

Nonprofit Video Index 2020

Lessons learned from 778 nonprofits



by **Tectonic**

“

Far too often we rely on gut instinct when making decisions in the nonprofit sector. With the Nonprofit Video Index™, the team at Tectonic Video is providing organizations everywhere with actionable intelligence they can use to drive engagement and fundraising—something that is more important now than ever.”



Andrew Means

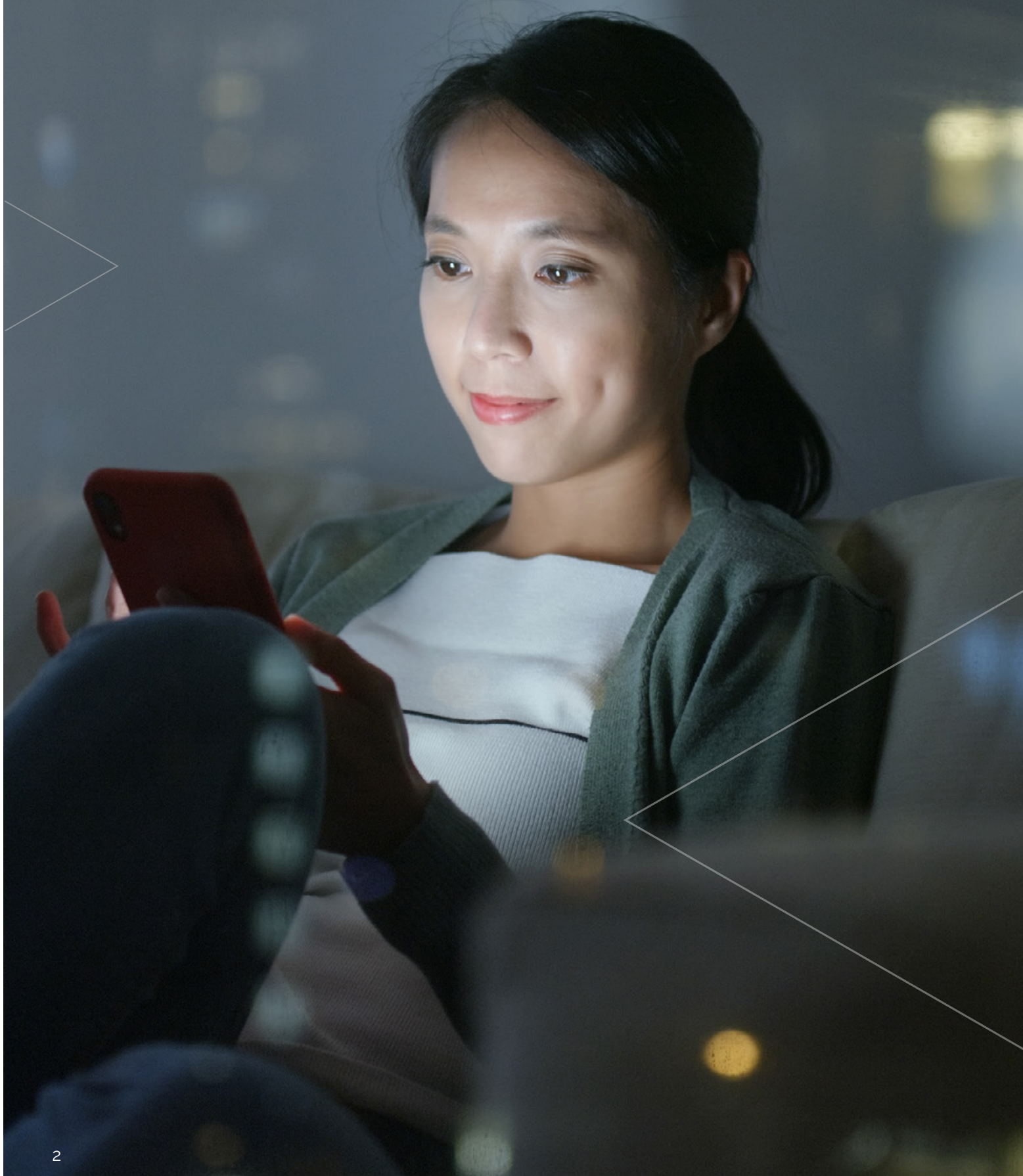
FOUNDER OF DATA ANALYSTS FOR GOOD

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	03
2. Methodology	04
3. Data Set	06
4. Key Findings	09
5. About Tectonic Video	25



A study by Nielson found that adults in the U.S. watch 6 hours of video every day on their TVs, tablets, computers and phones.





Introduction

What's a respectable number of likes, shares and comments for a video on Facebook? How many videos a year should we create? Should we be on Instagram? How do we grow our audience? Why do some videos generate lots of engagement and others don't? Is there a formula for creating effective social media videos?

If you work at a nonprofit and you've asked any of those questions, you're not alone. My team and I at Tectonic have made hundreds of videos for some of the world's most innovative nonprofit organizations, and our clients wanted answers too.

We had our hunches and theories, but they were based on anecdotal evidence or on small studies that lacked rigor. What we needed was big data from the social media accounts of hundreds of diverse nonprofits. We needed research with sound methodology that compared "apples to apples." We needed analysis that yielded actionable insights. But after an extensive search online and offline for that kind of data and analysis, we came up empty.

