Best Practices in Social Media

Summary of Findings from the Fourth Comprehensive Study of Social Media Use by Schools, Colleges and Universities

April 12, 2013

CASE

mStoner

HuronEducation

Overview of findings

Huron Education and mStoner partnered with CASE for the fourth year in a row in order to research educational institutions about their social media activities. Our 2010 inaugural study was, from what we could tell, one of the first studies conducted of the institutions themselves about how they use social media.

Our overarching goal of this research is to create knowledge and resources to assist education professionals as they assess and implement social media strategies for communication and engagement.

Some of the questions we hoped it would answer include:

- How do professionals in education incorporate social media into their marketing and communication strategies, initiatives, and campaigns, especially fundraising campaigns?
- What are their goals for social media?
- Which social media sites and tools are in use in the education sector and which are most successful?
- What are current best practices?
- How do they staff their social media efforts?
- How are schools measuring the ROI or impact of social media initiatives?
- What contributes to the successful use of social media?
- What are the barriers to the effective use of social media?
- What does the near future look like for social media in education?

We conducted an online survey among a random sample of 18,144 CASE members – in the US and abroad. We received 1,080 responses across all types of institutions – a testament to the interest in this topic.

We are just beginning to mine the data from this fourth round of research and will be releasing a full white paper later in the year. If you're interested in receiving this white paper, please email mstoner@mstoner.com.

For any questions about the study please contact:

Cheryl Slover-Linett
Huron Consulting Group
505-820-7256
csloverlinett-c@huronconsultinggroup.com

Thanks for your interest.

HuronEducation

1. Are you affiliated with an institution in:

Total Answering	1080
United States and Canada	89%
Europe	7%
Asia Pacific	3%
Latin America	1%
Other	1%

2. (International only) What type of institution do you work at?

Total Answering	121
Higher education/university	75%
Elementary/primary/secondary/high school	18%
Special focus institution (e.g. stand-alone business school, medical school, etc.)	6%
Further education/community college	-
Other	1%

3. (U.S. only) What type of institution do you work at?

Total Answering	942
Doctoral/research university	32%
Baccalaureate (four year) college	23%
Master's college or university	17%
Independent elementary/secondary school	16%
Associate's (two year) college	4%
Special focus institution (e.g., stand-alone law school, medical school)	3%
Independent alumni association	2%
Institutionally related foundation	1%
System office	<1%
Tribal college	-
Other	2%

4. Is your institution…?

Total Answering	1024
Private	54%
Public	45%
Other	1%

5. What is the name of your institution? (Open-ended)

HuronEducation

6. How many students does your institution have? Please include ALL students, both full and part time.

Total Answering	1025
Less than 1,000	18%
1,000 – 4,999	29%
5,000 – 9,999	11%
10,000 – 14,999	9%
15,000 – 19,999	6%
20,000 or more	28%

7. Which of the following describe your unit, that is, your immediate department or division?

Total Answering	1003
Communications	45%
Alumni Relations	38%
Development (including Annual Fund)	36%
Marketing	26%
Advancement Services	22%
Enrollment Management or Admissions	4%
Other	10%

8. Which one of the following best applies to your unit, that is, your immediate department or division? Please select one.

Total Answering	1002
We have no current involvement with the use of social media	2%
Another unit manages all of our social media activities, without any input from us	3%
Another unit manages all of our social media activities, with input from us	13%
We handle our own social media activities, with some input from others	55%
We handle our own social media activities, without any input from other units	28%

HuronEducation

9, 10. Which types of social media do you (your unit) use for each of the specific audiences below? Percent who use each social media platform for any audience.

Total Answering	851
Facebook	96%
Twitter	82%
LinkedIn	75%
Youtube	71%
Blogs	42%
Flickr	38%
An institutional web site that is an aggregator of social networking	34%
Social communities provided by vendors through proprietary software (such as Harris Connect, iModules, etc.)	32%
Pinterest	28%
Instagram	27%
Google+	22%
Tools to build social network sites in-house	20%
Geosocial services (like Foursquare or SCVNGR)	15%
Tumblr	9%

9, 10. Percent who use any type of social media for each audience.

