

FACEBOOK, SENEGAL, AND DEVELOPMENT:
HOW CAN THE INCREASE IN SOCIAL MEDIA AFFECT THE IMPACT OF NONPROFIT
ORANIZATIONS?

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Abstract

This paper examines how nonprofit organizations based in Senegal may benefit from the increase of social media, predominantly Facebook, in their impact. The significant implication of this analysis is how Senegal can adapt their increasing internet usage to promote development. It first evaluates the global impact of Facebook in other regions of the world, such as the Arab Spring in past years, and what factors influenced and increased community dialogue over the Facebook medium. It then provides a theoretical analysis of the nonprofit organization, "The Forgotten Children," an operation based in Mbour, Senegal and Tucson, Arizona and their efforts of Facebook to attract sponsors and donations. The director and president of the organization "The Forgotten Children" was also interviewed about his usage of Facebook to attract supporters and donations. Overall, this paper analyzes the method of change Facebook has contributed to the trend of nonprofit organizations and how it has become a new source of impact in both public relations, and garnering volunteer and monetary support in hopes to best provide resources to their missions' objectives.

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Introduction

Currently, there are over 1.2 billion Facebook users worldwide, according to Craig Smith in "*Digital Marketing Ramblings*". About 700 million of those users login daily. For some, it's a source of entertainment with its endless pictures, memes and games. For others, it is a connection to like-minded individuals, no matter the distance. Barriers are knocked down with Facebook. It allows people to learn from one another and share opinions but also engage in activism for a common goal. With this in mind, Facebook may be used to improve and encourage sustainable development in the world.

This paper examines how nonprofit organizations based in Senegal may benefit from the increase of social media, predominantly Facebook, in their impact. I argue that Facebook is a necessary tool for growth in the developing world in public sectors. This thesis can help nonprofit public relations administrators understand clearer how they can best use new media such as Facebook for publicizing their activities.

This thesis question was developed from my experience living in Dakar, Senegal in the spring of 2011. I was the social media intern for the nonprofit organizations, "Earth Rights Eco Village" and "Senegal Ecovillage Microfinance" fund. There had never been a position like it but I was aware of the importance social media was playing in the rest of the world. Less than two months prior, Twitter and Facebook were the frontlines to Arab Spring that brought on a revolt over the government by the public. This was the first time anything had happened like it. If change could be carried out from people who shared the same interests, yet came from the bottom, then why couldn't an organization inspire change for another purpose? I worked daily on developing the nonprofits' Twitter account, website, Tumblr blog, and Facebook. It provided a forum and the ability for volunteers to go out into the field and villages where their work was influencing people and share pictures and updates with potential donors and sponsors.

The first section of this paper provides an overview on what social media is and how it's developed in different parts of the world. It goes on to examine nonprofits' potential for expansion with the use of Facebook.

It then evaluates how Senegal's insufficient infrastructure may cause challenges for internet access growth and the promotion of developmental work.

Finally, we see the demonstration of Facebook used in an actual setting of nonprofit work. "The Forgotten Children" organization based in Mbour, Senegal and Tucson, Arizona. By looking at the contributions it makes to the community and Senegal and its activeness on Facebook, we can see the importance that is placed on social media to garner support.

Examining what social media is and how it is transforms global connections

Traditional media used to feature original print documents such as newspapers and print newsletters that were delivered in a considerable way. Now, media has transformed into things such as online news websites, emails, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Social media was a concept unheard of concept 25 years ago. Even still, it is hard to completely define or limit what social media encompasses. It began as online communities that brought internet users together through chat rooms where they shared ideas and personal information, wrote Danah Boyd and Nicole Ellison in *"Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship."* By the late 1990s, users had profiles and could compile their friends to lists and link other people with similar interests. Social networking sites began to thrive with sites such as "Friendster" and it then became mainstream and overpopulated on the internet as MySpace emerged in 2003 (Boyd and Ellison). Once Facebook launched in 2004, it grew into the largest social networking site in the world in early 2009.

Facebook is never just a standalone domain. Therefore it's not just a venue for users to share funny photos and email friends and family about frivolous things or have an "opinions war"

on something relatively insignificant such as a spelling error or personal drama. Facebook can fulfill other users' needs. It can serve in sectors such as health, education, culture and language.

Facebook is a common domain by friends and family to use as an important resource to seek information and options on things such as accessing health services, taking classes, finding local events and outings, accessing government services and seeking employment.

Social media is a neutral space. It is modified and bent to the will of its users. However, citizens may use it most to ignite change for a better world and a better future. The wants and needs of people for the future are told through Facebook and projected to a shared mindset where it forms into a communal thought.

Facebook's social networks are also effective at gathering participation by enhanced and dynamic motivation for a shared experience. What has improved access to Facebook and social media is the abundance of cell phones in the hands of cab drivers, market vendors, and many lacking formal education. What resonates more and makes even more of an impact is that these tools are available 24/7, free, and continuous.

Biz Stone, cofounder of Twitter, wrote in *The Atlantic* article, "Lowering the barrier to activism doesn't weaken humanity, it brings us together and it makes us stronger."

Facebook has also censored radical posts. This includes groups that have called for the assaulting of individuals to assaulting large corporations. For example, Greg Butterfield wrote, "Facebook Should not Censor Radical Posts" in "*The Global Impact of Social Media*" when the group "Boycott BP", a campaign against British Petroleum, the big oil company responsible for the gulf oil spill, was deleted. Facebook uses their "terms of service" as a justification for deleting these groups. However, Facebook is still a communication tool for the public and should be able to be used by any perception.

In a 2010 article from "*The New Yorker*" entitled, "*Small Change: Why the Revolution Will not be Tweeted*", Malcolm Gladwell, author of best-selling books such as "*The Tipping Point*" and "*Blink*,"

asserted that the value of social media is ineffective and that this tool will not lead to a serious or lasting social transformation. I beg to disagree. Social media such as Facebook unites people of the same interest and empowers them to share ideas and opinions. Inevitably, it brings those with the same mindset together for a common cause.