We knew that if we were going to get the answers we needed, we'd have to conduct our own research and produce our own study. So, we got to work. Over the past year we consulted with experts and spent hundreds of hours compiling and analyzing data to create the Nonprofit Video Index™.

We now have answers. We know what types of videos are the most engaging and which factors correlate to audience growth. We know which channels nonprofits should focus on and what benchmarks they should measure themselves against. We know how to help nonprofits make better videos, and we're excited to share what we've learned. Let's look at the data.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug".

Doug Scott

FOUNDER, TECTONIC VIDEO



Methodology

We compiled a database of 10,000+ nonprofit organizations from publicly available sources and assigned each a **Category and Cause Area** (i.e. sub-category). We then randomly selected organizations to include in the Nonprofit Video Index™.

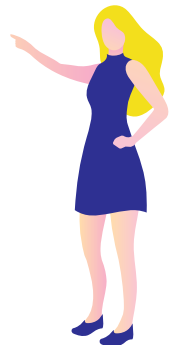
Each nonprofit included in the Index:

- was verified as an active 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in good standing with the IRS
- had posted a video to their Facebook account in 2019
- had posted a video on Instagram and/or Twitter in 2019

We then captured video post data from each nonprofit's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter account from January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019 to create our data set.

We focused on measuring engagement (i.e. reactions, shares and comments) for two reasons:

1. Nonprofits want to create videos that their followers react to, comment on and ultimately share with their friends and followers, i.e. videos that are engaging. This type of data is publicly available and possible to analyze.
2. Computer algorithms determine which content is prioritized in social media users' feeds. Although each channel's algorithm is different, and their exact ranking factors are secret, each channel says that their algorithm values engagement over everything else. The more engaging your videos are, the more likely they will be distributed to more of your followers who will share it with their friends and so on, providing you with the opportunity to reach millions of prospective fans, donors and partners without additional cost or effort.



To better quantify engagement we evaluated **video post engagement** and **organization engagement**.

Video post engagement is the amount of likes, shares and comments per video post, divided by the nonprofit's audience size at the time of the post.

Organization engagement is a bit more complicated. We started by identifying all known ranking factors for each social media channel. We then developed formulas and algorithms for each channel that weighted various actions in accordance with that channel's known value system (for instance, **Facebook values comments** between friends more than shares and likes). Scores for all organizations were converted to a scale of 1-100 per channel with the highest ranking nonprofits scoring 100, the lowest ranking nonprofits scoring 1, and the rest scoring somewhere in between.

This score per channel is a nonprofit's **Video Engagement Quotient (VEQ)**. Using VEQ allows organizations to quickly gauge where they rank against their peers and within their cause area. We use VEQ to illustrate a number of key findings in the Nonprofit Video Index™.

Notes

1. Posts with looping GIFs were not included.
2. Videos uploaded as Instagram Stories were not counted.
3. A minimum threshold of video posts and followers were determined per channel.



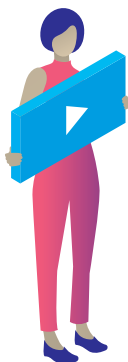
Data Set

The Nonprofit Video Index™ is a cross-section of nonprofits from diverse categories, cause areas, annual revenue and follower size.

CATEGORIES

- Animals
- Arts, Culture, Humanities
- Community Development
- Education
- Environment
- Health
- Human Services
- International
- Human and Civil Rights
- Research & Public Policy

Visit [Charity Navigator](#) to identify your category.



