254; F (1, 734) = 2.514, p = .113$). Tweets not including gratitude appeals worked better at getting retweets.
While there were 26 message appeal subcategories, ANOVA tests were run on the appeals that appeared in a minimum of 25% of each organization’s tweets, with the exception of American Red Cross. Since American Red Cross contributed the fewest number of tweets to the dataset (n = 38), ANOVA tests were run on message appeals tweeted in 23.7% (of the organization’s year-end tweets or higher (See Table 13).

American Heart Association used the call to action message appeal in 29.7% of its tweets (n = 46). An ANOVA test found that tweets including a call-to-action appeal were statistically significant at increasing retweets (F(1, 155) = 9.786, p < .05) and replies (F(1, 155) = 13.843, p < .05) and found that these tweets were marginally significant at increasing favorites (F(1, 155) = 4.279, p < .100). Tweets without call to action appeals were more likely to receive retweets (M_absent = 26.429 vs. M_present = 13.750), favorites (M_absent = 5.857 vs. M_present = 3.750) and replies (M_absent = 2.714 vs. M_present = .625). Tweets including news message appeals (32.3%, n = 50) were found marginally significant at increasing retweets (M_present = 29.333, M_absent = 17.250; F(1, 155) = 4.351, p < .10) and replies (M_present = 3.000, M_absent = 1.250; F(1, 155) = 3.940, p < .10), but nonsignificant at increasing favorites (F(1, 155) = 1.284, p = .278). Tests showed no significance in tweets including a question (36.8%, n = 57) for retweets (F(1, 155) = 1.159, p = .301) or favorites (F(1, 155) = .954, p = .347), but found marginal significance in replies (F(1, 155) = 3.155, p < .10). Tweets using a message appeal categorized as useful information (60.6%, n = 94) were used most frequently by American Heart Association; however, no significant differences were found in tweets with useful information and those without for engagement in retweets (F(1, 155) = 2.193, p = .162), favorites (F(1, 155) = .118, p = .737) or replies (F(1, 155) = 3.057, p = .104).
Salvation Army used the campaign message appeal in 59.7% of its tweets (n = 123). An ANOVA test showed statistical significance in increased replies (F(1, 206) = 7.964, p < .05) when tweets included a campaign message appeal (M = 1.500) compared to those without (M = .602). The call to action appeal was Salvation Army’s second most frequently used appeal, showing up in 28.6% (n = 59) of the organization’s year-end tweets. No significance was found in retweets (F(1, 206) = 2.172, p = .117), favorites (F(1, 206) = 2.216, p = .112), or replies (F(1, 206) = 2.216, p = .112) between tweets including a call to action appeal and tweets without the appeal.

ANOVAs for American Red Cross were reported on message appeal subcategories used in a minimum of 23.7% (n = 9), since the organization had the lowest amount of tweets during the year-end period (n = 38). American Red Cross used a call to action in 23.7% of year-end tweets (n = 9). An ANOVA test found a marginally significant increase in favorites (F(1, 38) = 3.040, p < .10) when call to action was used (M_{present} = 17.333 vs. M_{absent} = 38.621) by American Red Cross in its year-end tweets. Year-end ask appeals were used in 23.7% of the organization’s tweets (n = 9). No significance was found in retweets (F(1, 38) = .750, p = .392), favorites (F(1, 38) = 1.424, p = .241) or replies (F(1, 38) = .052, p = .821) when a year-end ask appeal was included in tweets. The organization’s most frequently used appeal was campaign at 60.5% (n = 23). An ANOVA test showed statistical significance in retweets (M_{present} = 54.435, M_{absent} = 100.133) regarding the use of campaign appeal (F(1, 38) = 6.221, p < .05), which was one of the message appeals that showed statistical significance over the entire dataset. Finally, gratitude was used in 23.7% of American Red Cross’s year-end tweets (n = 9). Tweets without the appeal were found marginally significant at increasing retweets (M_{present} = 43.222, M_{absent} = 81.552; F(1,
38) = 3.063, p < .10). No significance was found in favorites (F(1, 38) = .105, p = .748) or replies (F(1, 38) = .556, p = .461) in tweets using gratitude.

Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (n = 298) used the gratitude message appeal in 60.4% of tweets (n = 180), making it the organization’s most frequently used message appeal category. A one-way ANOVA found statistical significance in the increase of retweets (M_{present} = .433, M_{absent} = 4.052; F(1, 298) = 84.249, p < .001) and favorites (M_{present} = .480, M_{absent} = 1.195; F(1, 298) = 9.738, p < .050) when tweets did not have a gratitude appeal. No significance was found for gratitude increasing replies (F(1, 298) = .709, p = .400).

United Way used the news message appeal in 31.8% of tweets (n = 14), campaign in 25% (n = 11), call to action in 25% (n = 11) and endorsement in 25% (n = 11). For the use of news appeal, no significance was found in retweets (F(1, 44) = .001, p = .978), favorites (F(1, 44) = .663, p = .420), or replies (F(1, 44) = .387, p = .538). For call to action appeals, no significance was found in retweets (F(1, 44) = 1.130, p = .294), favorites (F(1, 44) = 1.228, p = .275), or replies (F(1, 44) = .784, p = .381). Tweets including endorsement found no significance in retweets (F(1, 44) = .039, p = .844), favorites (F(1, 44) = .248, p = .621), or replies (F(1, 44) = 1.218, p = .277).
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Nonprofit communication strategists have placed more emphasis on incorporating Twitter, the popular social media site, into communication plans. Twitter is a platform that allows nonprofit organizations to directly engage their audiences online, in real time, and has proven to be a necessary tool for conducting digital communications and nonprofit development.

The five organizations used in this study provided interesting results that will contribute to the limited research in mass communication focusing on social media use by nonprofit organizations and contribute to practical use in nonprofit development. While each organization displayed varied methods of communication using Twitter, they shared similar themes that provide a guideline to connecting the results of the study and understanding what communications methods would hold more effective in increasing engagement from users online. Through qualitative observations made during the coding procedure, it was apparent that nonprofit organizations use Twitter for various reasons and place emphasis on utilizing it to solicit funds or support at different degrees, but still maintain practices to regularly communicate with their audiences online via microblogging.

Results from research question one showed that hashtags and links were the most frequently used multimedia features among organizations. While these two multimedia features were used more frequently than photos and video, ANOVA test results conducted to answer research question three showed hashtags did not increase engagement on Twitter. Conversely, links and photos did show increased engagement, even though results answering research question one showed photos were used much less than links and hashtags. These findings explain that links are an effective component in tweets when increasing engagement is the goal. Hashtags flood Twitter and users sometimes include unrelated hashtags in their tweets that may
be viewed as “spam” (Twitter Help Center, Twitter Rules, n.d.). While Twitter imposes consequences for using hashtags as a means for spamming, repeatedly posting about one topic is allowed and attaching a hashtag to relevant tweets frequently is not prohibited. Therefore, perhaps the overuse of a hashtag turns Twitter users off to becoming engaged in conversation or participation. Since the act of attaching a hashtag, which these organizations displayed through year-end tweeting, is a common occurrence, it could be less attractive than other multimedia features.

Photos increased engagement among organizations using the feature and videos were used less frequently than photos among organizations. No significant differences were found in engagement between tweets including a video and those without a video. Since videos were not found to increase engagement, researchers might assume that photos may be earning more engagement from users than videos because receiving the content of the message is much faster. Unlike a video, users do not have to hit play and commit to viewing a photo.

The use of links was most frequently seen by American Heart Association; however, no statistical significance was found for engagement. This could be related to the message appeals used alongside the multimedia feature, which may also apply to the use of certain message appears combined with certain multimedia features.