Total Answering	851
Alumni	97%
Current Students	89%
Faculty and Staff	86%
Friends and Supporters	82%
Prospective Students	74%
Donors	72%
Parents of Current Students	67%
Parents of Prospective Students	58%
Media	51%
Employers	42%
High School Guidance Counselors	31%
Government Organizations	25%

11. To what extent is each of the following goals for social media a goal for your unit?

Goals of social media Total answering = 728	Not at all	Not much	Some-what	Quite a bit	Exten-sively	Mean
Engage alumni	2%	3%	10%	28%	57%	4.4
Create, sustain, and improve brand image	3%	4%	15%	34%	44%	4.1
Increase awareness/advocacy/rankings	8%	8%	23%	36%	25%	3.6
Engage current students	9%	10%	26%	30%	25%	3.5
Build internal community	10%	12%	27%	31%	20%	3.4
Engage current faculty and staff	9%	15%	34%	27%	14%	3.2
Engage admitted students	17%	17%	22%	24%	20%	3.1
Engage the local community	12%	15%	36%	23%	14%	3.1
Engage prospective students	22%	16%	18%	23%	21%	3.1
Engage parents of current students	18%	20%	27%	22%	13%	2.9
Recruit students	25%	16%	21%	19%	19%	2.9
Raise private funds	19%	24%	29%	17%	12%	2.8

12. Which of the following do you use the most in meeting your unit's goals? Please select the three you use the most.

Total Answering	717
Facebook	94%
Twitter	61%
LinkedIn	35%
YouTube	26%
An institutional web site that is an aggregator of social networking sites	12%
Social communities provided by vendors through proprietary software (such as Harris Connect, iModules, etc.)	12%
Blogs	10%
Instagram	5%
Flickr	4%
Tools to build social network sites in-house	2%
Google+	2%
Pinterest	1%
Tumblr	1%
Geosocial services (like Foursquare or SCVNGR)	<1%
Other	3%

13. Which of the following do you consider the most successful in meeting your unit's goals?

Total Answering	697
Facebook	90%
Twitter	49%
LinkedIn	31%
YouTube	22%
An institutional web site that is an aggregator of social networking sites	11%
Blogs	10%
Social communities provided by vendors through proprietary software (such as Harris Connect, iModules, etc.)	10%
Instagram	5%
Flickr	3%
Tools to build social network sites in-house	1%
Google+	1%
Pinterest	1%
Tumblr	<1%
Geosocial services (like Foursquare or SCVNGR)	<1%
Other	3%

14. Has your unit used one or more social media channels as part of a broader, planned campaign to achieve a specific goal?

Total Answering	735
Yes	54%
No	46%

15. In 2012, roughly what percentage of your campaigns included social media channels?

Total Answering	382
1-25%	27%
26-50%	21%
51-75%	23%
76-100%	29%

HuronEducation

16. In what types of campaigns have you used social media?

Total Answering	382
Alumni Engagement	81%
Brand/Marketing	65%
Fundraising/Development	59%
Student Engagement	54%
Admissions	41%
Other	6%

17. Please share with us some details of the campaigns. What goals did you have and what outcomes were achieved? (Open-ended response)

18. Is the use of social media at your institution centralized in one institutional unit or is it dispersed throughout the institution as a whole?

Total Answering	659
1 Centralized	14%
2	15%
3	15%
4	12%
5	14%
6 Dispersed	30%

19. Which outreach and marketing methods do you use to promote your social media initiatives? Check all that apply.

Total Answering	613
Website	90%
Email	88%
Social media	79%
Internal publications	68%
Outreach and marketing at events	59%
Direct print mail	54%
Blogging	27%
Search engine optimization or search engine marketing	24%
External publications (not your institution's publications)	22%
Radio	7%
TV	5%
Other	3%

HuronEducation

20. How would you rate the overall success of your unit's use of social media, in terms of achieving its goals?

Total Answering	703
Not at all successful	4%
Not very successful	10%
Somewhat successful	58%
Very successful	25%
A model for successful use of social media	3%

21. (For those who selected Not at all successful or Not very successful) Please tell us more about why you think your social media activities aren't that successful. (Open-ended response)

22. (For those who selected Somewhat successful) Please tell us more about how your social media activities could be more successful. (Open-ended response)

23. (For those who selected Very Successful or A model for successful use) Please tell us more about why you think your social media activities have been successful. What goals did they achieve? (Open-ended response)