778

Nonprofits included
in the Index



Jan 1 – Dec 31 2019

One year of video
post data



45k+

Total video posts
analyzed



78M

Total followers of
nonprofits in the Index

**Facebook,
Instagram &
Twitter**

The most important
channels for nonprofits

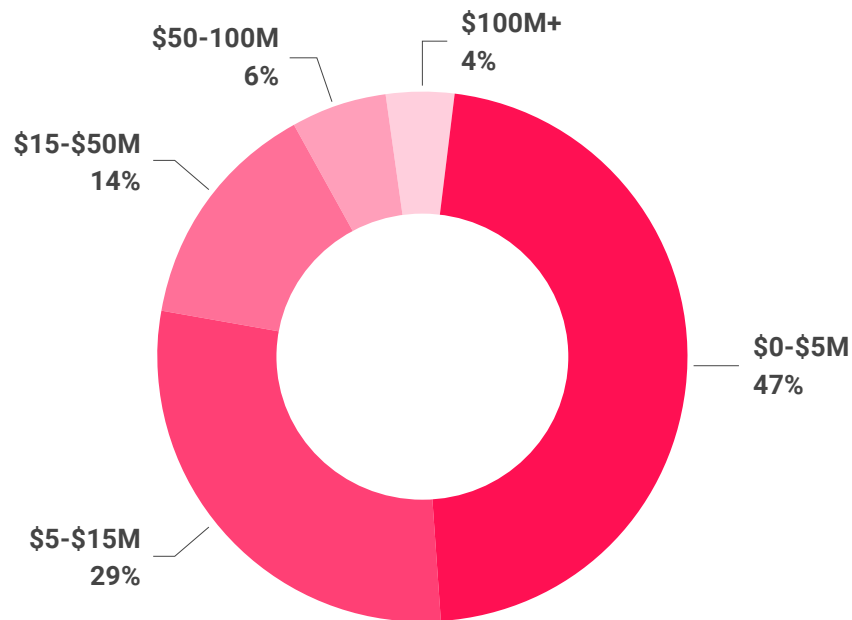


10 Categories

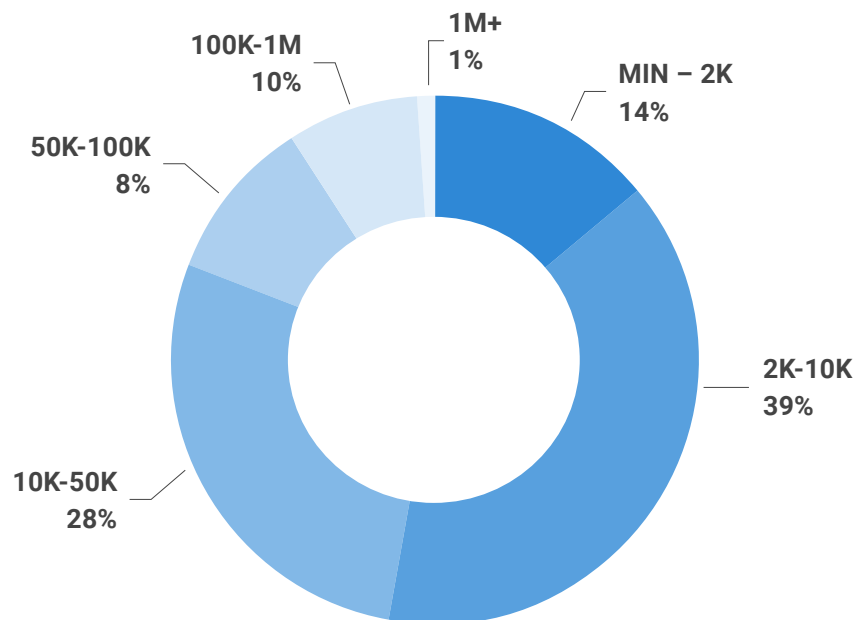
A diverse cross
section of nonprofits

BREAKDOWN OF NONPROFITS IN THE INDEX

ANNUAL BUDGET

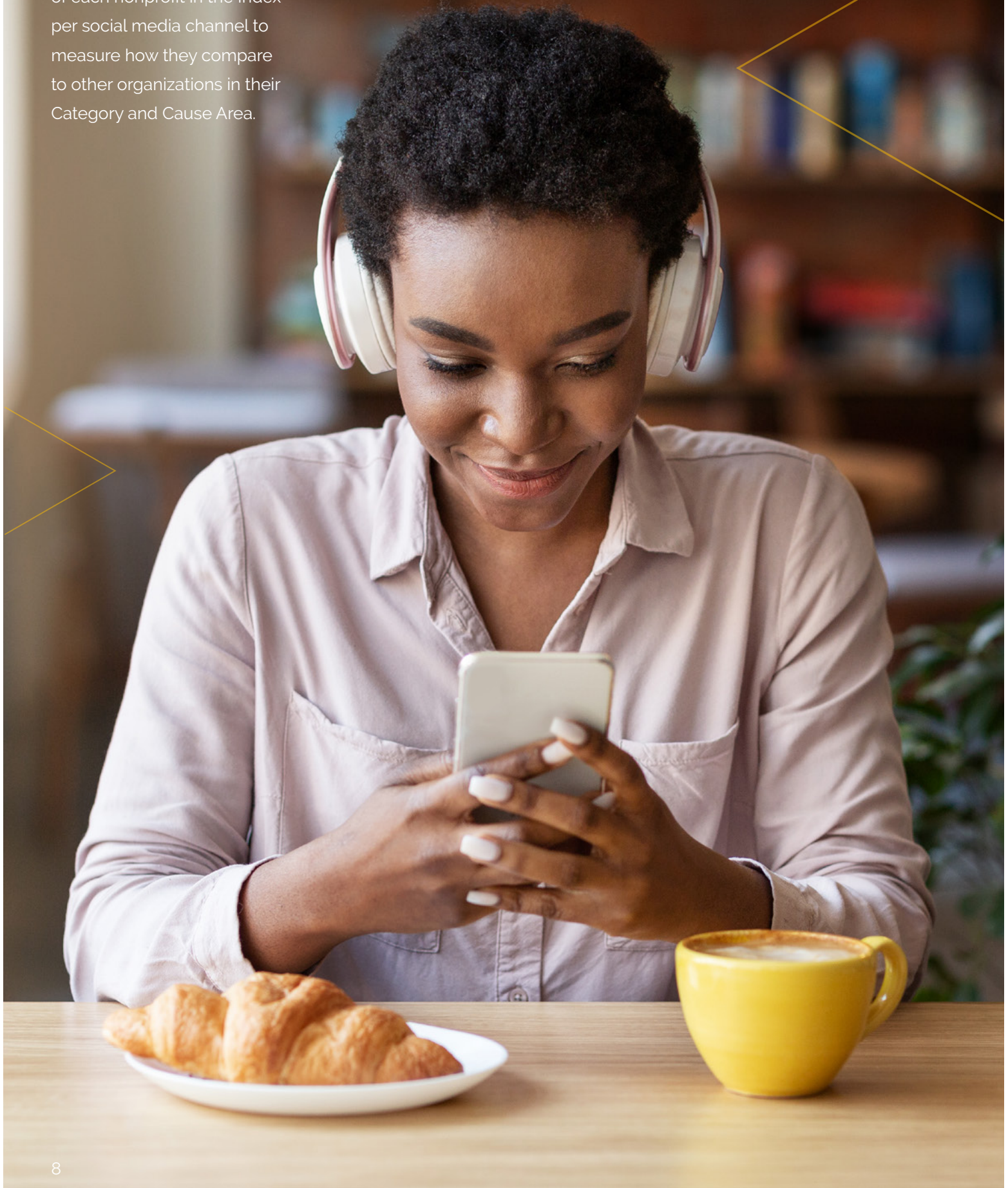


FOLLOWER SIZE



Total accounts from each channel by follower size

We calculated the Video Engagement Quotient (VEQ) of each nonprofit in the Index per social media channel to measure how they compare to other organizations in their Category and Cause Area.





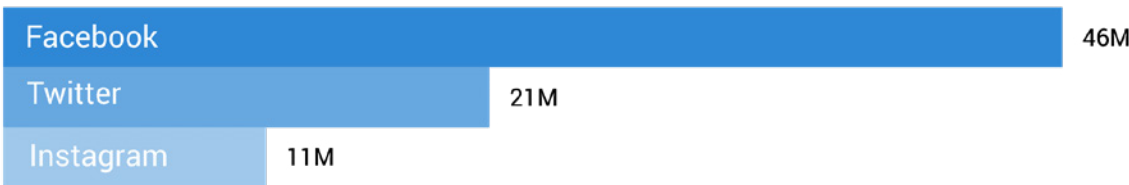
Key Findings

After spending months analyzing thousands of data points, we've uncovered 8 Key Findings to help you create better videos.

1. Facebook is the dominant channel for nonprofit video

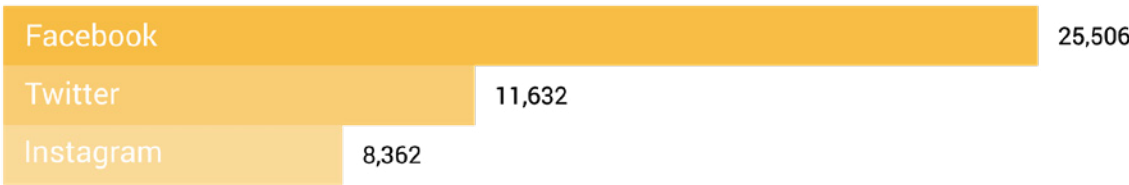
Facebook is the largest social media channel with 2.5B active monthly users globally, and 250M active monthly users in the US & Canada. Our research shows that Facebook is also the leading channel for nonprofit video. It is the clear leader in audience size, video post frequency, and total engagement.

CUMULATIVE AUDIENCE SIZE OF INDEX NONPROFITS (FIG. 1)