Results answering research question two showed that rational appeals were used more than emotional appeals across organizations. However, it was determined that Leukemia & Lymphoma Society used emotional appeals more than rational appeals and used them more than any other organization. The content analysis found increased engagement caused by rational appeals compared to engagement received when emotional appeals were used. This is particularly interesting considering previous research has argued the effectiveness of emotion-
based messaging in nonprofit communications (Panda et al., 2013). Since previous research does not take a 140-character limit into consideration, I speculate that these findings may be related to the short and sweet nature of Twitter. As previously mentioned and past research states, nonprofits are not selling material goods, they are asking for investments (Frank et al. 1999). This could provide an argument for this study’s findings that Twitter users are more likely to engage with tweets including rational appeals, slightly less when both rational and emotional are present, and engage the least when only an emotional appeal is present. Time and money are serious subjects and perhaps emotional appeals are not giving the desired information one considers when giving either. With the limited information they are given via a tweet, rational message appeals present right away the more logical information users need to make an investment. Message Appeal categories were listed under emotional and rational, however, qualitative observations made throughout coding demonstrated that the emotional message appeal subcategory of impact and the rational message appeal of factual reasoning overlapped at times. For example, this tweet by the Salvation Army includes both factual reasoning and impact in a way that may be indistinguishable to the message interpreter as solely rational or emotional or as a tweet containing only factual reasoning or impact as a message appeal: “4.2 million Americans to be served this Christmas thanks to your support. Make an impact on a family in need today: http://www.salvationarmyusa.org/” (Salvation Army, 2013). Happiness and pride in messages could also be interpreted as overlapping at times. Though, these two message appeal subcategories were not used in more than 5% of year-end tweets within the five organizations used.

The campaign message appeal is especially important to discuss, since year-end giving and campaigning often coincide. Leukemia & Lymphoma Society contributed the most tweets to
the dataset and tweeted the bulk of its sample on #GivingTuesday using the campaign and
gratitude message appeals together. Leukemia & Lymphoma Society took time to thank Twitter
supporters on #GivingTuesday for their contributions to their cause. While this did not increase
engagement for the organization’s gratitude-related tweets, it may be because these tweets were
directed to individuals, not a community of followers.

American Heart Association used the least amount of campaign-related appeals,
interpreted as either rational or emotional, which tells us they did not advocate for support via
direct campaigning as much as other organizations during the year-end period. American Heart
Association was more likely to use the call to action appeal than any other organization. Through
qualitative observation during coding procedures, it was observed that American Heart
Association used this appeal without a connection to a campaign or ask appeal, but rather used
the appeal to ask users to engage in healthful activities. In comparison, when Salvation Army
used the call to action appeal, the organization often asked its followers to click on a donation
page and contribute to the organization or participate in the Red Kettle campaign.

Still considering the findings in this study that rational appeals increase engagement more
than emotional appeals and previous research suggesting empathy creates inclination to give,
perhaps the medium of the message acts as the change agent (Einolf et al., 2012). Messages with
links to donation pages or further information concerning the organization, and other useful
information may be more reasonable to use when organizations are trying to get their audiences
to invest time and money. With rational appeals, it is easier to cut to the hard information and
provide facts about where donor dollars are being spent or how volunteer hours can save the
organization money that would better serve communities. Rather than trying to spark emotion,
these message appeals quickly present the opportunity to make a logical decision on whether or
not users should give. It may be helpful to think of emotional message appeals as soft news stories, whereas rational appeals are presented like hard news. This information can be provided in tweets using emotional appeals as well; however, the focus of emotional appeals is to instigate a feeling, placing less focus on the information prompting logical decision making that rational appeals present more overtly.

The rational appeal subcategory that received the most engagement was call to action. Asking for an investment is a delicate subject and it is strategic to utilize the limited character space imposed by Twitter to directly tell potential supporters how their investment will impose positive change and provide information on how they can do it. It was observed throughout coding that links were often used to reinforce a message or to follow up with a means for acting. Knowing this information, nonprofits would be able to strategize ways to incorporate the most effective message appeals in accordance with their organization’s goals and accompany them with the most effective multimedia features.