"Social media provides a complex and deep infrastructure perfect for the activist processes of social transformation," wrote Simon Mainwaring in *"The Global Impact of Social Media."*

Yes, activism was present prior to Facebook. People bound together with risk of violence and imprisonment to stand up for civil rights. However "weak" the ties were that people had during in the Egyptian revolution the spring of 2011 which Gladwell asserts to, there was tremendous high-risk activism which cannot be discredited.

Social media is also used in large part to exchange trivial unwarranted and often illegitimate information. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize the scalable connectivity it enables. It cannot be limited in its transformation of information and potential. It will grow and mature along with the amount of users and usage and can be cultivated in numerous ways to empower people.

Therefore, I argue that many nonprofit organization users of social media would be more powerful in their message and oversight if they strategically used this tool.

Social media enables activism. Here, I will explore the "six levels of activist empowerment" in nonprofits. The six levels stem from the writings by Evgeny Morozov in *"The Global Impact of Social Media: The Role of Social Media in Iran was Exaggerated."*

1.) One-to-one interaction between individuals connecting via Facebook.

More organizations can communicate things faster and to a farther and more extensive reach than ever; no matter where organizations are located or how remote they are.

2.) Groups of people form communities via Facebook.

This is how outreach for a certain issue, such as genital cutting in Senegal, is devalued. People share common values that an issue needs to stop and people rally behind it. This is also how experts and scientists can find a place to promote their own knowledge on an issue.

3.) Movements work across many platforms-not just one.

The old days involved public service announcements on television and radio programs, door-to-door canvassing and petitions. But choosing the right social media tool is just as important as choosing the appropriate message. Different types of people are using different types of social media.

4.) This is an important role for nonprofits.

Dialogues emerge between citizens or communities and organizations using social media. Nonprofits can ask what the most important issue to their audience is.

5.) Interactions occurring between the private sector, governments and nonprofits on Facebook often or always use consumers or citizens as intermediaries.

Nonprofits can ignite and empower citizens to become active in the nonprofits' mission statement. If the mission requires a change from a government entity or business, citizens can demand this with the nonprofit's support and also Facebook's open forum.

6.) The mingling of real world and virtual world through Facebook within social games on the site.

For example, "the use of virtual goods within the Farmville game on Facebook to raise funds for earthquake victims in Haiti," wrote Morozov (*The Global Impact of Media*). Nonprofits and presidents of organizations may be able to expand on this example with their own game or cause.

Nonverbal communication is interpreted in a different part of the brain. It is easier to misinterpret things that were meant to be funny or sarcastic when there are no verbal cues such as body movements or facial expressions, said Alton Barbour, author of *Louder than Words: Nonverbal Communication*. Moreover, when discussing crucial mission statements of nonprofits, the best way

would be to use public speeches, radio programs and PSAs. The advantage social media poses for communication is that younger generations who find nonprofits and public service in developing parts of the world as more important, find it more comfortable and less threatening to post their opinions and on Facebook.

The basic infrastructure of Facebook is in place and perfectly integrates social transformation and activism into daily life without being too hostile or controversial. This transformation occurs through knowledge development, transfer and sharing of information and ideation, there is empathetic and emotional connection, and inspiration is conducted through credible ideas and leadership.

This past spring, 120 education stakeholders, in government private sector, foundations, and civil society groups joined the UN in Dakar, Senegal to review education progress. The goals and challenges discussed were the spirit of the conference. What captured the main attention and emotions felt throughout were based on a blog video message that a member used to deliver his message of "universal learning." Yes, a blog. This is different from Facebook but it still inherently illicit the feeling that social media is meant to capture audiences and convey messages.

In the book *"The Dragonfly Effect: Quick, Effective, and Powerful Ways to Use Social Media to Drive Social Change,"* business consultant Andy Smith and the Stanford Business School professor, Jennifer Aaker, tells a story of an entrepreneur from Silicon Valley, Sameer Bhatia, who had acute myelogenous leukemia and was in need of a bone-marrow transplant. He could not find a match among his relatives and friends so his business partner sent out an email blast asking for help, which was then forwarded on and created into a Facebook page, "Help Sameer campaign." There was no risk involved for those a part of the campaign and no retribution.

By the end, about 25,000 people were registered into the bone marrow database and Bhatia found a match. The reason so many people joined into the campaign was the low amount of associated risk. Not much was asked of them. There was no financial or personal conflict. You are

not confronting social norms or practices or endangering you or your family's life. You are separated through the internet medium.

Within Facebook groups and pages funded through organizations, there are neither hierarchies nor central authority. Yes, there is the founder and the staff of a nonprofit organization but the network that is formed through their friends' or page likes become adaptable and resilient to changes in the context or that organization's mission.

The only downside to social networks developed through Facebook is if no change was sought. The main mission of nonprofit organizations is the need for change.

However, a Facebook friend is not the same as a real friend. But it does link people to things they want to become involved in. Facebook activism works by motivating people to do things but not make real sacrifices.

Public access areas such as telecenters sometimes ban sites that lead to games, or social networking and Facebook. These venues should reconsider these policies given the findings released above.

Facebook connections have created an information network that pulsates throughout the globe in times of disaster or when a country is in need. Again, take the earthquake in Haiti for example. Instead of reading about the earthquake several hours after it occurred, news of it was produced in real time. Not only that, but nations, communities, and individuals reacted more swiftly because they had a place to connect and a place to outpour resources and information.

Social networks can bridge the divide of social class and development. It can open communications to the idea of privilege and what contributes to it without being afraid of inherently offending one person or the other.

It is correct to be hopeful and to encourage social media growth in these areas of the world where progress can be achieved through communication networks and connection.

Evaluating how nonprofit organizations apply Facebook to their mission

Nonprofit organizations are finding new ways of using social media. Facebook can be used to have open dialogue on a particular issue involving development.

Facebook, a social media website, was first launched at Harvard University in 2004 and by early 2011 there were six hundred million users.

Facebook helps share credible information because it is passed along by friends. A friend's seal of approval is more powerful than coming upon a piece of information yourself. This concept of "trusted referral" said Randi Zuckerberg in *"Topic of Book"*, is the point of success of content sharing on Facebook.