Audience = FB Page Likes, IG Followers, TW Followers

TOTAL VIDEO POSTS OF INDEX NONPROFITS (FIG. 2)



Note: Video posts are not necessarily unique videos

TOTAL ENGAGEMENT OF INDEX NONPROFITS (FIG. 3)



Engagement = FB-Reactions, Shares, Comments | IG-Likes, Comments | TW-Likes, Retweets Comments

If a nonprofit posts an engaging video on Facebook, it has the opportunity to reach tens of thousands of prospective fans, volunteers and donors. However, competition is fierce and people's news feeds are overflowing with content. For your content to rise to the top, it must generate engagement.

► Takeaway

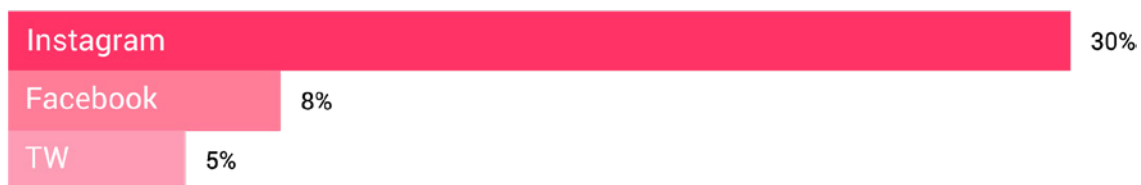
Nonprofits looking to reach the largest audience should focus on Facebook. Create videos that drive engagement to reach prospective fans, volunteers and donors.



2. Instagram is the fastest growing channel for nonprofit video

Instagram is the newest of the big three social media channels. Because of this there are fewer nonprofits competing for users' attention, and there are greater opportunities for growth. Instagram users are younger than Facebook and Twitter, providing nonprofits with the chance to cultivate relationships that will grow over time.

AUDIENCE GROWTH BY CHANNEL (FIG. 4)



► Takeaway

Nonprofits who develop a strong presence on Instagram will likely see rapid growth and connect with younger audiences.