While rational appeals saw more engagement than emotional appeals, digging further into each organization’s purpose for using the appeals they chose gives us further insight to what users are interested in. Tweets made to be more personal seemed to be more popular among users. American Heart Association (n = 155) tweeted using useful information more often than any other message appeal (n = 50). These tweets included helpful information that users could use daily, such as heart healthy recipes or exercises that could lower risk of heart disease. Based on qualitative observation, these tweets did not usually include an appeal for funds, support or advocacy. The organization also used call to action appeal frequently (n = 46), while other organizations often used this type of appeal to link to donation pages or ask for support in money, gifts or time. American Heart Association often called their followers to do something
that would help improve their health. For example, this tweet posted by American Heart Association on December 5, 2013 shows a call to action unrelated to supporting the organization during the year-end period: “Dealing with a picky eater? Try feeding your kid colorful foods. http://bit.ly/1dfzDeT #nutrition #GRFW” (American Heart Association, 2013). These message appeals were used along with information that directly relates to users, not constituents of the organization, and showed increased engagement.

Some missed opportunities should be noted considering the message appeals used more frequently and those that were more likely to increase engagement. For example, American Heart Association may have benefited from the use of campaign-related message appeals in addition to useful information appeals. The organization advocated for support fewer than any other organization, though the campaign message appeal showed increased user engagement across organizations. News, factual reasoning and question appeals all provide opportunity for engagement through replies. If organizations are looking to engage in two-way communication with their users, these are appeals that could aid in achieving conversation. Leukemia & Lymphoma Society in particular did not use any of these message appeal subcategories in more than 1% of its year-end tweets.

There appears to be a slight connection between tweets that have direct ties to users and increased engagement. This study’s findings show us that American Heart Association tweeted information that their followers could use and earned increased engagement in those tweets.

When rational appeals were present, Twitter users engaged more than they did with emotional appeals. The campaign message appeal, considered rational or emotional depending on message context, proved to be effective at increasing engagement, so depending on the coders’ interpretations, if categorized as emotional, these could be effectively used as emotional
appeals as well. Salvation Army received a lot of engagement via replies from users during year-end campaigning in their tweets. This campaign utilized its own collateral and was incorporated in Salvation Army’s branding. This was observed through other multimedia features used in their tweets including photos and video. The appeals that can be categorized as either emotional or rational are particularly important to pay attention to, since they can be used with more flexibility.

Two organizations used endorsement appeals, which included a mention of a celebrity or business partnership, in their tweets. Also with the subjective assignment of emotional or rational, Salvation Army’s Red Kettle campaign included endorsements from several artists and tweets about their Rock the Red Kettle concert in December. United Way’s partnership with the National Football League was mentioned in year-end tweets and highlighted endorsements from several NFL football players. It is important to consider these appeals and the other appeals that showed significant increase in engagement and to then consider the multimedia features that increased engagement. By comparing the results of this study and looking at the multimedia features and message appeals side by side, it can be better understood how organizations are using these message components together and separately and how frequently they are being used.

This study explains that while nonprofit organizations are using social media with different goals and levels of priority in mind, utilizing certain multimedia features may lead to better results in increased engagement compared to others. These findings show that appeals including a personal component, as American Heart Association and Leukemia & Lymphoma Society demonstrated through rational appeals and emotional appeals, respectively, are more likely to increase engagement and these findings suggest that messages with less information to comprehend through the use of multimedia features are more likely to see increased engagement.
Practical Implications for Nonprofits

Based on the findings in this study, nonprofit development teams can apply best practices to their year-end communication practices online, and even to their everyday Twitter use. Since this study offers insight to practices from five different organizations with varying goals at the end of the year, nonprofits can compare and contrast what message components worked best at increasing engagement and which methods were most effective for each type of organization and their assumed goals. The study’s findings offer best practices for nonprofit organizations interesting in reviving communication strategies used on Twitter.