With the Internet, people now have more choices and can dig deeper into their interest, share knowledge and share their passion with others alike. Users join Facebook to discuss issues, activities, topics, opinions. Facebook enables quick collaboration around an issue in real time; people can instantly respond and collaborate on issues they find compelling. In addition, what is most important and an integral part of our development as human beings is to learn from our friends and the world around us or outside of our bubble. This is one point where nonprofits can best use Facebook.

In the 2008 elections, the Democrat party used "Facebook politics" to promote their candidacy, brought supporters and like-minded people together and showed how important the internet can be for organizing political movements. Nonprofits can and have for many years, done the same thing.

One example of this is when a group of internet-savvy Nigerians formed a coalition called "Enough is Enough Nigeria." They began targeting the estimated 1.76 million Facebook users to mobilize the young people to pressure their government for a fair and credible election. Though this is more of a political mission, the same system can be used for social movements created by nonprofits.

Nonprofit organizations that are fully embracing the opportunity of the Internet and Facebook page services have accelerated their growth in social impact and donations accruing. However, those that have failed to begin creating an online presence will fall further behind in their organization's impact and growth.

Nonprofits need to realize that social media is not free. It takes time to cultivate your message. Constant communication will require more work. This is to be expected and conquered. It is the number one way nonprofits will be able to connect with the public to see how they can best serve them. More interactive dialogue means an increase in models of different actions that are proposed.

Even when put out into the online sphere, a message can be manipulated by players who have other motives than what one nonprofit is trying to accomplish.

Greg Butterfield, a contributing editor to "Workers World" writes in "*The Global Impact of Social Media*," "social networks should belong to the people, not to corporations." Butterfield goes on to say that these social network sites like Facebook, have grown to be necessary and important components of all types of progressive social advocacy. From all over the world, people rely on them.

Facebook is a valuable medium for any type of business: small start up, large corporation, or entrepreneurial endeavor. However, nonprofits face a unique challenge. They have to state their mission, show what they are doing and try to gain a following and garner support: both by money and by volunteer power.

Facebook has noticed this challenge and has helped organizations connect to more users. There are fundamental best practices for nonprofits that use Facebook.

The first action is to create a Facebook Page. This will allow all administrators of a nonprofit to publish posts and articles directly to the news stream where the rest of Facebook users can view

it and engage with a message. Nonprofits can also engage with “fans” or those who have “liked” a page by adding media such as photos, videos, polls and updates.

With Facebook Pages, nonprofits can also analyze how viewers interact with a page by the graph. The graph shows how many views a Facebook page gets per day, by which demographic of people and at what point during the day. It gives instant feedback that can help adjust a nonprofit's social media methods to something that garners more views. One simple but costly way to increase number of fans is by buying advertising on Facebook.

It's also important to talk back to people who comment on a page's posts, photos or videos. It shows them a real person is there and not a robot. Organizations can also add “a store” or donations box on a page where it is easier for fans to buy merchandise and give money to a cause.

Not all nonprofits will share the same results. It all depends on how active a organization is on their page and the format of their cause.

Communication representatives from 75 transnational nongovernmental organizations based in the United States were surveyed on how they used new media tools such as social media to influence their public relations activities. This was part of a study from 2009 *Public Relations Review*, written by Hyunjin Seo, Ji Young Kim, and Sung-Un Yang,

“These media enable activists to mobilize citizens across the globe by efficiently transcending national boundaries at minimal costs,” (Seo, Kim, Yang). This is true. Facebook is free to access, post and interact with users. It is an open communications portal that answers and where an even discussion about the social issues nonprofits are working to dispel can occur.

Seo, Kim, and Yang define new media as “digital media that allow interactivity and independent distribution of information,” (Seo, Kim, Yang). These include blogs, podcasts, wikis, video-casts, and websites.

Unsurprisingly, the most important new media tool for nonprofits was websites with blogs being the second.

“Some NGOs said they are currently conducting research on how many people in their target audience use which specific new media modes so they can reallocate resources accordingly,” said the study when researchers asked open-ended questions (Seo, Kim, Yang).

The research also found that these organizations are investing more time in social networking such as Facebook and Twitter.

Therefore, it can be speculated that future nonprofits will have more of a presence on a given new media depending on how much more their target audience interacts with a given site.

Out of the NGOs that were surveyed, they said the most important function of new media was to promote their image, the second was fund-raising, and the third was providing information to journalists, followed by interacting with the public and networking with other NGOs (Seo, Kim, Yang).

The organizations’ missions most accurately projected how they perceived and used new media and which ones they placed more emphasis on. For example, the study found that NGOs focused on advocacy deemed blogs as more important than aid and research NGOs. This is partly due to the fact that advocacy organizations want to interact more with the public than get funding. Aid and research NGOs place more importance on official websites where they can publish research and garner monetary support in a secure environment.

In the study, an NGO communication official regarding social networking sites said, “The upside to this is garnering a new audience who instantly trusts the messenger because it is an opt-in system,” (Seo, Kim, Yang).

However, some NGOs have shown concern over how messages may be posted to blogs or social media sights and can be misused or modified by others. This fear may keep NGOs from engaging in social media public relations based activities.

Overall, this study suggests that NGOs use new media most for media relations. New media can be an invaluable tool for less wealthy or kick-starter NGOs. Internet promotion is a lot less

expensive in these ways and is a way to tap into niche areas for potential donors. New media modes may also help sustain their programs overtime.

Nevertheless, the concept that nonprofits need to be aware of is that "trust is key" (*The Global Impact of Social Media*). NGOs must remain in touch with their audience and that means being transparent in their work and answering questions that the public and more importantly, potential donors might have. For example, Reddit and Digg are popular sites because they are about trust and collective wisdom, said (*The Global Impact of Social Media*). People can easily find and bookmark important information that they deem legitimate depending on who is recommending it.

The last thing people need though is for nonprofits to convey a short slogan and offer short general wisdom of the future and the hope for their mission. It is all about distinct facts that are detailed and provide examples with articles, videos or pictures.

The more effective and engaged organizations use Facebook pages and the resources it provides, overall the better the outcome for projecting a mission out to the world and initiating public response and support.

The challenges of Senegal's insufficient infrastructure for a growing population

Senegal is a democratic country in West Africa made up of 12 million people, according to "*Senegal's Infrastructure: A Continental Perspective*," written in 2011 by Clemencia Torres, Cecilia Briceño-Garmendia, and Carolina Dominguez.