3. Instagram has the highest average engagement per video post

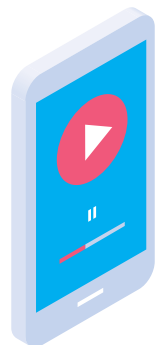
Not only is Instagram the fastest growing social media channel, it also has the highest average engagement per video post. We speculate this is due to a combination of factors including Instagram's focus on photos and videos, its streamlined user experience and limited video length (60 seconds max).



As expected, Twitter's video engagement rates are much lower than Facebook and Instagram. We speculate that since Twitter is a leading source for breaking news and social commentary, and most nonprofits don't have the expertise nor the resources to produce that type of content, Twitter users don't seek out and engage with nonprofit video. However, nonprofits don't have to relinquish the Twittersphere to news organizations and entertainment networks. Some savvy nonprofits have found a way to create engaging video content on Twitter by repurposing existing video footage of their work and re-appropriating it to comment on the current news cycle or zeitgeist with powerful effect.

► Takeaway

Nonprofit videos are exceptionally engaging on Instagram for a number of factors. Since high engagement ultimately leads to audience growth, nonprofits should produce content for Instagram to capitalize on this quickly growing channel.



Instagram is the fastest growing
and most engaging social media
channel for nonprofit video.



4. One third of nonprofits have no Instagram and/or Twitter account or no video posts

We were surprised to discover how few nonprofits are active on all three social media channels.

NONPROFITS IN INDEX WITHOUT INSTAGRAM AND/OR TWITTER ACCOUNT OR NO VIDEO POSTS (FIG. 5)



Being absent from a channel isn't necessarily a bad thing. Unless a nonprofit has the time, energy and money to invest in creating engaging content for a social media channel, it's unlikely to see much success. It's better for a nonprofit to be absent from a channel than to make a half-hearted attempt that yields limited results and wastes precious resources.

However, being absent on Instagram or Twitter is still a missed opportunity. Video is the **most efficient, engaging, and preferred form** of brand communication. How many prospective fans, volunteers and donors are unreached because nonprofits aren't creating engaging videos for those channels?

► Takeaway

It's better for a nonprofit to be absent from a channel than waste time, energy and money on a half-hearted attempt to create engaging video content. Yet, the decision to not invest in a channel has a high opportunity cost in lost fans, volunteers and donors.



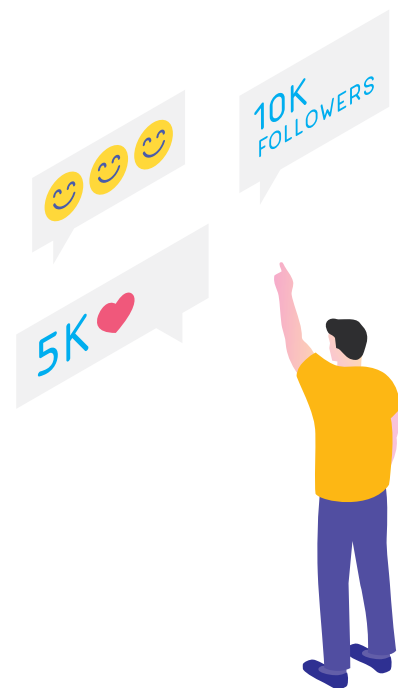
5. Some content is intrinsically more engaging than other content

An assumption we wanted to test was our hunch that some categories of nonprofits are intrinsically more engaging than other categories. After all, it certainly seems like baby animals rule the internet.

To determine which categories were most engaging, we took the average VEQ (Video Engagement Quotient per channel, see Methodology for details) of all nonprofits in the Index by category, and then ranked categories from 1–10. Turns out, we were right – videos about animals are more engaging than anything else.

HIGHEST AVERAGE VEQ BY CATEGORY

1. Animals (Zoos, Conversation, Welfare)
2. Human and Civil Rights
3. Arts, Culture, Humanities
4. Research & Public Policy
5. Human Services
6. Environment
7. Education
8. Community Development
9. International
10. Health



TOP CONTENT TYPES

Beyond categories, we wanted to learn if there were types of content that were especially effective. We analyzed the **Top 100 Most Engaging Nonprofit Videos Per Channel** and discovered that the following content types were consistently the most engaging.



1. Animals, Kids & Cuteness

Especially baby animals or cute kids



2. Emotional reactions captured in real time

From jubilant celebrations to tears of joy



3. Political / controversial topics

Specifically human rights, the environment, or hot button topics like reproductive rights



4. Emotional stories of beneficiaries

Individuals whose lives have been transformed by your work sharing their story



5. Timely, topical videos

Mother's Day, Father's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day, Throwback Thursdays, Anniversaries, etc.

Can you capture an emotional reaction from a staff member in real time? Can you tell an emotional story of a beneficiary? Can you put a baby animal in one of your videos 😊. Cycle through these **Top Content Types** throughout the year to increase engagement and improve your VEQ.

► Takeaway

Some categories of nonprofits are intrinsically more engaging than others. Focus on the Top Content Types to increase engagement and raise your VEQ.

