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Report Suggests Strategies for Web 2.0 Technology Use

By Nicole Wallace

A new report looks at how foundations are using interactive Web 2.0 technology, such as blogs, podcasts, and social networks, in their communications — and urges philanthropies to do more.

Some foundations are already embracing technology tools that allow for two-way communications, write the study's authors David Brotherton and Cynthia Scheiderer. The report was published by the Communications Network, a membership organization for public-relations professionals who work at foundations.

The Daniels Fund, in Denver, for example, set up a Facebook group to communicate with young people who receive college scholarships from the foundation and to try to foster a sense of camaraderie among the students.

The fund took that step after it realized students were not using its Web site or responding to e-mail messages.

"For them, e-mail is kind of the 8-track player," Peter Droege, vice president of communications at the Daniels Fund, says in the report.

The paper also discusses misgivings that many foundation officials have about new interactive communication technology, including fear of "losing control over the foundation's message."

The authors argue, however, that foundations have to reach out beyond traditional communication channels if they don't want to lose influence among important audiences.

"To decide not to join the myriad online conversations and networking opportunities is to cede territory to others who may have less means, knowledge, or experience," they write.

To read the report: Go to <http://www.comnetwork.org/resources/research.html>.

Link to article: <http://philanthropy.com/premium/articles/v20/i24/24005504.htm>