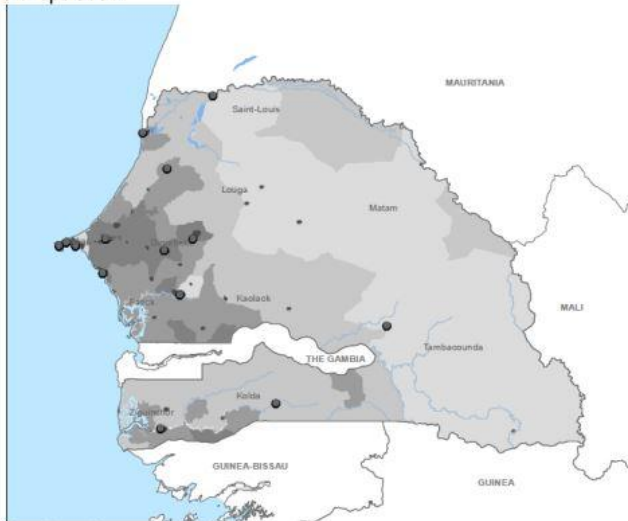
Senegal still remains a poor country despite its past economic performance. It has strategic positioning in Africa by being close to transit, trade, external markets, the sea, etc. Senegal is competitive in the international markets, especially in trade and tourism. It is also known for its political stability.

A majority of the country's population is located in the capital, Dakar. Urbanization is not projected to slow down soon. By 2015, 6 out of 10 people are forecasted to live in an urban area (World Bank 2007). Population growth has averaged 2.7 percent annually over the years (2000-08), which is above average compared to other low income countries (which is an average 2.3 percent per year).

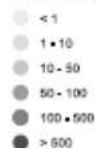
The "*Africa Infrastructure Country Diagnostic*" (AICD) has worked to gather data on African countries' infrastructure, including Senegal. Though Senegal has improved multiple facets of their infrastructure to place them in the middle distribution among West African countries, the country still has upcoming challenges, such as improving electricity infrastructure, improving road conditions, promoting air and rail traffic, and expanding water and sanitation.

Senegal's population, natural resources, and poverty distribution

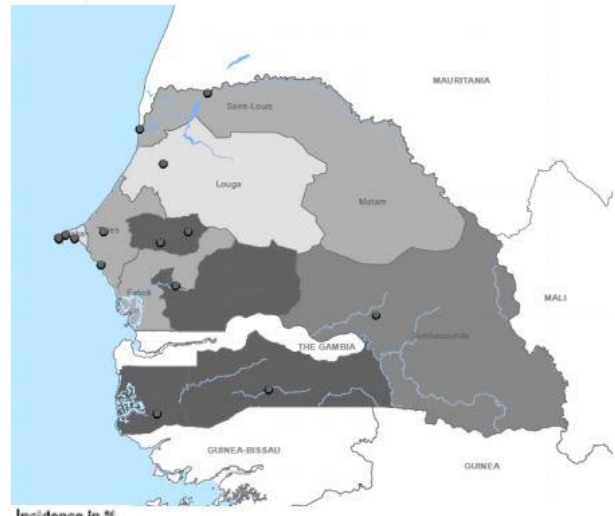
a. Population



Density per Km²



b. Poverty



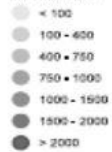
Incidence in %



c. Topography

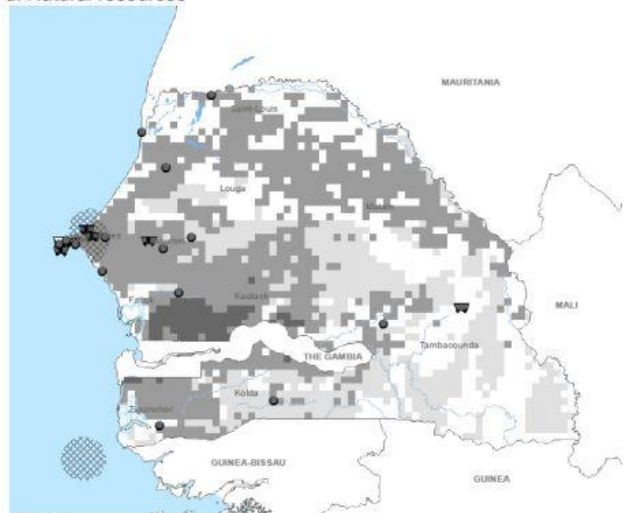


Elevation(m)



----- River Basin

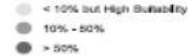
d. Natural resources



Mining



Cropland Extent



Source: AICD Interactive Infrastructure Atlas for Senegal (www.infrastructureafrica.org/aicd/tools/maps).

According to the "Policy Research Working Paper from the World Bank" (2011), Senegal has the potential to close this gap if they can secure more private sector investment. Senegal spends