Communication practitioners should keep in mind the character limit on Twitter. It became apparent through qualitative observation, the organizations in this study were being strategic with the content of their year-end tweets. Since Twitter imposes a 140-character limit on all tweets, including the character length of an active link, photo, video and hashtag, organizations provided further information in their messaging or an included more than one appeal by including multimedia features. Some tweets contained a rational appeal, but included an emotional appeal in the multimedia feature attached and vice versa.

For example, shown in Figure 1 is a tweet by American Red Cross (Red Cross, 2013). The organization used a photo in addition to a rational message appeal, link and hashtag. Taking into account all components used in this message, it is apparent that this particular tweet uses both rational and emotional appeals.
As found in the study, photos and links are more likely to increase engagement. This tweet received 72 retweets and 22 replies, whereas a tweet by the same organization using a rational appeal, a link and the same hashtag, #GivingTuesday, received 34 retweets and 22 favorites (Red Cross, 2013). (See Figure 2).

Figure 1. Tweet with Rational Message and Photo

Figure 2. Tweet with Rational Message, Link and Hashtag
United Way, Salvation Army and American Red Cross are all categorized as social services organizations. While these organizations are housed under the same category, according to the npENGAGE list, “25 Largest Online Fundraising Nonprofits in 2010,” they contrast in the types of services offered, the people served, and the means in which they serve. It is recommended that organizations evaluate the goals they wish to achieve in online communications, particularly on Twitter (MacLaughlin, 2014).

American Heart Association and Leukemia Lymphoma Society are both health nonprofits. However, their practices in online communications on Twitter during the year-end period appear to differ. American Heart Association tweeted more frequently to provide information to its Twitter followers using links, including heart healthy recipes and activities. The organization received marginal increase in retweets when using links. Considering links were included in nearly 95% of American Heart Association’s tweets, the marginal increase is a noteworthy outcome. If providing daily useful information to online communities is a priority for organizations, taking a tip from American Heart Association’s 2013 year-end practices is recommended.

As reported, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society used more emotional appeals than rational appeals, especially on #GivingTuesday when the organization thanked individual donors on Twitter. While engagement did not increase, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society did receive retweet engagement when tweets included links. The organization also received overall engagement in retweets, favorites and replies, when using photos in tweets. Leukemia & Lymphoma Society took time to thank its donors, which is important for relationship cultivation. However, if the organization and other organizations alike are interested in increasing
engagement, using more rational message appeals including some of the more successful subcategories such as call-to-appeal will provide better results. If organizations deal with patients and clients in distress, such as Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and American Red Cross, using a rational message appeal, along with a photo or link including content with emotional triggers, would be advised. Using links to videos could also be an effective strategy for increasing user engagement. Videos do not increase engagement, but links do; thus, nonprofits could include links to video in their tweets along with a corresponding message appeal.

It is advised that nonprofit organizations take a closer look at these five organizations’ communication practices on Twitter during the year-end period, evaluate their own goals, and craft a strategic plan that will best suit their needs.

Limitations

This study acknowledges that using nonprofits from a list of top online fundraising organizations is not entirely generalizable. By using a purposive sample of messages as the data, this imposes certain limitations that might have otherwise provided a more accurate representation of how nonprofits conduct communications on Twitter during the year-end period. These nonprofit organizations were chosen, because it is important to the research that, instead of choosing five randomly selected organizations or collecting a random sample of tweets throughout time, trends are displayed over five very different organizations. By choosing nonprofits that are considered leaders in online fundraising, it can be inferred that these organizations have put in their own research and have applied best practices and social media policies viewed as being most practical for their organization. Since nonprofit organizations do not all have the same mission and goals, studying the trends of these different organizations, yet similar in national leadership, allows us to compare and contrast communication practices.
However, limitations are present for choosing this method of data sampling. By choosing larger, national nonprofit organizations to collect data from, this study does not take into account local affiliates of each organization.