24. To what extent does your unit use each of the following outcome measures to evaluate your social media initiatives?

Outcome Measures Total answering=633	Not at all	Not much	Some-what	Quite a bit	Exten-sively	Mean
Number of active "friends," "likes," members, participants, people who post, or number of comments	5%	4%	19%	40%	32%	3.9
Volume of participation (unique person counts)	10%	7%	29%	36%	19%	3.5
Number of "click-throughs" to your website	10%	10%	31%	34%	15%	3.3
Event participation	13%	14%	33%	29%	9%	3.1
Anecdotal success (or horror) stories	19%	17%	39%	21%	4%	2.8
Penetration measure of use among target audience	31%	20%	29%	15%	5%	2.4
Volume or proportion of complaints and negative comments	28%	27%	34%	9%	2%	2.3
Donations	35%	26%	24%	10%	4%	2.2
Surveys of target audiences	35%	33%	22%	7%	2%	2.1
Analysis of content/ number of mentions in blogs	44%	24%	21%	9%	2%	2.0
Number of applications for admission	54%	21%	15%	7%	3%	1.9

25. In what way has social media been most successful for your institution? Please select only one.

Total Answering	663
Increasing engagement with our target audiences	54%
Increasing awareness of our school	14%
Creating awareness of key institutional initiatives	9%
Increasing attendance at our events	7%
Recruiting students	6%
Building a stronger internal community	4%
Communicating during campus issues/crises	2%
Increasing donations	1%
Other	3%

26. With which target audiences did you increase engagement through social media? (Open-ended response)

27. Does your institution use social media channels to raise money from donors?

Total Answering	661
Yes	35%
No	47%
Don't know/unsure	18%

28. Does your institution use social media channels for donor stewardship purposes or to communicate with current donors?

Total Answering	659
Yes	41%
No	39%
Don't know/unsure	20%

(Note: Question numbering intentionally skips 29)

HuronEducation

30. For which types of development and fundraising activities does your institution use social media?

Total Answering	320
Keeping donors up to date on institution news	77%
Annual fund solicitations	58%
Thanking donors for their contributions	52%
Keeping donors up to date on campaign or fundraising news	49%
Inviting donors to donor events	48%
Annual fund follow-up reminders	30%
Referring to or reminding about solicitations that a donor would have received through non-social media channels	25%
Capital campaign solicitations	14%
Other	6%

31. Which of the following do you consider the most successful in your fundraising efforts? Please select the three you consider most successful.

Total Answering	288
Facebook	80%
Twitter	34%
YouTube	18%
LinkedIn	15%
Social communities provided by vendors through proprietary software (such as Harris Connect, iModules, etc.)	14%
An institutional web site that is an aggregator of social networking sites	13%
Blogs	6%
Google+	2%
Tools to build social network sites in-house	1%
Flickr	1%
Instagram	1%
Pinterest	1%
Tumblr	<1%
Geosocial services (like Foursquare or SCVNGR)	-
Other	9%

32. Approximately how much money did your institution raise through social media channels in FY12?

Total Answering	200
Up to $10,000	67%
$10,001 – $50,000	21%
$50,001 – $100,000	6%
$100,001 – 500,000	3%
$500,001 – 1,000,000	2%
$1,000,001 or more	1%

33. What would you like to do differently in the next year or two to increase the amount of money your institution raises using social media? If nothing, please state that. (Open-ended response)

34. For each of the following statements about the use of social media, please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree.

Total answering=635	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Some-what disagree	Some-what agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Percent in top two
Social media have great potential for achieving important goals in my unit	<1%	1%	3%	20%	42%	34%	76%
A champion is essential to the successful implementation of social media in our institution	<1%	3%	6%	19%	37%	34%	72%
My unit benefits from institutional support and buy in for social media deployment	3%	6%	13%	27%	35%	16%	51%
It is difficult to measure "return on investment" from the use of social media	2%	10%	14%	35%	28%	10%	38%
Expertise to help our social media efforts is readily available	3%	11%	18%	34%	24%	10%	34%