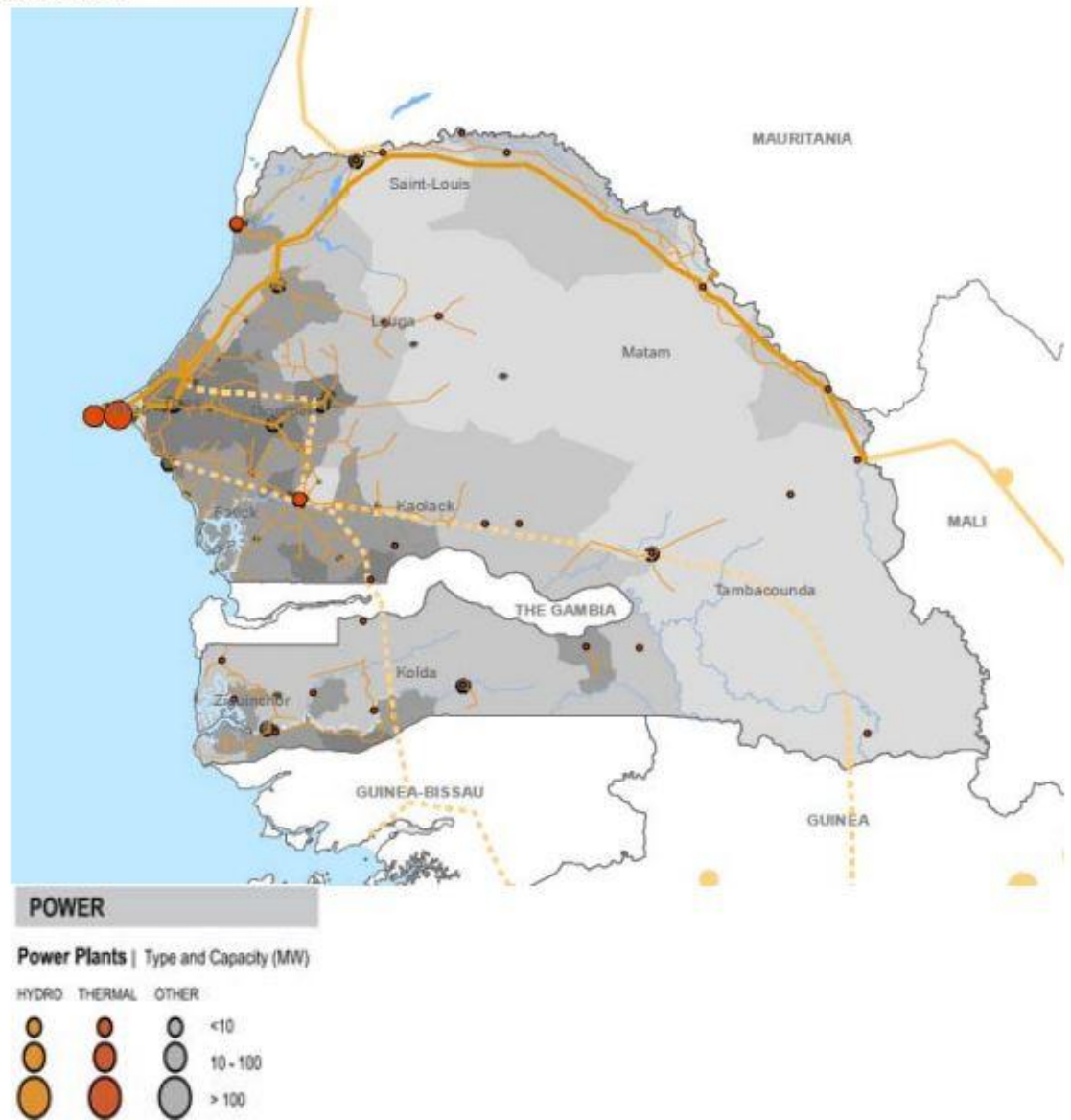
around \$911 million per year on infrastructure, according to the study. This amount is about 11 percent of its GDP.

The economic growth that Senegal has experienced in the past decade has come predominantly from telecommunications and this sector of the economy also contributes about 65 percent to Senegal's GDP (Torres, Briceño-Garmendia, Dominguez).

Along with telecommunications, internet has penetrated the country as well. According to the report, in 1999 the number of internet users per 100 people was almost zero. By 2008, this number has increased to almost 9 in 100 people.

Senegal lacks sufficient electricity supply for its growing economy and the increasing population connected to the internet. It is insufficient for the growing demand. In four years, between 2005 and 2009, generation capacity grew from 365 megawatts to 510 megawatts. Due to operational and structural problems, Senegal has about 12 power outages a month. In the United States, a typical power outage occurs 1 day in 10 years (Torres, Briceño-Garmendia, Dominguez). This also depends heavily on the area of the country or time of day. A little over half of private firms use private generators to conduct their electricity compared to 43.1 percent for the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. Although the amount of generators seems like enough, the demand by people has kept growing at a rate of 25-30 MW per year. The electricity market is looking toward other options to expand their sources. These include hydroelectricity from Guinea and gas fueled electricity generated from Cote d'Ivoire.

b. Power



Senegal has made a tremendous influence in West African countries in terms of Internet usage and connectivity. However, with the lack of sufficient electricity, Senegal still has a long way to go until their entire population is connected.

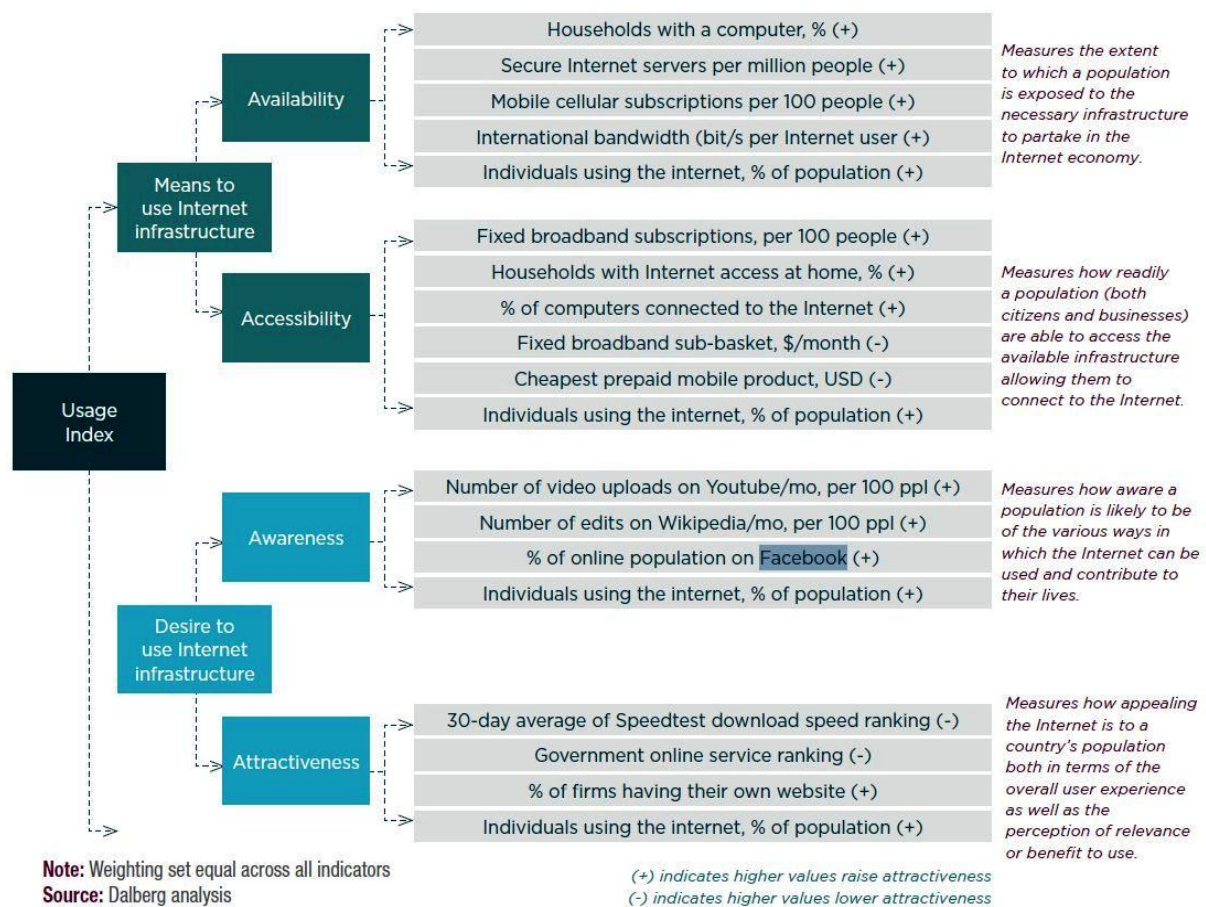
The importance of Internet to promote development