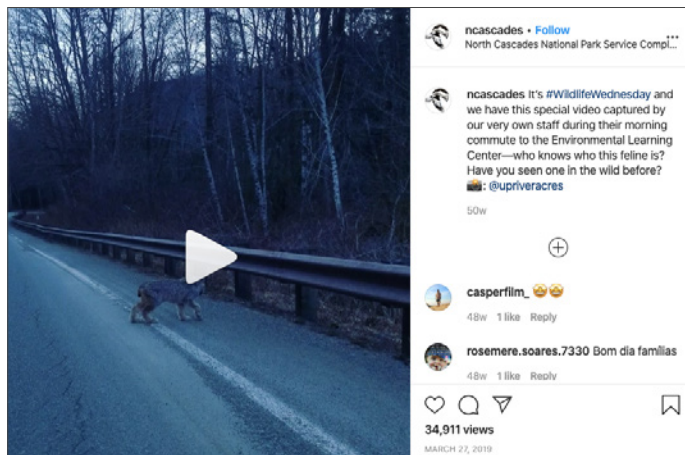
6. Production value does not correlate with engagement

Another question we needed to answer was the relationship between engagement and production value. Do nonprofits need to put a lot of money into video production to produce engaging content? We analyzed the **Top 100 Most Engaging Nonprofit Videos Per Channel** and scored them on their level of production value (i.e. use of professional video cameras, lighting equipment, sophisticated graphics, sound design).

It quickly became apparent that high production value does not correlate with engagement. If anything, the opposite is true. The majority of the Top 100 had minimal production value, with many of the top videos captured on iPhones or "prosumer" video equipment without professional lighting or sound. This should encourage resource-constrained nonprofits to focus on content and storytelling, and not perceive resource limitations as a barrier to creating engaging content.

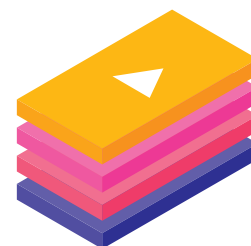
EXAMPLES OF TOP ENGAGING VIDEOS





► Takeaway

Nonprofits don't need to invest in professional video production to create engaging videos for social media. Just grab a phone or prosumer video camera and capture content that's in line with the Top Content Types (see Key Finding #5).



Creating engaging social media videos has more to do with content type, category, length and frequency than budget or production value.



7. Videos with the highest engagement are short (often less than 1 minute)

It was rare to find a video much longer than one minute in the **Top 100 Most Engaging Nonprofit Videos Per Channel**. There were a few exceptions, but 54% of videos on the Facebook list, 100% of videos on the Instagram list (because length is limited to 60 seconds), and 70% of videos on the Twitter list were less than a minute. In fact, 33% of the Top 100 on Twitter were shorter than 30 seconds!

AVERAGE LENGTH OF TOP 100 MOST ENGAGING NONPROFIT VIDEOS PER CHANNEL

69

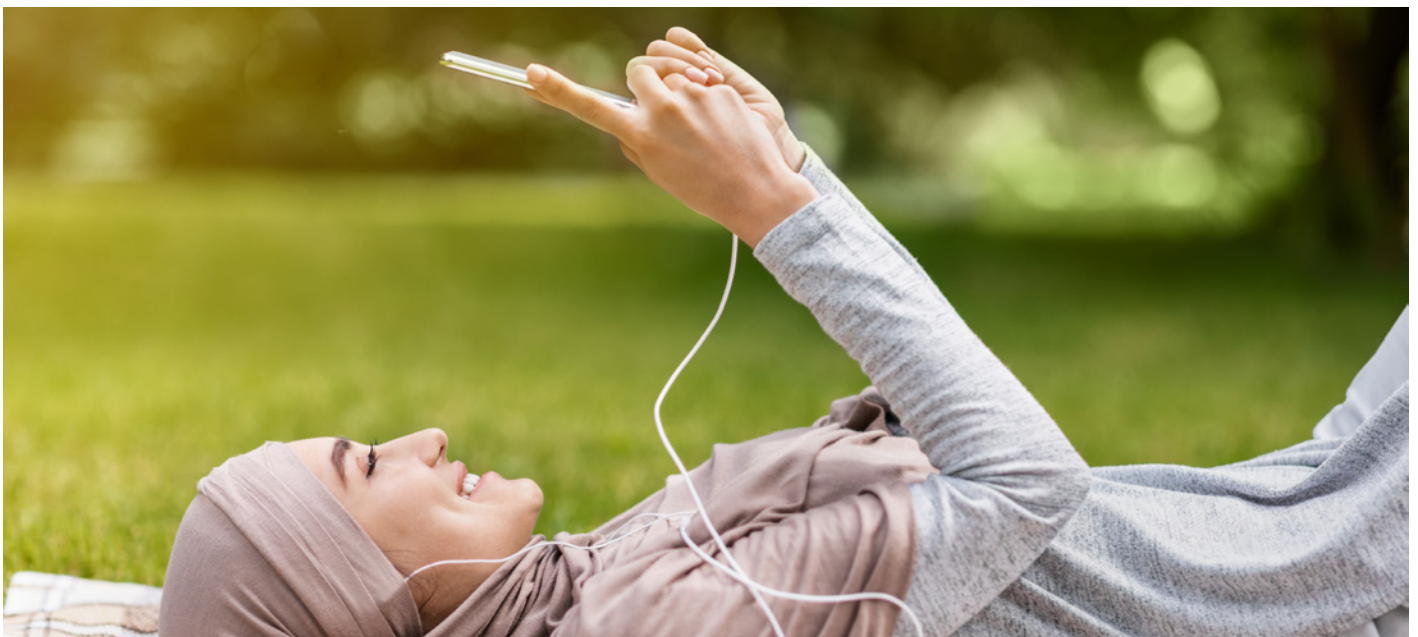
Seconds on Facebook

52

Seconds on Twitter

► Takeaway

Videos 1-minute or less are more engaging on social media than longer videos.



