Communicating With A Statewide Activist Group

Communication in modern history.

When great citizens join together to make an impact for our lives and communities, they need to communicate effectively and efficiently. Sometimes they need to get the word out FAST!

In the 80s we structured 'phone trees' where every person got a call and notified 5 others, until everyone got the message. We printed up newsletters, licked stamps, and waited a few days.

In the 90s we set up answering services with outgoing recordings, containing our latest news. A few of us started using fax machines.

As the millennium approached, we got online and marveled at electronic mail (e-mail) and bulletin boards, chat rooms, news groups, and even our own websites.

We got rid of our pagers and bought cellular phones.   And in the past 10 years we got rid of our fax machines, pagers, dial-up modems, and even our land lines.

We discovered text messages and Twitter. The message boards and newsgroups all started moving to the big social media giants. Our cellphones got a whole lot smarter.

Today's tools of communication For Activist groups

The web continues to evolve at a rapid rate. Yet some stable systems of communication are evident. The blog website now serves as an essential foundation for group information and communication. There are several free services available. RSS technology is a huge leap forward for getting news to many outlets in a fully automated process.

Here are a few tools we have found to be very useful & Effective

Google's Blogger

Of all the free blog web services, Blogger (a.k.a. Blogspot) is one of the easiest and yet very powerful. You can create an entire website in your Blogger acct. the RSS feed allows other websites to automate the inclusion of your news. When you incorporate Feedburner tools, it does amazing things. Desktop & mobile app. **Free**

Google's Feedburner

This service of Google's is designed to add a lot of flexibility to your blog website. It handles mailing lists, automated daily emailing, and other ways to enhance your message.

It creates a box for your website so folks can add their email address to your daily newsletter mass mailing & works with any blog. **Free**

Google Voice

This tool creates an answering service and so much more. It can forward calls to several other phone numbers. It can send you an email or text message when a message is left.

Campaigns use this to create a virtual corporate phone network. Desktop and free mobile app. **Free**

Google's Youtube

Your meetings and event have a statewide impact. But many of your devoted allies live so far away that they can't possibly attend all your meetings. A Youtube channel can make a great archive of your meetings, and allow your organization to have regular tv programming on Roku. **Free**

Facebook

A Facebook Page is a limited blog. Unlike a Facebook personal account or Facebook Group, these are designed to get news posted, however only from the few who run the page.

A Facebook Group is a pace to discuss with a free flow of information. It also limits itself in functions.

Neither a page nor a group is a real person. You can't be a group's or a page's friend.

Many blog hosting services have the ability to automatically post a notice on a Facebook page whenever you create a new blog post. Desktop & mobile app. FaceBook.com **Free**

Twitter

Twitter is for the mobile activist. It is immediate and gets right to the point. It's not the right platform for a cyber base of operations, but it's a very powerful way to notify folks of breaking news and to drive the masses back to your website blog.

Many blog hosting service have the ability to automatically post a notice on a Twitter acct. whenever you create a new blog post. Desktop & mobile app. www.Twitter.com **Free**

Weebly

Weebly offers free webhosting for your organization. It's a simple interface with pre-designed themes. But Weebly adds a blog feature, included with every website.

It's a favorite of this journalist. The service has a phone app and a full-featured desktop editing suite.

Weebly does offer some premium upgrades, and some of them are worth having, if you see the need for the features. Desktop & mobile app. www.Weebly.com **Free**

Sooner Politics .org

We started SoonerPolitics 2 years ago, to help keep conservatives throughout the state informed. Our free news service has expanded from a single web page, to a 4-section online newspaper, and a Roku Channel.

Over 5 dozen bloggers and activist groups are regular columnists on SoonerPolitics.org

We keep looking for more sources. www.SoonerPolitics.org **Free**

Google has many free communicator tools. We have found many of them to be of great value in your activism. I have led a winning presidential campaign in Oklahoma, using Google. In fact, most of our 2012 campaign was cloud-based. Google drive is cloud storage with preset tools including Google Forms & Google Sheets. Whether your group's next campaign is for a politician or a piece of legislation, these tools can help.

Our county teams were marked up on our Google Maps. Our state campaign office developed a phone network consisting of each volunteer's mobile phones, while they were in the office.

Our volunteer sign up form was hosted on Google drive and our resulting database of volunteers was automatically & instantly stored on Google Sheets.

Our calling lists were also on Google Sheets. We were able to monitor county teams' progress by watching their notes on Google sheets.

Start out by getting a Google acct. for your group, & share the log in access codes with ever leader who needs access. Use that Google acct. to set up your group's Gmail, Youtube, Drive, Blogger, Maps, Plus, & other free features.

End user tools: If you're a part of a grassroots group and you're having a difficult time staying informed, we have some tools for your use.

One of the many free email services available is Google's Gmail. It has great tools for notifying activists when certain senders mail something important.

It's web-based, so you can access it anywhere. It works great with mobile phones & tablets.

And you can set up as many accounts as you need to. Many activists set up one gmail mailbox for all their civic activism connections. Desktop & mobile app. **Free**

If you're a real geek, you can do so much more, using "If This Then That". This free service can automate so many things. But they especially work well to notify you of messages.

IFTTT also re-posts messages from one site to another. If your blog doesn't notify Facebook, Twitter, or other social media sites, you'll probably find a solution in this free service. www.ifTTT.com Desktop & mobile app. **Free**

~ David Van Risseghem, Publisher of Sooner Politics.org