The Internet can serve as an equalizer. It gives people in developing countries access to knowledge and potential markets, and can create opportunities where none existed for them prior. Internet access is considered almost as important as water and food access and internet freedom is a human right.

The importance of the internet freedom as a global freedom is set with highest precedent for evolving and developing countries. Already, access is compromised by a country's poverty and the ability to get internet connectivity. But when government control and laws to silence citizens impede their speech, it is even worse.

The United States has made it a top goal in their foreign policy to advocate internet freedom and access in the world. This is one component in the first resolution for the returning United Nations Human Rights Council. The US has assisted the United Nations in developing new tools to enable citizens in developing countries to exercise their rights of expression and circumvent censorship from their government. These tools include access to computers and software in foreign languages and the education of how to use them.

It's especially important that the tools provided by the UN are available to the correct people. The people in these developing countries who are most likely to advance human rights, fight environment degradation, and encourage sustainable economic development in their country. By also focusing on the bottom percent of a countries' population, i.e. the poorer and uneducated, they can lift citizens from the bottom up and encourage leaders to emerge.



Compared to Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya in the Dalberg report, Senegal has a relatively small amount of internet users, yet they are more sophisticated. Senegal led in sub-Saharan countries having access through telecenters and internet cafes on street corners. Telecenters and internet cafes are common in urban areas, such as the capital, Dakar, and also towns on the edge of villages such as Tambacounda or Kolda. They are a public place where anyone can go and pay money per hour of connection to the internet.

Community access to the internet and computer is a crucial resource. It connects people to skills, information and the rest of the world, which is becoming more and more digital. The fact that the internet pulls many countries from undeveloped to developed is key, especially if more and more economic trades and markets are being conducted online.

But public access has been waning in recent years despite the proliferation of personal computers, home computers and mobile phone devices.

This fact was recently concluded by a study of eight countries in five years by the Technology and Social Change Group at the University of Washington Information School.

Araba Sey, Information School research assistant professor and lead investigator of the study said,

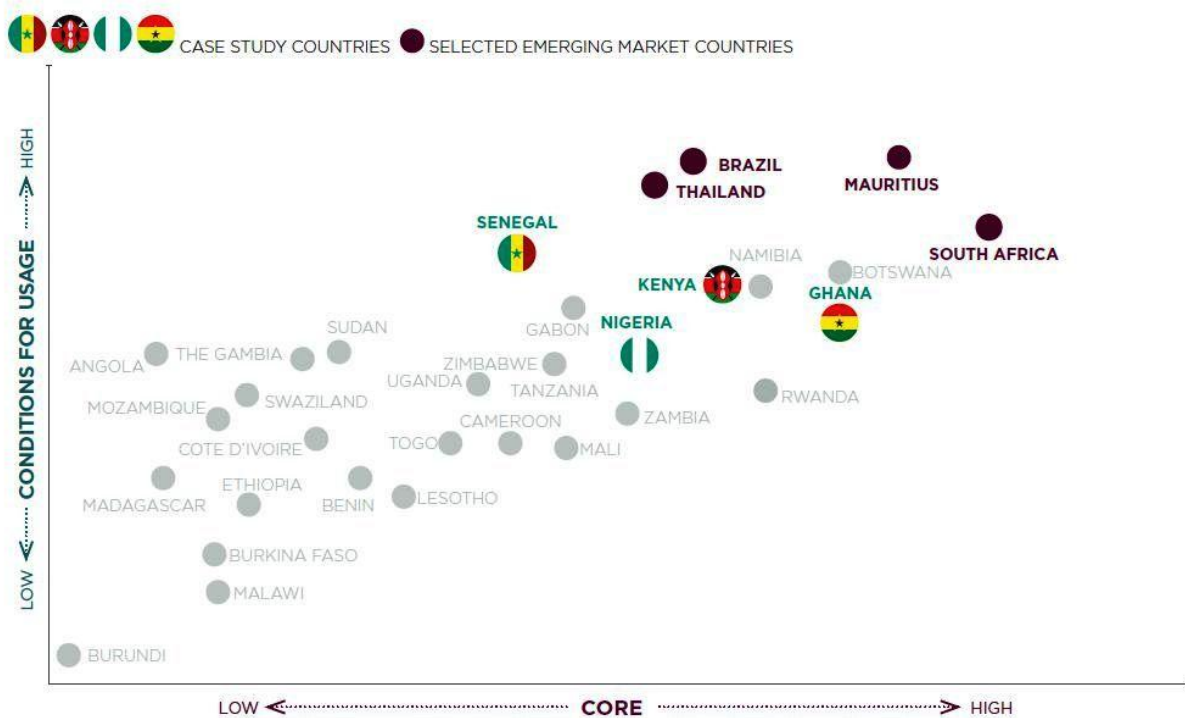
“Our study finds that many people in low and middle income countries, including the underemployed, women, rural residents and other who are often marginalized, derive great benefits in such areas as education, employment, and health when they use computers and the internet at public access venues,”

The survey looked at 5,000 computer users at libraries, telecenters and cyber cafés and 2,000 nonusers at home to learn more. Although Senegal was not part of the study, it was conducted in three continents, and 8 other third world and second world countries: Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Ghana, Lithuania, Philippines and South Africa.