HuronEducation

35. To what degree is each issue below a barrier to the successful use of social media in your unit?

Potential Barriers	Not at all	Not much	Some-what	Quite a bit	Exten-sively	Mean
Staffing for day-to-day content management	7%	15%	22%	30%	25%	3.5
Staffing for site development	9%	18%	29%	27%	17%	3.3
Lack of relevant human resources in my unit	15%	19%	26%	24%	16%	3.1
Slow pace of change	18%	27%	25%	21%	10%	2.8
Expertise in how to implement it	15%	30%	31%	19%	6%	2.7
Funding	19%	32%	24%	16%	10%	2.7
Lack of IT resources	21%	33%	23%	15%	7%	2.5
Lack of institutional clarity about who is responsible for social media initiatives	22%	33%	23%	14%	8%	2.5
Concerns about loss of control over content and tone of postings by others	19%	35%	27%	14%	5%	2.5
Lack of commitment by decision makers	20%	36%	25%	12%	7%	2.5
Uncertainty about usefulness of social media	23%	31%	30%	12%	4%	2.4
Institutional red tape	25%	39%	20%	10%	7%	2.4
Privacy issues	25%	44%	22%	7%	2%	2.2
Legal issues	33%	47%	16%	3%	<1%	1.9
Ethical issues	40%	46%	11%	3%	<1%	1.8

36. What units, if any, are responsible for creating, monitoring compliance, and enforcing institution-wide policies?

Total Answering	632
Communications/Public Relations	73%
Marketing	41%
Alumni Relations	23%
Development (including Annual Fund)	16%
Advancement Services	14%
Information Technology	13%
Enrollment Management or Admissions	10%
Other	6%
None	11%

If your unit has distinctive "lessons learned," significant experience, or success stories in any of the below areas that could help others, please note them.

37. **Lessons learned on deployment of a specific social media tool or platform (Open-ended response)**

38. **Lessons learned on implementation of a specific evaluation approach (Open-ended response)**

39. **Lessons learned on application of social media to a specific target audience (Open-ended response)**

40. **Lessons learned on effective policies and guidelines for use of social media (Open-ended response)**

41. **How many full time people does your <u>unit</u> have working on social media that are 100 percent dedicated to it?**

Total Answering	620
0	81%
1	14%
2 or more	5%

42. **How many full time people does your <u>unit</u> have working on social media who are not 100 percent dedicated to it but spend at least 25 percent of their time on it?**

Total Answering	622
0	21%
1	41%
2	21%
3	11%
4 or more	6%

43. **What is your estimate of the FTE (Full time equivalency) effort of all staff in your <u>unit</u> working on social media?**

Total Answering	604
0	7%
Greater than 0 but less than 1	62%
1	10%
Greater than 1 but less than 2	14%
2 or more	7%

44. How many full-time people does your <u>institution</u> have working on social media that are 100 percent dedicated to it (all of their job responsibilities relate to social media)?

Total Answering	533
0	67%
1	17%
2	7%
3	3%
4	1%
5	1%
6	1%
7	-
8	-
9	-
10 or more people	3%

45. How many full time people does your <u>institution</u> have working on social media who are not 100 percent dedicated to it but spend at least 25 percent of their time on it?

Total Answering	517
0	11%
1	20%
2	18%
3	11%
4	7%
5	5%
6	2%
7	1%
8	1%
9	<1%
10 or more people	22%

46. What is your estimate of the FTE (Full time equivalency) effort of all staff in your <u>institution</u> working on social media?

Total Answering	486
0	5%
Greater than 0 but less than 1	34%
1	10%
Greater than 1 but less than 2	13%
2	6%
More than 2	32%

47. What training resources are provided for staff who focus at least half of their time on social media?

Total Answering	457
Internal social media and branding policies	53%
External best practices in social media	52%
Technical assistance, or how to implement social media	40%
Content development	34%
Engagement strategies	31%
Other	19%

48. What is the level of the position that manages the day to day aspects of your unit's social media activities?

Total Answering	597
Associate, assistant or deputy director/manager	35%
Specialist, coordinator, or administrative assistant	32%
Executive director, director or manager	25%
Vice president, vice chancellor or assistant head of school	1%
Dean, associate dean or assistant dean	1%
Associate or assistant vice president	<1%
President or head of school	-
Other	6%

49. What resources would you find most helpful to help your unit or institution better understand or manage social media?