Time was also not recorded. While tests frequency tests showed how many times per day these organizations were tweeting, the time of day each message was tweeted was not recorded for analysis. This could be a factor in levels of engagement. Tests were not run to determine whether tweets with an @mention were more likely to receive engagement, nor were tweets in reply to other users (also including @mention). This could definitely help researchers understand engagement through conversation and aid in understanding which tweets earn replies.

While year-end campaigning was a driving force for the topic of this study, it was apparent that a full inventory of message appeals and year-end tweeting practices should be considered prior to focusing research solely on campaign-related tweets. Therefore, this study did not focus special attention on recording whether campaign tweets were in reference to a particular campaign conducted by one organization or if tweets were in reference to general campaigning or public campaigning, such as #GivingTuesday. This could help to better understand which are more effective at increasing engagement.

Inferences were not made considering followers to following ratio. Each organization has a unique number of followers and a unique number of accounts they are following. By comparing these numbers, the level of engagement and how it effects retweets, favorites and replies might provide more in-depth implications. The level of two-way communication may be measured more accurately and allow the research to observe whether organizations are engaging in conversation with their followers and to what extent if followers and following are considered.
This could give insight to how this type of engagement could lead to relationships and a stronger online community of supporters.

Finally a more accurate dataset might include a sample from each organization using a narrower range of tweets. This dataset included one organization providing just fewer than 40 tweets to the dataset, whereas another provided nearly 300 tweets. This shows the diversity among organizations as far as tweet frequency, however, these differences can contribute to less accurate representation of organizations’ engagement when comparing between groups.

A final limitation on this study is the definitions included in the codebook. The definitions of each subcategory could have been more explicitly defined for the second coder to full comprehend what each appeal means and how it applies to certain tweets. Including examples for each type of message appeal would have provided higher intercoder reliability scores on some of the categories which received lower Scott’s pi results.

**Implications for Future Research**

Suggestions for future research include more in-depth looks at each organization’s practices. This study provides further insight to social media practices of nonprofit organizations during a critical time in the year. However, moving forward with this study’s findings, future research could address many of the limitations of this study to gain a more thorough comprehension of what these findings mean and build on the findings of this research to perhaps provide more comprehensive results in current practices of nonprofit organizations and engagement.

Time is a major component of communication and should be considered both from the audience’s perspective and from the perspective of the organization. Future research should include time of posts in their methods and run frequencies on engagement using time of post as a
factor. Certainly there are periods of the day when Twitter experiences more traffic. Conversely, nonprofits may not be tweeting outside of business hours. These data can help nonprofit development teams understand when they should be posting if engagement is their goal and utilize social media management tools that allow the capability of scheduling posts, such as Hootsuite (Social Media Management Dashboard – HootSuite.; n.d.).

It would be particularly helpful to investigate whether or not the number of followers a nonprofit has and the number of accounts it is following is related to engagement. Future research should consider including this in analysis along with the degree at which organizations reply and converse with other users, or engage in listening. Research on social media and “listening” states that corporations (in this case, nonprofits) can build relationships with their audiences by “listening in” (Crawford, 2009).

The agenda for this study originally set out to understand year-end campaigning, however, the initial and necessary foundations to build from were lacking in this area of research. Future researchers should utilize this study’s findings and focus more attention on campaign-related tweets. Perhaps, methods for coding would include recording types of campaigns, such as “brand-specific,” “general campaign appeal,” and “#GivingTuesday appeal.” #GivingTuesday is growing tremendously with each new year and for that reason, categorizing campaign appeals including a #GivingTuesday class, would help research understand how time and date differ on this day that occurs the Tuesday after Thanksgiving and all other days in the year-end period (MacLaughlin, 2014).