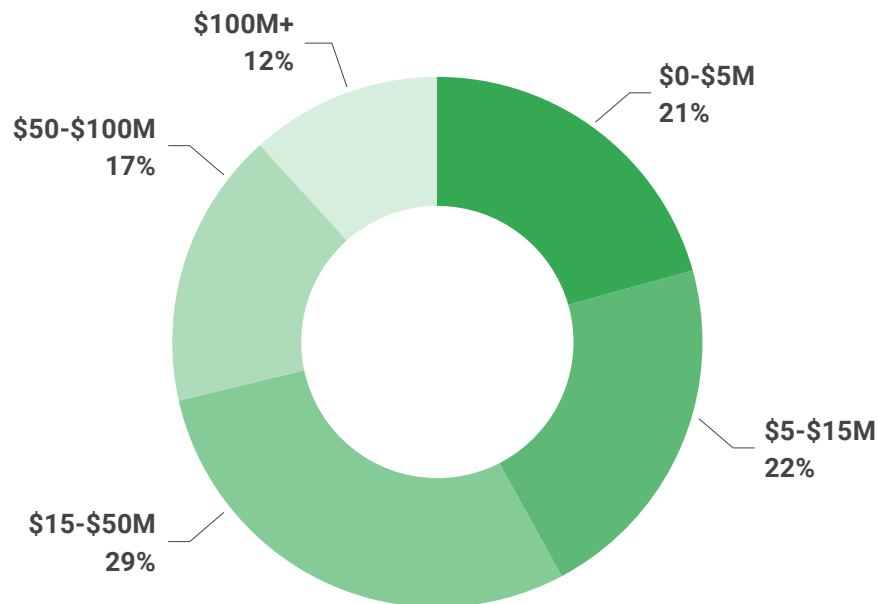
8. Nonprofits who produce more videos with higher VEQ have larger audiences

This key finding is one of the most important. We were keenly interested in understanding the relationship between audience size, frequency, engagement and growth.

When we initially compiled the list of nonprofits in the Index, we focused on equal representation in each cause area and category. Only after pulling the data from each nonprofit did we look at their audience size. What we found was surprising.

Nonprofits in the Index with large audiences (100k+ on Facebook and Twitter, 50k+ on Instagram) were evenly distributed across all revenue sizes. A nonprofit with an annual budget of less than \$5M was just as likely to have a large audience as a nonprofit with the annual budget of \$50M-\$100M.

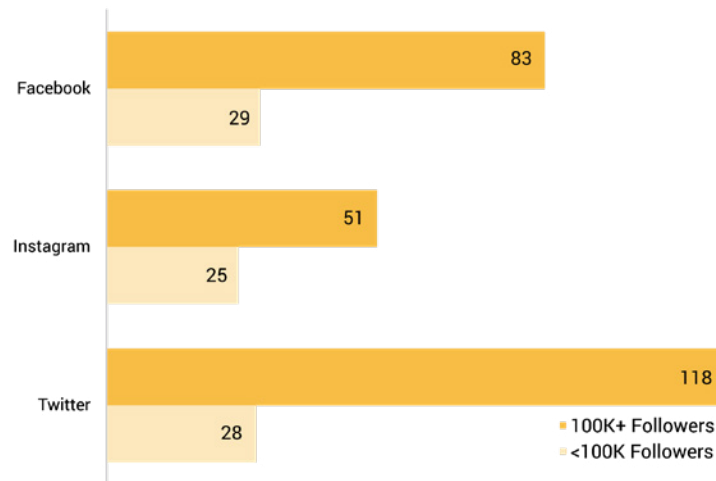
BREAKDOWN OF NONPROFITS IN INDEX WITH LARGE AUDIENCES (FIG. 6)



Large audience size = FB 100k+, IG 50k+, TW 100k+
Dollar amounts are annual revenue per nonprofit

Next we wanted to find out if frequency (number of annual video posts) had any bearing on audience size. We found that nonprofits with large audiences posted significantly more videos per channel than those with smaller audiences.

