

The Social Media Presence of International Rural Development Nonprofit Organizations

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Introduction

- Social media can serve as a powerful relationship builder (Meredith, 2012).
- The reduced transaction costs of social media enable organizations to improve efficiencies and effectiveness in achieving goals and missions (Curtis et al., 2010; Waters et al., 2009).
- With the population expected to exceed nine billion by 2050, it is important for international rural development nonprofit organizations (IRDNPOs) to understand effective communication strategies in order to engage stakeholders, increase funds, and accomplish their mission (Pardey et al., 2014).

Theoretical Framework

- Relationship management posits relationships, not communication, are the correct focal point of public relations (Ferguson, 1984).
- This theory encourages the use of two-way symmetrical communications to cultivate and maintain relationships with key publics (Ledingham et al., 2000).

Purpose and Research Questions

- The purpose of this study was to explore the social media presence of IRDNPOs.
 - RQ1: Which social media platforms are IRDNPOs using?
 - RQ2: Are IRDNPOs listing their social media presence on their websites?

Results

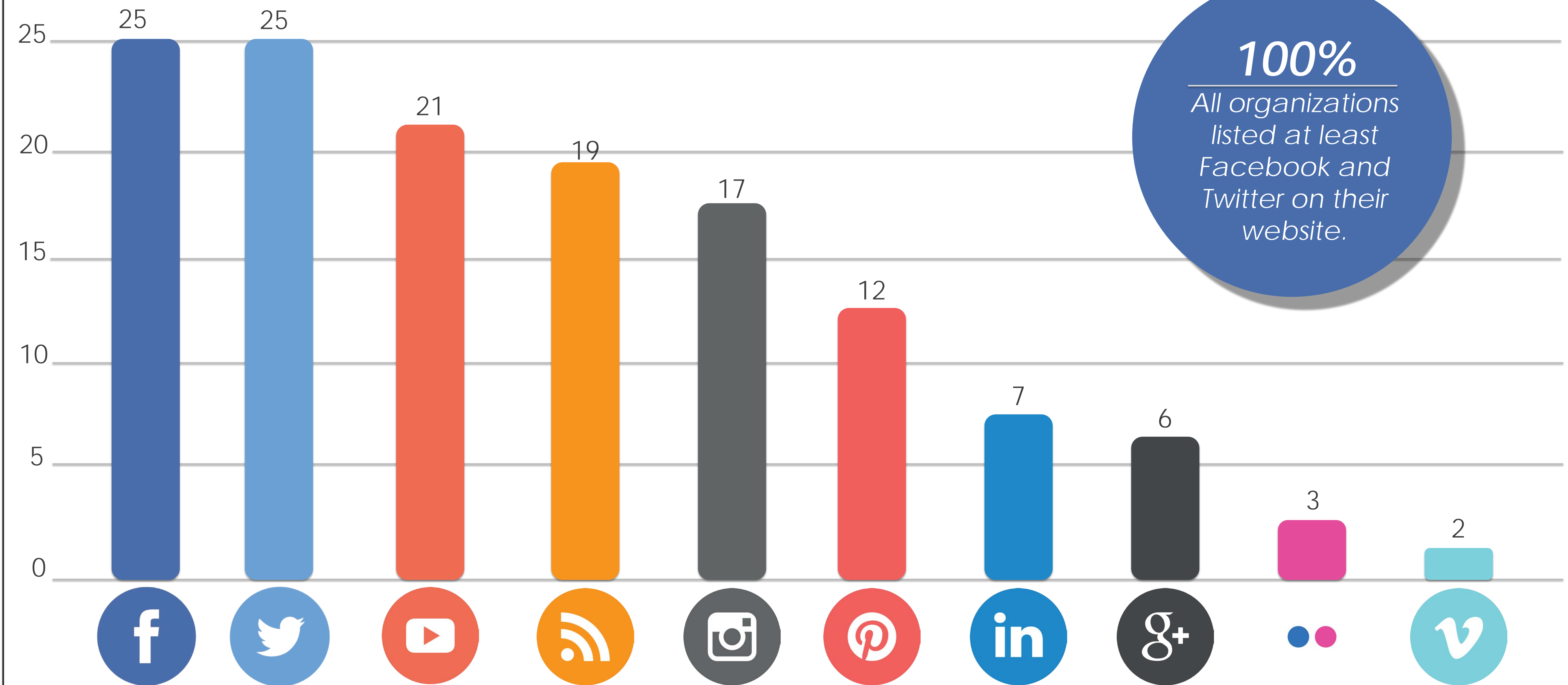


Figure 1. Frequency of social media outlets used by International Rural Development Nonprofit Organizations

Methods

- Identified IRDNPOs by consulting a list of the most followed 501(c)(3) registered nonprofits on social media, conducting an online search, and asking key informants for suggestions.
- Included only organizations with at least an organizational Twitter and Facebook account.
- This process identified 25 IRDNPOs.
- Each website, Twitter handle, and Facebook page was evaluated for the presence of additional links to social media.
- If social media were not provided, a search for the organization was conducted on Pinterest, Google+, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Flickr.

Conclusions/Recommendations

- All the organizations are using social media platforms in addition to Facebook and Twitter, and they cross-promoted those accounts.
- Having a more comprehensive social media presence will provide more opportunities for organizations to build relationships with their stakeholders (Meredith, 2012; Ramadhan et al, 2013).
- Additional research should examine the content provided on these platforms.

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