The study also found that the use of mobile phones did not pose a threat to the relevance of public access.

More than half of people’s use of computers would decrease if the public access locations were not present. Forty percent of users said that the public access places for the internet were crucial for them to develop their computer and internet skills.

FIGURE 3: MAPPING OF COUNTRIES BASED ON CONDITIONS FOR USE AND CORE INFRASTRUCTURE



Source: Dalberg analysis

The above table shows where a country is placed in terms of their core infrastructure related to conditions of internet usage. Without an increase in infrastructure investments, internet usage and number of usage will not rise above a certain level. The internet represents global information networks and connecting to it and its information freedom is the high-speed route to modernity and development. As I mentioned above, not everyone in the world has access to the benefits of technology. In fact hundreds of millions do not and even fail to afford to feed themselves daily. However, once a person on the internet, they need not be a rocket scientist, multimillionaire or celebrity to make an impact on society in a global context. Economic progress will be imminent with the help of the internet and Facebook.

In sub-Saharan Africa and regions of Senegal, women entrepreneurs have used the internet to get access to microcredit loans that can connect them to global markets, according to Hillary Rodham Clinton in her piece in *"The Global Impact of Social Media."*

Promoting economic and social development in countries where people are already lacking education, and access to capital and markets is frustrating. However internet is an equalizer. And with the ease of access and usage of the internet anyone can learn the fundamentals enough to gain access to the rest of the world. When people have access to internet, opportunities arise for knowledge accumulation and various markets and networks.

Internet access and the potential growth in Africa and Senegal

For many Africans, the internet has become part of their daily life.

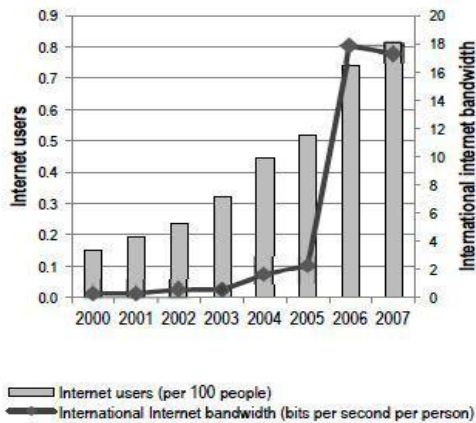
"The Impact of the Internet in Africa," a report published in April 2013 by Dalberg, the Global Development Advisors, describes the role of the internet on the socioeconomic development of Sub-Saharan African and its potential to grow.

The report, which was derived from a variety of resources including interviews with key stakeholders such as academics, policymakers, practitioners, and media, is a broad-based survey over 1,300 businesses across Senegal, Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria, and a heat map of where Internet enabled solutions are likely to have the greatest impact on development. This report differs from previous research by its definition to understand opportunities that drive inclusive growth and to address social and inequality goals. It also delves into the opportunities that the Internet would bring to small businesses and the potential impact on them.

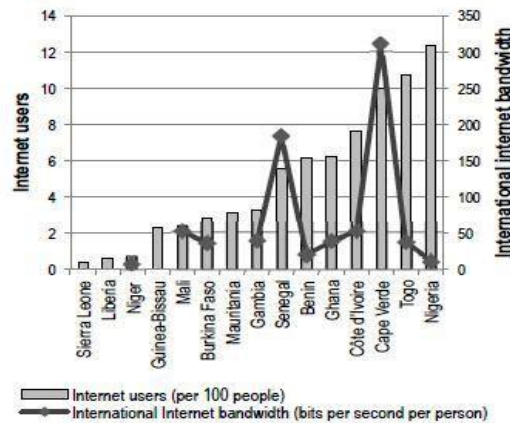
According to the Dalberg impact report, a decade ago there were about 10 million internet users in the entire continent of Africa. That number has increased to over 160 million, as of April 2013, according to the *"ITU 2013 Facts and Figure and World Bank African Development Indicators."*

Figure 19. Expansion of the Internet market in Senegal

a. Internet service trends, 2000–08



b. Internet service, ECOWAS, 2008



Source: World Bank, including the Information and Communications for Development database.
 Note: ECOWAS = Economic Community of West African States.

The internet has been around since the 1960s, but Senegal only first got access in 1996. Senegalese citizens who are experiencing Internet for the first time are doing it vastly different than already developed countries, especially through mobile internet and telecenters. In the figure of the usage index, the percentage of the Senegal’s population that is online and has a Facebook account reflects their awareness of how internet availability can contribute to their lives in an innovative and modern way. And with internet use come these social media realms, such as Facebook, to easily connect with friends and family.

“Social media and social networking is proving to be a catalyst in driving Internet access and impact” (Dalberg).

Organizations in Senegal have said that they consider Internet essential to operations. According to the report, the estimated 100 million social network accounts in Africa, signal the stronger link between government, educators, service providers, businesses and citizens. This will also encourage more sophisticated and niche growth given the industry in the future.

Users are engaging in a full spectrum of topics; from music, sports, and activities, to public health, governance, and human rights. This is instrumental to how internet use will be taught to future generations.

In the Dalberg impact analysis, one conclusion is to manage digital and internet connectivity across geographic and demographic areas. But it also seeks to make the internet content available to individuals and become social, environmental and economical services. Promoting beneficial service through social media is an important distinction. Unless a problem is being solved, nothing is really happening.

Interview with “The Forgotten Children” organization founder, Elijah

Elijah Ndoye was born and raised in a little Senegalese town called Mbour, just off the African coast. When he turned twenty, he left Senegal and moved to Tucson, Arizona to attend the University of Arizona. There, he learned English, met his wife, La Makka Thiouf (who is also Senegalese), and got a degree in business. He is now the bank manager at the National Bank of Arizona and has three daughters.