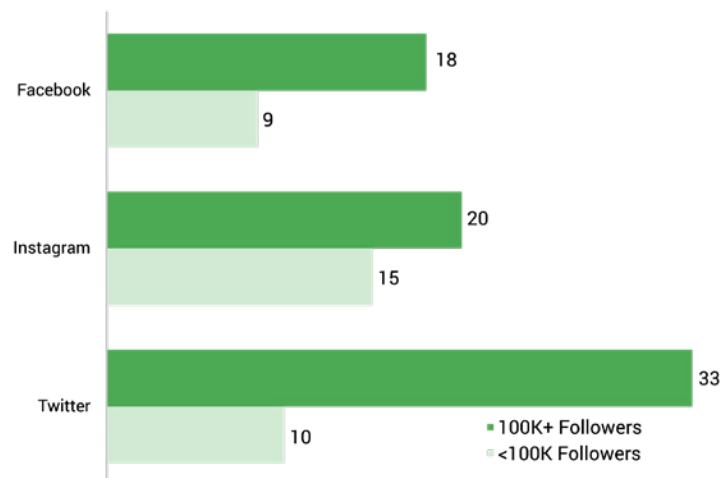
AVG VIDEO POSTS PER NONPROFIT BY AUDIENCE SIZE (FIG. 7)



Large audience = FB 100k+, IG 50k+, TW 100k+

Next, we looked at average VEQ for nonprofits. We discovered that nonprofits with large audiences had dramatically higher VEQ than those with small audiences.

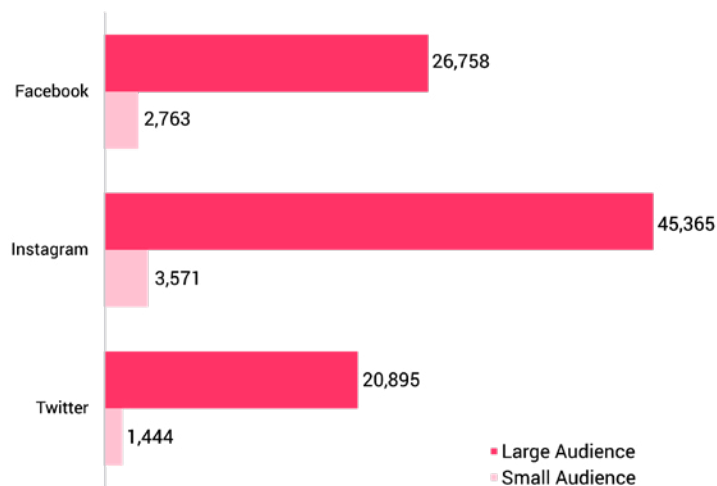
AVG VEQ OF NONPROFITS BY AUDIENCE SIZE (FIG. 8)



Large audience = FB 100k+, IG 50k+, TW 100k+

Lastly, we looked at audience growth rate. Nonprofits with large audiences grew only slightly faster than nonprofits with small audiences. Yet, because of the massive size of their audiences, nonprofits with large audiences added tens of thousands more followers than nonprofits with small audiences.

AVG ANNUAL GROWTH BY AUDIENCE SIZE (FIG. 9)



Large audience = FB 100k+, IG 50k+, TW 100k+

When you take into consideration how many “friends” those new followers likely have, a nonprofit with a large audience will have access to millions of new prospective audience members each year.

► Takeaway

There is a strong correlation between large audience size, high frequency and highly engaging content. No matter your annual revenue, it's possible for your nonprofit to have a large audience.



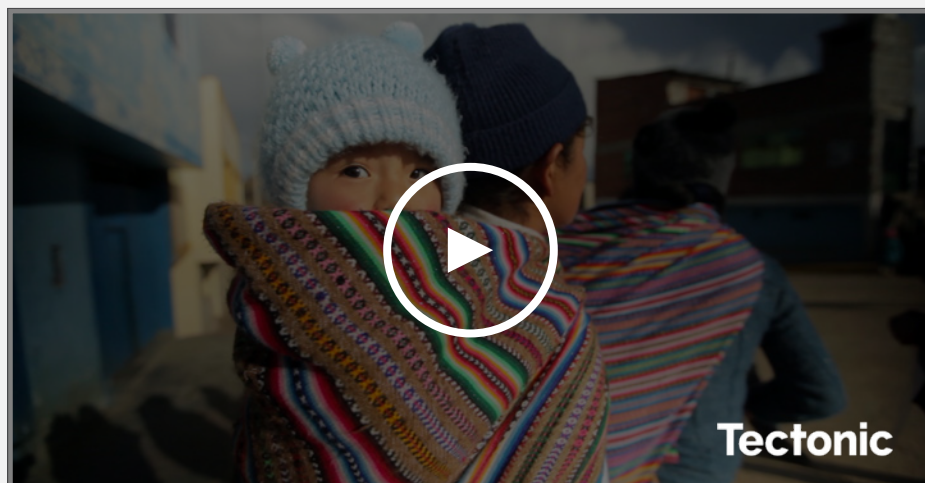
About Tectonic Video

We're the video agency behind many of the world's most innovative nonprofits. We make PSAs for the American Lung Association, branded content for Mutual Rescue, immersive VR experiences for TeachAids, educational exhibit videos for The Tech Interactive and fundraising videos for World Relief.

We help nonprofits make better videos by:

- Unlocking key insights about their target audiences to build awareness, increase engagement and compel action
- Benchmarking their video performance and measuring its effectiveness
- Strategically integrating video throughout their marketing and fundraising funnels to maximize ROI
- Creating award-winning video content that catalyzes their brand

See for yourself



I can say without reservation that Tectonic Video is the absolute best at what they do.



Dr. Piya Sorcar
TeachAids

Awards



Our Work Has Been Featured In

People ADWEEK CNN

The New York Times

BuzzFeed npr

The Telegraph

FAST COMPANY TODAY

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