It is imperative that future research build on these findings and dig beyond the surface to better comprehend which practices, message appeals and multimedia increase public support of an organization. Understanding current practices of nonprofit communications on Twitter and
which message appeals and multimedia features provide the most engagement will allow nonprofits to implement the practices that fit best with their goals.
CHAPTER 6: REFERENCES


APPENDIX

Codebook

Code Sheet One: Nonprofit year-end Tweets

Researchers will use this codebook for each tweet posted by each nonprofit’s Twitter account from November 27, 2013 to December 31, 2013.

1. **Twitter handle**: Type in the Twitter username.

2. **Followers**: Type in the number of followers belonging to the Twitter account.

3. **Following**: Type in the number of users the Twitter account is following.

4. **Date** – Type in the date of tweet in designated section. (MM-DD-YY)

5. **Exact text of tweet** – Copy and paste exact content of tweet in this section.

6. **Type of Post** – The number corresponding with “original,” “at reply,” “MT,” or “Other” will be recorded by the coder.
   
   (1) **Original Post** – This is a tweet created by the nonprofit’s social media administrator. This does not include replies to other Twitter accounts.

   (2) **Retweet “RT”** – This is a tweet belonging to another Twitter account and includes “RT” followed by the username “@user” before the message. This is not an original post.

   (3) **At reply** – This is a tweet in reply to another Twitter user and acts as a response to another message. This will include another user’s Twitter handle within the message (@user), likely at the beginning of the tweet.

   (4) **MT** – This is a tweet belonging to another Twitter account with slight modification in the text. This will include a “MT,” likely at the beginning of the tweet.

7. **Multimedia Feature**: Type in “hyperlink,” “photo,” ”video,” or “hashtag”
   
   - **Hyperlink** – Researchers will type “yes” if a hyperlink is included in the nonprofit’s tweet or “no” if a hyperlink is not present. 1 = YES, 0 = NO.

   - **Photo** - Researchers will type “yes” if a photo is included in the nonprofit’s tweet or “no” if a video is not present. A description of the photo will also be provided, but will not be used at as a variable. 1 = YES, 0 = NO.

   - **Video** - Researchers will type “yes” if a video is included in the nonprofit’s tweet or “no” if a video is not present. A description of the video will also be provided, but the message of the video will not be used at as a variable. 1 = YES, 0 = NO.

   - **Hashtag** - Researchers will type “yes” if a hashtag (#text) is included in the nonprofit’s tweet or “no” if a hashtag is not present. 1 = YES, 0 = NO. If yes, please copy and paste the Hashtag.
8. **Message appeal**: The type of message used in a tweet. Coder will select all appeals that apply to a single tweet. Not all tweets will include a donation ask.

**Rational** - Reasonable and practical message designed to encourage logical decision-making. Coder will enter 1 if message contains rational appeal and 0 if message does not contain rational appeal. 1 = YES, 0 = NO If “No” to this category, coders should skip to the emotional appeals.

- **Call-to-Action** – Messages with a call to action for support of the organization and campaign. Message will contain a prompt, such as a link, button or feature, for the user to click. Ex. Coder will enter 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **News** – Messages providing news about campaign, organization, or topics pertaining to organization’s overall mission. Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Factual reasoning** – Message appeals presenting facts or statistics. Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Question** – Message appeals that ask a question. Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Urgency** – Message appeals that explain immediate action is necessary. Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Year-end Ask** – Messages with an explicit “year-end” ask. Message may include a mention taxable donations, specific campaign running through end of year, mention of #GivingTuesday (may include #GivingTuesday or @GivingTues in tweet). Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Holiday** – Message will include a holiday greeting or mention of holiday. Ex. “Merry Christmas from all of us at United Way!” Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Convenience** – Message including one or more options as means for donating (i.e. Givver, direct donation page, PayPal, etc.) making it more convenient for donors to give. Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Useful Info** – Message includes information that may be useful to audience. Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

**Emotional** – Message designed to influence emotional reaction. Coder will enter 1 if message contains emotional appeal and 0 if message does not contain rational appeal. 1 = YES, 0 = NO If “No” to this category, coders should skip.