In March 2013, I was able to sit down with Ndoye and discuss his nonprofit work and how he uses Facebook to garner support, discussion, and donations.

Ndoye created "The Forgotten Children" organization in 2010. It is based in both Tucson and Mbour. The Forgotten Children is dedicated to providing the street children beggars, or "Talibes" of Senegal with clothing, shoes, first aid items, shelter and other necessities.

"We believe that no child should be left alone, hungry and helpless," said Ndoye.

The "Talibes" of Senegal are homeless children predominantly in urban areas but were originally from rural villages. Often their parents take them from the villages to the cities because they cannot take care of them on their own. In addition, the parents believe the children will have success in begging to be able to send money home to their families in the village. When talibes are not on the street begging, they usually find shelter at "daaras" run by the head "Marabout." Marabouts have a lot of political and economic control and teach the children Islam at night.

However, in the daytime, talibes must beg for enough money or on their return to daaras, may suffer emotional and physical abuse.

"Child beggars are one of the most recognizable images of poverty in Senegal," said Ndoye. Ndoye collects supplies and donations at his home in Tucson and visits Mbour about once a year to deliver the supplies directly to the children and the shelter he has started.

A month after Ndoye created The Forgotten Children, he built a Facebook page for the organization. He uploaded as much content to the Facebook page as he had accessible although it still wasn't the best because he was unfamiliar with the social networking site.

Finally, in 2012, he hired a web designer to update his original website along with the Facebook page. Since then, he has seen an increase in people "liking" the page as compared to before.

Ndoye says he tries to use Facebook constantly for the nonprofit and although he understands that by posting something daily you're keeping the organization's mission in the forefront of people's minds, he has yet to adopt such a persistent posting schedule. Ndoye also notes how important Facebook is for generating guests to events and fundraisers that he is promoting for The Forgotten Children.

"It is especially nice for the friends in Africa. Yes, they can not come, but they still like to know what's going on," he said.

Yet, when people share and like pages or articles on Facebook, this doesn't always mean people realize what they're sharing. Many do not read a page's article thoroughly before passing it along.

Another way Facebook can be misleading is with attendance to events. Ndoye noticed that after creating an event on Facebook for a fundraiser he held last year, many more friends and fans of The Forgotten Children page hit "Yes" to attend however this did not accurately reflect who actually attended or the number of people present.

Ndoye has also tried using his Facebook to generate monetary donations. Nonprofits can create a donation page that can be sent directly to friends requesting donations. However, Ndoye says he hasn't had success with it yet.

When it comes to sponsors, volunteers and donors, it is more often that people donate and then familiarize themselves with the organization's Facebook page than vice versa.

"Facebook is more of way to get in contact with people and a lot of people in Senegal use it to post pictures," he said. "I do like to share, that's what I really like about Facebook. I think it's a great way to spread the word."

Though there may be more people in Tucson who "like" the Facebook page, Ndoye knows he has many connections in Africa who are fans as well, but due to the lack of internet connectivity, it's harder to display that with Facebook.

"I attribute that to the lack of not being able to access it everyday. Because of the lack of electricity, connectivity and lack of computer."

"Technology in Senegal is huge and people love it," said Ndoye.

The last time Ndoye visited the village where his father once lived, he did see internet access. The modems for wireless connection is powered by generators.

"It's not a whole lot but it's there," he said.

Sonatel, one of the phone companies of Senegal is beginning to go further into the villages to give access.

"The joke is that some of them won't have money to eat but they'll have the money to buy a new cell phone," said Ndoye.

Ndoye does not see how Facebook could be a bad thing.

"It's just how we use it. It's all dependent on the user and what you're putting on there and how you use it to make it a benefit to your organization," he said.

"But still, social media sometimes can be a little scary."

Analysis of the Facebook page for "The Forgotten Children"



The profile picture is the most important component of a Facebook page. It gives the first impression to users and simultaneously tells them who you are and what you do.

With "The Forgotten Children" they chose an original photo from their past visits to Senegal to support the Talibes. This is a comforting picture to show fans just what they are supporting.

You can see where the nonprofit is located and how close they are to you.

For a kick-starter nonprofit, this is a good amount of fans but could definitely improve.

This space can tell what the organization does and how to help donate. It's beneficial that it puts a link to the website.

Anyone can post content to the Facebook page's wall. This is mostly where the nonprofit will give updates on their work.

Here you can see which of your Facebook friends are fans of the Facebook page also. You can also invite those who aren't to like it.

On a recent trip to Mbour, the founder El, took the donations to the Talibes and documented the trip with photos. This is crucial to showing supporters what they are actually supporting.

The Forgotten Children Likes ▾ Like

👍 Likes and People Talking About This

People Talking About This	Total Likes
1	81

Page Insights

December 25, 2011
Most Popular Week [?]

25-44 years old
Most Popular Age Group [?]

December 25, 2011
Most Visited Week (1 person) [?]

1 Person
Largest Party [?]

● People Talking About This
● New Likes Per Week

Jun 23, 2013 Jul 22, 2013

Friends Who Like The Forgotten Children

This graph shows the gender and age breakdown of fans for this page. For page administrators, they can also see what countries and cities they are located and which languages they speak.

This graph tells you how fans are interacting with the page. Are they looking at it, what types of posts are they looking at? And you can see that when there is a lack of activity, there is also a lack of interaction and views.

Conclusion

Social networks, such as Facebook, have emerged in a way people can connect and discuss a plethora of subjects. Facebook is the leading social media and with updates such as Facebook pages and causes, nonprofits have a new tool to invest time into and receive benefits.

Every month, the average person spends about 15.5 hours on Facebook. Users have the ability to access the 2.5 million websites that have integrated to Facebook or the 70 billion pieces of content that is shared each month on the leading social media site.

Facebook is an extensive tool for nonprofits if used properly. Though Senegal is still working to increase their infrastructure including their internet access, nonprofit organizations based in the country may benefit from the increase of social media, predominantly Facebook, in their impact. The future implications are vast. Nonprofit interactions that do not consist of social media may become obsolete. However, it is evident that Facebook is a new source for impact in both public relations, and garnering volunteer and monetary support in hopes to best provide resources to nonprofits' mission objectives.

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