- **Gratitude** – Messages expressing thanks or gratitude toward individual, other organizations, entities or donors. Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Impact** – Message designed to express to audience that their support is impactful/has great effect or can have great effect. Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO
- **Sympathy** – Messages designed to trigger sympathy from message receivers or convey sympathy. Ex. “Our hearts go out to everyone effected by the tornadoes in OK.” Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Fear** - Messages designed to trigger fear from message receivers. Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Happiness** - Messages designed to trigger happiness from message receivers. Message may contain synonyms for “happy,” such as “joy,” “glad,” and “delighted.” Message may also contain the expression of happiness in response to another tweet or in response to circumstances. Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Pride** – Message will include declaration of proud feeling toward goal, mission or service. Ex. “We are so proud of the work we do every day.” Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Praise** — Message will include praise to other parties for qualities or contributions. Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Humor** – Message contains humor aiming to elicit laughter or amusement. Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Inspirational** – Messages designed to trigger feeling of inspiration or optimism. Ex. “Our fighting cancer patients inspire us to fight for them every day.”  Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Spiritual** – Message contains reference to spiritual being, Christ or includes biblical or spiritual references. Ex. “Read this amazing story about Ricky & the healing power of Christ’s love & the outstretched hand of #SalvationArmy.” Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Arbitrary** – Message can be categorized as either emotional or rational depending on the context and content of the message. These messages are subject to interpretation by the reader. If coder interprets message as either rational or emotional, coder will go back to main categories and assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1=YES, 0=NO.

- **Mascot** – Message will include use of a mascot or fictional character to promote message. (Ex. Smokey the Bear says you can prevent forest fires.) Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Endorsement** – Message will include an endorsement by someone (ex. Celebrity, public figure) or an institution (ex. Company, social group). Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

- **Self-benefit** – Message includes reason(s) supporting the organization is a benefit to users (followers). Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO
Community/Demographic – Message will include attention to specific demographic or community being assisted by organization’s services/mission. Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

Goal – Message includes mention of goals or mission, can be stated in an emotional or rational way. Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

Team – Message includes verbiage of togetherness, denoting that organization and supporter(s) are working together or can make change together. Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

Testimony – Could be emotional or rational, message will include a person or persons providing a personal testimony about their experience with the organization, a personal struggle or story. Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO Ex. “#RedCross blood donors share their reasons for giving blood this holiday season http://rdcrss.org/1fYopxM #givewithmeaning”, “Listen to Rick’s story about fighting heart disease with the help of American Heart Association.”

Campaign – Message will include mention of specific campaign. Ex. “#GivingTuesday is underway! #RedKettle #GivingTuesday” Coder will assign 1 or 0 to each category. 1 = YES, 0 = NO

Other – Message cannot be categorized.

9. Retweets – For each nonprofits’ tweets during the duration noted, coders will record the number of retweets per post.

10. Favorites - For each nonprofits’ tweets during the duration noted, coders will record the number of favorites per post.

11. Replies – Number of replies per organizations’ original tweet was recorded.
VITA

Lilliana Lopez is from Edinburg, Texas. She graduated from the University of Texas – Pan American in 2012 with a bachelor’s degree in mass communication with a double major in psychology. After mentoring sophomore students her senior year as an undergraduate, working as a copy writer at a digital media agency, and writing and reporting for the University of Texas – Pan American’s student publications, she decided to pursue a master’s in mass communication to focus her studies on strategic communication. During her two years as a master’s student with the Manship School of Mass Communication, she held an internship at Volunteers of America Greater Baton Rouge as the agency’s marketing and social media coordinator. After graduation, she plans to continue working in the nonprofit sector to discover best practices for nonprofit development through online media.